



# Practices in taste maintenance. The case of Indian diaspora markets

**Ruben Gowricharn**

VU University, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Journal of Consumer Culture  
0(0) 1–19  
© The Author(s) 2017



Reprints and permissions:  
sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/1469540517717784  
journals.sagepub.com/home/joc



## Abstract

This article centres on taste as a crucial driver of consumer behaviour and addresses the issue of how ethnic tastes in hybridized diaspora communities are maintained. The most common answer to this question refers to glocalization, which is briefly described as the adoption (modification) of global elements in the local culture. The article argues that the glocalization of taste occurs through consumer practices, but the concept of practices has been found difficult to apply, as there is no unified definition of it. Accordingly, each time the question of ‘taste for what?’ may be asked. Taste for dresses is something quite different, for example, than the taste for food – and so are the related practices. The concept of taste is therefore specific, as are the operationalized consumer practices. Put differently, taste appears to be a fuzzy concept that must be specified in each case in order to disclose its concrete meaning. Consequently, the article specifies that taste is shaped, maintained and expressed in and through consumer practices that need to display cultural scripts and institutional regularities in the lived culture of the ethnic community. Furthermore, the ethnic lived culture is differentiated from the concepts of ‘everyday ethnicity’, ‘cultural norm images’ and ‘invention of tradition’, detailing the home culture, the community culture and the celebration of traditions, respectively, to highlight how script-driven institutional practices sustain diaspora-related taste. Acknowledging that the specific mode of glocalization varies across diaspora communities, this article elucidates the argument with a case study by Dutch Hindustanis. The article claims that despite being a case study, the maintenance of taste applies to all communities that constitute the Indian diaspora market.

## Keywords

Practices, taste, glocalization, Indian diaspora, institutions, cultural scripts

---

### Corresponding author:

Ruben Gowricharn, Angstel 5, 3068 GB Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Email: rgow@xs4all.nl

## **Introduction**

In economics, markets have been conceived as coherent units with buyers and sellers responding to price signals, quantities and quality. Despite the emergence of a diverse corpus of heterodox economics (Colander, 2000), this highly simplified microeconomic conception remains central to demand theory (Stiglitz and Walsh, 2006). Taste is acknowledged as being foundational for consumer behaviour but is relegated to the field of culture, which is considered to be an exogenous variable (Guiso et al., 2006; cf. Storr, 2013). Consumers, and more generally economic actors, are conceived as having predetermined similar tastes. This assumption of predetermined and similar taste is a crucial assumption to comprehend mass sales of products.

Taste, being a driver of consumption, is often used interchangeably with preferences, wants and needs (Becker, 1996; Storr, 2013; Throsby, 2001). Apart from conceptual distinctions, this array of concepts raises the question of whether they all are culturally determined. Arguably, preferences, wants and needs are not necessarily the same thing, nor are they solely biologically determined. Food, for example, is considered to be a basic biological need. However, what is eaten, when and how it occurs, at what time and with whom are culturally shaped and a matter of taste (Warde, 1997). Consequently, the way a need is fulfilled (e.g. food) varies across cultures. In addition, taste is conceptually different from preference, since the latter expresses an individual ranking of commodities, while taste is a cultural (collective) force that requires no comparison.

The issue of taste becomes more troubling when we leave the national realm and consider diaspora markets that consist of culturally related ethnic communities. However, several authors point out that diaspora communities become hybrid communities for several reasons – for example, they may adapt to new circumstances and adopt elements of different cultures (Ang, 2003; Anthias, 1998, 2001). This implies that diaspora communities may differ significantly from each other. Despite these differences, a common ethnic taste is foundational for the diaspora market but cannot be taken for granted because of hybridity. Many authors suggest that tastes internationally converge through global acculturation (Aizenman and Brooks, 2005; Cleveland and Laroche, 2006; Yan and Bissell, 2014). Most often these studies report little more than actual purchases and preferences, which are taken as a reflection of international taste convergence. Although this view is questioned on different grounds (Lizardo, 2008; Yan and Bissell, 2014; Zukin and Maguire, 2004), none of the mentioned studies address how taste similarity in diaspora markets is engendered. The pressing question therefore is how to account for the similarity in ethnic taste in diaspora markets.

This article centres on taste as a crucial driver of consumer behaviour and addresses the issue of how ethnic tastes in hybridized diaspora communities are maintained. The most common answer to this question refers to glocalization, which is briefly described as the adoption (modification) of global elements in the local culture. The article argues that the glocalization of taste occurs through consumer practices, but the concept of practices has been found difficult to apply,

as there is no unified definition of it. Accordingly, each time the question of ‘taste for what?’ may be asked. Taste for dresses is something quite different, for example, than the taste for food – and so are the related practices. The concept of taste is therefore specific, as are the operationalized consumer practices. Put differently, taste appears to be a fuzzy concept that must be specified in each case in order to disclose its concrete meaning (Haack, 1996). Consequently, the article specifies that taste is shaped, maintained and expressed in and through consumer practices that need to display cultural scripts and institutional regularities in the lived culture of the ethnic community. Furthermore, the ethnic lived culture is differentiated from the concepts of ‘everyday ethnicity’, ‘cultural norm images’ and ‘invention of tradition’, detailing the home culture, the community culture and the celebration of traditions, respectively, to highlight how script-driven institutional practices sustain diaspora-related taste. Acknowledging that the specific mode of glocalization varies across diaspora communities, this article elucidates the argument with a case study by Dutch Hindustanis. The article claims that despite being a case study, the maintenance of taste applies to all communities that constitute the Indian diaspora market.

