

“THIS IS OUR AREA AND THAT IS THEIRS”

Scripting the spatiality of migrant masculinity in Goa, India

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Masculinity in its various forms is socially constructed and changes over time and space (Berg and Longhurst 2003; Coles 2009; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Hopkins and Noble 2009). The ways in which masculinities are both produced and reproduced reflect the struggles between dominant and subordinate groups of men and women. However, the structural categories of being dominant and subordinate/marginalized are relative to the spaces (geographical, personal and metaphorical) where these masculinities are performed. In keeping with the theme of this volume, it is argued here that spatiality is one of the key factors in understanding the context and variations of performed masculinities. In this chapter, I examine the various performances of migrant masculinities as situated within inclusionary, exclusionary and liminal spaces. An attempt is made here to situate performances of masculinities within the intersecting discourses of migration and poverty.

For this chapter, I draw on data collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and a survey which included explicit sections on migration, migrant identities and the relationship with the host population in the state of Goa. Due to the changing demographic scenarios and increasing investments in infrastructure for tourism, Goa attracted labour from surrounding states, including Karnataka. In order to understand the daily life of the migrants better, the researchers stayed close to migrant settlements as this facilitated close observation of activities. The selection criteria for participants in both the qualitative and quantitative studies were: male, married, aged between 20 and 45 years, born in Karnataka and then migrated to Goa, and had spent the last whole year in Goa. Mobile men were those who travelled between Karnataka and Goa for work as truck

drivers and fishermen. The data include 25 in-depth interviews, 16 focus group discussions and a survey involving 1,259 men. In addition, the chapter also draws on a study conducted in 2009 which included observations, in-depth interviews and focus groups on migrants’ access to health care.

Space, masculinity and performance

The performance of masculinities as discussed in this chapter is based on Butler’s (1990) concept of performative gender. Butler developed the concept of gender performativity, in which gender is not seen as an expression of what one is, but as something that one does: “[G]ender is the styled repetition of acts through time” (Butler 1990, p. 141). According to this approach, the subject does not express its identity through acts and gestures, but rather the reality of the subject depends on its own performance. Though much of Butler’s work has been applied to queer studies, there is a fair amount of work which applies this post-structural approach to studying masculinities (Hibbins 2005; Jackson 2001; Onoufriou 2009; Roussel and Downs 2007). Elmhirst (2007) applies this performative gender approach in Indonesia to examine the performance of masculinities by young men left behind due to feminized labour migration.

In India, studies on masculinity in its various forms have highlighted the relationship between various socio-cultural factors and the construction of masculinity. Key themes identified include sexuality (Datta 2008; Mane and Aggleton 2001; Ramasubramanian and Jain 2009; Srivastava 2004; Verma et al. 2006), media representations, popular narratives (Derne 2000; Murty 2009; Rajan 2006), Hindu fundamentalism (Banerjee 2005), honour (George 2006) and migration (Ali 2007; Osella and Osella 2000; Shah 2006; Sharma 2008). The literature shows that relationships between dominant and subordinate masculinities are more pronounced in the context of migration, in which the host population assumes a dominant position in relation to the migrant population. However, it can be argued that among migrant groups, length of stay and accumulated (social and financial) capital can lead them to perform either dominant or subordinate masculinities in relation to other migrants. In this chapter, the focus is on male migrants who move between the states of Karnataka and Goa. By focusing on migrant men, I do not intend to give the opinion that masculinities are performed only by men. I strive to situate the performances of masculinity among the migrant men in a relational context. To this end, I first present a background to the study in Goa, then reasons for men to migrate to Goa, which leads to discussion of the various performances of migrant masculinity as situated in inclusionary, exclusionary and liminal spaces. Finally, an account of the positionalities and performances of researchers’ masculinities in the field is presented.

For this study, inclusionary spaces are those that the migrants create for themselves through their space-making activities. Similarly, exclusionary spaces are those where migrants experience discrimination and social exclusion from full participation in public life. Liminal spaces are more metaphorical spaces where migrants find themselves “betwixt and between” (Turner 1979). Taken together, a narrative of how space shapes gender performances of migrant men is built up, showing them to be performing dominant and subordinate masculinities in relation to spatial factors.

