

research article

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The Characteristics and Influence of the “Long-Distance Nationalism” on Americans of Indian Origin

Ping Qu ✉

Chengdu Institute of World Affairs, Chengdu, China
✉ 870100179@qq.com

Wang Jianping

South Asia Research Institute of Sichuan University, Chengdu;
Institute for China’s Overseas Interests of Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, China

Abstract. *During the First World War of the 20th century, with the rise of the Indian national independence movement, the American Indian consciousness of “long-distance nationalism” began to awaken. The development of American Indian “long-distance nationalism” has gone through three main stages, and with the continuous expansion of ethnic influence, the nationalist feelings and political practice of ancestral countries are also constantly strengthening, and showing strong elitism color, transnational capital interests’ connection and internal and external mechanism coordination and integration and so on. Under the background of the current “India-Pacific Strategy”, the strengthening of the willingness to cooperate between the United States and India has provided both a cover and an opportunity for the development of “long-distance nationalism” of Indian Americans, and will play a continuous role in American society, US-India relations and even global geopolitics. The “long-distance nationalism” of Indian Americans will further deepen the “common interests” between the United States and India, and this trend will become increasingly prominent with the continuous expansion of Indian influence.*

Keywords: Americans of Indian origin; distance nationalism; immigration politics; India; United States

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Особенности и влияние “дистанционного национализма” на американцев индийского происхождения

Пин Цюй ✉
Чэндуский институт мировых отношений, Чэнду, Китай
✉ 870100179@qq.com

Ван Цзяньпин
Научно-исследовательский институт Южной Азии
Сычуаньского университета, Чэнду;
Институт зарубежных интересов Китая
Шэньчжэньского университета, Шэньчжэнь, Китай.

Аннотация. В начале XX века, во время Первой мировой войны, в связи с ростом индийского национального движения за независимость, начинает пробуждаться сознание индийцев американского происхождения в рамках идей “дистанционного национализма” (“long-distance nationalism”). Развитие новой формы этнического национализма индийцев, проживающих в США, проходило в три основных этапа на фоне расширения этнического влияния на национальные идеи через политическую практику страны предков (Индия). Установлено, что такие связи укрепляются, осуществляется транснациональная связь интересов капитала, развиваются внутренние и внешние механизмы координации и интеграции, при этом авторами подчеркивается соблюдение сословности и элитарности. На фоне современной Индийско-Тихоокеанской стратегии развивается готовность к сотрудничеству между Соединенными Штатами и Индией, которая обеспечивает как прикрытие, так и возможность для развития “дистанционного национализма”. Американцы индийского происхождения играют и будут играть постоянную роль в американском обществе, развитии американо-индийских отношений, в том числе и в глобальной геополитике. Концепты “дистанционного национализм” еще больше углубляют “общность интересов” между Соединенными Штатами и Индией, и эта тенденция будет становиться все более заметной с постоянным ростом индийского влияния.

Ключевые слова: американцы индийского происхождения; дальний национализм; иммиграционная политика; Индия; Соединенные Штаты Америки

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Introduction and Materials

“Long Distance Nationalism”, also known as “nationalism in ancestral countries”, means that “there is still a strong sense of identity and nationalism between discrete ethnic groups and ancestral countries around the world (even more radical than nationalists in their ancestral countries), and the social movements initiated or participated have become an important force affecting the political ecology of the countries in which ethnic groups are located” [1]. This kind of political practice of discrete ethnic groups began to show prominent in American immigration society from XIX to XX century, and gradually became an important decision-making factor in American internal and foreign affairs, at the same time, it also attracted the continuous attention and research of academic circles. In 1992, Benedict Anderson (Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson), a famous American political scientist, formally defined this phenomenon as “distance nationalism” in his masterpiece distance nationalism: the rise of World Capitalism and identity Politics [2]. And through the expansion of anthropological research (by professor Nina Glick-Schiller of Manchester University and others), it has increasingly become an important topic in American immigration research. Due to non-immigration countries, there is a lack of understanding of the difference of nationalist emotion among migrant groups, especially the study of “long-distance nationalism”. At present, only professor Liang Maochun (Jinan University) has made a groundbreaking discussion on “remote nationalism: transnational political identity and practice of discrete ethnic groups”.

