Imagined mobility: migration and transnationalism among Indian students in Australia

Baas, M.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Download date: 11 Dec 2018
Acknowledgements

On the night of Tuesday on Wednesday the 12th of May 2009 one of my informants, Rohit, got married to his Indian girlfriend whom he had met in Melbourne in 2005. They had fallen in love while living in the same student house in Melbourne, studying at the same university. They were now both proud PR (permanent residency) holders and Rohit’s wife was even planning to apply for Australian citizenship soon. Watching Rohit wait for the priest to finish a particular ritual I joked that he was in fact marrying an Australian girl. It amused Rohit, though earlier that evening he had already mentioned that they had no intention of settling in Australia. As a newly married and soon to be Indian-Australian couple they would move in with his parents and find jobs in Delhi. The struggle for Australian permanent residency had been a stressful one, and the friends who were also attending the wedding talked about little else. They had all come to Australia as international students and almost all had ended up getting a permanent residency (PR) as well. One of Rohit’s friends had recently married her boyfriend from Melbourne. She was now living with his family in Mumbai while he was setting up his mining business in Australia. Soon she would join him there though. They had all attended a wedding of another friend from Melbourne in Delhi a couple of months earlier, and less than a month from now they would all be heading for Tamil Nadu in the South of India for a similar wedding. Their conversations were layered with references to people in other countries, while issues with the Australian migration authorities seemed still fresh on their minds. Surat (West India), where the wedding took place, seemed far removed from the years in Australia they now had behind them. Yet although many were now – more or less – settled back in India, what happened in Australia or was going to happen (one day) seemed inseparable from where they were finding themselves now. They were starting the kind of transnational lives they had once fantasized and talked about before coming to Australia. This dissertation is about the lives of these students Down Under on their way to an (imagined) transnational existence. It is also because of this that I owe them my gratitude first and foremost. Without their help, trust and faith this project would never have become what it is now. Unfortunately I am not able to name anyone in particular since ethical rules and requirements do not permit me to do so. Yet let me stress that never before have I met such a cheerful, friendly and welcoming group of people, many of whom are now close friends of mine. Their determination and resilience has been an inspiration throughout.

From 2004-2008 I was a PhD student with the Amsterdam School for Social science Research (ASSR), University of Amsterdam. I would like to thank this institution
for all the assistance, guidance and help they have offered me throughout the years. The following people have been invaluable: Linda Atjak, Teun Bijvoet, Anneke Dammers, John Grin, Anita Hardon, Miriam May, Hermance Mettrop and Hans Sonneveld. One person needs special mentioning here: José Komen. Her advice and friendship got me through the most difficult parts. She is the ASSR.

My fieldwork in Melbourne (Australia) was kindly hosted by the Monash Asia Institute (MAI) of Monash University. I owe particular thanks to Wendy Smith, Marika Vicziany and Juliet Yee who made my stay not only possible but also a warm and welcoming one. Other people in Australia I owe lots of gratitude to are: Jayant Bapat, Bob Birrell, Diana Cousens, Vivien Dews, David Feith, Peter Gainey, Lesleyanne Hawthorne, Salim Lakha, Michella Rost, John Russell, Kannan Srinivasan, Kim Styles, Soumitri Varadarajan and Shabbir Wahid.

Besides family, friends and colleagues, there are a number of people who played a much more than special part in my years as PhD student. Sikko Visscher immediately comes to mind; roomy, buddy and very tall. Ward Berenschot: living proof that committees are sometimes very wrong and sometimes very right. Malini Sur and her uncanny knack always to know exactly how I feel and being very frank about it. Luc Fransen for doing the none-dissertation kind of paperwork that made such a difference in the end. Barak Kalir and his highly necessary advice that one sunny afternoon in Leiden. I will always remain thankful to Rosanne Rutten for alerting me to my first job within the university and her interest in my work over the years. And to Ot van den Muijzenberg for making me his research assistant while I was still doing my masters. Others whom I have much to thank for are: Sarita Seshagiri, Carol Upadhya, Sahana Udupa, A.R. Vasavi and Peter van der Veer. We were all, at some point, involved in research on the IT industry of Bangalore; something that eventually formed the basis for my research on Indian students in Australia. And finally I would like to thank the following people all for their own specific reasons: Laura Baas, Gerd Baumann, Niko Besnier, Erna de Boer, Marieke Brand, Jasper Blom, Sjoukje Botman, Jan Breman, Willeke Colenbrander, Sebe Emmelot, Rineke van Daalen, Frans van Deutkom, Leo Douw, Jan Willem Duijvendak, Ruchira Ganguly-Scrase, Peter Geschiere, Devleena Ghosh, Thomas Blom Hansen, Anna Harris, Klaas Helmers, Silke Heumann, Lotte Hoek, Jessica Hoogenboom, Hester Houwing, Chip Huismans, Menno Hurenkamp, Saskia Jans, John Kleinen, Jeroen de Kloet, Sanneke Kloppenburg, Ruya Gökhan Koçer, Laura Kors, Gerben Nooteboom, Olga Korse, Kristoffel Lieten, Jantine Messing, Heleen van der Minne, Petra Neijenhuis, Manon Osseweijer, Katharina Paul, Marina de Regt, Bert Schijf, Tim Scrase, Henk Schulte Nordholt, Deasy Simandjuntak, Max Sparreboom, Victor Toom, Oskar Verkaaik, Annick Vollebergh, Nynke Wiekenkamp, Anna Yeadell, Dorien Zandbergen.

The two most important persons in my life as a PhD student have been my supervisors Mario Rutten and Willem van Schendel. Without them there would simly
never have been a dissertation in the first place. Mario was the first to encourage me to pursue a PhD and I could not think of a better supervisor; fun loving, a true inspiration and always there when I needed him. Him taking time to visit me in the field and meet ‘the students’ is something only truly great supervisors do. Discussing my work with Willem van Schendel was always highly inspirational. It always amazed me how careful he would read my work and how he always seemed to know exactly how to point out the weaknesses in the text while also acknowledging its strengths. I consider it a privilege to have worked with both of them. Thank you so very much.