Goa: a distinct social space

Goa has had a different history from the rest of India and thus constitutes a distinct genderscape. The state has experienced both in-migration and out-migration processes, which have contributed to the making of Goa as it is today. Goa remained a colony of Portugal for 450 years until 1961, after which it became part of India, and then attained complete statehood in 1987 (Desai 1997). According to Couto (2004), there are two versions of Goa: “Goa Dourada” (the Portuguese Goa) and “Goa Indica” (the Indian Goa). Goa Dourada refers to the Portuguese colonial construction of Goa, which sees Goa as a European enclave attached to the Indian subcontinent, and Goa Indica refers to the anti-colonial construction of Goa which emphasizes the Indian element in Goan society. Migration and extensive infrastructure development for tourism are perceived by Goans to be threats to the Goa Dourada identity (Saldanha 2002). Portuguese Goa is still cherished by the dwindling Catholic elite groups, as they find it hard to accept Goa Indica (Couto 2004). Goans also experience liminality, which is evident in the sentiments whereby what may be viewed by some as the “liberation” of Goa from the Portuguese may be constructed by others as an “invasion” of Goa by the Indian forces. Goa was, indeed, the last of the colonized territories in India to be liberated. The then-dictator Salazar claimed Goa as a province of Portugal and not as a colony. Hence, it was impossible under the auspices of the UN for Goa to become independent. This led to an armed liberation of Goa by Indian forces, thus creating Goa as it is now – part of the territory of India, a small state surrounded by the Arabian Sea in the West and the states of Maharashtra in the North and Karnataka in the East and South.

Migration as a phenomenon in Goa is multifaceted. Da Silva Gracias (2000) defines three historical phases of migration from Goa: first, migration to the neighbouring kingdoms; second, migration to British India and Africa; and third, the postcolonial migration to the Gulf, the West (Europe and America), Australia and New Zealand. It is the last phase, and most noticeably to the Gulf states, which da Silva Gracias (2000) has described as migration “in search of petro dollars.” Post liberalization and the accompanying swift development of the tourist industry induced large-scale

infrastructure development. With the Goans migrating to other countries, a vacuum was created at the lower levels of the labour hierarchy. To support the infrastructure development, a third Goa emerged: the Goa of migrant labourers. The Goa of migrants is very different and would not be considered a luxury tourist destination. Migrants from Karnataka are clustered in slums and shanty towns. With respect to health and demographic indicators, the level of modernization and economic development is higher in Goa than Karnataka. Pull factors in Goa are per capita income (the highest in India) and the availability of better civic facilities (see Bailey 2008).

Reasons for migration and mobility from Karnataka to Goa

The common migration pattern followed by Karnataka men in Goa begins with married men moving to Goa in search of work. After finding work, they stay on between two to three months and then bring their wives and children to Goa. Men tap kinship and social networks to initially find work and accommodation. The push factors for migration to Goa are, in most cases, lack of work, rising debts and meagre wages in Karnataka, which make it difficult for the respondents to clothe and feed their households. In the years prior to the fieldwork in 2004–5, many districts in Northern Karnataka experienced drought. The villages in these districts depend on the monsoons for their agricultural activities. With the advent of drought, there was less work in the fields as people could not sow seeds. The people most affected were the agricultural labourers as they were dependent on large landowners for work. With less work, men started to borrow money from money lenders in the village. This burgeoning debt and low wages in many cases act as push factors for migration. In terms of wages for a day's work in the villages in Karnataka, the men received about 20 rupees (20 euro cents), whereas in Goa they earned at least 100 rupees (1.28 euros) per day. In the survey, men were asked for their primary reason for migrating/joining mobile occupations. Unemployment was the most commonly mentioned factor. As their communities were primarily agricultural, migrants could not find other employment opportunities in their villages. The other commonly reported reason was that migrant men had extended families in Karnataka, and they shared the responsibility of supporting their younger siblings and elder family members. Many migrants sent money home either through a money order or through fellow villagers going back home.