Based on the existing research results at home and abroad, and based on the theoretical perspective of “long-distance nationalism”, this paper studies the characteristics, performance and substantive impact of American Indian “long-distance nationalism”.

Results

From the end of the XIX century to the beginning of the XX century, the number of Indian ethnic groups in the United States increased rapidly, and once became the third largest Asian group in the United States on the scale of more than 10,000 people¹. Most of the Indians who lived in the United States in the early days were seafarers from East India (including today Bangladesh and West

¹ According to the United States Department of Homeland Security, recorded Indian immigrants to the United States began in 1820, but since then growth has been slow, until the beginning of the 20th century there was more than a thousand growth rates.

Bengal, India) and farmers from West India (Pakistan and Punjab, India), but a significant number of them did not acquire local legal status and were expatriates rather than immigrants living in the United States.

During the First World War of the XX century, with the rise of the Indian national independence movement, the American Indian consciousness of “long-distance nationalism” began to awaken. Britain increased its exploitation of the colonies in World War I and promised under the pressure of the Congress Party that India would become a “self-government” within the British Empire after the war in order to fight for Indian troops. However, instead of fulfilling its promise, Britain, after the war, brutally suppressed the Indian people who fought for their own rights and carried out the Amritze tragedy in Punjab, India”². At that time, the vast majority (85%) of the Indian population in the United States were farmers from Punjab, India [3]. As a result, he was extremely angry with the tragedy in his ancestral country and actively participated in political activities such as donations and demonstrations and solidarity against India in the United States.

However, due to the alliance between the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as the exclusion and discrimination of American whites against Asian immigrants, the “long-distance nationalism” mood and behavior of Indian Americans have aroused strong resentment by the authorities. Not only many Indian expatriates have been deported, but also many laws have been introduced to strictly restrict the immigrants of Indian ethnic groups. For example, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in 1923 that Indian immigrants could not become American citizens because of their skin color and culture [4]. It not only fundamentally negates the possibility of Indians emigrating to the United States, but also makes Indians who have acquired legal citizenship become once again a marginalized group in American society. With the decline in the number and social status of Indian ethnic groups, the newly awakened “long-distance nationalism” of American Indians returned to silence again, a phenomenon that did not last until 1946³. It was only then that the introduction of the law was reversed.

In the middle and late 20th century, with the continuous improvement of group size, population quality and economic status, the “long-distance

² The Amritze massacre was carried out by British colonial forces on April 13, 1919. The colonial government believed that 379 people had been killed, but later the official Indian government believed that about 1000 people had been killed in the crackdown.

³ In 1946, the Luce-Celler Bill not only redeclared the legal American citizenship of Indian immigrants, but also allowed 100 Indians to emigrate legally to the United States each year.

nationalism” of American Indians has been presented in various fields such as political society and so on. “Liyin” is not only a kind of political slogan / posture, but increasingly transformed into a continuous political practice. The Indian population in the United States has grown from 10, 000 in 1965 to more than 1.67 million in 2020, and the improvement in the quality of the population is to make Indian Americans among the high-income ethnic groups in the United States, which provides a material basis for the “long-distance nationalism” surrounding the interests of India, where they personally promote the consumption level of Indian families and the real growth of the country's GDP⁴ through “remittances”. And began to try to use their social status in the United States to exert a comprehensive influence. As Raja Mohan, a prominent strategic scientist published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India, said, he believes that “there are a large number of overseas Indians and outstanding achievements, and they become the strongest support for India's rise and a manifestation of India's global soft power” [5]. The Indian government also recognized the great energy of overseas Indian people at the end of the 20th century, so it specially amended the Indian nationality Law at the Cabinet meeting on May 6, 2003, and decided to grant Indian people living in eight major western developed countries (the United States, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Italy, Ireland, Canada, Australia, etc.) the status of “dual nationality”. Subsequently, on December 22 of that year, a congressional bill was passed again to allow Indian people with 16 nationalities, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, to apply for Indian nationality at the same time to recognize their dual nationality. This position of the Indian government is not only an affirmation of the overseas Indian people's development of India, but also a way of “political identity” to further stimulate the feelings and actions of overseas Indian “long-distance nationalism”.