The theoretical relevance of this article includes an extension of the concept of taste from the national realm to hybrid diaspora markets, an issue that is rarely addressed. The application and specification of the concept of consumer practices elucidate how ethnic taste in diaspora communities is maintained. Furthermore, the article argues that although community activities are specific, it is insufficiently underscored that ethnic consumer practices need to be institutional and specific to cultural scripts. In connecting the concept of taste with consumer practices, the article not only contributes to the concept of practices but also elucidates how glocalization occurs, thus, producing similarity of ethnic taste.

In the next section, I discuss the concepts of taste and practice in the lived culture to account for glocalization. The cultural homophily rendered is critical for the operation of the diaspora markets, as it shapes similarities in cultural practices that sustain and express taste. Section Research population and data collection outlines the researched community, the research strategy and the collection of data. Section Practices of taste describes the adoption and usage of the Indian culture in the Netherlands, specifically the home culture, the community (public) culture and the celebration of tradition, thus, elucidating how cultural scripts materialize in institutional practices that shape, maintain and express taste. The last section underscores that diaspora markets are bonded by ethnic taste and suggests some wider theoretical implications.

## **Practice and taste maintenance**

In most literature, the concept of taste remains implicit or poorly defined. The economic literature does not distinguish between taste and preference (Aizenman and Brooks, 2005; Becker, 1996; Bisin and Verdier, 2010). The dominant perspective is that of rankings, which are disclosed by actual shopping behaviour and

called revealed preferences. One exception is Becker, who argues that taste or preference depends on personal capital (including personal experiences that affect current and future utilities) and social capital (past action by peers). This is a dubious representation of the cultural determination of taste, as it remains restricted to individuals and leaves out collective activities (see also Sassatelli, 2010). A broader economic perspective is offered by Bisin and Verdier (2010), who, after reviewing the economic literature on cultural transmission, collect mostly microeconomic variables to account for cultural heterogeneity. From their perspective too, the individual predominates, while the study fails to account for the cultural nature of taste.

In sociology, the issue of taste is similarly treated. Bourdieu (1984), one of the very few to define taste, refers to it as follows:

... the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of life style, a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same expressive intention in the specific logic of each of the symbolic sub-spaces, furniture, clothing, language or body hexis. (p. 173)

In his view, taste is the product of class and power relations, an ingredient of the cultural capital of the middle class and a way to maintain distinctions and class hegemony. Taste in the Bourdieuan sense has less to do with market behaviour. In another work, Bourdieu (2005) argues that markets are constructed by the state along with the symbolic meaning attached by the consumer, whose taste is primarily a class feature rather than foundational of market behaviour.

Although many sociological accounts acknowledge that the operation of markets depends on cultural forces, they do not deal explicitly with the consumer (Biggart and Beamish, 2003; Fligstein and Dautar, 2007; Levin, 2008). A fruitful perspective is offered in the sociology of consumption, specifically the strong tendency to frame taste in terms of subcultures (Featherstone, 1990; Warde, 2015; Zukin and Maguire, 2004). In this context, Warde (1997: 197) argues that consumption is guided by exchange values, use values and identity values. As a consequence, purchasing commodities is not the same as using them, since exchange, use and identity formation or maintenance are separate activities (Warde, 2015). As taste is expressed by use values that serve to express identity, these elements are closely related.

Arguably, the bulk of these studies presume that taste varies across classes and subcultures, while basically sharing the same taste. When applied to multicultural societies, this basic uniformity runs counter to limitations, as the tastes of disparate ethnic (minority) groups are different. This is a serious limitation, since it glosses over the possibility that taste may be specific across ethnic groups in multicultural societies. One notable exception is Warde (1997), who refers to a cultural variation, including ethnic groups, but does not elaborate on it. The sheer presence of an ethnic specific taste warrants the concept of 'ethnic taste'. Viewed from the

perspective of ethnic taste, some commodities are just intended to satisfy instrumental needs, like cars or household appliances, although they may contain elements of taste when it comes to brand and design (Warde, 2015; Zukin and Maguire, 2004; cf. Holt, 1995). However, some other elements, like food, smells, dress, music, beauty and physical appearance, are expressions of collective (ethnic) taste, even though they may display variations according to education, class position, acculturation and individual appreciation.