The pull factors for Goa are that the migrants can easily find jobs as labourers at construction sites, at ports and in other businesses where labourers are required. Wages are also higher than in their villages. The living conditions in Goa are perceived to be satisfactory; the migrant men are able to find housing in the areas where other migrants live. Migrant men

rely in the beginning on kinship and social networks to locate housing and to find work. The existence of migrant settlements and strong ethnic and linguistic ties helps migrants cope with the new environment.

Our area: masculinities in inclusionary spaces

This section moves beyond the centre-periphery discourse on migrant settlements and looks deeper into the place-making exercises of migrants, in terms of architecture, language and temples within migrant settlements. The social production and reproduction of place by migrants can be seen as a means of coping with the harshness of the new hostile environment. The performance of masculinities is based on various discussions held in different migrant settlements located in Vasco, Madgaon and Panjim. The migrant settlements are adjacent to industrial areas, work sites and urban periphery. Within their settlements, migrants feel safe and exercise social power. For an outsider, the settlements may appear as another version of slums and shanty towns visible in other urban centres, but for the migrants these settlements are their homes, communal spaces and spaces of political power. Through various place-making activities the migrants are able to recreate in some settlements their former rural life.

Here all are friends; here in C. there are only Karnataka people; here everywhere there is Karnataka "system." There is nothing from Goa in this place. There are Karnataka people here, so why should people go to Karnataka to celebrate their festival? Here in this area, everyone speaks Kannada; here there is Karnataka system. From here if you go to Panaji, then the Goa system starts. Here, we feel as though we are living in Karnataka only.

(Migrant, Vasco)

The major place-making activities extend from private spaces such as homes to include communal spaces such as temples, mosques and monasteries built and maintained by the migrant men. In two of these settlements, men formed a temple and a mosque committee through which they increased their bargaining power with the local politician, the municipal authorities and the host population. These committees were instrumental in building schools where Kannada and Urdu are used as a language of instruction. A mosque committee, consisting only of men, was busy negotiating with the local politician for better civic facilities. The local politicians here were more "giving" with local elections close by. The local politician in this case was a Goan woman. In our discussions, the committee referred to her as *Bai*, a term of respect attached to her name due to her position. However, women from the migrant settlements did not have the right to be part of this

committee. Women within the settlements were confined to their domestic roles and hardly ventured out to work. Some of the Muslim women were able to get out of the settlement to work as domestic help in Goan homes. These women, however, were bound by strict rules of time and, any violation would risk a loss of name and lead to domestic quarrels with spouses and mothers-in-law.

The schools, temples and mosques were built with the capital raised within the migrant settlements and from fellow migrants in other parts of Goa. The settlements were also spaces where men could generate cultural and social capital. In one of the settlements where they have the Yalleshwara *Matha* (monastery), the committee of men organized an annual fair called *Jathri* in Kannada; this was the main event which brought all migrants together. On the occasion of the *Jathri*, the head Swamiji, popularly referred to as *Muthya* and *Ajuru* (both words refer to an old wise person) visited the *Matha*, and the devotees had an opportunity to meet him. The committee started the preparations a few months in advance. They printed handbills and went to various migrant settlements to collect donations for the *Jathri*. The members organizing this event saw it as a way of galvanizing support for migrants and as a show of strength. The acceptability of the fair by the Goan population is a result of the spatial politics that underlie the efforts to showcase Goa as more than a Catholic state.

Some people give 500, some 100 and some others 1000 rupees. It all depends on their “Kushi” [happiness/wish]. Whatever they give, we take. Everyone gives something.

(*Jathri*, fair organizing committee member)

During the *Jathri*, devotees seek blessings from the Swamiji. Men in the interviews reasoned that the *Jathri* gives an opportunity for all the Kannada people to come together. They used the word *Nammajanaru*, which translates as “our (Karnataka) people,” a connotation that the fair is for the welfare of Kannada people in Goa. Thus, migrant settlements should be examined not merely as peripheral urban sites but, more specifically, as cultural microcosms which are spatialized by their social relations. The cultural microcosms are produced by migrants who carry only not their belongings when they move, but also their cultural schemas and the broader cultural meaning systems.