At the beginning of the XXI century, Indian Americans have become one of the most important minority groups in the political and economic system of the United States. They play an important role in the positioning and decision-making of US-India relations. They use the external resources they have to directly assist the internal and external problems faced by the ancestral country India. During this period, the social status of Indian Americans has been further improved, the most prominent symbol is that Indians have entered the “core

⁴ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of the total economic output of a country. It is the sum of all the goods and services produced within a country over a given period.

decision-making level” in the political and economic field of the United States. Both federal / local government and large enterprises have a large number of Indians as leadership. They use their own resources to actively participate in the political practice of the United States, especially pay particular attention to matters related to India's interests, and assist their ancestral countries to achieve a breakthrough in political diplomacy and economic and cultural development. For example, the controversial US-India Nuclear Agreement in 2006⁵.

The reason why it was passed in both houses is entirely the result of the comprehensive influence of Indian Americans in all walks of life in the United States: on the one hand, Indian-American lobbying groups actively enlist the support of members of both houses of Congress; on the other hand, they use the status of some Indian federal officials to organize high-level political forums to promote India's views on the nuclear issue. On the other hand, it is to fully mobilize public opinion and conduct a public defense in famous American media (such as the New York Times, the Washington Times, the National Public Radio, etc.) [6]. A bill essentially “nuclear proliferation” is packaged as an agreement to safeguard the “nuclear non-proliferation regime” and “US-India relations”. Thus, it can be seen that the “long-distance nationalism” of American Indians has been able to safeguard or even expand the interests of their ancestral countries by influencing the core decision-making levels of the United States. As former US Senator Burnbeck commented on the influence of Indian Americans: “the success of Indian immigrants in various fields has contributed to their active involvement in politics, and now Indian Americans have far more influence and ability than they actually have” [7, p. 329].

Discussion

According to the different positions of discrete ethnic groups towards their ancestral countries, Schiller marked anti-colonialism, separatist, seeking regime change and transnational political participation as the characteristics of distance nationalists. American Indian Americans also show the above characteristics in the historical process of American social and political practice, but in the context of the new era, they show the following three aspects of uniqueness.

⁵ At first, the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States strongly opposed the “US-India Nuclear Agreement,” believing that this violated the original intention of the United States to establish a “nuclear non-proliferation regime,” and ran counter to the national interests of the United States. But after lobbying for it, US lawmakers changed their position and turned to agree to such a nuclear agreement in India's national interest.

The Color of Elitism is Strong

The biggest difference between Indian Americans and Indian expatriates living in other countries is that their own elite color is extremely strong, which is to some extent influenced by American immigration policy. Before 1965, the American immigration law extended the quota system based on the “national origin clause” in 1920. Indian immigrants to the United States can only rely on a limited number of “family reunion immigrants”, both in terms of population size and quality and skills. In 1965, the United States adopted the Immigration and Naturalization Act (also known as Hart Keller Act), which abolished the quota system and strengthened the openness of “skilled immigration”. Since then, the elite from all walks of life in India have begun to emigrate to the United States. In the first 10 years of the immigration bill alone, 20, 000 scientists, 25000 doctors and 40, 000 engineers in India emigrated to the United States, accounting for as much as 95 per cent of India's total immigration [8, p. 14]. Of course, India's intellectual elite yearning for the United States is also an important reason for a large number of skilled immigrants. According to statistics since the 1970s, the proportion of Indian high-skilled talents choosing the United States as a destination among developed countries is as high as 80% [9].

Because of the high proportion of Indian elite in the United States, it shows the political practice of “long-distance nationalism”, not only traditional demonstrations, electoral solidarity and media propaganda, but also implicit political lobbying, economic assistance and technology transfer with typical elite nationalist behavior. For example, since 2001, Indian Americans have further strengthened their lobbying for both parties in the United States, and the resulting “Indian Policy Seminar in the United States Congress” has become an important platform for Indian Americans to lobby members of Congress to strive for decisions that are beneficial to their own ethnic and ancestral countries, India [10]. As Indian influence continues to expand, James M. Lindsay, former vice chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, predicted as early as 2002: “in the next few years, Indian Americans are most likely to develop into an important political force” support [11, p. 762].

