



Insecurities of Expulsion

Afro-Asian Entanglements in
Transcontinental Uganda

ANNEETH KAUR HUNDLE



INSECURITIES OF
EXPULSION



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For my parents

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Asian African Association
ACFODE	Action for Development
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BLM	Black Lives Matter
BPP	British Protected Person
CBR	Centre for Basic Research
CEDOVIP	Center for Domestic Violence Prevention
DAPCB	Departed Asians Property Custodial Board
DRB	Domestic Relations Bill
EAC	East African Community
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
FIDA	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers
FMF	Fees Must Fall
GMF	Gandhi Must Fall

HAR	Hope After Rape
HSS	Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh
IAU	Indian Association of Uganda
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	Indian National Congress
IPA	Investment Promotion Agency
IWA	Indian Women's Association
IWO	International Women's Organization
KIBP	Kampala Industrial Business Park
KY	Kabaka Yekka
MISR	Makerere Institute of Social Research
MoFPED	Ministry of Financial Planning and Economic Development
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRI	Non-Resident Indian
NRM	National Resistance Movement
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCI	Overseas Citizen of India
PIO	Person of Indian Origin
RMF	Rhodes Must Fall
UCW	Uganda Council of Women
UIA	Uganda Investment Authority
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front
UNRCA	Uganda National Records Center and Archive

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ABBREVIATIONS

UPC	Uganda People’s Conference
UPDF	Uganda People’s Defence Forces
URB	Uganda Resettlement Board
UWONET	Uganda Women’s Network
YWCA	Uganda Women Christian Association



PREFACE

From Diasporic to Transcontinental Entanglement

It is perhaps ironic that a book about transcontinental Uganda—one that seeks to de-exceptionalize the critical event of the 1972 Ugandan Asian expulsion from normative South Asian diasporic understandings—is itself rooted in South Asian and Punjabi Sikh diasporic experience in the United States. *Insecurities of Expulsion* is grounded in my life history of growing up in the quintessentially Black American city of Chicago and its sprawling suburbs. Histories of frontier mercantilism and settler colonial expansion across the Great Plains, European settlement, indigenous land dispossession, and the labor of Black fugitive slaves and freedmen were all key to the development of this grand city on the southern shores of Lake Michigan. Black American descendants of slaves from the South settled in the city after the Civil War, during Reconstruction, and during the Great Migration of the twentieth century. My father arrived late on this roiling urban scene, from the rural *doaba* region of the land of five rivers, the Punjab, just as immigration restrictions eased and permitted his entry in the 1960s. Against the turmoil of the civil rights struggle, he made his way to the Windy City, working scrappy jobs until he was hired as an industrial engineer with a major automaker before returning to India to marry my mother through traditionally arranged *zaat-biradari* (caste and kin-based tribe) marriage networks. Chicago remained that symbol of American promise, prosperity,

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and modernity—economic and social mobility, industrial transformation, a mecca for architecture, art, and education.

Orientalized at times within a Hinduized formation of Indianness and at other times within an Islamicized formation of a South Asian or Arab Muslim—within the Black-white hierarchies of US nationalist racial formation—we participated in a Christian and secular public sphere, even as we practiced Sikhism in our homes and in the *gurudwara*. If public life felt like a series of deracinations from ancestral origin and tradition, of being remade into a singular South Asian American, Indian American, or even *desi* identity, then community and domestic life became sites of reconstructing and asserting tradition, culture, religion, and minority identity. I became adept at moving flexibly across these nested and interlinked identities, public and private domains. Traveling between the United States and the Punjab, I was working out the legacies of colonial and communal violence brought about by the Partition of the Punjab in 1947, followed by the growing oppression and militancy in post-partition Indian Punjab and, finally, by the events of 1984 in India, which culminated in anti-Sikh pogroms and a brutal counter-insurgency in the Punjab throughout the 1990s, the fallout of which continued to reverberate in the global Sikh community. Diasporic Sikh lifeworlds were wrought through racial, religious, and gendered precarities and intergenerational violence, the remembering and narrating of collective and individual histories. Spoken English—and even Punjabi—were limited vehicles for expressing traumas and displacements. Embodied practices—the performance of devotional music (*kirtan-sangeet*) and Punjabi poetry, folk music, and dance—offered paths to sacred heritage and healing. This lived experience of navigating society, similar to what W. E. B. Du Bois described in *The Souls of Black Folk* as “double consciousness,”¹ was the underneath of things, that which belied the secular and multicultural making of “hyphenated” American identities in post-civil rights-era United States.

A corollary diasporic theme was the forging of Black-Punjabi-Sikh (Afro-Asian) identifications and affiliations. The postwar and post-partition migration of Punjabis to the UK had already led to new encounters between British Asian youth and Afro-Caribbean diasporas. For example, the traditional Punjabi rural folk music and dance of *bhangra* and *giddha* had taken on elements of reggae and dancehall and, later, elements of Black American music like house and hip-hop. The new sound was rooted in the plural devotional cultures of the Punjab (Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu identities) and the ways in which Blackness—culturally and politically—had become an idiom of Punjabi working-class marginalization and the racial and religious

Othering that the community, especially visible minorities like Sikhs, experienced.² It was a formative moment in creating transracial Black British identities and solidarities as working-class communities confronted the neo-liberalism of the New Right, violent policing, and white supremacist groups in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s. Back in Chicago, and working with these inheritances, I was absorbed in the writings of slave abolitionists and Pan-Africanists—who critiqued the denigration of Blackness and who mobilized a unified Black global consciousness to fight for the self-determination of all indigenous people and diasporas of African ancestry—along with Chicago-based novelists, poets, and jazz and blues musicians. The intimacies between Black Atlantic and Indian Oceanic histories (a product of the modern world’s capitalist racial system that links Black and brown people together) were becoming more apparent to me as I continued to read Du Bois and Richard Wright and listened to musicians like John and Alice Coltrane and Yusuf Lateef, the latter a prominent figure in the Black American Ahmadiyya Muslim community. I was also studying the pluralistic and liberatory potential of the Sikh scriptural and secular traditions; Guru Nanak’s radical rupture from Brahmanism and casteism; from patriarchy and other religious orthodoxies; and the tradition’s egalitarian, anti-casteist, antiracist, and feminist possibilities. These literary, musical, and poetic compositions allowed me to integrate the ways that Punjabi performative cultures—Sufi *qawwali*, *gurbani-kirtan*, *bhangra*, and *giddha*—were also braided with Afro-diasporic expressive repertoires, producing a “vernacular modernity”³ and a unique diaspora aesthetics.

As Sikh youths embodied a more marked and visibly Othered position in post-1984 India and in the post-9/11 United States, both community-based and Black-Punjabi-Sikh racial- and class-based solidarities were also becoming more apparent. Black-Punjabi-Sikh transracial identifications and alignments signified the possibilities of an emerging subjectivity and revealed the internal fractures within universalizing group categories of “Indian,” “South Asian,” and *desi*. Encounters with Blackness were reshaping what *Sikhi* and being Punjabi Sikh American meant, and vice versa. This was the “remix culture” of the diaspora in which one traversed categories of Sikhness and Punjabiness; racialized ethnicity and religion; stigmatized gender, queer-, and caste-based identities; and ideas of brownness and Blackness. These cultural formations challenged the parochial boundaries of communal life, the high commoditization of hip-hop and *bhangra*, and the singular straightjacketing of racial and cultural identities in the United States. It was an embrace of what Vijay Prashad, drawing on Robin Kelley,

argues in *Everyone Was Kung-Fu Fighting* is an antiracist “polycultural” sense of being—the idea that “people live coherent lives made up of a host of lineages,” a lived practice that relies on “a ferocious engagement with the political world of culture, a painful embrace of the skin and all its contradictions” (xii).⁴ At the same time, there were severe limitations to horizontal Afro–South Asian transracial identifications—a sense that “the political” in struggles for Black and brown self-determination and South Asian investments in Pan-Africanism and Black internationalism had been lost—that internal religious and caste-based ideologies and practices, sexism, elitism, and deep-seated anti-Black racisms and racial tensions persisted.

After 1984, my parents’ generation grappled with their loss of national belonging and committed to the idea that securing futures in the United States would offer us more safety from the brutal violence unfolding in the Punjab. Benefiting from policies that enabled upward mobility, our family had already moved to the suburbs, which symbolized aspirational whiteness and economic stability. Here, we could better integrate into the mainstays of middle-class life, including the curation of the bourgeois home. This transition maintained an essentializing and ahistorical South Asian American racial script based on an adherence to US nationalist liberal exceptionalism and minority-making tropes: that South Asian Americans were exceptionally hardworking and successful in the diaspora and thus assimilable. Claire Kim in “The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans” has described this as a national racial discourse that constructs Asian people as “model minorities” positioned vertically between white and Black people, but one that also maintains immigrant Asians as perpetually foreign, alien, and unassimilable to the nation. It requires the maintenance of anti-Black racism and the reproduction of racial ideologies among immigrants and racial minorities that positions Blackness at the lowest rung of humanity and as an undesirable community, despite one’s own racial exclusion. In her 1993 essay, “On the Backs of Blacks,” novelist Toni Morrison argues that this is “the organizing principle of becoming an American.” Among segments of the Sikh community in the United States, race and caste consciousness melded with class status, bourgeois respectability politics, and the production of anti-Black racism. Race has multiple origins and is also entwined with caste identity, beginning with the earliest Punjabi Sikh migration to the Californian American West at the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1923, Bhagat Singh Thind was racialized as “Hindoo” and barred from full citizenship rights in the United States on the basis of his nonwhite racial identity. Although he was Sikh and a revolutionary anticolonial intellectual affiliated with the California-based

Ghadar Party, he also asserted his upper-caste identity and Aryan racial origins, laying claim to a Caucasian racial identity and thus an entitlement to citizenship. Many North Indians and individuals of the larger Punjabi diaspora continue to assert a politics of both assimilation and resistance to white supremacy and social injustices through the lived experiences of class and performances of racialized ethnicity and caste, demonstrating the enduring legacy of histories of citizenship, race, and empire.

Despite my ongoing interests in Black-Punjabi-Sikh political and cultural formations, navigating the US scene meant contending with the profound inaccessibility of entangled imperial, oceanic, and territorial histories—transcontinental entanglements. My embodied diasporic experience—migration, mobilities, and displacements; negotiations of racial, religious, and citizenship entitlements and precarities; overlapping registers of violence; collective memory and trauma; the weightiness of key historical events; aesthetics and poetics; trans-racial alliances and tensions; and the enduring resonances of Black internationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Afro-Asianism—compelled me to pursue fieldwork in East Africa and the Great Lakes Region of Africa in Uganda and to study the 1972 Asian expulsion through the lens of the ethnographic present. This touchstone event felt less personal to me and my own family, yet familiar when viewed through the lens of the Punjabi Sikh diaspora's connections to Black Africa, Africans, and racial Blackness. The ways in which my aunts and uncles from East Africa interspersed Kiswahili into their Punjabi had always left an impression on me; the languages melded into each other and were overheard at the *gurudwara* and at other community functions. The indentured laborers building the Uganda railway from Mombasa on the Swahili Coast to the shores of Lake Victoria in Entebbe; the figure of the Kenyan *kalasingha* (a colloquial term for turbaned Sikhs in Kenya); histories of anticolonial freedom fighters like Kenyan trade unionist Makhan Singh and famed rally car drivers like the “Flying Sikh” Joginder Singh; the importance of the Makindu *gurdwara* (a commemoration site for the Indian labor and lives lost in building the East African railway in Kenya); and the entwined histories of the Indian Punjab with East Africa had all shaped a shared sense of the global Sikh and Punjabi experience.

In addition to racial scripts about Black Americans then, images of Black Africa, Africans, and racial Blackness moved surreptitiously and obliquely into and out of my view in the diaspora community. Here were South Asian community-based origin stories of Uganda, Idi Amin, and the Asian expulsion, imaginaries of Africa that intersected with and departed

from Black American imaginaries of the African continent that I had also absorbed. There were the hauntings of Afro–South Asian racial estrangement, resentments, and racial conflict—all these complicated signs, affects, and histories circulating and shared through collective memory and in a *kahani* (story), shared over a cup of tea while eating *besan mittai* (chickpea flour sweet) or a warm bowl of *kheer* (rice pudding). My uncle often recounted the rags-to-riches story of Indar Singh Gill, a prosperous *sardar*, industrialist, and Ugandan settler, who owned a sawmill factory in Jinja. From his living room in the Detroit suburbs, he shared his own version of Idi Amin mythology, the expulsion of Asians, Gill’s loss of home and wealth, ending with a spiritual and ethical lesson in material detachment and immigrant resilience, reciting a *pauri*, or poetic verse from the *Adi Granth*. I could easily connect to this experience of forced exile and the negotiation of loss of entitlement and loss of privilege, of sentimental memories for lives once lived in Africa, despite the limits of language itself. In contrast to the larger East African Asian diaspora, the expulsion of the Ugandan Asian diaspora was compelling because theirs was a narrative shaped by sudden and forced exile and estrangement from Black Africans. Their silences were not absences but presences, racial traumas reworked into new nation-based landscapes, becoming louder as I confronted them. These silent presences revealed a strong South Asian (via Africa) racial, caste, and class consciousness; feelings of victimization and resentment; loyalties to imperial citizenship and its racial hierarchies; new deracinations from African-Asian identity; and the making of new South Asian diasporic and liberal nationalist identities and desires for racial proximity to whiteness and the denigration of Blackness. But in other cases, and much to my interest, deep feelings of grief, love, and affection for Black Africans tinged these displaced Afro–South Asian cultural formations. More specifically, East African Asian–Punjabi identities persisted in cultural and performative domains, in the everyday stuff of diasporic aesthetics: in sartorial choices, language, sports, food, and musical cultures.