Their area: masculinities in exclusionary spaces

According to Canales (2000), “exclusionary othering” is a process in which people use the power within relationships for domination and subordination. The exclusionary othering discussed here is based on exclusion

experienced by migrant men in both public and work spaces. The Goan community ascribes a certain identity to the migrants from Karnataka, calling them *Ghati*. The term “Ghati” is derived from the reasoning that the people from Karnataka live over the *Ghats* (mountain ranges).

Yes, they call us Ghati. See, when we come from Karnataka, we cross the Ghats. So they call us Ghati. Because we have left the Ghats and come here.

(Migrant, Panaji)

The Western Ghats, or the Sahyadri Mountains, run along the Western coast of India, forming the Western edge of the Deccan plateau and separating the plateau from the Arabian Sea. When migrant men move to Goa, they cross these Ghats; thus the term “Ghati” is ascribed to them. Though the Ghati identity has a spatial reasoning attached to it, the ascription of this identity itself excludes the migrant. Exclusionary othering is related to the journey of crossing the mountains. The crossing is not only of the administrative boundaries between Karnataka and Goa but also of natural and cultural boundaries. In the survey, eighty-three percent of the migrant men and fifty-two percent of the mobile men (truckers and fisherman) agreed that Goans call migrants from Karnataka “Ghati.” Over the course of time, the geographically ascribed identity has turned into an abusive reference for migrants.

Migrant men offer cultural reasoning for the differences between migrants and Goans. Exclusionary othering is based on cultural markers, such as the styles of dressing and the use of language. Many Goan Catholics wear western clothes, whereas the migrant men, especially those who have just arrived in Goa, prefer to wear traditional clothes such as a *dhoti/lungi* (a rectangular piece of cloth wrapped around the waist and the legs and knotted around the waist). Some men also wear a *topgi* (a white cap) and a *walli* (a small piece of cloth carried around the shoulders). The women mostly wear saris – either the ones that are traditionally made in Karnataka or the newer designs that they can buy in Goa. Sometimes the distinction between migrant and Goan men in their clothing can get blurred, with younger migrant men wearing more western clothes. The distinction between migrant women wearing saris and Goan Catholic women wearing western clothes is starker. Thus, dressing styles act as visual cues by which the Goan population can distinguish the migrants. In the following interview quote, we see the different interconnections between Ghati identity and socio-economic status. The imagined situation around a police inspector throws light on the different status that a migrant police inspector has, compared to a migrant labourer.

Ghati why they say. . . . If someone wears good clothes like you and come, they will not know, they will [not] know whether he

is from Goa or outside, but when these Kannada people come in lungi, in “topi,” then they say, “Ghati Muslim.” They don’t understand. These Goa Muslims, they don’t use this “topi” that much. Now it’s happening if they see people wearing pyjama they say “Ghati.” If he is a police inspector from outside, how will they say “Ghati”? Will they say, “Ghati, no, there is no question. It’s like that. I observe that sometimes salla he doesn’t say Ghati to him” [laughs].

(Migrant, Vasco)

Language is the second cultural reasoning presented by men as a factor for exclusion and othering. Goans speak Konkani, which is spoken widely in the Indian Western coastal region known as Konkani through the states of Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka. North Karnataka migrants find it difficult to learn the language. There is no facility where they can go and study Konkani. Migrants who stay for longer periods, however, learn the language from their peer groups. The national language, Hindi, becomes a vehicular language, used only when men interact with Goans and migrants from other Indian states.

Participant: Yes, I have heard of this. They do call Kannad people Ghati. People from Karnataka cannot speak Konkani; they speak only Hindi. So the Goan people call them Ghati. Some Kannad people don’t know Hindi, so they speak Kannada, and the Goans speak Konkani, so they don’t understand each other.

Interviewer: How do you reply when they call you Ghati?

Participant: We don’t reply. When we came to their desh [country/ place], we should bow to them. When they know that these people don’t know their language, they use such words. People will reply if they know Konkani.