Ethnic taste implies purchasing and using commodities and services that sustain the ethnic identity. For this reason, the consumer behaviour needs to be part of the lived culture. The concept of lived culture is described by Schutz and Luckmann (1974) as ‘... that province of reality which the wide-awake and normal adult simply takes for granted in the attitude of common sense’ (pp. 3–4). It is a natural world that is obvious to its participants until further notice; it is shared and intersubjective. Gowricharn (2012) juxtaposes this concept of the lived world with the Habermasian idea of the ‘system world’. The latter is formal, abstract and public and comprises a large number of systems and institutions that broadly structure public life. In contrast, lived culture is concrete and private. It consists of daily routinized habits, including those of an ethnic, creolized and assimilated nature.

The lived culture consists of disparate activities that are denoted with ‘practices’. The concept of practices has several applications and meanings. Useful reviews of the concept are provided by Feldman and Orlikowski (2011), Rasche and Chia (2009), Røpke (2009), Schatzki et al. (2001) and Warde (2005, 2014). Feldman and Orlikowski (2011: 1241) summarize the principles of practice theory as situated actions that are consequential for the reproduction of social life, the rejection of dualism as a way of theorizing and relations that are mutually constitutive. Reckwitz (2002) argues that practice theory aims to fill the gap between structure and agency and transcends a number of dualities in the social sciences, such as those between mind and body or action and reflection. He describes practice theory as a theory that ‘invites us to regard agents as carriers of routinized, oversubjective complexes of bodily movements, of forms of interpreting, knowing how and wanting and of the usage of things’ (Reckwitz, 2002: 259).

Regarding the field of consumption, it is Warde (2005, 2014, 2015) who repeatedly probes the concept of practice. Acknowledging that consumption is subject to ambivalence, consisting of purchasing and of using up, Warde (2005) explains that consumption is not in itself a practice but a moment in almost every practice. This makes the individual an intersection of many practices. Warde (2005) summarizes ‘practice as consumption’ as comprising interconnected forms of bodily and mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, understanding, know how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. Practice concerns doing things, as well as its representation. From this perspective, taste is shaped, maintained and expressed in and through consumption practices.

The consumption practices need to be part of the ethnic lived world to meet the requirement of routine behaviour. This combined regularity and cultural specificity

of the practices imply cultural scripts. Scripts presume that social behaviour is scripted. Often the script behaviour is unconscious and restricted to an event. The literature distinguishes between cognitive scripts, social scripts, cultural scripts and shopping scripts. Erasmus et al. (2002) advocate the application of the script concept in consumer research because 'it could shed light on consumers' expectations, proactive planning as well as situational decision making processes and behaviour'. They refer to scripts in general terms as 'a sequence of goal directed actions that are causally and temporally ordered and includes the relevant people, objects and locations'. However, their discussion of the operation of scripts is embedded in an individual learning perspective. Although the script literature offers the concept of cultural scripts to articulate specific cultural norms, values and practices (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2004; Triandis et al., 1984; Winterrowd et al., 2015), the focus is on behaviour and neglects the use of objects and their identity function.

The relevant consumer practices can be found both at the micro- and at the meso-level. Religion and music are cases in point. They are typical activities conducted in households and enabled by institutions in the community. For example, professing a religion or listening to music may refer to practices conducted at home, but they presuppose churches, temples and mosques or radio stations broadcasting music. Another example specific to ethnic minorities consists of the preparation of ethnic food, which is conditional on shops selling the required ethnic goods (Mankekar, 2002). Households, temples, radio stations and 'ethnic shops' are (ethnic) institutions. Typical of institutions, they enforce, internalize, routinize and transmit, becoming sediment of the cultural history of the community (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). These ethnic institutions, such as cinemas and festivals, are located outside households. The relevant practices that elucidate taste are, thus, located both inside and outside households and are critical for opportunities provided by institutions. This extra-individual dimension implies that the concept of practice should be extended to the participation in communal institutions of the ethnic group (Yaish and Katz, 2010).

Institutions do not disclose the ethnic specificity of the behaviour. For that, 'cultural scripts' provide a useful specification (Barley and Tolbert 1997). Scripted behaviour is culturally specific and needs to be institutionalized to capture the ethnic nature of the practice. By linking the concept of institutions with cultural scripts, it is possible to capture concrete activities in the ethnic lived culture as consumer practices sustaining taste. Put differently: The consumer practices underscoring taste maintenance are institutionally embedded and subject to cultural scripts.

Note that taste, along with the subsequent cultural scripts and institutionalized practices, also changes, mostly due to demographic changes, increased welfare levels and acculturation. Consequently, a change in ethnic taste can occur as a result of an increase in ethnic salience, creolizing or assimilation and may produce three outcomes: the salience, blurring or maintenance of ethnic features (Cornell and Hartmann, 2007). All three outcomes may occur simultaneously in one ethnic community. Since my focus is on the maintenance of tastes, which presupposes the

ethnification of diaspora communities, it rules out diverging tendencies of creolization and assimilation.