Yet the legibility of the 1972 Asian expulsion was an epistemic conundrum for me, especially in the US academy. It was clear to me that the itineraries of diasporic youths like me—our identities, subjectivities, orientations—were deeply entwined with internationalist histories of Africa and South Asia. But our recognition was obstructed by US nationalism and liberal multicultural and model-minority identities, the institutional operations of 2000s-era neoliberalism, and postracial colorblindness; it was obstructed even by the territorial limitations of US-based ethnic studies, which

reproduced nationalist narratives that erased imperial and other intimacies. All the books I read on Ugandan history were limited to the scholarly field of African studies, tracing Afro–South Asian racial conflict and the expulsion back to world-historical processes of British imperialism, experiments in colonial capitalism, and Anglo-European racial supremacy and usually ending in 1972. But histories of Afro–South Asian racial conflict persisted in lived and embodied ways: a sensation of pressure in my chest, a tension headache, anxiousness in my belly. They became heightened as I negotiated intimacies and estrangements with the Black and African diaspora, working across registers of family, communal, social, and academic life.

In the US university, South Asian studies courses often examined issues of communal violence, caste, gender, and patriarchy—but they excluded an analysis of racial politics and their relationship to caste discrimination, colorism, and communal violence. This was so despite the extensive nature of African–South Asian encounters and the presence of old and new African diaspora communities in South Asia, which I read about separately. The tendency was that these courses had a dominant focus on Indian nationhood and an elite postcolonial politics that contended with anticolonial struggle, communalism, or the racial discrimination experienced by South Asians in Global North (Western) diasporas; but they could not attend to South Asian sources of anti-Black racist prejudice, casteism, colorism, or the multiple origins of racial consciousness. There were other challenges, too. African studies in the US-based academy often excluded race and the South Asian diaspora from understandings of the African continent and its diasporas, albeit with some limited focus on Eastern Africa and South Africa. There were the many intellectual fractures between African studies and African diaspora studies (or Africana studies), and what eventually became Black studies and African studies departments in the university, making it challenging to access earlier intellectual genealogies of Pan-Africanism and Black internationalism that were inclusive of Afro–South Asian dialogue—especially Afro-Dalit studies and other third world internationalisms that crosscut area studies and disciplinary concerns. And then there was the tricky business of navigating the racial, religious, and caste politics of various disciplines and departments: the “racial flattening” of identifications that displaced Black-Punjabi-Sikh and Afro–South Asian diasporic consciousness. Here, queer Africa-based scholar Keguro Macharia offers a similar critique of navigating the knowledge politics of African studies outside of the African continent.⁵ Finally, and more intimate to my own ethno-religious community, working through internal racial, color,

caste, and gendered discriminations was challenging, for we were already minoritized, combating layered racial and religious oppressions and discriminations in academia. Engaging the university required from us what Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, has described as “contrapuntal reading”: participating in, but not being completely produced by, dominant knowledge formations, subjectivities, and agendas. Envisioning a university that was more habitable to lived histories and practices was a parallel endeavor to the existential questions I had inherited from the Sikh tradition, namely, how to live in a world shaped by the challenges of everyday life, the self, and ego and yet transcend them via struggles for social justice and the cultivation of an ethical and poetic consciousness oriented toward the Divine, ultimate reality.

In addition to unmaking conventional understandings of the 1972 Asian expulsion then, this book aims to complicate facile or overly determined understandings of Black/Afro–South Asian connections. Racial identities, racial conflict, and racial resentments are usually presented as timeless and primordial rather than historical and contextual phenomena. Postcolonial events like the expulsion often obfuscate the significance of European empire, racial capitalisms, and white supremacy in fomenting race and class tensions between unevenly colonized communities. Racial divisions are often positioned as a by-product of exclusively European encounter. Yet colonial determinisms and single-origin stories about the making of racial hierarchies and supremacies are also problematic. At the same time, progressive scholars usually have investments in emphasizing global interracial solidarities, even romanticizing Afro–South Asian connection with a sole focus on anticolonial and anticapitalist solidarity. They might focus selectively, or in reductive ways, on recuperating the early internationalist solidarities examined in W. E. B. DuBois’s Pan-Africanist thought and the nascent connections between enslaved and colonized people; Afro-Black-Dalit solidarities (race and caste analogy); mid-twentieth-century histories of Afro-Asian non-alignment and the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung; transnational connections in abolitionist, anti-imperialist, anticolonial, and civil rights organizing; and most recently, optimistic narratives of South-South cooperation between postcolonial elites and policy pundits as they strive to meet development goals; or even the romance of academic collaborations across Global South geographies. In this book, I show that the insecurities of expulsion enable a critical feminist engagement with the multiple (historical and geographic, South Asian) sources of racialism and other inequalities, with the asymmetries, ambivalences, and tensions intrinsic to projects and

performances of reconciliation, cooperation, and solidarity, and with unequal domains of knowledge and power. Here, I strive to center the experiences of Black Africans, the caste-oppressed, religious minorities, and others with vulnerable gender and sexual identities.

The 1972 Asian expulsion is significant precisely because it is a difficult and uncomfortable *racial* event; but it is one that has the potential to unfold into a more robust anthropological engagement with transcontinental Afro–South Asian entanglement. Entanglement suggests the complexity that is constitutive of Afro–South Asian encounters: it comprises both intimacies and estrangements. And so while this book speaks more immediately to new scholarly directions in Ugandan studies, African studies, South Asian diasporas, Indian Ocean studies (and connections to what Paul Gilroy has described as a distinctive and modern cultural world of the Black Atlantic⁶), and global Afro–South Asian studies, I am in dialogue with an African continental intellectual tradition of study that must continue to engage with race and racial entanglements. Here, I am committed to an ongoing project of “reinventing the Left” in ways that take seriously critical feminist approaches to race, ethnicity, and class; religion and caste; gender and sexuality.

These scholarly investments are grounded in my location as a feminist anthropologist with experience working in the African university and now based in the US academy. This book was written during a time of great political and social upheaval in the United States, where I confronted the (often frustrating) exclusion of the African continent from US-based South Asian studies and the limitations of transnational feminist, Black internationalist, Pan-Africanist, Afro-Asian, and Global South solidarities. I did this while making sense of US imperialism and the aftermath of 9/11 and the Bush and Obama “global war on terror” both abroad and in the US; Islamo-racism and racial and religious minoritization; the ascendancy of Obama-era postracialism and the neoconservative and neoliberal consensus; and finally, the assertion of Trump-era White Christian racial nativism and the Biden-Harris-era normalization of late neoliberalism and identity politics (the latter both strategically necessary but also reductive and limiting in its potential for anticolonialism). I found myself also unexpectedly encountering the currency of racial pessimism in US social movements and the US academy, and I hope that this text reveals the complexities of anti-Black racism and anti-Blackness globally and the shifting logics of race, empire, labor, and capital through the lens of Afro–South Asia specifically.⁷

Transcontinental Uganda is thus a key geographical center from which to study the dynamics of Afro–South Asian racial violence while maintaining

possibilities for Afro–South Asian universalisms and futurisms. And since I completed the research, the excesses of US imperialism and shifting global geopolitics (the rise of BRICS, Russia’s war on Ukraine, and Israel’s offensive war and genocide in Gaza), coupled with the apparent waning of liberal democracy; the rise of late neoliberalism, militarism, and repression; and the resurgence of Black and Palestinian protest movements—both solidarities and tensions—compel me to dwell on Afro–South Asian universalisms in the United States as well. Ultimately, however, I aim to universalize transcontinental Uganda instead, thus enabling multiply conceptualized analysis.

Far from a purely analytical or written exercise that privileges the epistemologies of Western modernity, feminist and anticolonial knowledge production is an embodied, vernacular, and intersubjective experience wrought through intimate and affective encounters. Kinship and relationship-building nurture ethical and spiritual commitments in research partnerships, community collaborations, and higher education. Small ripples of growing political, ethical, and spiritual consciousness gradually build oceanic and cosmic waves of transformation, but always in the messy materiality of living with difference and imagining other universals via particular histories, locations, and experiences. In this way, I write with insistence that this book, via the study of a complicated and enduring history, might trace paths to a present abundant with possibility for becoming and being co-liberated across the many lands and waters—Chicago, Kampala, the Punjab, and California—that I travel.

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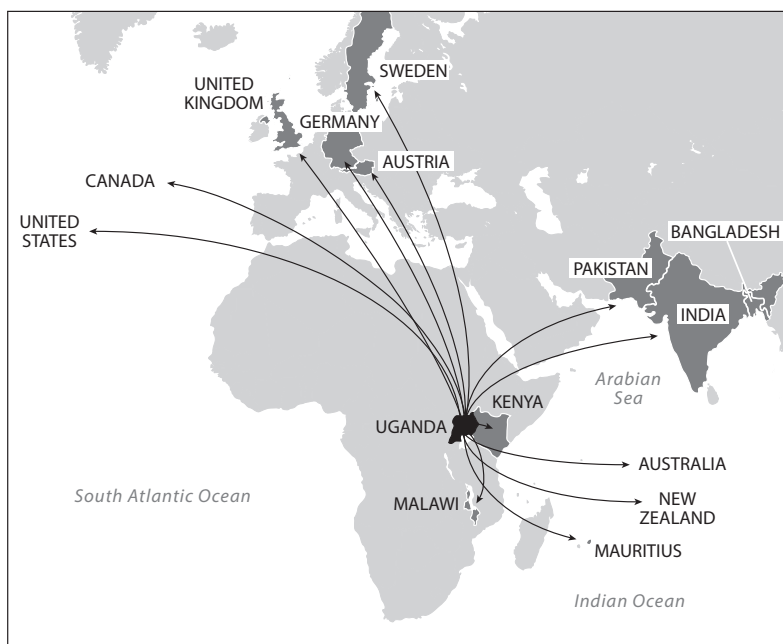
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Map 1 Transcontinental Uganda: Differentiated migration and mobilities of Black African, African Asian and South Asian (imperial, post-partition, and postcolonial) diasporic communities.

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Map 2 Postcolonial Uganda and Ugandan Asian displacement in 1972.

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Map 3 Uganda: Selected regions and traditional kingdoms.

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Map 4 Uganda: Selected major cities and towns.

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PART I

Imperial
Entanglements

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Introduction

Expulsion as Closure, Expulsion as Opening

The recent story of Indians in Uganda—the summary expulsions en masse, the harassment from security and bureaucratic personnel, the detentions, “disappearances,” and deaths, and the lack of any compensation for any abandoned property and businesses—is tragic indeed. But we must not lose sight of the fact that Uganda as a whole is truly an African tragedy.

Hasu Patel, “General Amin and the Indian Exodus from Uganda,” 1972

Fused into the paradox of heroic evil was Idi Amin—at once a hero and a villain, at once a subject of applause and denunciation. As a villain he was a symbol of tyranny. Hundreds of thousands of his fellow compatriots died under his rule. As a hero, Amin had four meanings for Africa and the Third World. Economically he attempted to strike a blow against dependency and foreign control of his country's economy. Culturally, he signified a reaffirmation of cultural authenticity. He helped to foster cultural discovery among Africans. . . . Politically, Amin was often in rebellion against the northern-dominated power structure of the twentieth century. He made fun of the mighty—and sometimes helped to inspire self-confidence in the ranks of the Third World. Morally, Amin signified a basic leverage between the liberal values of the Western world and the nationalistic concerns of much of the Third World.

Ali A. Mazrui, “Between Development and Decay: Anarchy, Tyranny, and Progress under Idi Amin,” 1980

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In fall 2008, I met again Dr. Vali Jamal, a self-described “returnee” of Ugandan Asian origin and Ismaili Khoja Muslim background. A retired academic and economist, he had returned to Kampala in the early 2000s, and lived there permanently, running a small eatery as a retirement activity. He welcomed me warmly to his café, and we settled at a table across from each other, sharing tea and roasted groundnuts. I mentioned that I had read some of his articles in the local Ugandan dailies and that I appreciated seeing Asian (often used interchangeably with Indian) representation in political affairs as well as in discussions of the infamous 1972 decree by President Idi Amin to expel all Asians from the nation. Upon hearing this, Jamal retrieved a frayed and yellowed copy of a newspaper from his back office. Together we gazed at the large block headline: “ALL ASIANS MUST GO.”

I was surprised that for so many years he had kept a copy of the newspaper announcing his expulsion; and he began to share with me his life story and memories of the expulsion event. Jamal explained how, in the early 1960s, Prince Karim Aga Khan had envisioned a multiracial society in East Africa and had advised Ismailis to take on Ugandan citizenship and play an active role in nation-building through their daily lives, grounded in spiritual and ethical principles. As a doctoral student at Stanford, Jamal had been in Kampala in 1972, collecting dissertation research at Makerere University when he was ordered out of the country. Although he was himself a Kenyan citizen at the time, he described how, as mostly stateless refugees, the Ismaili community was especially affected by the expulsion order. Jamal narrated his and his family’s eventual resettlement in Vancouver, Canada, followed by his career at the International Labour Organization. The British colonial administration had socially engineered enormous Indian and African racial and class disparity in Ugandan society, he explained, which led to anti-Asian sentiment and his expulsion following Uganda’s political independence from Britain. Jamal had researched the political economy of the cotton cash-cropping industry and the role of Indian merchants in the colonial era. Now, inspired by Cynthia Salvadori’s *We Came in Dhows*, a collection of oral histories that documents the settlement of the Indian diaspora in East Africa, he was beginning to compile interviews from Ugandan Asian returnees and exiles in the global diaspora.

Just beyond the open café doors and across the busy traffic on Kampala Road, we could make out City Square, a public garden and park in front of the Ugandan courts of justice. It was there, Jamal recounted, that Idi Amin had made an influential anti-Asian speech just prior to announcing the expulsion decree. Wistfully, Jamal recalled when he would picnic in the park



1.1 Newspaper clipping from the *Uganda Argus*, August 21, 1972.

before strolling to an afternoon matinee of a newly released Indian film at one of the theaters in the city. He paused in his recollections, taking a sip of tea, as he peered at me from behind his black-rimmed glasses. Hinting at the racial issues that had made Ugandan Asians so vulnerable to expulsion, he said, “But we were also arrogant. We thought we were superior, and we were a minority.” I could sense his unresolved pain and disquiet, his careful unearthing of community complicities. Sitting with me in a sensory and figurative zone of “cultural intimacy,”¹ we became friends and colleagues, sharing observations about our research and writing, discussing global and local political issues when we met and over email communications, and attending community events together.