Interconnection of Transnational Capital Interests

At present, a large proportion of the chief executives of American multinational corporations are held by American Indian Americans, so they show their “long-distance nationalism” demand for their ancestral country India in the

United States, and at the same time, they represent the interests of transnational capital in the Indian market. Among them, India, as a global arm purchasing power, the United States military-industrial complex attaches great importance to the potential of the Indian market, so it hopes to stimulate nationalism in India and the long-distance nationalism of American Indians by means of regional tensions, and promote the expansion of American military products in the Indian market. This is also an important reason why Indian-American Vivek Lall has been able to serve as senior management of many American military giants, such as Thor, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, General Atomic and so on. Vivek Lall strives to promote arms sales cooperation and military technology exchanges between the United States and India, and has played a key role in almost all US-India military cooperation projects, which is not only the result that American military giants want to see, but also the result of the development of India's military industry and core technology by American Indians. For example, in February 2020, it used his role as a member of the Federal Aviation Advisory Council of the United States to play a key role in a number of important US-India aerospace and defense manufacturing transactions and cooperation. It can even be said that he has promoted the “Pan-Indian Strategic Industrial Cooperation” of the United States on his own [12]. In addition, he also promoted the transfer of manufacturing supply chain to India through the particularity of the military industry, transferring the key and complex F16 wing production line from Israel to India during his tenure in Lockheed Martin [13]. It has promoted the localization of many kinds of American weapons in India.

The “long-distance nationalism” of American Indian executives such as Viviral is common in all industries in the United States, with Indian companies appointing Indian executives to 1/3, far more than other minorities, especially Internet technology companies in Silicon Valley, such as Motorola, Nokia, MasterCard, Microsoft, etc., almost all of them are Indian chief executives. Therefore, in looking at the position of “distance nationalism” of Indian Americans, we should also emphasize the capital interests, market demand and the power brokers endorsed by them, and the combination of them promotes the sustainability of “distance nationalism” of Indian Americans.

Synergetic Integration of Internal and External Mechanisms

Different from the traditional “long-distance nationalism” in the last century, Indian Americans have a high degree of organization in expressing their feelings

and behavior, and attach great importance to the construction of institutionalization, so as to promote the goal of “long-distance nationalism” in the system.

On the one hand, by establishing and strengthening the political cooperation mechanism between the United States and India, Indian Americans provide effective, legal and reasonable official channels for the achievement of the goal of “long-distance nationalism”. Indian Americans actively participated in the political activities of the United States. As early as the 1988 US presidential election, Indian Americans organized US \$100000 and US \$650000 for Republicans and Democrats respectively, initially demonstrating their political power to all sectors of American society. By the beginning of the 21st century, the Biden administration had consolidated the power of Indian Americans in American politics. As many as 17 of the 20 Indian-Americans on the Biden campaign held key positions in the White House, which also marked the overall display of Indian influence in American politics, so that President J. Biden personally admitted that “Indian Americans are taking over the United States” [5, 14]. With their great influence in politics, Indians have established a series of official channels of communication around US-India relations, such as the US-India political Action Committee (USINPAC) and the “connection between Indian and Indian ethnic groups” in the US Congress, which are political tools for Indian Americans to exert influence in US politics and safeguard the interests of Indian and Indian ethnic groups.

On the other hand, Indian Americans strengthen their own internal integration and enhance their own cohesion in order to consolidate the organizational foundation of “long-distance nationalism”. With the continuous improvement of the number and social status of Indian ethnic groups, Indian ethnic organizations representing different interest groups have been rising rapidly since the 1970s, covering political, economic, cultural and other fields [15] instead of competing with each other, these organizations have cooperated and developed with each other, such as the Indian-American Forum on political Education (IAFPE), the Indian Union (AIA) and the National Union of Indian American Associations (NFIA), which facilitated a joint meeting in Washington at the beginning of the XXI century to seek joint efforts to expand their influence, and subsequently held a joint reception on Capitol Hill. To show the unity and social influence of Indian people from all walks of life. In addition, American Indian immigrants have achieved remarkable results in the fields of joint inter-ethnic participation in politics, litigation, resistance to protest, the use

of mass media and other media for their own interests and claims for the rights of their ancestral countries [16].

On the whole, although the purpose of American Indian “long-distance nationalism” is still around the interests of ancestral countries, the specific forms and procedures have broken through Anderson and Schiller's traditional definition of “long-distance nationalism”. Rallies, processions, violent demonstrations and material donations have been replaced by political lobbying, technical assistance and capital bundling. On the one hand, this change is due to the evolution of political practice itself in the context of globalization, on the other hand, it is also determined by the nature of the American Indian class.