The concept of diaspora requires some specification, especially regarding the Indian experience. Indian communities consist of migrants originating from different regions, characterized by many languages, religions and local traditions. Moreover, they have migrated to different destinations in several epochs. Depending on their resources and the response of the host society, their mode of integration has also differed, specifically due to unequal degrees of ethnification, creolization and assimilation. Present-day diaspora communities comprise several generations, which add to the internal hybridity (Jayaram, 2011; Oonk, 2007; Parekh et al., 2003). This hybridity of the Indian diaspora communities highlights that taste and related practices have been evolving through time. Nevertheless, they have performed as markets for Indian products. One example is Bollywood, which represents a 'fictive culture', eagerly consumed by diaspora communities, as well as by non-Indian communities such as those in the Middle East, black Africa and Eastern Europe. Within the Indian diaspora communities, Bollywood has an impact on daily life in various ways (Gowricharn, 2017; Kaur and Sinha, 2005; Rao, 2010). Their market function is only comprehensible if these communities share similarity in taste.

The similarity is engendered by glocalization, which connects the global and the local, referring to the absorption of global cultural elements by local cultures. Often referred to examples of glocalization include the worldwide ubiquity of MacDonalds and Coca-Cola. Robertson (2012), outlining the micro-marketing origins of the concept, argues that there is no contradiction between the global and the local; rather, globalization has been involved in the creation of 'home', 'locality' and 'community'. In his view, the global should not be juxtaposed against the local, since the former presupposes the linking of many localities: without the local there would be no global, and the global always has local origins. In this context, a crucial difference should be pointed out between the globalization emanating from the United States and Europe and that originating from the Indian subcontinent. While the former is based on the Western economic, political and military supremacy, the latter is restricted to its diaspora communities and based on cultural and historical affinity. Consequently, the globalization of Indian culture comprises highly specific items, including Bollywood, religion, diaspora tourism and the search for roots.

As with acculturation, elements from the globalizing culture are selectively adopted and adjusted to local practices and uses. This is not a new phenomenon; many scholars point out this selective incorporation. Examples include Douglas (1982), who advocates the selectivity of adopted elements in acculturation, and Hall (1980), who accentuates the encoding and decoding performed by the actors involved. Adopting Indian commodities signals, for example, home possessions, cultural identity, a feeling of home and relations with co-ethnics (Gowricharn, 2017; Mehta and Belk, 1991; see also Money, 2007). Glocalization, thus conceived, presupposes some entanglement of the global culture in the local community

(Kraidy, 2002). However, the role of the actors in the maintenance of taste in homes and communities, as well as how localities are shaped and how they are connected with the diaspora, is rarely addressed. The concept of institutional practices as embedded in ethnic scripts elucidates this process.

Warde (1997) argues that consumption ‘can no longer be encapsulated in the question “who buys what?” but must become one of “who obtains what services (and goods), under what conditions are those goods delivered and to what use they are put?”’ (p. 19). Indian ethnic communities obtain their commodities and services through three major channels: via the normal global market, including internet shopping; via diaspora tourism and gifts; and from downloading commodities from the Internet. In the first case, entrepreneurs are involved in the importing and exporting of commodities or offer their services in the local diaspora market (Mankekar, 2002). In the second case, members of diaspora communities visit India, often for several reasons, including purchasing commodities for personal use and for giving (Gowricharn, 2017). The third channel consists of the (often unpaid) acquisition of Indian goods through the Internet, especially downloading (Bollywood) movies, songs and gadgets (Elahi, 2014).

The sustenance of a common taste is manifested in behaviour that fits the cultural scripts of the ethnic community and is institutionalized in practices in the lived culture. Since the concept of lived culture is too broad to focus on, it is conveniently broken down into the home culture, the community culture and the celebration of traditions. The home culture is a proxy for daily routines in everyday life as far as these comprise daily family life; the community culture refers to the life in the ethnic community, especially the participation in ethnic institutional activities; and the celebration of traditions, some of which are invented, are recurring rare events. Each category of practices is sustained by its specific institutions, which cannot be taken for granted, since ethnification is not an inexorable outcome. All the practices in the lived culture have been inherited and affected by ethnification and assimilation (Hennion, 2007). Section ‘Practices of taste’ outlines the practices in the lived culture of the diaspora community, which have been foundational for the demand exerted by consumers of Indian products.

## **Research population and data collection**

The research population consists of Dutch Hindustanis, descendants of indentured labourers who, from 1873 to 1917, were shipped to Suriname, then a Dutch plantation colony, to replace freed black slaves. Most of these immigrants originated from the north-eastern part of India. During the run-up to constitutional independence in 1975, they migrated on a large scale to the Netherlands, mainly in fear of race riots. In the Netherlands, they regrouped themselves ethnically with major settlements in The Hague, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht. At present, the population amounts to about 175,000 persons (Choenni, 2014). Hindustanis have a reputation for being a successful integrated ethnic minority, especially the second generation. An increasing part is assimilating, as expressed in mixed marriage and

the rise of Western lifestyles; another category combines Surinamese and Dutch Hindustani culture with Indian culture; while the third category concentrates on the Indian heritage (Choenni, 2014). Consequently, the idea of a homeland in the diaspora is ambiguous: for most Hindustanis, Suriname, the Netherlands and India perform the function of a homeland (cf. Brubaker, 2005).