This book is a study of the persistent afterlives of the 1972 Asian expulsion in contemporary and transcontinental Uganda; it is an anthropology

of an expulsion event. Although this particular expulsion—defined here as the process of forcing someone to leave their homeland (not just territory but modern nation)—may be unknown to a general reader, I argue that it is a *global critical event*. This book makes legible the *insecurities of expulsion*, a term that encompasses the interrelation between (1) the consequences and effects of the 1972 Asian expulsion; (2) the circulating global representations, discourses, and imaginaries of the event and the state, individual, and collective memories and narrations of the expulsion and their affective resonances; and (3) the logics, practices, and performances of citizenship that have flourished subsequent to the event. The expulsion is neither a parochial nor an exceptional moment of postcolonial Afro–South Asian racial estrangement and closure. Instead, the event and its aftermaths linger—materially, discursively, ideologically, and affectively—in *transcontinental Uganda*, which I define as the modern, territorial Ugandan nation-state and its intimate connections with trans-Indian Oceanic and Black Atlantic migrations, mobilities, and displacements and territorially based intra-African, South Asian subcontinental, European, and North American geographies inclusive of specific transnational circuits of connection. In fact, the insecurities of expulsion offer us an epistemological opening into a transcontinental study of Afro–South Asian entanglement. This orientation toward theorizing citizenship through racial entanglement is not concerned with an either/or dichotomy of inclusion or exclusion, nor is it concerned with a singular narrative of Ugandan Asian victimhood, Afro–South Asian racial conflict, or a redemptive search for Afro–South Asian racial solidarity. Rather, this book foregrounds the enduring residues of a critical event and the evolving terrains of citizenship practice that are fragile, tense, and ambivalent—even strategic, embodied, subaltern, and performative.

In the pages that follow, I trace old and new assemblages of empire—Indian sub-imperialist ambition and anticolonial solidarities; nationalisms, governance, sovereignty, citizenship; race, labor-capital and class relations, religion, caste, gender, and sexuality—all from the vantage of contemporary urban Uganda that is itself constituted through transcontinental processes. Building on growing scholarly interest in the production of “non-citizens” or “impossible citizens” in both so-called liberal and illiberal contexts,² I demonstrate that successive Ugandan authoritarian and militarized state projects have shifted from practices of Asian/Indian racially nativist expulsion to the interlocking logics and practices of racial expulsion, exclusion, and noncitizen incorporation. These new incorporations are constituted by the unresolved legacies of the 1972 Asian expulsion and by a normalized

politics of racial nonreconciliation. Through ethnographic analysis, I explore the classed, raced, ethno-religious, caste-based, and gendered hierarchies within racially privileged yet noncitizen Ugandan Asian and other South Asian–descendant communities, laying out gradations and combinations of formal, structural, and substantive inclusions and exclusions and parsing the complexity of citizenship practices in the post-expulsion era with respect to Black African aspirations for self-determination and sovereignty. I show how those individuals, racialized as “Asian”—Ugandan Asians and postcolonial South Asian migrants, and all those who are structurally, substantively, or legally noncitizens and unofficial citizens—continue to negotiate the tensions between formal and substantive citizenship and settler/citizen, native/immigrant, insider/outsider, and racial Black African/South Asian identities. These practices are never wholly reduced to or defined by a top-down hierarchy; rather, nation-building and state-building are constantly produced and contested by subjects as they negotiate governance, inclusion, and exclusion.

Despite the attempts of Ugandan nationalists and state actors to reshape the nation through population demography and ideas of indigeneity, autochthony, and racial Blackness (defined here via imputed biological and phenotypical notions of Black identity, accompanied by other criteria such as claims to autochthony and indigeneity to African territory or homelands), people of South Asian heritage (both African Asians, or Ugandan Asians, and new post-expulsion South Asian migrants) and racial South Asianness (defined here via imputed biological and phenotypical notions of South Asian identity and ancestral and heritage claims to the South Asian subcontinent) are an entrenched feature of the Ugandan nation. Ugandan Asian and South Asian migration, labor, capital, and community formation are necessary for, or even constitutive of, Ugandan national identity, state formation, citizenship, and belonging, both within and outside of the nation-state. This has been the case from its very inception. Ugandan national identity and normative citizenship are constituted by those who embody its limits: the expelled and exiled; the returned; migrants, dependents, transients, and sojourners; transnationals and expatriates. In other words, Afro–South Asian connections, communities, identities, and subjectivities are at the heart of what we call Africa or the South Asian/Indian diaspora in Africa—they also persist in Uganda’s racially diverse global diasporas.

Departing from abstract analysis that examines the limits of settler inclusion in the postcolony or the study of majoritarian-minoritarian relations in the nation, this book demonstrates that there are multiple, transnational

scales of governance and sovereignty that produce people of Ugandan Asian and South Asian heritage as simultaneous racial noncitizens and economic citizens. More specifically, I track how imperial citizens and Subject Races—turned—postcolonial—citizens³ straddle ambivalent positions of global racial privilege and postcolonial racial exclusion vis-à-vis Black African global and national racial exclusion. Working with and past the dominant conceptual apparatus of liberal-nationalist, multiracial, and secular citizenship, contestations between and among Black African and South Asian racialized sovereignties become paramount. Some might argue that the insecurities of expulsion are relevant only to the Ugandan Asians who were directly expelled; but they are also relevant to Ugandan Black African-identifying communities. And they are relevant to theorizing the production of racial difference and racial Blackness and racial South Asianness; to the production of racially nativist nationalism; and to the connections between Black African, African Asian, and South Asian diasporic communities in trans-continental scope.

Studying the insecurities of expulsion and the often-fraught nature of Afro-Asian encounters enables new approaches to studying citizenship in Africa in a shifting geopolitical context. While anthropologists of citizenship in liberal nation-states study the exclusion, deportations, and expulsions of minoritized racial groups with less power than normative citizens in host societies, this book focuses on postcolonial Uganda and the complicated and uneven inheritances of imperial and colonial violence on racialized and colonized communities, the possibilities and limitations of democratization and decolonization, and histories and presents of authoritarianisms, illiberalisms, neoliberalisms. It looks at expulsions, repatriations, and ongoing migrations and mobilities, including new South-South migrations, and builds on existing conversations in political anthropology and debates on citizenship in anthropology in particular. Centering Weberian notions of disenchantment with liberal and legal-juridical citizenship,⁴ I write amid the perceived crisis of liberal democracy in Western nation-states and other signal events of geopolitical shift.⁵ Anthropologist Deborah Thomas has argued that we are living through and witnessing the death of “the West” (naming our contemporary moment as an “epochal shift” rather than “crisis”); that “we have reached the limits of liberal forms of sovereignty that were themselves rooted in plantation-based slavery and imperialism.”⁶ She uses the phrase “conceptual disenchantment” to underscore the limitations of the liberal vocabulary that we have inherited and that continue to be universalized to capture complex historical, political, and cultural formations.

Transcontinental Uganda allows us to study existing citizenship practices that may be inflected by the material histories, ideologies, and practices of European imperialism, liberalism, and decolonization; but it showcases other important political practices, too, such as the interactive elements of what I am bracketing as *liberal*, *illiberal*, and *nonliberal* modes of governance, sovereignty, and citizenship. Most anthropological studies that contend with the limitations of liberal, legal-juridical citizenship and its abstract utility still tend to be centered within the universalized Eurocentrism of Europe and North America (previously referred to by postcolonial scholars as “the West” and by left-identifying scholars as the wealthy, developed nations of “the Global North”),⁷ locations where the imputed and assumed civilizational and racial divisions between liberal and illiberal nations are widely accepted and from which the African continent and its complex diasporas continue to be excluded. While this book builds on anthropological studies that have focused on the (formal, legal-juridical) exclusion of minoritized subjects, or on the production of noncitizens through “technologies of exclusionary incorporation” in liberal-democratic nation-states,⁸ it centers debates in the anthropology of citizenship in Africa and the postcolonial world, or the Global South, with attention to postcolonial Uganda specifically.

Here, disenchantments with liberal and legal-juridical citizenship have been apparent since at least the 1960s, and they continue to circulate within urban and global geographies, imaginaries, and affective economies. The multiplicity and complexity of postliberal democratic practices and performances of citizenship require new conceptual vocabularies that can speak to a normalized politics of nonreconciliation and the ambivalences that continue to characterize Afro–South Asian encounters as we enter a transformative era of global geopolitics and the escalation of militarism, authoritarianism, rightist populisms, and even neofascist movements globally. In other words, we must study how individuals negotiate citizenship and belonging in what are usually defined through a Eurocentric lens as exceptionalized states and geographies of illiberalism and authoritarianism but that are fast becoming a global condition.⁹

Anthropology, unlike other disciplines, is limited in offering us sufficient ways to think and write relationally across colonized and minoritized groups that have been situated unequally across European imperial and colonial experiments. Nor has it offered deeper contributions to the development of global or transnational Afro–South Asian studies. Beyond its contributions to an anthropology of citizenship then, *Insecurities of Expulsion* introduces a transcontinental anthropology of Afro–South

Asian entanglement. This requires new conceptual and methodological tool kits that center relationalities of *violence*, *interdependency*, *intimacies*, and *estrangements*—that which binds racialized Black Africans and South Asians subjects together across shifting projects of empire and sub-imperialist ambition, postcolonial nation-building, geopolitical transformation, solidarity, and cultural connection—with transcontinental Uganda as a critical center of the study.

Encountering the Expulsion in the South Asian American Diaspora

Jamal's narrative of his expulsion, which took place between the months of August and November 1972, was very familiar to me, as I had heard similar versions and recollections of expulsion from fellow community members. The sudden and violent nature of mass expulsion targeting Uganda's entire Asian population required immediate responses by government officials from the United Kingdom, Canada, and India as well as from the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner and influential religious and community leaders. In short, it required the willingness of numerous advocates to convince many nations to absorb large numbers of stateless refugees. To be sure, it was an unparalleled event in postcolonial Africa that rippled across the continent and the world, receiving both media and scholarly attention.¹⁰

As a displaced population, some Ugandan Asians completely moved on from this difficult chapter in their lives, cutting off their connections to the Ugandan nation and Africa completely. Others attempted to return or revive connections to the nation when later governments introduced property repossession processes as a mode of repatriation. Some never returned, nurturing attachments to their homeland and fellow Ugandans from afar, digitally and virtually via social media or through community gatherings and official commemorations of the expulsion among resettled communities in the UK and Canada. And some became global citizens, engaging in a kind of cosmopolitan lifestyle across multiple states, moving across imperial geographies. (For example, I recall unexpectedly meeting an exile during a family wedding party in Jalandhar, the Indian Punjab, during my research. He had first temporarily resettled in Europe as a refugee, then moved to Malaysia, and finally settled in Vancouver.) The large-scale movement of the majority of Ugandan Asians from East Africa to the UK and Canada meant that these communities were formative to nation-based projects of postimperial multiracialism and liberal multiculturalism as well

as to the negotiation of racial and cultural difference in those contexts (see map 2). Many exiled Ugandan Asians embraced new British, Canadian, and other national identities, processing their sudden displacement from what had become an exclusionary and racially nativist African society, focusing instead on integrating into Western societies with white European demographic majorities. Their Ugandan (and African) cultural and political identities were marred by a sense of unwantedness, their unwilling estrangement from Black Ugandans and from African nationhood. In my encounters with exiles from different racialized ethno-religious communities (addressed in more detail in the next chapter) in Canada, the United States, and the UK, many positioned themselves ambivalently as “ex-Ugandan Asians”: as if to designate this unwantedness but also to demarcate that they had once been Ugandan Asians (a persistent claiming of African and Ugandan identity, despite its ongoing disavowal).

I was also familiar with expulsion stories through film and literature. I first watched Mira Nair’s *Mississippi Masala* in an undergraduate South Asian diaspora studies class in college; and I later screened *The Last King of Scotland* (starring Forest Whitaker as Idi Amin, and based on Giles Foden’s novel), which led to my explorations of other, lesser-known films and documentaries about this period of Ugandan history, including representations of Idi Amin.¹¹ These films helped to solidify the 1972 Asian expulsion in a global, Western imaginary, conveying representations of East Africa, Uganda, Idi Amin, and Ugandan Asians that made the event accessible to many viewers. They have been joined by numerous other narrative accounts by Ugandan Asians, both autobiographical and fictional, about their own expulsion experiences.¹² Taken together, films, novels, memoirs, and other cultural productions constitute a powerful archive of Ugandan Asian identity and the experiences of expulsion, exile, and resettlement. Each contribution is worthy of analysis on its own terms, and each is central to key debates within postcolonial and other dominant intellectual strands in South Asian diaspora studies in Western contexts that explore themes of exile, displacement, trauma, memory, identity, and cultural hybridity. These works present the 1972 Asian expulsion as one of the most important moments of African–South Asian racial estrangement and of the broader East African Asian out-migration from postcolonial Africa; and they continue to offer both conventional and critical analyses of the event, its historical context, and its diasporic aftermaths, discussed further below.¹³ Here, expulsion is typically posited as a rupture or crisis that exemplifies South Asian racial victimhood and estrangement from Black Africans, followed by a negotiation



1.2 & 1.3 Representations of the 1972 Asian expulsion in Hollywood: Movie posters for Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991) and Kevin Macdonald's *The Last King of Scotland* (2006).

of an African Asian identity in exile that is eventually deracinated and absorbed into South Asianness writ large. And often, the very eventfulness of the event, its spectacular nature, and its mass-media representations exceed its context, the “facts” of the event itself.