(Migrant, Madgaon)

Migrant men reported incidents of violence when their sense of security was considerably threatened. Violence was reported to take place in two ways: individual targeting or group fights. In the first case, individual migrant men are beaten up by local Goan men, and the second refers to fights taking place between groups of migrants and the local men. We heard from the scrap-metal collectors about being beaten up and abused and enquired further about a possible connection between the Ghati identity and this violence. Nearly 58 percent of migrant men and 62.5 percent of mobile men agreed that there were violent fights between some Goans

and migrants. Fights were possible only in places where the migrants were in the majority.

While walking in the city, even if our body touches them a little also, they come to beat us. Because they know we are from Karnataka, and they boss over us. And we have to bear it. Isn't it? We have to live being scared.

(Truck driver, Vasco)

We feel bad . . . but what to do; everyone comes here for their stomach. Sometimes when they say such things [Ghati] if we say anything in return. . . . Then once or twice it has happened that we said something and then got beaten up by them.

(Migrant labourer)

Men feel more vulnerable outside the migrant settlements and are more prone to attacks at their place of work or in public spaces such as markets and bus stops. This fear of being attacked infuses a sense of insecurity among the migrant men. A sense of fear that they will become more vulnerable outside their own settlement restricts their ability to develop a sense of belonging to Goa. The discrimination and fear are embodied in the performance of the masculinities in relation to the host population.

Masculinities in liminal spaces

Liminality is a concept used by Van Gennep (1960; cf Little et al. 1998) in his 1908 study of rites of passage. In his analysis, there is a period of transition when a person has left his previous stage and has not yet entered his new stage; it is this in-between stage that Van Gennep termed “liminaire.” Building on Van Gennep’s work, Turner (1979), in relation to ritual and performance, defines the liminal as a space “betwixt and between the normal, day to day cultural and social states.” According to Turner, both time and identity become liminal during a ritual or a performance. In the context of migration, an event which includes many transitions, liminality comes to the fore in illuminating the lived experiences of migrants who are in a liminal state, in terms of both identity and time, as many migrants may aspire to return home or to be accepted as full members of the host community. Liminal states and migration stages are closely linked; as newcomers in a country/state, they are much attached to their place of origin. In the next stage, when the migrants start to settle down by finding a job and a place to live, they move then to the liminal state, wherein they have not given up their previous identity and remain unassimilated into the culture of the host population. In this

liminal stage, migrants live in closely clustered migrant settlements with strong ethnic/linguistic ties.

An implication of the exclusion and othering process is the wish for return migration. Many men wanted to return to their villages in Karnataka in the future. Exclusionary othering coupled with violence and difficulties in accessing services infuse a liminal existence in the lives of the migrants. Return migration is perceived as a return to the original identity. A sense of placelessness (Relph 1976) underpins the wish to return to Karnataka to reestablish identity and ties with disrupted social networks. Though many migrant men do visit their villages in Karnataka for festivals and other family occasions, they still wish to return “home one day.”

There [Karnataka], our Muslims are more; here, what is there in Goa? Here, anything can happen; we are only [a] few people here if they [Goans] attack us. There [in Karnataka], we are more in number, so we have more support. We can stay there well. Here people will always say Ghati. Insha Allah, I will go back some day.

(Migrant, Panaji)

After completing work here, we go back to our village to join our family members. It is our desire to live in our houses. Last, we sell everything here and go there. It is our birthplace, where we grew up; everything is ours; we have right; nobody asks. Tomorrow they say go, but in my place, nobody says that.

(Migrant, Vasco)

As the men had a liminal existence, they were at different stages of accumulating resources to go back to Karnataka. Men gave examples of fellow villagers who moved to Goa, earned enough money and went back to their villages to setup small shops and businesses. Investing in land as an asset was perceived to be helpful. In the survey, more than thirty-seven percent of the migrant men owned land in Goa, and all of them owned land in Karnataka. Migrant men used the English term “settle” to explain their wish to “place” themselves back in their villages, thus moving out of the liminal existence that marked their identity and time in Goa.