In the Netherlands, three important preconditions emerged that account for the closer relation between the Dutch Hindustanis and India. The first is the rise of the Internet. This enables instant, detailed and almost complete overviews of the commodities offered by the Indian market. The second is the consumption of Bollywood movies and related products, such as dresses and music. This gave rise to a section of cultural entrepreneurs in the major Dutch cities selling Indian commodities. The third is the increasing diaspora tourism to India. In the 1990s, this tourism consisted predominantly of a search for family roots; later, religious motives gained relevance along with the desire to visit movie locations (Gowricharn, 2017).

It should be pointed out that although Dutch Hindustanis are part of the Indian diaspora, they represent a specific segment within the Caribbean People of Indian Origin (PIOs), one that does not share the British colonial history and lacks the obvious command of Hindi or English. Consequently, this population is at a large distance from India compared with the English-speaking PIO's and the non-resident Indians (NRIs) in Anglo-Western societies. Gowricharn (2009) argues that despite the larger distance, India has become a 'source culture' from which Dutch Hindustanis obtain culture through tourism and the Internet, notably downloading movies and music, practising dancing styles and engaging in online shopping. Similar activities are reported in later studies (Elahi, 2014).

The data for this research were obtained from participation in the community for over three decades. As a member of the community and a university professor, and having lived for over 40 years in the Netherlands, I have often been invited to cultural happenings, including cultural shows, feasts, ceremonies and celebrations, and to participate in Hindustani television and radio programmes to deliver public lectures about the Hindustani community and Dutch ethnic minorities. This participation has included visiting families, friends and other people who appreciated my visit because of my social status, watching Bollywood movies in people's homes and in cinemas, watching changing house decoration, visiting India, discussing diaspora tourism with community members (including tour operators), listening to Hindustani radio and watching Hindustani television, attending community celebrations like Milan (the equivalent is called Kumb Mela in Britain), Diwali and Holi and attending religious ceremonies. In the course of my participation, I saw the community growing demographically, changing culturally and shifting in orientation from Suriname to India. These activities were participatory, but they were also engaging and part of the debate within the Hindustani community about values such as liberty, respect and ethnic identity.

Riemer (1977) calls this type of 'fieldwork' opportunistic research. He pleads for researchers to use this knowledge at hand and to use familiar situations or events to their advantage. Social scientists are insiders in many communities and have access to an enormous stock of first-hand knowledge that is often neglected. Opportunistic research comes closest to participant observation and data collection in focus groups. However, the type of research and data collection exceeds the normal routine of participant observation. Opportunistic research usually covers a long time span and enables changes to be discerned in the community. Moreover, it offers the opportunity to cross-check data numerous times and to discuss the findings with key informants and participants. While the absence of recorded data compels one to rely on memory (and may trick the observer), the participation over a long period and discussion about the observations with community members offer repeated opportunities to 'cross-check' data and preclude or minimize distortion in their representation.

Opportunistic research also resembles self-ethnography, in which the researcher is an active and equal participant (Alvesson, 2003). The researcher lives in the natural setting and uses the experiences, knowledge and access to empirical material for research purposes. The intention is to draw attention to what takes place around oneself rather than putting oneself and one's experiences at the centre. Self-ethnography is different from auto-ethnography, in which authors relate their personal experience to the culture. Both types of research suggest that data are collected for research purposes, while opportunistic research is an *ex post* 'strategy'. Because of its highly informal and casual nature, opportunistic research discloses a reality that is less unveiled by a formal research design (Priore, 2006). Consequently, opportunistic research, albeit a rare and *ex post* strategy to obtain and structure data, is a highly reliable method of data collection. The repeated observation and discussion for over three decades are considered a key advantage of the employed methodology.

The focus on Dutch Hindustanis does not mean that the whole community is involved in the consumption of Indian commodities. The community displays an internal variation that ranges from families and individuals who are oriented towards India to those who are seemingly totally assimilated. The latter category is not part of the diaspora market. The part consuming Indian commodities is not restricted to PIOs in the Netherlands. Hindustani PIOs in Suriname, Guyana and Trinidad, Mauritius and Fiji are all involved in the Indian diaspora in the same manner as Dutch Hindustanis (Jayaram, 2011; Kaur and Sinha, 2005; Parekh et al., 2003). While the communities are spatially segmented and hybrid, their taste is similar enough to constitute a diaspora market.

## **Practices of taste**

The argument so far states that taste in the (Indian) diaspora is sustained by institutionalized consumer practices that are subject to cultural scripts and part of the lived culture of the diaspora community. Recall Warde's (2015) conception

that consumer practices comprise interconnected forms of bodily and mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, understanding, know how, states of emotion, motivational knowledge and doing things, as well as their representation. In this section, these practices are highlighted in three domains, namely the home culture, the community culture and the celebration of traditions, all of which are enabled by communal institutions.