In more recent years, research on the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees and their descendants in the UK, Canada, the United States, and other countries has increased in number; and much of it is being carried out by exiles and their descendants.¹⁴ This research has helped to establish academic and other community archives of Ugandan Asian exile experiences, including oral history and museum projects, a significant feat as members of the expelled generation are now in their retirement years.¹⁵ They reveal that throughout the 1970s and the ensuing decades, Western governments such as those of the UK (the former imperial power) often extolled Ugandan Asian refugees, or the so-called twice migrants,¹⁶ for their entrepreneurial success, constructing them as ideal integrated and successful immigrants by British officials, by Ugandan Asian community elites, and by conservative politicians and ideologues alike.¹⁷ In the UK, the forced expulsion of Ugandan Asians was actually a sedimented migration,

building on earlier displacements of other East African Asians to the UK, such as the Africanization-era out-migrations of Kenyan Asians. Ugandan Asian migration complicated earlier migrations of former British Indian subjects to the UK in which new postimperial migrants were experimenting with “Afro–South Asianness” through working-class encounters and identifications with Afro-diasporic identity and eventually with antifascist, working-class, and feminist experiments with Black Britishness, a political expression of Black identity.¹⁸ These alternative configurations of Afro–South Asian identities continue to warrant deeper examination, especially as they developed alongside the arrivals of Ugandan Asian exiles.

Together, the rise and fall of scholarship on expulsion, cultural productions of the event, and the sense that the exiled population is now integrated into liberal nation-state contexts lends an air of finality to, even a sense of closure around, the 1972 Asian expulsion, indicating the total “de-Indianization” of Uganda. It produces a teleological course to the migration of Ugandan Asian exiles from Africa to the dominant geographies of settlement in the Global North. *Insecurities of Expulsion* recenters contemporary urban Uganda in this unidirectional story of Ugandan Asian exiles’ minority integration in liberal states of inclusion. The expulsion is far from over; the event remains unresolved, with residual effects and affects that reverberate in transcontinental Uganda. It is a persistent expulsion, an ongoing technology of nativist nationalism and racial exclusion, a source of meaning-making, still central to nation-building and statecraft and even to imperial and sub-imperial formations that encompass the United Kingdom and the Indian nation. The expulsion is also a structural, material, and affective reality that, as we will see, shapes logics of governance and sovereignty and practices of citizenship and belonging; this includes contestations over whether race and nation are mutually exclusive, or if national territories can be plural across Afro–South Asian encounters or across zones of racial and religious encounter, cultural productions, and exchange.

Somewhat surprisingly, and despite the global consequences of the 1972 Ugandan Asian expulsion, few scholars oriented within and across the South Asian and African postcolonial intellectual tradition have seriously reassessed the 1972 Asian expulsion and its aftermaths in the context of contemporary debates. This is true despite the ways in which we might characterize the Asian expulsions and other exoduses of South Asians from decolonizing East Africa as the great “racial partitions” that are at the center of global histories and imaginaries of Afro–South Asian racial conflict and solidarity. Indeed, compared with the decolonization of Kenya and Tanzania

and the transition to postapartheid South Africa, Uganda's expulsion of its Asian population was one of the most extreme policies of postcolonial racial exclusion.¹⁹ Yet the event remains relegated as a minor topic within the study of global South Asian diasporas (as was my own experience as a college student) or understood as an exceptional or provincial event in African studies. Ideas and meaning-making about the expulsion and its Ugandan Asian exiles—like ideas of Africa, Uganda, and the notorious dictator Idi Amin—are constructed as exceptional rather than as located in dynamic historical and global processes; they are also not universalized to engender new contemporary arenas of discussion and debate. However, the 1972 Asian expulsion is a landmark event constitutive of epistemological concerns in South Asian and African/diaspora studies, global Afro–South Asian studies, and Indian Ocean and Black Atlantic studies as well as in themes of citizenship, refugee, and migration history in anthropology.

Expulsion Exceptionalism: Identifying Terrains of Exceptionalism

In this book, I use the term *expulsion exceptionalism* to refer to a global assemblage of normative discourses, imaginaries, and representations of the 1972 Asian expulsion. I contend with existing common-sense knowledge that circulates in Ugandan Asian and other South Asian diasporic communities, mass-media representations, cultural productions, and even scholarly assessments of this period. There are many registers of expulsion exceptionalism, beginning with media representations of the three-month period during which the expulsion took place. Here, the event is rendered as a spectacle. In “Race and Nation in Ugandan Public Discourse,” Edgar Taylor has observed that this is because of numerous factors, including the relocation of a large population of South Asians into European and North American nations that impacted British and Canadian demographics, the simultaneous shift (at that time) of Ugandan president Idi Amin's government away from Western influence, and the global racist and classist perceptions that the expulsion of fairly prosperous Indians (many of whom were British citizens) was more important than the displacement of and violence against Black Africans.²⁰ Ian Sanjay Patel has argued further that the British government made the so-called Ugandan Asian crisis and the refugees' British nationality a global responsibility (addressed further in chapter 1).²¹ Indeed, the ensuing refugee crisis in the UK and Canada, which received

the majority of Uganda's Asians, and the international press's existing preoccupation with Ugandan president Idi Amin shaped the entire episode as a global media event.²²

One of the consequences of expulsion exceptionalism is that it constructs expulsion in reductive and singular ways, preventing a deeper investigation of the why and how of expulsion, and even contributing to a deep erasure of Black African experience of South Asianness. While some individuals, like Vali Jamal, have understood the expulsion as revealing the violence of colonialism and relationships between the imperial metropole and its postcolonial territories (even after the so-called end of colonialism), others have focused exclusively on the racism and illiberalism of Black Ugandan nationalism and Asians' racial victimization by Idi Amin and fellow Black-identifying Ugandans. Major media representations emphasize the dynamics of postcolonial violence but are limited in their ability to offer us a sense of the historical and structural processes that gave way to the rise of Idi Amin, his military dictatorship, and the racial tensions that led to the mass expulsion of Ugandan Asians. Expulsion exceptionalism can inadvertently legitimize ideas of Black Africa and Africans as inherently nativist and exclusionary, of anti-Asian or racial South Asianness as *equivalent* to immigrant foreignness, and of Asians as essentialized victims of racism and racial estrangement.²³

Eurocentrism and the ensuing liberal Western (read: global) imaginaries of racial Blackness, Africa, Uganda, and Idi Amin are central to configurations of expulsion exceptionalism. For instance, the Punjabi diaspora community I am part of in the United States typically views Africa through civilizational, settler, or racializing/racist imaginaries of Blackness that are understood through postcolonial crisis, failure, underdevelopment, and "lack." In this framing, Africa is the exceptionally inferior illiberal Other to an exceptionally superior liberal West. Uganda, in particular, occupies a central position within these circulating epistemologies about the African continent. It is viewed as the premier site of political conflict and war, illiberalism, autocracy, and corruption—as represented by the exceptional brutality of military dictator Idi Amin. However, scholars such as Mark Leopold continue to unravel the distinctions between the myth and reality of Idi Amin, documenting the ways in which Western journalists constructed racist images of him as "Africa's icon of evil" through both personal and political notions of evil. Leopold observes that these notions of evil encompassed ideas of Amin's supposed, but unfounded, practices of cannibalism and sadistic

pleasure, violent hypermasculinity and heterosexuality, illiteracy and buffoonery, and his excesses, thus constructing meanings about Africa, Africans, and Blackness itself.²⁴

Even after the expulsion, some commentators simply assumed that the institutionalization and effective enforcement of liberal citizenship laws in the African postcolony would naturally enshrine substantive and equal rights for new citizen-subjects across racial, class, and other lines of difference. Mobilizing Eurocentric and liberal-democratic paradigms of modernization and development, they argued that individual rights on the basis of citizenship, backed by substantive content, would eventually overtake deeply entrenched racial and tribal (ethnic) conflicts and thus pave the way for norms of individual freedom and liberty and the interpersonal civility and respect common to multicultural and multiracial societies. In their efforts to perpetuate liberal-democratic norms in African contexts, they minimized the effects of empire and colonial violence and the role these played in the making of postcolonial racial, ethnic, and class identities; and they overlooked the agency of African and South Asian subjects in shaping the trajectory of the nation. Instead, their focus was on debating whether President Idi Amin's decree that expelled Asians was a violation of existing international human rights laws and norms, and legal strategies became a central modality of redress for many expelled Ugandan Asians.²⁵

In response, Ugandan and East African intellectuals deployed analyses of political economy, dependency theory, and Marxist theory to underscore that European imperialism and colonial capitalism were central to fomenting racial and class tensions between Indian and African communities.²⁶ Mahmood Mamdani further developed the relationship between imperialist intervention, neocolonialism, and the ensuing emergence of military dictatorship and fascism in postcolonial Uganda, and later, the enduring logics of racist and native rule in producing antagonistic postcolonial political identities and violence.²⁷ Others underscored the minoritized position of mercantile communities in new postcolonial nations and developed their analysis of expulsion according to Marx's study of the inequalities embedded in the modern liberal bourgeois capitalist nation as presented in his "On the Jewish Question." Here, they highlighted the circulation of anti-Semitic and other racial tropes that were applied to Indian merchants in Uganda as part of the nationalist bourgeoisie's visions of purifying the nation of minority groups made "alien" and "internal Others."

Decades after these scholarly interventions were introduced, both expulsion exceptionalism and colonial determinism continue to be



- 1.4 Ugandan Asian refugees deplaning upon arrival at Stansted Airport in the UK, September 18, 1972. This is a dominant visual representation of expulsion that circulates at commemorative functions; it is part of a global visual archive of expulsion exceptionalism. Courtesy of Keystone/Hulton Archive by Getty Images.

the preferred lenses through which to understand this particular historical event: either by rendering opaque imperial and colonial violence, capitalism, and global white supremacy and constructing instead postcolonial Afro–South Asian conflict as primordial and inevitable; or by explaining away Afro–South Asian conflict solely as the byproduct of European colonialism and European racialism. And thus, expulsion becomes transformed into a spectacle of illiberalism imbued with reductive racial analysis. Images of racially victimized Asians leaving the nation via the Uganda Railway, and images of more well-to-do Asians boarding international airline carriers at Entebbe International Airport and deplaning as refugees in Stansted Airport in the United Kingdom, accompany references to the expulsion, (re)producing a collective global and diasporic memory of the event. These images are part of a global visual archive that depicts Asian/Indian eviction from an illiberal Africa due to the whims of an African dictator, leading to the incorporation of victimized, stateless refugees into Western liberal multicultural nation-states. Expulsion continues to be associated with powerful



I.5 & I.6

Ugandan Asians forced to return to India: Uganda Asians arriving by train in Voi; and Asian passengers aboard the vessel *SS Karanja* arriving in Mombasa. Courtesy of the Mohamed Amin Collection, Nairobi.

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1.7 Ugandan Asians departing Uganda at Entebbe Airport. Courtesy of the Mohamed Amin Collection, Nairobi.

racial imagery of Africa, of Idi Amin as the archetypal African autocrat, and of Black Africans in general as a racially threatening body politic incapable of liberal governance, civility, or even civilization. These associations linger, like waves, in our Eurocentric consciousness.

But the illiberal exceptionalism associated with racial Blackness, Africa, Uganda, Idi Amin, and the expulsion is not only rooted in a Western, white imaginary. From the vantage of other locations in the Global South such as South Africa and India—officially designated and self-defined as liberal democracies—Uganda continues to occupy an exceptionally illiberal position. For the larger global South Asian diaspora and many subcontinental South Asians, Uganda is associated with the exceptional figure of Idi Amin and his associated imagery, and especially with his sovereign decree to expel all Asians from the nation. This perpetuates South Asian racist imaginaries of Blackness and Africanness through South Asian source idioms and practices, which also indicates that there are multiple origins of race and civilizational thinking.

Importantly, in pointing out discourses and narratives that mark historical events through racialized binaries of liberalism and illiberalism, I do not wish to minimize Ugandan Asians' legitimate experiences of racial violence

and trauma during their expulsion; rather, I wish to interrogate their lived historical experiences and their interpretations and representations of the event, which are themselves dependent upon historical location, identity, power, and privilege. Moving away from the idea that expelled Ugandan Asians are either singular or a monolithic community, or exceptional racial victims of Idi Amin, I am interested not only in how they negotiated the violence of their expulsion but also in how they continue to understand and construct ideas about expulsion many years on.

Finally, contemporary British and Canadian nationalist celebrations of Ugandan Asian exiles as exceptionally successful refugees and immigrants are also constitutive of the global landscape of expulsion exceptionalism I am mapping here. Formal and legal-juridical notions of citizenship are connected to normative notions of Western liberal democracy, civilization, the rule of law, and the successful integration of legal-juridical citizenship status with substantive rights and entitlements. This is exemplified by the making of exceptional refugees and immigrants who successfully embody citizenship in liberal nations. Commemorative practices and memorializations of the 1972 Asian expulsion are at the heart of reproducing and challenging aspects of expulsion exceptionalism, as they tend to focus on the time between the issuance of Idi Amin's decree to expel Asians and the ninety days following, during which Ugandan Asians were forced to flee. Indeed, commemorative events are usually racially compartmentalized, reproducing Ugandan Asian-centric understandings of the event.²⁸ I am interested in the weightiness of the expulsion as a traumatic event, the limitations of language in accessing the past, and the limitations of its more official representation through discourses of expulsion exceptionalism and official state narratives. What might be unearthed if we begin to work through and past these registers, centering the unresolved nature of the event, its tensions, and ambivalences?

This is important because it is not only Ugandan Asian exiles and their descendants who are working through their unresolved experience of expulsion and the enduring politics and practices of race, empire, and citizenship.²⁹ Ugandans of Black African heritage (also not a singular or monolithic group) continue to debate and discuss South Asian presence in the nation, and their entanglements with racial South Asianness remains persistent and complicated. Many young Black African-identifying Ugandans—both in Uganda and in global African diasporas—are becoming knowledgeable about the expulsion and are thinking through South Asianness. South Asians of Ugandan Asian heritage in the global diaspora are becoming more

interested in their African heritage and in Uganda's place in the world. For many, their inheritance of racial exclusion from Africa and their continued racial discrimination in white majoritarian contexts are entwined with other complicated sentiments, such as discomfort and shame at working through elitism, casteism, anti-Black racism, and anti-Blackness within their South Asian communities. And as I will show, African–South Asian encounters are intensifying, not only in the African and South Asian diasporas in Global North contexts but also in the Global South and contemporary Uganda.