*The Political and Economic Influence of Indian
“long-Distance Nationalism”*

“Long-distance nationalism” is a kind of political intention dominated by sensibility, but sensibility is immediate, temporary and even impulsive. Only rational “interest anchoring” can realize this perceptual continuity and deepening, and the result of “interest anchoring” is bound to seek political and economic feedback or the expansion of influence. From this perspective, the reason why American Indian “long-distance nationalism” can continue to ferment is not only emotionally maintaining nostalgia for the ancestral country, but also because of the demands of political and economic interests and the display of influence.

On the one hand, the “long-distance nationalism” of Indian Americans will further deepen the “common interests” between the United States and India, and this trend will become increasingly prominent with the continuous expansion of Indian influence. As early as during the Biden campaign, he publicly said that “as president, I will continue to rely on Indian-Americans to unite the United States and India.” on his own cabinet list nominated in January 2021, only 1 percent of Indian-Americans contributed more than 20 candidates, including Vice President Kamala Harris ⁶. Whether it is a public statement or a substantive personnel arrangement, the Biden government has fully reflected the radiation power of the political and economic influence of American Indians. This practical influence has become an important platform and tool for Indians

⁶ Kamala Harris, one of her own names, Kamala (Kamala), was taken by her Indian mother Shyamala Gopalan, implying India's national flower "Lotus" in Indian, expressing her deep feelings for her ancestral country, India.

to practice “long-distance nationalism”. The Biden government abandoned its tough position against India on many issues, such as the trade dispute between the United States and India, human rights in Kashmir, and arms sales cooperation between India and Russia, and instead sought to achieve a breakthrough in quasi-alliance relations, such as the basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on Geo-Spatial Cooperation signed at the end of 2021 and the Maritime Information sharing Technology Agreement, which is being discussed in early 2022. In fact, India-US relations have been upgraded from ordinary partners to “quasi-allies”.

On the other hand, the “long-distance nationalism” of Indian people will become an important thrust of the “India-Pacific strategy” and will be the coupling point of interests for the two countries to compete with China. Because the United States has always adhered to the Cold War mentality, and there is a realistic territorial dispute between India and China, the two countries have interests in the field of competition with China. Under the background of “India-India strategy,” they have successively formed the “alliance of four countries” between the United States, India, Japan and Australia, and the “four-sided mechanism” between the United States, India, Japan and Israel. The “long-distance nationalism” of American Indians supporting the interests of India will be covered by the continuing tension in Sino-US relations, and at the same time provide opportunities and windows for further deepening the cooperation between the two countries under the “India-Pacific Strategy.” the increasingly close relations between the two countries will once again promote the overall extension of Indian influence in the United States. Although this is an unstable variable for global peace and development, as far as the interests of American Indians are concerned, the “Indian strategy” around the Chinese issue is a treacherous “virtuous circle”.

Of course, there are also huge political differences among Indian Americans, especially the differences in ideology and ruling ideas between the Congress Party and the Indian people`s Party. For example, senior Indian officials in the United States have generally expressed dissatisfaction with Modi's government in the aspects of human rights and farmers' rights and interests in Kashmir. However, it should also be deeply understood that the further strengthening of the willingness to cooperate between the United States and India and the continuous expansion of the influence of American Indians are not only the driving force but also the opportunity to consolidate the ethnic basis and the tendency of public opinion of Indian “long-distance nationalism”.

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Сведения об авторах / Information about authors

Пин Цюй – научный сотрудник.

Чэндуский институт мировых отношений, Чэнду, Китай.

E-mail: 870100179@qq.com

Ван Цзяньпин – научный сотрудник.

Научно-исследовательский институт Южной Азии Сычуаньского университета, Чэнду; Институт зарубежных интересов Китая Шэньчжэньского университета, Шэньчжэнь, Китай.

Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Ping Qu – Research fellow.

Chengdu Institute of World Affairs, Chengdu, China.

E-mail: 870100179@qq.com

Wang Jianping – Research fellow.

South Asia Research Institute of Sichuan University, Chengdu; Institute for China's Overseas Interests of Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, China.

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