### *Home culture*

The home culture comprises the routines at home and the activities within the family and close circles. The part of the home culture that is connected with the taste of the Indian diaspora represents a kind of ‘everyday ethnicity’. Colombo (2015) refers to a similar but broader concept as ‘everyday multiculturalism’ that highlights how differences are produced. Similar to everyday multiculturalism comprising ethnic institutions, networks, traditions, behavioural norms, moral values, customs and so on, the home culture is embedded in a wider ethnic environment. The home culture specifically includes how members of the ethnic community consciously and unconsciously spend their time in the reproduction of their ethnic life at home. This culture of Dutch Hindustanis is inherited from the past, adjusted in and through migration, absorbs culture from the host society and ethnifies due to new cultural flows from India. The home culture comprises the ‘natural taste’, since it is taken for granted and considered pivotal for the ethnic identity. Since the concept is still very broad, as it includes the total material and immaterial culture of Hindustani households, I select some aspects of food, home recreation and home possessions to highlight practices in the ethnic home culture.

The food of the Dutch Hindustanis is recognizably Indian, with typical elements such as dal, roti, the standard use of curry, pepper, the rejection of beef and several vegetables familiar to Indians. Dutch youngsters consider these foodstuffs to be characteristic of their identity (Gowricharn, 2009). As about 60% of the population profess Hinduism (Choenni, 2014) at most religious feasts, such as weddings, masses (katha and hawan) and Diwali (the light feast), standard meals consist of vegetarian Indian food. Since males rarely prepare food and hardly assist women in these activities, women often lament, ‘It is so much work. I cannot prepare all the dishes while having a fulltime job’. One generation ago, these women could count on the support of relatives and friends, but the increase of female labour participation and individualization has diminished this support. Consequently, a new practice in the food scene is to order Indian dishes from take-away restaurants. This is not to say that no other dishes are served. A recent trend on heydays, especially when many people are invited, is to serve less labour-intensive meals, such as nasi and bami, originally dishes from the Javanese in Suriname. This happens mostly at non-religious celebrations, but increasingly these dishes are served at weddings.

Other aspects that are typical of the home culture are Indian (Bollywood) music and the enjoyment of Indian movies. In the Netherlands, the daily ‘Indian’

entertainment of the Hindustani community is taken care of by radio. Local radio stations, which are concentrated in the major Dutch cities and agglomerations, broadcast in Hindi (often alternated with Dutch and a Surinamese variant of Bhojpuri, called Sarnami Hindustani) and play Indian music around the clock daily. First-generation Hindustanis (male and female), referring to movies where a song was played, often say when hearing the song again that ‘This song was acted in film Kangan by Mala Sinha. She was so beautiful then’. Nationwide stations are Radio Amor, Radio Ujala and the online Sunrise Radio, which are subject to competition from YouTube. Women are generally more comfortable listening to the radio while working.

With the advent of the cable and television channel Zee TV, Indian television has gained increased traction with Dutch Hindustani families. In some cities, such as The Hague, this ‘Indian facility’ is offered by several Dutch companies. Indian TV broadcasts Bollywood movies, talk shows, singing contests and documentaries on movie stars. In a similar manner to the radio, it is common to have the TV on at home while working. Listening to the radio is often an individual act, while families tend to view Bollywood movies or talk shows. In addition to television, a major Dutch cinema chain, Pathé, regularly offers Bollywood movies to the public. Visiting Pathé has become a highly popular activity for young and old people alike. It has become part of the going out scene. Thanks to the combination of music, television and cinema, the Hindustani ethnic culture is highly condensed in many homes.

Home decorations of Indian origin are a key element in the houses of many Hindustanis. The volume and the composition of such decorations vary depending on the degree of identification with Indian culture. They also signify what the occupiers consider to be a pleasant home or indicate how ‘Indian’ they are. Home decorations are obtained on visits to India or received as presents from family members or friends (Gowricharn, 2017). They usually include small religious statues and pictures, musical instruments, photographs of visits to India, souvenirs, music CDs, DVDs, incense and tapestries. Many Hindustanis take pride in these artefacts from India, but they gradually become familiar to visitors: ‘I recognise this, you have bought this in Mumbai. It is nice’. These Indian artefacts are increasingly used to shape one’s identity in a modified, lived culture, similar to how Indian emigrants to the United States may take possessions home possessions with them to recreate a culturally familiar environment (Mehta and Belk, 1991). Together with practices around food, music and movies, they reflect a shared taste in diaspora communities.