From Exceptional to Global Critical Event: Unraveling Expulsion Histories and Afterlives

Expulsion exceptionalism is both pervasive and illuminating. The excessive nature of the expulsion event is productive of its own occlusions. In “Asians and Africans in Ugandan Urban Life,” Taylor has argued against a teleological narrative of racialization that posits “Africans” and “Asians” at odds with each other and in which “the 1972 Asian expulsion constitutes a totalizing legacy of Ugandan Asian history.”³⁰ Such an understanding, Taylor maintains, obscures other historical contestations over race, class, identity, and citizenship before 1972. It also conceals other moments of anti-Asian violence that help us better map the run-up to the expulsion event as well as the complementary expulsions of the numerically larger communities of Kenyan Luos and Banyarwanda communities from Uganda by the first Ugandan president, Milton Obote; these communities were also constructed as nonindigenous to the nation.³¹ With respect to Obote's civilian government and Amin's military government, the Asian expulsion is actually consistent with long-standing colonial tactics of identifying, persecuting, and eliminating social groups that came to be branded as “foreigners,” “enemies,” “saboteurs,” or “anti-nationals” in the name of creating a new national and moral order. Other scholars have documented a range of “slow” evictions and deportations alongside the more radical expulsions of Black African “ethnic Others” considered nonindigenous during the decolonization eras of numerous African nations.³² More recently, immigration restrictions, deportations, and expulsions have been more closely associated with a transforming global political economy, late neoliberal capitalism, and intensified migration; and there is specifically a growing literature on intra-African violence and migrant xenophobia in South Africa.³³

While expulsion exceptionalism has concealed important precursors to Idi Amin's regime and the events of 1972, it leaves us without a sense of

the *afterlives of 1972* in the Ugandan nation. I argue that the expulsion is an example of what Veena Das has described—in the context of divided societies created in post-partition South Asia—as a “critical event.”³⁴ Das argues that critical events institute “new modalities of historical action” and that “new modes of action [come] into being which redefine traditional categories such as codes of purity and honour, the meaning of martyrdom, and the construction of the heroic life. . . . New forms were acquired by a variety of political actors, such as caste groups, religious communities, women’s groups, and the nation as a whole. . . . They are also located across many terrains and institutions.”³⁵ While Das examines critical events in post-partition and postcolonial India with respect to communal (religious-based) violence and pogroms, her concept is useful for studying the violence constitutive of postcolonial settler–Subject Race–native relationalities in the racially plural societies created by British indirect rule.³⁶ Elaborating upon Das’s theorizations of violence, events, and the everyday allows us to reposition the 1972 Asian expulsion as a *global critical event*.³⁷ In general, anthropologists have argued that we should approach events “not as aberrations of the normal state of affairs but [as] elements of the everyday,” which suggests that “social structure is a dynamic form shaped and remade through events.”³⁸

In this book, the expulsion is less of an “event as a historical construct that constitutes a rupture,” or one that is framed singularly around Ugandan Asian experiences of expulsion and resettlement in the West.³⁹ The expulsion event is critical in the sense that it cannot “be subsumed within existing repertoires of thought and action” and it is constitutive of what I describe as the insecurities of expulsion.⁴⁰ This alternative positioning allows for deeper ethnographic engagement with persistent Afro–South Asian entanglements, including racial intimacies and estrangements. Expulsion as global critical event contends with both the continual reconstitution of racially nativist nationalism via transnational processes—and the colonized native subject’s Manichean desire to rid, or “purify,” the postcolony or nation of the settler-turned-citizen via expulsion—as well as with ongoing resistance to these same impulses.⁴¹ This is a specific inheritance of the decolonization process that not only persists within Black African Ugandan and Ugandan Asian diasporic imaginaries but, like a haunting, lingers in contemporary urban Uganda.

In this book, I counter those who might exceptionalize a Ugandan postcolonial “culture of violence,” including militarism and dictatorship (primarily and incorrectly associated with the Idi Amin regime), ethnic-based politics, and failures to arrive at modern political formations. Instead, I posit

postcolonial Uganda's trajectory within interrelated scales of structural and societal-based violence that derive from European imperialism and colonialism, neo-imperialist and sub-imperialist formations of power, nationalist nation-building, the excesses of political elites, militarism, and racial and ethnic, communal and gendered violence in everyday urban life. Das's conceptualization of "violence in the weave of life"⁴² is useful here in considering the ways in which the familiar rhythms of postcolonial urban life were transformed into new and uneven domains of political and cultural practice and performance in the years that followed the expulsion. She considers the "mutual absorption of the event and the ordinary . . . So I end up thinking of the event as always attached to the ordinary as if there are tentacles that reach out from the everyday and anchor the event to it in some specific ways."⁴³ I approach the expulsion event in similar ways among Ugandan Asians—as silenced, politically regulated, constituted by the experience of trauma, a psycho-socially repressed domain of discourse that constitutes urban life.

Expulsion exceptionalism has both oversimplified and overdetermined the historical event of expulsion and its aftermaths. It fixes essentialized Black African and South Asian identities in opposition to each other in a binary logic, concealing the complexity of Afro-South Asian identities, subjectivities, and relationalities and concealing other persistent, if fragile, connections in post-expulsion years. When scholars stress either the event of expulsion via sovereign decree by the African autocrat (Idi Amin) or a historical-materialist analysis that resulted in Asian expulsion, they fail to see that both options prevent us from thinking about the everyday, productive tensions between historical process (structure) and the event and its circulations; they fail to consider the ways in which events may or may not illuminate structural processes, and how structural processes accrue and erupt in spectacular violence.

In other words, in this book, I examine how subjects understand and articulate the tensions and ambivalences between the two dominant themes constitutive of the expulsion as each claims, practices, and performs citizenship: first, as the failure of liberal nation-statehood and multiracialism; and second, as the failure of decolonization. While I am suspicious of a Western liberal worldview that posits the expulsion as the epitome of "failed citizenship," I am invested in working out how those I interacted with (across their relative positions of imperial and racial privilege, power, or precarity) navigate the aftermath of violence and continue to construct liberal and illiberal binary imaginaries. How do the subjects draw upon or forget colonial

histories to make or disavow claims to citizenship and belonging, and what imaginaries of decolonization continue to persist?

When I began my research, I was struck by the ways in which the exoduses and expulsions of European settler and Subject Race communities of Indians and Arabs who left Africa in the 1960s and 1970s had foreclosed ethnographic research on South Asian presence in contemporary Uganda and on themes of race, citizenship, and belonging in East African nations, despite their neoliberal transformation since at least the 1980s. About 150 or so individuals who came to identify as Ugandan Asians—holding Ugandan, Indian, Pakistani, or other South Asian national citizenship—remained in the nation during the Amin regime; two thousand of the expelled generation and their descendants (usually third-, fourth-, or fifth-generation Ugandan Asians) returned to the nation after two separate state attempts to repatriate Ugandan Asian exiles during President Milton Obote's second government (1980–85) and President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) government (1986–present). In addition, the state was engaged in a project to attract South Asian foreign investors (primarily Indian nationals) to settle in the nation as expatriate-citizens; and a growing population of noncitizen postcolonial migrants (estimated between 25,000 and 30,000) from India, Pakistan, and even Bangladesh and Sri Lanka had settled in the nation. Despite the growing urban presence of South Asians once again, there was a complete absence of an open discussion about the expulsion in national public life (although racial tensions and internal feelings of racial precarity among old and new “Asians” in Uganda were apparent once again). And unlike other (usually European settler) contexts in Africa, Uganda's postcolonial trajectory involved both Asian expulsion and state property expropriation *followed by* repatriation and property repossession for Ugandan Asian exiles—an unparalleled (and understudied) process in Africa.

The normalization of the contradictions between Ugandan Asian racial privilege and racial exclusion in urban Uganda (a vulnerable sense of noncitizenship—structurally, legal-juridically, and for some, substantively) became my entry point for studying what Aihwa Ong, in *Neoliberalism as Exception*, has astutely described as “mutations in citizenship and sovereignty.”⁴⁴ How was it that despite attempts to de-Indianize the nation via expulsion and rid the new nation of a community with accumulated colonial, racial, and class privilege, numerous South Asian-descendant communities were still residing in the nation? How were their experiences of citizenship, belonging, inclusion, and exclusion shaped by the historical

legacy of politics and policies of Africanization and expulsion, including Ugandan debates over Indian assimilation and social integration with Africans in the nation? Or how were their experiences being shaped by novel formations of power, sovereignty, and governance? How were they negotiating both privilege and precarity in the nation?

Open the Field: Remapping Citizenship, Sovereignty, Governance

Exceptionalities accrue. The propensity “to do history by analogy,”⁴⁵ alongside standard political commentaries, has produced Uganda as an epistemological foil to teleological Western liberal-capitalist norms of modernity and Eurocentric notions of development. Working from a descriptive and comparative perspective, the effect is that much knowledge production on Uganda buttresses policy frameworks that are used by international or global governance institutions, further normalizing the interventionist roles of such institutions. Knowledge experts position themselves as custodians of modernity, development, progress, and civilization through their discussions of distorted African political formations and their failure to arrive at supposedly universal metrics.⁴⁶

Drawing on the postcolonial intellectual tradition that has underscored the historical and relational development of nationalism, the state, citizenship, and subjectivity within global and structural systems of power and violence, *Insecurities of Expulsion* unsettles the geographic and racialized epistemological distributions of liberalism and illiberalism (and their respective associations with a predominantly white Euro-American Global North and a predominantly Black African Global South) as mediated by South Asian communities and Asian nations in a hierarchy of nation, civilization, and race.⁴⁷ It is more fruitful to work from a baseline that acknowledges the entwinement of liberal, illiberal, and “nonliberal” modalities of governance in *both* Africa and the Global North. Ugandan state projects are modern phenomena, with state actors participating in their own nationalist and geopolitical projects, shaping citizenship and racial regimes, and negotiating interactive liberal, illiberal, and “nonliberal” domains of governance and sovereignty. (Here, I place the “nonliberal” in quotes to indicate that the term includes ideas and practices of Pan-Africanism and other practices of Black self-determinism; Afro-Asianism; racialized and patriarchal ethnic, religious, and caste formations; moral economies; and non-Western African political cultures—all deeply historical and social practices—that often

become slotted under the signs of illiberalism, culture, tribalism, corruption, neopatrimonialism, clientelism.) Uganda is not exceptionally illiberal, backward, crisis-ridden, or pathological. Contemporary Uganda is a site from which to theorize more universally about what postliberal democratic citizenship formations might look like, even contemplating possible futures of what is understood as the exceptionally civilized West.⁴⁸

By unbundling the category of citizenship from its assumed liberal, legal-juridical, nationalist, European, and heteropatriarchal associations, this book advances anthropological approaches to citizenship and noncitizenship.⁴⁹ Citizenship is neither a matter of legal-juridical status, nor is it delimited by an abstract or prescriptive assessment of citizen or subject status in postcolonial society.⁵⁰ Mahmood Mamdani's powerful analysis of the bifurcated nature of the colonial state and its construction of a domain of civil citizenship (for nonnative Subject Races), positioned in hierarchical relationship to ethnic citizenship (for native or indigenous Africans), showcases the exclusion of most Black Africans from citizenship. Mamdani analyzes the partial reform of the colonial state ("deracialization without detribalization"), and the resulting nativist construction of national identity and the exclusion of white settler and immigrant Subject Race populations, such as South Asians and Arabs, from the postcolony. Mamdani focuses more intensively on the ethnic domain of citizenship and does not offer us an analysis of the *ongoing incorporation* of nonnative or nonindigenous racialized subjects into the nation in relation to the persistence of citizen and subject hierarchies. I build on Mamdani's insights ethnographically by continuing to focus on the racial (civil) domain of citizenship; and I examine the transnational and multiple logics of governance, sovereignty, citizenship, and subjectivity even after the supposed de-Indianization of the nation. Attention to governmentality, to biopolitical and disciplinary power, and to necropolitics allows for a focus on the production of various racialized Asian subjects as both economic citizens and racial noncitizens who participate in citizenship-like effects with respect to specific gradations of Black African inclusion and exclusion from citizenship.⁵¹ Black African, Ugandan Asian (or African Asian), and South Asian heritage communities are constructing projects of inclusion and exclusion, making claims to or even disavowing legal-juridical (formal) citizenship, and ultimately creating the assumed and naturalized binaries between citizen and noncitizen and state and national identity.