In the future, after I earn some money, I want to return to my village. I don't know if that will be possible. Because in our Karnataka, we can stay better. . . . We can do anything we want. Meaning there we can live in harmony with others . . . sharing and caring for others. Whatever we do – how we live in our village – we cannot live in the same way here. I would like to go back and build a house there for myself. If it is possible for me, then I would like to go and

settle there. The way you settle here is not the same as you settle there. There is no guarantee that I will get the same job there, but still I have to earn a lot of money before I return.

(Migrant, Vasco)

The experience of liminality differs with generation and the length of stay of the migrant families. The second generation is nostalgic about their parents' native village but do not know if they would prefer to go and live there. Among the first generation, those who have stayed longer maintain ties through arranging alliances for their children from their native villages or towns. A common pattern is that sons bring wives to live with their extended families in Goa and vice versa. Recently, in some settlements, I also came across men who moved to Goa to live with the family of the bride. The reason given was to look for employment or that the father of the bride had promised to find a job for the groom. This group (migrant sons-in-law) experiences liminality due to the process of exclusion from within existing migrant groups as men in the settlement do not involve them in gatherings or events. One of the men who had moved to live with his wife's family always took her along when he had to go to a doctor or the market as she was raised in Goa and was able to speak Hindi and some Konkani, languages, of which he had less knowledge. Hence, the experience of liminality varies among men and depends on the social and cultural capital that they can tap to survive in the liminal period.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that there is a certain fluidity in the manner in which migrant masculinities are performed. In inclusionary spaces, the performances are evident in the place-making activities carried out by men. To build schools, temples and mosques within the migrant settlements is performance, wherein the men are exercising power by which they create places for their safety and their fellow migrants. By furthering religious and cultural practices, they help create a sense of belonging at least to the settlement, if not to Goa as a whole. The performances of migrant masculinity within the inclusionary spaces are those of men acting as protectors, philanthropists and providers. As political bargainers, they underplay their masculinities when negotiating with the Goans.

In exclusionary spaces, masculinities are in conflict with that of the host population. Here, the performances when in public spaces and at work sites are more subordinated. The ascription of Ghati identity and the accompanying abuse and violence further marginalizes/subordinates migrant masculinity. Hence, men have less power to exercise, especially reduced bargaining power, as they do not, or are not allowed to, feel a sense of belonging to

Goa. Further, men are poor, uneducated and lower in the labour hierarchy. The performances of migrant masculinity in the exclusionary spaces are those of men acting as victims, subordinates, abused selves and powerless entities.

In liminal spaces, masculine performances are transient, and men are in various stages of accumulating capital to return to their “homelands.” The wish to return home highlights the lack of a sense of belonging to Goa and their relative powerlessness, due to which they may be evicted from the settlements where they now reside. The liminality that affects migrant masculinity stays with it forever, as the migrant is not completely at home in Goa or completely pleased to return home to unemployment and poverty. The accumulation of capital is one of the measures by which, when they return to their villages, they can reclaim their hypermasculine identity as the abundant provider. The performances of migrant masculinity in the liminal spaces are that of men acting as transient and nostalgic entities, accumulators of capital and seekers of “home.”

The empirical material presented in this chapter is in line with research from Ali (2007) and Osella and Osella (2000). The latter show in their analysis how masculinities and mobilities converge to create new performances of masculinity, but also socio-economic privilege. Migration in itself is a transformative process which changes power relations both between and within genders. The contribution of this chapter is to show the different performances of masculinity and how power and poverty interact to produce these different forms of masculinity.

All these performances of migrant masculinity are part of everyday lives and everyday geographies for the migrant men in Goa. The spatiality of the performance highlights the fluidity of masculinities. These performances depend on the spaces men occupy and the power struggles within the relationships. A migrant man in Goa can perform all or some of these masculinities in the course of a day. In this paper, I have tried to highlight the different spaces where men perform their masculinities in order to underline the importance of local geographical contexts in scripting gender performances. In future research, a more complete understanding of the spatiality of gender among migrant communities would also require delving into the parallel narratives of women within the same genderscape.

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