### *Community culture*

The community culture is the culture outside the home. It represents people’s activities when they present themselves to their co-ethnics in community happenings. Some activities outside the home are recurrent, notably weekend pastimes, family celebrations such as weddings and dance parties, and community festivals

such as the organization of beauty contests and annual religious festivals (Choenni, 2014). A less frequent occurrence comprises events such as public appearances from visiting Bollywood movie stars, which are part of community life. On all these occasions, Hindustanis often dress up, sometimes wearing Indian dresses, and use Indian cosmetics and many other symbols displaying Indian culture. On these occasions, people want to look good, respectable and representative. When Hindustanis go out, Indian aesthetics predominates.

To capture the aspects of Indian aesthetics, I employ the concept of norm images. These are ideal conceptions of man that are present in every culture. The concept of norm images originates in a study on the choice of marriage partners relying on bodily features, notably skin colour. Hoetink (1967), the progenitor of the concept, terms these ideal images 'somatic norm images' and emphasizes that they reflect both aesthetics and socio-economic position. In much later work, and building on Hoetink, Gowricharn (1992, 2002) extends the concept of the cultural norm image to capture aspects of somatics, aesthetics, morals and community culture. Somatic, cultural, moral and aesthetic norm images are intertwined but change over time, although some elements may remain recognizable over a long period. Indian aesthetic norm images in the lived culture of the Hindustani community are easily identified in beauty, dresses and fashion.

The major tastemaker, when it comes to Indian beauty, is Bollywood. This industry conveys the Indian aesthetics, for example, the desired somatic features of a beautiful woman or handsome man. Regarding skin colour, the phenotypes display small variations: women are supposed to be light-skinned, while males are sometimes allowed to be somewhat darker. A few generations ago, the body shape of most actresses could easily have been described as chubby; today they are more in line with Western images of beauty. Bodily features are underscored by fashion. For women, this is a matter of daily routine, especially concerning body care and the use of cosmetics, including the daily use of *kadger* to underline the eyes, oil and other cosmetics, based on Ayurveda principles. Indian costumes, such as the sari for women and sherwani for men, are only worn on special occasions. If these dresses are liked, it is quite common to ask, 'Where did you buy it?' In many cases, the explanations include a story about visiting Mumbai or Delhi (Gowricharn, 2017). The aesthetic norm images underlying the consumption of these commodities are advertised by the community radio, television and new social media, while local firms offer them in the major Dutch cities.

In addition to these items, aesthetics is characterized by sound, specifically music and songs, as well as the associated dancing. Songs and music are easily incorporated into the community, since ethnic radio and TV stations broadcast them regularly. At celebrations, it is customary to have a musical band playing. A large proportion of this music is Bollywood. The qualification of 'beautiful' songs or music depends, to some extent, on the lyrics and is sometimes limited to the memory and language of a generation. The frequent playing of 'beautiful old songs' socializes the younger generation in the Hindustani repertoire of songs.

### *The invention of traditions*

Traditions are a regular recurrent activity that is inherited. A variation of the description is the idea of 'the invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983), which was developed in the context of nationalism and refers to the reactivation or invention of practices to mobilize people politically. Concepts such as the invention of ethnicity (Conzen et al., 1992) and symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Fournier, 1992) similarly refer to this fabrication of 'cultural substance'. The 'invention' of tradition, ethnicity and symbolic boundaries shapes the group identity. Because of the preponderance of India in the diaspora, traditions are copied from it rather than invented. What, for reasons of convenience, is labelled 'invention' here is an adjustment or incorporation of 'new traditions' into the community. It is a process of ethnification, although the meanings ascribed to the adopted elements may vary with the people involved (Burke, 2009).

Dutch Hindustanis have been subjected to processes of ethnification. As in Suriname, they have always been aware that they are part of an ancient civilization that is now worldwide (Choenni, 2014). They took pride in the increasing international recognition of India as a regional superpower after the 1980s. Especially India's economic development, its political and military power and the increasing popularity of Bollywood in the West are hugely gratifying for Dutch Hindustanis. In this alignment, Indian cultural items are modified, reactivated and in many cases 'imitated'. Older traditions have been retained and adjusted to the new environments. There are a few examples that illustrate this process of cultural 'invention'.

Practices include the increasing use of the tika, a red mark on the forehead of women, and the sindhoor, a red line along the middle of the head that symbolizes women's married status. It has been widely observed that these symbols are increasingly being used by the younger generation of Dutch Hindustani women. Also borrowed from Bollywood is Raksha Bandhan, the ritual underscoring of the relationship between sisters and brothers. A similarly imitated item is the wedding scene, including the lavish decoration of one's house. The similarity in terms of the design, the specific type of electric lamps, the wedding outfit and the colours is striking. Quite often, celebrations of rich people become the talk in the community and on the radio because of the demonstrated richness and resemblance with the Bollywood scene. People are often impressed by these features: 'It was so beautiful, most of the stuff was obtained from India, exactly like in Bollywood movies'. The organization of annual beauty contests, as in other diaspora communities, is another type of imitation. This practice is inspired by some Bollywood actresses who happened to take part in international beauty pageants and the organization of beauty contests elsewhere in the Indian diaspora (Mani, 2006).