Likewise, by unbundling sovereignty from its associations with an ideal state that maps neatly onto the boundaries of a national territory, I follow

those who have argued for the study of the dispersal of power and sovereignty across postcolonial societies and the state through the study of “sovereign bodies.”⁵² This is especially relevant for African states that continue to be shaped by external forces like donor-aid dependency, humanitarian and military intervention, NGO-ization, and neoliberal market encroachments from both Western and other Global South nations. Sovereign actors and entities like state officials who represent the UK, Canada, and the Indian nation-state, Ugandan Asian firms, self-appointed Ugandan Asian/Indian “big men” and other intermediaries, Indian entrepreneurs, community organizations, gender-based NGOs, and women activists all shape projects of governance, citizenship, the state, and national identity. And in order to avoid the so-called Agamben effect that often pervades the study of citizenship and sovereignty in anthropology, this research foregrounds political economy analysis and Indian Oceanic approaches to racial capitalism in its analysis of the shifting nature of empire, sub-imperialism, race, and capital.⁵³

I trace liberal, illiberal, nonliberal, and neoliberal logics of governance, power, sovereignty, and citizenship. Here, different registers of citizenship appear across domains of structural racial exclusion, formal or legal-juridical status, and other substantive dimensions of inclusion and exclusion (or inclusion that according to Neha Vora is “both within and through conditions of legal impossibility”).⁵⁴ As Damani Partridge observes, “An analytic of noncitizenship opens up a space for thinking about how the foreign subject is incorporated into social and political life without being totally excluded.”⁵⁵ I examine this noncitizen racial and economic incorporation of “Asian” subjects—Ugandan Asians and other South Asians—as they negotiate gradations of inclusions and exclusions in postcolonial Ugandan society. Ugandan statecraft is characterized by autocratic and illiberal governance, and although political leaders have consistently positioned themselves as anti-Western imperialists, in practice, they have incorporated elements of liberal, nonliberal, and neoliberal governance as they undertake nation-building and citizenship projects. Taken together, I assess postcolonial racially nativist governance, neoliberal governance, and nonliberal forms of governance as assemblages of power central to the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

A persistent challenge in Uganda studies is the “methodological nationalism” that obscures Western imperial and Indian sub-imperial formations and that participates in the construction of Uganda through a lens of exceptional illiberalism.⁵⁶ This is so, despite the ways that African nations

have to be legible in an international system of liberal nation-states, even as their sovereignty is continually undermined by imperialist and neocolonial interventions. This does not mean that nation-based illiberal governance should not be critiqued; it does, however, require transnational and geopolitical analysis. Those who analyze Western imperialism as an ongoing structure of power in contemporary Uganda often utilize reductive frames to understand Uganda's relationship to empire. For instance, with respect to US empire specifically, they assume that the Ugandan state is a client state or puppet regime of the United States, or simply a derivative regional or proxy ally in the United States' more recent Global War on Terror. At worst, they become apologists for the excesses of Ugandan state violence and militarism and romanticize Uganda's new strategic relationships with China and, to a lesser extent, with the Indian nation. Others take the position of critiquing only Ugandan postcolonial state violence, thus invisibilizing or implicitly defending Western influence in Africa and instead adopting simplistic discourses that analyze the influence of BRICS nations like China and India in Uganda through the lens of neocolonialism. They point to the role of new Indian and Chinese elites in helping to consolidate illiberal, authoritarian regimes in Africa under the reductive sign of "corruption," with little historical mapping or complexity that anchor these projects.⁵⁷

Insecurities of Expulsion emphasizes the agency of Ugandan postcolonial elites and state officials alongside the changing nature of Western imperialism and the Global South's geopolitical shifts, including Indian sub-imperialist and nationalist ambitions, Afro-Asianism, and South-South cooperation. An ethnographic approach to governance, sovereignty, and citizenship highlights the agency of postcolonial elites, transnational expatriates and migrants, and other marginalized communities as they both participate in and contest imperialist and settler-colonial projects; the approach specifically highlights how subjects claim, disavow, or remake citizenship, inclusion, and belonging through domains of racial noncitizenship and economic inclusion in urban Uganda. This is especially crucial for studying the state that, vis-à-vis militarization, has long participated in its own interventions, counterinsurgencies, and political repression domestically and in East and Central Africa.⁵⁸ And as much as I am attentive to the ways in which Afro-South Asian connections have been mediated by historical processes of Western imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy, I track the contradictions embedded in emergent South-South connections and the resurgence of ideas and practices of Afro-South Asianism as South Asians continue to migrate to East Africa and to Uganda, specifically.

Feminist Anthropological Approaches to Transcontinental and Racial Uganda

This book is grounded in feminist anthropology regarding ethnography, theory, and methodology. Drawing on classical studies of nation, race, and citizenship in postcolonial East Africa and the anthropology of transnationalism and transnational feminist theory, *Insecurities of Expulsion* posits the territorial Ugandan nation as a *transcontinental formation* that is produced and constituted by circuits of Ugandan Asian (or African Asian) and South Asian capital, labor, migration, and mobility. Here, I am working past vague notions of “the global.” The transcontinental lens encompasses a methodological parsing of the analytics of diaspora, imperial, national, transnational, and geopolitical scales of analysis while being attentive to the specificity of Uganda’s transnational connections to specific nation-states that harness both imperial and sub-imperial ambitions. While the analytic of transnationalism attends to nation-to-nation connections and can at times inadvertently recenter “the West” or even “US empire,” the transcontinental emphasizes the Ugandan nation’s relationships to Western imperialist geographies and to *both* Indian Oceanic and Black Atlantic territorial geographies and historical processes, showcasing entanglements between empire, sub-empire, postcolony, nation, and diaspora (see map 1).⁵⁹ In doing so, I study how territorial-based state formation and citizenship are constructed and contested transcontinentally and both internal and external to the contemporary Ugandan nation.

Feminist anthropology that is informed by intersectional, postcolonial, and transnational feminist theories allows me to visibilize and foreground the experiences of Asian women and their relationalities to Black African men and women, the construction of racialized masculinities and femininities, and the changing structures and practices of heteropatriarchies central to imperial and colonial violence, anticolonialism, decolonization, and postcolonial statecraft and nation-building. Moreover, feminist theory advances new directions in classical studies of nation, race, and class as well as race and racialization in contemporary Uganda.

Race, like citizenship, is entwined with the rise of modernity, secularism, and racialized formations of ethnicity, religion, and caste. Ideas of Africa, India, Blackness, Africanness, Indianness, and South Asianness are contingent across time and space. Uganda and the East African region are shaped by distinctive landscapes of racialism and racialization practices, what we may describe, borrowing from David Goldberg, as a site of “racial

regionalization.”⁶⁰ Africa as an idea and as a continent is also racialized as Other to Western liberal modernity, which itself produces a hierarchy of nation-states, races, cultures, and civilizations.⁶¹ Jemima Pierre’s interventions on race, Africa, and the African diaspora parochialize South Africa’s exclusive purchase on racial analysis, suggesting that non-European-settler colonized nations like contemporary Ghana and Uganda are also shaped by global white supremacy and global racial hierarchies, thus framing the African continent within discussions of “global Blackness” to include, rather than exclude, global racial regimes and their relationship to the specificity of regional racial formations.⁶²

Africanists who deploy liberal “race-avoidant” practices based on the socially constructed nature of race tend to invisibilize the dynamics of whiteness and white supremacy as central to colonial and postcolonial rule, especially in non-European-settler contexts. In Uganda studies, paradigms of African ethnicity and ethnic conflict became dominant in the aftermath of the postindependence out-migrations of the British European administrative class and Ugandan Asians. In chapter 1, I discuss how the production of a (heteropatriarchal and militarized) racially nativist nationalism, the expulsion of Ugandan Asians in 1972, and the dominant ethnicity paradigm in academia, coupled with “race relations” analyses,⁶³ have marginalized the study of racial formation and racialization with respect to the structuring of African ethnic identity in postcolonial Uganda.

Building on more recent scholarship on East Africa, South Asia, and the Indian Ocean world that examines histories of racial thought and practice, this book is invested in the interactive elements of global and regional racial formations of Blackness and South Asianness. So, in addition to studying the production of anti-Asian sentiment and exclusion through Black African sources of Orientalism and racial nativism, I argue that both Western or Eurocentric and South Asian sources of racialism are implicated in anti-Black racisms and the denigration of African people, particularly through the intimacies of racial and caste consciousness.⁶⁴ Here, this research grapples with the ways in which Africa as an idea and as a continent is also rendered Other to ideas of Indian liberal-democratic national and civilizational modernity, which is itself under contestation, given the ascendancy of illiberalism and the Hindu right in contemporary India as well as other supremacist projects elsewhere in South Asia. To be sure, both Black African and South Asian-descendant people are racialized through global white

supremacy and imperial or colonial race-making. Yet South Asian sources of civilizational, racial, and caste consciousness are central to understanding “race” in the Indian Ocean world and wherever South Asians migrate. So, while Indians, Arabs, and Africans are all subject to racial regimes that emanate from Western conceptions of race hierarchy and difference, I am working past any theorization of a single origin of race or what has become an either/or formulation of Western-centric racial analysis versus South Asian-centric religious and caste analysis. Racialisms have multiple sources, and the race, religion, and caste nexus, in addition to gender and sexuality and class formation and labor-capital relations, is critical to unpacking these dynamics. Finally, race is relational and mutually constitutive. African identities and ideas of racial Blackness are constituted by and through ideas of racial South Asianness, and vice versa. Both are mediated by ideas of racial whiteness and supremacy. Racial Uganda is produced within a transcontinental system of racial meanings and hierarchies in which Africa itself is racialized as a location of Blackness and continues to be configured as a racialized space by South Asians as they encounter racial Blackness and Africans in Africa.

Feminist analysis reveals that earlier studies of the Indian (or Ugandan Asian) diaspora in Uganda struggled with theorizing *both* class and racial formation; while other recent engagements with race in Uganda or East Africa are typically positioned in a white-Black binary framework, with no attention paid to Asians, Arabs, or other multiracial and religious communities. Historical-materialist histories of Indians in East Africa highlight the “masculinized migrant narratives”⁶⁵ of men or “Indians” who are unmarked and gendered male, with little attention to the dynamics of trans-Indian Oceanic patriarchal marriage and kinship; the racialized and gendered production of religious, sectarian, and caste-based communities; or the reproductive and productive labor of Indian and African women. Gendered, communal, sectarian, and caste-based identities are themselves nested within larger racial structures and labor-capital relationships, implicating both Black Africans and South Asians/Indians. Race is gendered and sexualized, and gender and sexuality are fundamentally raced.⁶⁶ A feminist undertaking of changing systems of race, capitalism, and patriarchy is foundational to the domains of citizenship and noncitizenship that I study. And while each of these domains is deserving of in-depth treatment, *Insecurities of Expulsion* offers more robust interventions in the discussion, advancing standard race and class analysis in East Africa.

From Diaspora to Theorizing Afro–South Asian Entanglement

This book is in conversation with existing studies of the global South Asian and East African Asian diasporas—works that have largely explored postcolonial themes of nation-based racial and cultural alienation and belonging, identity, migration, displacement, and nostalgia as South Asians migrated to the Global North.⁶⁷ It joins scholarly critiques of South Asian diaspora studies that argue that these studies have typically focused on majoritarian communities in Western liberal states, with less attention paid to the ways in which diaspora communities continue to be implicated in the material and discursive construction of the homeland.⁶⁸ New studies have expanded focus to the historical and more recent diasporic migrations of South Asians in the Caribbean, Middle East, and Africa, emphasizing themes of Arab-Asian and Afro-Asian connectivity, empire, and trans-Indian Ocean and Black Atlantic mobilities.⁶⁹

The complexity of colonial and postcolonial African Asian and South Asian migrations, settlements, displacements, return migrations, and new migrations requires attending to British imperial diasporas and their descendants (whom I refer to as Ugandan Asian exiles, *stayees*, and returnees; they are also part of a larger “African Asian” global community). The overseas British Indian community (that is, the overseas Indian diaspora) that eventually came to see themselves as Ugandan Asians was deeply affected by the 1947 division of British India and the further division of Punjab into an officially Islamic (majority Muslim) Pakistan and secular (majority Hindu with Sikh, Muslim, Christian, and other minority religions) India; this division included the partition of East Bengal and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, and the creation of the semi-autonomous, contested, and now Indian-occupied Kashmir. From the vantage of the African continent, the notion of “India” is not static and discursively shades into prepartition and premodern notions of “Hindustan” and “the subcontinent” as well as into contemporary nation-states. This is especially the case as I trace post-1990s South Asian migrations to Uganda (I variously describe these new migrants as investors and entrepreneurs, newcomers, and sojourners) from the postcolonial Indian nation, with scope for more attention to be paid to Pakistan and other South Asian nations. I examine how the Indian nation has come to be increasingly defined by Hindu majoritarian and Hindu nationalist tendencies, exclusionary to the ethno-religious plurality of the earlier East African Asian migrations, and more critical to the construction of the new post-expulsion South Asian communities in East Africa.

The multiple diaspora communities that move into and out of the Ugandan territory are characterized by different political, ethnic, and religious affiliations—with distinctive histories, loyalties, and identifications—all in flux and all of which changed during my fieldwork.

Many East African Asian heritage scholars studying their own displacements from Africa have critiqued any monolithic ideas of a South Asian diaspora, or even the idea that diasporic communities maintain attachments to a singular homeland in South Asia. Parminder Bhachu studies the “twice-migrant” East African Punjabi Sikh settlers in Britain; Avtar Brah, of East African Punjabi heritage, highlights “cartographies of diaspora” and the persistence of a “homing desire”; May Joseph analyzes the “nomadic identities” and the “performance of citizenship” among Tanzanian Asians; and most recently, Maya Parmar writes of “the double diaspora” in her study of the East African–Gujarati community in the UK.⁷⁰ This book follows Stuart Hall in his arguments that the location and “emplacement” of diaspora communities matters.⁷¹ Returnee Ugandan Asians and newcomer South Asian migrants are a minority presence and are subject to structural and even interpersonal racial discrimination, or they have experienced racial discrimination in the West. But they also retain racial and (often) class privileges, and they can participate in settler ambitions, strong racial and civilizational consciousness, and racially prejudiced attitudes toward indigenous Black Africans. Interlaced with state and populist anxieties over the past and present of South Asian/Indian and foreigner presence in the nation, their citizenship practices, developed through multiple diasporic mobilities and displacements, inform the insecurities of expulsion I explore in this book. I work past the traditional anthropological study of diaspora communities as monolithic, with singular attachments to homelands and without the possibility of return; rather, I study their reception by their host nation and communities, the possibilities and limits of their repatriation to Uganda, their tensions with new migrants, and the construction of public and private narratives of racial victimization, privilege, belonging, and exclusion.

In this transcontinental analysis, the notion of diaspora is not only a scholarly analytical concept but also increasingly central to Ugandan, Indian, and other state-based ambitions. In a shifting geopolitical and political-economic context in which diaspora, South-South cooperation, and Afro-Asianism are being increasingly mobilized in international diplomacy and neoliberal economic policy, a focus on Afro–South Asian entanglement allows us to attend to wide-ranging configurations of connection: from the remaking of racial capitalisms and resurging racial resentments to notions

of hospitality-guest relations, neighborliness, strangerhood, and intimacy to strategic cooperation and diplomacy. In general, Afro-Asianism has become a mode of describing cross-racial, national, and continental connections, including particular historical moments and shared experiences of oppression, politics, and aesthetics. Christopher Lee, in *Making a World after Empire*, concurs that “Afro-Asianism” is “an ill-defined term that has signaled both a cold war ideology of diplomatic solidarity and a more general phenomenon of intercontinental exchange and interracial connection.”⁷² My book engages with ideas of Afro-Asianism (and Afro-South Asianism more specifically) through ethnographic analysis of the state, citizenship, sovereignty, and governance. The geopolitical and neoliberal capitalist emergence of BRICS nations and South-South cooperation is recasting earlier Afro-Asian histories to new ends. It is not a linear, temporal progression from earlier Afro-Asian visions but a remaking of earlier historical moments and ideas, grafted into new practices. I trace how ideas of Afro-Asianism are becoming both nonliberal and neoliberal resources for practices of sovereignty, governance, and citizenship in the aftermath of the expulsion. As Afro-Asianism is increasingly authorized by state actors, these practices do not necessarily lead to less social distance between Black Africans and South Asians (both Uganda Asians and new South Asian migrants); instead they reveal both racial tensions and internal racial community oppressions—indeed, the unresolved nature of the expulsion event.

Conventional approaches to methodological nationalisms, area studies, and even anthropological research methodologies are limited in their ability to attend fully to entanglement. We cannot think of Africa as compartmentalized from South Asia, nor of South Asia (and its diverse diasporas) as isolated from Africa and its diasporas. Following Pan-Africanist Ugandan scholar Ali Al’amin Mazrui, who describes Africa’s “triple heritage,” and Paul Zeleza, who argues for “rewriting the African diaspora,” this book asserts a notion of Africa that makes space for “Afro-South Asia” as territory, geography, and imaginary.⁷³ It is in dialogue with research that makes legible the transcontinental intimacies forged by European imperialist endeavors; and it expands upon research on what is being described as “Afro-Asian worlds” and “Afrasian imaginaries” among postcolonial scholars and others engaged with the possibilities of premodern Indian Ocean commercial cosmopolitanisms and pluralistic cross-cultural and religious encounters that were fostered in this region prior to the onset of European imperialism, colonial capitalism, and Western onto-epistemological conceptions of the human (including the ideas and practices of slavery, indenture, race).⁷⁴ However,

it builds on more recent postcolonial insights on “brown over Black” and the uneasy nature of African-Indian entanglements, raising questions about the possibilities and limitations of the work of the anticolonial, postcolonial, and decolonial in research and scholarship.⁷⁵

Methodological Notes and Plan of the Book

Insecurities of Expulsion is based on two years of ethnographic field research (2008–10), supplemented with follow-up research conducted while working on a national archive project (2011–12), while researching and teaching at Makerere University (2013–15), and during follow-up fieldwork in summer 2017. It includes additional online and virtual research tracking relevant developments up to 2022, focusing on the fifty-year commemoration of the Ugandan Asian expulsion. Most of my ethnographic research was carried out in central Uganda (Kampala and Jinja; Buganda and Busoga regions), with additional trips to small towns in other regions of the country to carry out interviews (see maps 3 and 4). I conducted participation-observation and made use of informal conversations, attended community events, and spent time at government institutions. The last chapter builds on an earlier phase of research carried out in 2003–4. I consulted print media in major national newspapers (since the expulsion) and analyzed archival documents. I also examined Ugandan Asian expulsion survivors’ testimonies and cultural productions that circulate in the diaspora; I followed online social media engagement and commemoration events as they were planned by community leaders over email, social media (and after the COVID-19 pandemic, virtually); and I helped to organize community events in Kampala, especially in 2013–15. While this book foregrounds ethnography in contemporary urban Uganda, mapping the transcontinental nature of the insecurities of expulsion required following the partial and situated knowledge productions and practices emerging in the UK, Canada, and India—the contexts most significant to this study.

A significant challenge in my study was the high degree of political violence and political repression encountered in Kampala. The fallout of the Amin and Obote years, Asian expulsion, and civil war has resulted in enduring antagonisms and tensions within communities and in broader society, sensitivities that I, naively, did not always understand. Extended family connections were necessary for introductions and to build long-term relationships with affected families over many years. Given the economies of mistrust and suspicion that circulated in urban Uganda, my positionality and

social location mattered a great deal, but often in unexpected ways. Although I was not quite a native anthropologist with Ugandan Asian heritage, my cultural familiarity with the Ugandan Asian community lent itself to varying degrees of insiderness and outsiderhood and to accessing certain kinds of information; this varied by context, of course, due to my ethnicity, religion, age, gender. Moreover, among Ugandan Asians who had experienced the expulsion, what people talked about with me in private was different from their more self-conscious positioning in urban life. The management of trauma, of self and community representations, and of racial stereotypes were all micropractices that shaped the social fabric and everyday life. This study is not empirically exhaustive and does not intend to be. Instead, it opens up interpretive and subjective terrains of knowledge—with the realization that the act of writing is constituted by the limits of its ability to render legible violence and trauma or to engage with silences that surround critical events like expulsion and its aftermaths.

In contrast to persistent state discourses and even scholarship on the Asian presence in East Africa, there never was, nor is there now, any essential community to study. Rather, my subject of study is the continually unfolding insecurities of expulsion as viewed through critical themes of interest. Methodologically, I used the unfolding experiences of (racially defined) Ugandan Asian or African Asian and South Asian subjects as starting points from which to theorize entanglement and gain insight into the perspectives and agency of Black-identifying Ugandans, presenting empirical context in each chapter in relation to the discursive and representational constructions of the “Asian” or the “Indian” and the “Black African.” Due to the specter of another possible expulsion and feelings of racial precarity among returnees and others, and in light of the fact that community networks are small, I maintain the anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy of those mentioned in this study. In some cases, I have used strategies such as composite figures and vignettes to convey meanings and ideas. In the case of public figures who gave me permission to use their real names, I have used them only after weighing the risks of doing so in an evolving political context.

Despite my efforts to share this research with and integrate perspectives of Ugandan (Black-identifying) intellectuals and researchers, government workers, journalists, artists, writers, and political activists, the very act of doing so raises methodological questions about anthropology and ethnography and how one develops a project that speaks to the relational but that might also peripheralize some voices and center others, and how one might

imagine collaborative Black and South Asian ethnographic methodologies in places like urban Uganda and its geographies of connection. If I was worried about internalizing nationalist and nativist norms and anti-Asian sentiments, I was also concerned that my racial and cultural access to Ugandan Asian and other South Asian communities would lead me to reproduce the exceptionalisms I sought to undermine and to inadvertently highlight sympathetic representations of Ugandan Asians as singularly victimized subjects. Through the centering of Black African and other marginalized perspectives and by having others read and discuss my work with me, I hope that threads of scholarly accountability are woven into the text. The denigration of Blackness and African lifeworlds, often framed indirectly through discourses of cultural difference and connected to civilizational and religious ideology, casteism, and colorism, was emotionally difficult to confront. Apprehending and discussing racial practice with sensitivity were persistent ethical quandaries, especially during moments of heightened political violence, such as during elections, when anti-Asian discourses could quickly transform into racial violence. At the same time, I attempted to write without losing sight of racial, nativist, xenophobic, gendered, casteist, and other chauvinisms. Those who shared their lives with me also made strategic choices about what they presented. The ethnographic dynamics of what was “off stage / on display,” both deeply intimate and very public, simultaneously secret and overt, was central to the insecurities of expulsion and constitutive of dynamic relationships and conversations unfolding during research.⁷⁶

Asian, Indian, South Asian, Black, and African are discursive categories of colonial racial rule and anthropological knowledge-making that are still in common use in everyday life. But they must be denaturalized—even decolonized—in analytic and scholarly practice. I consider all racial categories to be mobile signifiers, and their meanings are shaped and reshaped dialogically and according to context. *Asian* and *Indian* are often used interchangeably in East African scholarship and in common parlance; but in this book I demarcate shifts in racialization and identification practices, attending to racialized ethnicity and religion. I refer to the older, British imperial diaspora of East African Asians as Ugandan Asians and as African Asians, especially as they distinguish themselves from post-expulsion migrants from South Asia. Newcomers are referred to as postcolonial South Asian migrants or more specifically, as Indian capitalists and entrepreneurs, as sojourners and migrants, or as immigrants and expatriates. Ugandan host communities are referred to as indigenous or

Black-identifying Africans or Ugandans. I use the figure of the “Asian” or the “Indian,” the “Asian man/woman,” the “African” in quotes to refer to the discursive register of race-making—recall that discursive and legal categories of native and nonnative shape racial distinctions in everyday life. I offer attention to racialized ethnicity and religion and to sect and caste identities as well, since *African* and *Asian* or *Indian* are incomplete in their ability to account for numerous communities that each have their own complex histories, traditions, and vernaculars (as addressed in chapter 1).⁷⁷ I am aware of a Gujarati and (Ba)ganda-centrism that might come to inadvertently stand in for “Asian” and “African,” respectively, and thus unpack the multiplicities (and majority-minorities) that might be concealed by racial signifiers.

In positing the categories I use, I am aware that they still reassert the fixity of racial, ethnic, and cultural identities. Unlike the presumed essential and biological nature of race or the racial, ethnic, and caste purity of bloodlines, no one lives in isolated silos where cross-cultural borrowing and identity formations are not in flux, or where Afro–South Asian identities, subjectivities, and communities are not emergent, even if and when difference and hierarchy are regulated and reinforced. People with multiracial identities from mixed-racial and ethnic heritage communities also appear in this book. There is a dynamism to identity and subjectivity—the lived substance and fluidity of what becomes fixed racial identity—even as I write about nationalist, state, and community projects of racial, ethnic, communal, caste purity. I trace evolving categories of self-identification and Othering in order to make this complexity tangible, mapping categories of practice in contrast to my own categories of analysis. Finally, I use the category of Afro-Asian (and Afro–South Asian more specifically) because I am interested in how actors mobilize this category for governance (and its capacity to mask cross-racial inequality and internal hierarchies within racial communities) as well as its liberatory power to denaturalize imperial or colonial racial power and Eurocentric epistemologies and to forge solidarities across racialized groups. I attend to the circulation of Afro–South Asianness in grounded contexts and to the contingency of all categories as they emerge, strengthen, fade, and are remade anew.

The arguments evolve over six chapters that unravel the fallout of the expulsion and the continuity of Ugandan Asian and South Asian presence in the nation via a narrative of Ugandan statecraft and nation-building: the Idi Amin military government (roughly 1972–79); Milton Obote’s second government (1980–85); and the post-1986 Yoweri Museveni-led NRM government. The exiled global Ugandan Asian diaspora community is not

absented here but central to post-Liberation War statecraft and nation-building. Working from the ethnographic present then, part I of the book, “Imperial Entanglements,” contends with expulsion as an epistemic and scholarly problem. Extending the discussion from this introduction, chapter 1 offers an analysis of the historical processes that shaped the rise of Idi Amin and the key anti-Asian themes that led to the 1972 Asian expulsion order, my interventions into existing scholarly debates on “Asians” or Indians in Uganda, and the scholarly distortions surrounding 1972 in knowledge production. Part II, “Entanglements of Expulsion,” explores the shifting nature of imperialism and neocolonialism and postcolonial nation-building through the political and economic transformations of the post-Amin period. Chapter 2 examines the narratives of those who were “exceptions to the expulsion” and who lived as racial denizens in Amin’s Uganda after the displacement of the majority Ugandan Asian population. In chapter 3, I examine the return of Ugandan Asians and (British-origin) Ugandan Asian capital via property repossession, all in the midst of structural adjustment, liberalization, and experiments with “No-Party Democracy,” which marked a new era of racial noncitizenship and economic inclusion for those constructed as “Asian” and a normalized politics of racial nonreconciliation.

Part III, “South-South Entanglements,” takes on recent geopolitical shifts of empire and sub-imperialism through a retheorization of Indian sub-imperialist and nationalist ambition, South-South cooperation, Afro-Asianism, and related concepts in contemporary Uganda. It also takes on three critical themes and points of racial tension that were central to the events of 1972, namely, economic exploitation, social integration, and interracial intimacies. Chapter 4 examines how Ugandan postcolonial elites at a state agency work to attract foreign direct investment from Indian capitalist entrepreneurs, all while remaking histories of Asian expulsion and facilitating “neoliberal Afro-Asianism” and noncitizen racial incorporation. Chapter 5 explores new South Asian migration and community-building practices and obstacles to social integration, state-community governance and citizenship practices, and community-based tribal citizenship claims by examining contestations between Ugandan Asians and new South Asian residents surrounding the moral and substantive content of citizenship in the aftermath of 1972. Chapter 6 unravels the heteropatriarchal nature of state- and community-building projects as the nationalist discourse surrounding Asian womanhood comes under public scrutiny for the first time since the expulsion, eliciting novel, but also tense and ambivalent, practices of cross-racial feminist organizing between Ugandan (Black

African), Ugandan Asian, and South Asian women. Finally, the concluding chapter and postscript shift back to transcontinental Uganda and its relationships with empire and sub-imperialism, postcolonial nation-building, geopolitics, and diaspora as I deepen my discussion of an *anthropology of transcontinental Afro–South Asian entanglement*. I reflect on the knowledge politics of the 1972 Asian expulsion and the transcontinental nature of contemporary social movements surrounding race and caste liberation and university-based student movements in the midst of intensifying South–South connection, all of which require rethinking empire, nation, race, caste, area, and discipline as separate domains of analysis. More immediately, I assess the possibilities and limitations of post-expulsion racial reconciliation, emphasizing that the conceptual and theoretical tool kit developed in this book is necessary for any substantive project of decolonizing citizenship and the liberation of Black and co-colonized people.

If Ugandan postcolonial experiments with liberal nation-building, inter-racialism, and social integration have proven fallible, then we might focus on an analytic of “arrested decolonization.”⁷⁸ In my efforts to de-exceptionalize and deparochialize this difficult history and context, I argue that transcontinental Uganda can tell us much about the problems of democracy and decolonization, of uneasy paths to reconciliation, of interracial pluralisms, and of the need for more robust engagements with Black and Afro–South Asian study. But we must first begin by dwelling in the uncomfortable and unromantic labor of how people tentatively remake encounter in the aftermath of violent events and processes; this is a labor that requires epistemological possibility to flourish.

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NOTES

Preface. From Diasporic to Transcontinental Entanglement

- 1 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 11.
- 2 Ballantyne, *Between Colonialism and Diaspora*.
- 3 Hall, "New Ethnicities."
- 4 See also Prashad, *Karma of Brown Folk*, for a landmark text on Black–South Asian relationalities in the United States.
- 5 Macharia, "On Being Area-Studied."
- 6 Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
- 7 In this book, I trace transcontinental (both global and regional) racial formations, and thus am invested in critical engagement with two intellectual traditions, the Black Radical Tradition (and its dialogue with Pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism) and Afro-pessimism, which I indicate through my use of both "anti-Black racism" and "anti-Blackness."

Introduction. Expulsion as Closure, Expulsion as Opening

- 1 Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy*.
- 2 Partridge, *Hypersexuality and Headscarves*; Vora, *Impossible Citizens*.
- 3 Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.
- 4 Plascencia, *Disenchanting Citizenship*.

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- 5 Rosa and Bonilla, “Deprovincializing Trump.”
- 6 D. Thomas, “Crisis, Epochal Shifts,” 550.
- 7 I use both “the West/non-West” and “Global North/Global South” in this book, primarily as a reflection of the scholarship relevant to my study. These terms generally indicate material, geopolitical, and racial divisions and inequalities according to histories of empire’s and colonialism’s racialized geographies. I use them to map epistemological inequalities as well.
- 8 Partridge, *Hypersexuality and Headscarves*, 19–22.
- 9 Comaroff and Comaroff, in *Theory from the South*, among others, have made this argument.
- 10 See Lalani, *Ugandan Asian Expulsion*, for a compilation of media coverage on the expulsion; see Seftel, *Uganda*, for media coverage of the Amin government in the South African periodical *Drum*. Scholarship on the 1972 Asian expulsion is extensive and rich, peaking in the late 1970s, and I attend to it selectively in this book.
- 11 M. Nair, *Mississippi Masala*; Macdonald, *The Last King of Scotland*.
- 12 Some influential expulsion memoirs are Mamdani’s *From Citizen to Refugee*, and Alibhai-Brown’s *No Place like Home*. Novels by exiled Ugandan Asian authors like Gulshan Ahmed, Yusuf Dawood, Jameela Siddiqi, and Peter Nazareth, among others, speak to themes of migration, identity, displacement, individual and collective trauma, and memory. Younger Black African Ugandan writers like Moses Isegawa and Goretti Kyomuhendo are also reflecting on Asianness and expulsion from the perspective of their particular ethnic communities and histories.
- 13 For scholarly analysis of East African Asian literature, see Ojwang, *Reading Migration and Culture*; G. Desai, *Commerce with the Universe*; Ocita, “Diasporic Imaginaries.”
- 14 Bhachu, *Twice Migrants*; Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*; Muhammedi, *Gifts from Amin*; Parmar, *Reading Cultural Representations*; Fulford, *The Exiled*.
- 15 See the Uganda Collection in the Archives and Special Collections of the Carleton University Library.
- 16 Bhachu, *Twice Migrants*, which focuses on the displaced East African Ramgarhia Sikh community in Britain.
- 17 Popat, *A British Subject*. See especially Lord (Baron) Dolar Popat’s debate to mark the fortieth anniversary expulsion of the Ugandan Asians in the UK Parliament. Hansard, House of Lords, “Ugandan Asians.”
- 18 Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back*; R. Gupta, *From Homemakers to Jailbreakers*.
- 19 Former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere experimented with a conditional inclusion for the Indian minority on the basis of their acclimation

to socialist policies and nonracialism. A more gradual Africanization took place in Kenyatta's Kenya, in which Indians lost commercial and business opportunities through state-based trade and commercial restrictions, leading to the Kenyan Asian exodus between 1968 and 1969, and their subsequent resettlement in the United Kingdom. In postapartheid South Africa, Indians were integrated as citizens in line with an official policy of nonracialism and inclusive notions of "Blackness" that encompassed African, Colored, and Indian communities.

20 Taylor, "Race and Nation."

21 I. Patel, *We're Here*.

22 Taylor, "Asians and Africans in Urban Ugandan Life."

23 In Nair, *Mississippi Masala*, we see the complexity of expulsion and its aftermaths as we follow the migration trajectories of Jay, an exiled Gujarati lawyer of Ugandan origin, his wife Kinu and their daughter Meena as they migrate to Greenwood, Mississippi, and negotiate dynamics of US-based state, racial, class, gender, and sexual power. In a notable scene, Jay sues the government of Uganda over his expulsion and eventually returns to repossess his property and connect with his childhood African friend Okello; likewise, the interracial romance between Meena (growing up South Asian American of Ugandan heritage) and Demetrius (of Black American heritage) offers insight into lingering Afro-South Asian intimacies in Uganda and its diaspora.

24 Leopold and other scholars argue that there is no factual evidence to support written accounts of Amin that describe practices of cannibalism and other ritual practices. He attributes them to Western propaganda, anti-Black African racism, and stereotypes among Southern communities like the Ganda about the Kakwa people and West Nile region of Uganda in particular. Leopold, *Idi Amin*, 1. See also Leopold, *Inside West Nile*; D. Peterson and Taylor, "Rethinking the State in Idi Amin's Uganda"; Mazrui, "Between Development and Decay"; Moghal, *Idi Amin*.

25 Bonee, "Caesar Augustus and the Flight of the Asians"; Chivers, "Is Expulsion Rational?"; Read, "Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion."

26 Ghai, "The Bugandan Trade Boycott"; Ghai, "The Asian Minorities"; Jamal, "Asians in Uganda"; Mazrui, "Casualties of an Underdeveloped Class Structure"; Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation*; Tandon, "The Expulsions from Uganda"; Tandon and Raphael, *The New Position of East Africa's Asians*.

27 Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism*; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*.

28 A more expansive reading of expulsions and exile during this era reveals the existence of many diverse displaced populations, both Black African

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and South Asian. There is no comparative research on multiracial Ugandan exiles and their trajectories in the intervening years since Amin, Obote II, and the short-term governments that followed.

29 Fulford, *The Exiled*.

30 Taylor, "Asians and Africans," 1–40.

31 Amin also expelled the Israelis and the British European administrative and capitalist class just prior to the 1972 expulsion decree aimed at Asians. Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*. According to A. B. K. Kasozi, at least one million Ugandans were killed in the period between 1964 and 1985, and he estimates that the number killed during the Amin regime were between 50,000 and 300,000, with increasing levels of terror and violence during the Obote II period. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*. Mark Leopold notes that most informed scholars agree Obote was responsible for more deaths than Amin over a shorter period of time. Leopold argues that unlike Obote's second period in power, "Amin did not specifically direct mass violence towards civilians from particular tribes, and Obote's earlier expulsions of Kenyan and Rwandan workers are not remembered alongside Amin's targeting of the Asian, although the Kenyans and Rwandans were greater in number." Leopold, *Idi Amin*, 3.

32 Adida, *Immigrant Exclusion*.

33 Sassen, *Expulsions*.

34 Das, *Critical Events*.

35 Das, *Critical Events*, 5–6.

36 I have been unable to locate research that places in dialogue the partition of British India and the Ugandan Asian expulsion and larger Asian exodus from East Africa, although there are clear parallels in terms of nation-building, displacement, state bureaucracy, and the transfer of property and assets. Some communities were affected by both events (the partition and the Asian expulsion). Reading both critical events together offers possibilities for engaging with race, religion, caste, class, gender, and sexuality across these geographies.

37 See Das, *Life and Words*. I build on the "ethnography of events" that questions the dichotomy of "structure" and "event," arguing "for studies which explore the dynamic relationship between moments of disruption and moments of calm." Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories*, 6.

38 Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories*, 6.

39 Das, *Life and Words*, 223.

40 Das, *Critical Events*, 5–6. Taylor, in "Asians and Africans in Ugandan Urban Life," drawing on Sinha, *Specters of Mother India*, has also argued that the 1972 Asian expulsion was a "global public event" (264).

- 41 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*.
- 42 Das, *Life and Words*, 9.
- 43 Das, *Life and Words*, 7.
- 44 Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception*, 6.
- 45 Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 9.
- 46 Uganda studies scholarship is dominated by statist political science approaches. See, for example, Collier and Reinikka, *Uganda's Recovery*; H. Hansen and Twaddle, *Developing Uganda*; and H. Hansen and Twaddle, *Changing Uganda*. The state is typically understood as a weak or quasi-state, while the NRM government is typologized as an authoritarian regime, a personalist regime, or more recently, a "hybrid regime," given its mix of liberal democratic and illiberal traits. See Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*. Other themes include ethnic conflict, neopatrimonial politics, or the thwarting of constitutional norms and the failure of transparent, free, and fair presidential elections.
- 47 Note the "imagined geography" of post-partition India as a liberal democratic nation, as opposed to other nations in South Asia and to African nations. Rana, *Terrifying Muslims*.
- 48 I use *postliberal* to indicate a critical undertaking of the universality of liberal political formations. See also Comaroff and Comaroff, *Theory from the South*, with the caveat that Africa cannot be construed via South African exceptionalism.
- 49 See Bernal, *Nation as Network*; Clarke, "Notes on Cultural Citizenship"; Diouf, "Engaging Post-colonial Cultures"; Englund, *Prisoners of Freedom*; Malkki, *Purity and Exile*; Nyamnjoh, *Insiders and Outsiders*; Nyamnjoh, "From Bounded to Flexible Citizenship"; Geschiere, *Perils of Belonging*; Geschiere and Nyamnjoh, "Capitalism and Autochthony."
- 50 Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.
- 51 Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1; Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*; Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*; Mbembe, "Necropolitics." I follow Foucault in the study of "governmentality" as an array of knowledges and practices that are concerned with the systematic and pragmatic guidance and regulation of everyday conduct, or the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other. My analysis is informed by discussions of biopower, biopolitics, and racism and by the distinctions in the biological field over the management, cultivation, and protection of life as opposed to those who must die.
- 52 T. B. Hansen and Stepputat, *Sovereign Bodies*. I build on anthropological scholarship that has critiqued notions of sovereignty rooted in European/Western intellectual genealogies that are themselves responding to normative

conceptions of nation-state sovereignty in an international world order. Anthropologists studying the global South stress ethnographic attention to the multiple forms of governance, sovereignty, and citizenship in (by normative definition) nonliberal, non-Western nation-states, including the transnational formations of sovereignty and power that constitute “the state” and attendant projects of nationalism.

- 53 Ross, “The Agamben Effect”; Robinson, *On Racial Capitalism*.
- 54 Vora, *Impossible Citizens*, 16.
- 55 Partridge, *Hypersexuality and Headscarves*, 22.
- 56 Wimmer and Schiller, “Methodological Nationalism.”
- 57 I am departing here from culturalist/racist framings of corruption that locate these practices within perceived “closed” national economies. I am engaged instead with those who are studying the category of corruption and its shifting practices and meanings over time and space to upend liberal global imaginaries. See Akhil Gupta, “Blurred Boundaries.”
- 58 Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*; Finnstrom, *Living with Bad Surroundings*; Epstein, *Another Fine Mess*.
- 59 Hundle, Szeman, and Hoare, “What Is the Transnational?”
- 60 Goldberg, *The Threat of Race*.
- 61 Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*; Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*; Grovogui, “Come to Africa.”
- 62 Pierre, *Predicament of Blackness*.
- 63 The Chicago school of sociology normalized the “race relations” and “racial conflict” frameworks that circulated in African universities and in East African scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s. The legacy of race relations frameworks includes the use of essentializing racial categories, the masking of European and white supremacy, and the use of colonial discourses such as “the Asian question” or “the Native question.” Race relations, racial conflict, and “minority question” frameworks police the possibilities of studying race via dynamic global and local racial formations and as mediated by global white supremacy.
- 64 Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya*; Brennan, *Taifa*; Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*; and Taylor, “Asians and Africans in Ugandan Urban Life.” I build on studies of race, religion, and caste formation in the Indian Ocean world; see Jayawardene, “Racialized Casteism.”
- 65 Herbert, “Oral Histories of Ugandan Asians in Britain”; see also Modi and Pandurang, “Women as an Invisible Constituency.”
- 66 With few exceptions, see the feminist scholarship by Richa Nagar on East Africa, especially Tanzania.

- 67 Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya*; Aminzade, *Race, Nation, Citizenship*; Bertz, *Diaspora and Nation*; Brennan, *Taifa*; Oonk, *Settled Strangers*; Soske, *Internal Frontiers*; Taylor, "Asians and Africans in Ugandan Urban Life."
- 68 Shukla, "Locations for South Asian Diasporas"; Vora, *Impossible Citizens*; Axel, *The Nation's Tortured Body*.
- 69 Niranjana, *Mobilizing India*; Rana, *Terrifying Muslims*; T. Hansen, *Melancholia for Freedom*.
- 70 Bhachu, *Twice Migrants*; Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*; Joseph, *Nomadic Identities*; Parmar, *Reading Cultural Representations*.
- 71 Hall, "Negotiating Caribbean Identities."
- 72 C. Lee, *Making a World after Empire*, 4.
- 73 Mazrui, "Afrabia"; Zeleza, "Rewriting the African Diaspora."
- 74 Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents*; Lewis, "Afro-Asian Worlds"; Desai, *Commerce with the Universe*.
- 75 Burton, *Africa in the Indian Imagination*; Shankar, *An Uneasy Embrace*. Burton reminds us of the persistence of civilizational and racial hierarchies and that "there are good reasons for [these] histories of difference, resentment, and suspicion in the Afro-Indian context, among them racialized capitalist relations, colonial-era racial histories, and entrenched practices of racial endogamy" (*Africa in the Indian Imagination*, 3).
- 76 Shryrock, *Off Stage, on Display*.
- 77 In fact, the meanings behind "Asian" are shifting with respect to a growing East Asian, especially Chinese, presence.
- 78 Jeyifo, "The Nature of Things."

Chapter 1. Becoming a Racial Exile, Becoming a Black Nation

- 1 Obbo, "Village Strangers," 239.
- 2 Mankekar and Gupta, "The Missed Period."
- 3 Morrison, *Beloved*, 43.
- 4 Morrison, *Beloved*, 86.
- 5 Reid, *Political Power*, 135–73.
- 6 Kasozi, *Social Origins*, 27–28.
- 7 Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation*, 17–18.
- 8 Thapar, "Theory of Aryan Race."
- 9 Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition Revisited"; Dirks, *Castes of Mind*; Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation*; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.