The practices also reflect the growing popularity of the 9-day religious festival Navratan, celebrated by Dutch Hindustanis twice a year. This event is most likely picked up by Hindustani pilgrims to India. Annual festivals, such as holi phagwa, diwali and nawratan, are firmly entrenched as community celebrations. Celebrations of these community feasts are annually broadcast nationwide by the Organization Hindu Media and by community radio. These religious activities,

as well as those in the field of yoga, are supported by the Internet and Indian gurus. In some pious families, a greater number of religious festivities are observed. Related festivals, aimed at the production of ethnicity, have been reported for Indians in the United States (Sukhla, 1997).

Another practice that is enjoying increasing popularity is weekend festivals, which mainly feature dancing with appearances from community music bands. Since 2016, a highly successful festivity called 'Bollywood weekender' has been organized in the national CenterParcs. Here, families can spend a long weekend enjoying Bollywood movies, songs, dances, Indian food and several workshops (<http://www.bollywoodweekender.nl/>). A variation of this activity is special singing festivals, in which several singers from the Indian diaspora take part. These festivals are especially common on heydays. In the summer, they are supplemented by festivals featuring the showing of a range of Bollywood movies, dancing and other activities, especially in The Hague. These events culminate around 4 June, which commemorates the arrival of the first British Indians in Suriname. They are part of community life, especially for young people. The agenda is widely broadcast via Hindustani radio, websites and social media (Elahi, 2014).

## Conclusion

The issue of taste is under-researched across the social sciences. The scant attention that it receives focuses on individual preferences or class culture, assuming a basically uniform cultural taste. Consequently, it remains unclear how hybridizing diaspora communities come to share a common taste. The shaping is accounted for by the concept of glocalization, but this concept does not reveal how the dissemination of global culture affects local tastes.

The article employs the concept of practice as a theoretical lens to look at taste maintenance in diaspora communities. Although useful, it found the concept abstract and adjusted it to capture ethnic scripted and institutionalized behaviour. It argues that the similarity of taste is forged by institutionalized practices subjected to the cultural scripts of the diaspora community. The article reveals the linkages between glocalization and script-framed institutionalized practices by focusing on the home culture, the community culture and the imitation of tradition. The practices sustaining the diaspora taste are part of the lived culture and theoretically captured as everyday ethnicity, cultural norm images and the imitation of tradition. Without these activities and use values, ethnic identity and the taste for Indian products would evaporate. This account of the sustenance of taste in diaspora markets applies largely to all Indian diaspora communities since the adoption of Indian home culture, specifically taste as shaped by Bollywood, tourism and Internet, is condensed in institutional practices within the community and characteristic of all Indian diaspora communities. With some modifications, the theoretical framework of this article, specifically the institutionalization of home culture in scripted behaviour, can be of assistance to other diaspora communities when accounting for taste maintenance by means of practices.

More generally, the theoretical concepts applied in this research were meant to account for similarity of tastes in a hybrid diaspora. However, in an age of migration and diversification of cultures, national cultures increasingly consist of hybrid constellations, notably of consumer practices. This hybridity is not restricted to immigrants and their descendants as focused on in this article but includes all (sub)cultures in the national realm – of which most are also subjected to glocalization. Viewing national consumer practices from the angle of glocalization, scripted institutionalized behaviour and lived culture reveals how taste is maintained even when it is modified by surrounding hybridity. Therefore, the central concepts employed in this research may be a fruitful perspective to account for national consumer cultures as well.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

### References

- Aizenman J and Brooks E (2005) *Globalization and Taste Convergence: The Case of Wine and Beer*. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research. Available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11228>.
- Alvesson M (2003) Methodology for close up studies – Struggling with closeness and closure. *Higher Education* 46: 167–193.
- Ang I (2003) Together-in-difference: Beyond diaspora, into hybridity. *Asian Studies Review* 27(2): 141–154.
- Anthias F (1998) Evaluating ‘diaspora’: Beyond ethnicity? *Sociology* 32(3): 557–580.
- Anthias F (2001) New hybridities, old concepts: The limits of ‘culture’. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24(4): 619–641.
- Barley S and Tolbert P (1997) Institutionalization and structuration: Studying the links between action and institution. *Organization Studies* 18(1): 93–117.
- Becker G (1996) *Accounting for Tastes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Berger P and Luckmann T (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Biggart N and Beamish T (2003) The economic sociology of conventions: Habit, custom, practice, and routine in market order. *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 443–464.
- Bisin A and Verdier T (2010) *The economics of cultural transmission and socialization*. NBER working paper no. 16512. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Bourdieu P (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu P (2005) *The Social Structure of the Economy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brubaker R (2005) The ‘diaspora’ diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(1): 1–19.
- Burke P (2009) *Cultural Hybridity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Choenni C (2014) *Hindostaanse Surinamers in Nederland, 1973–2013*. Utrecht: LM Publishers.
- Cleveland M and Laroche M (2006) Acculturation to the global consumer culture: Scale development and research paradigm. *Journal of Business Research*. DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2006.11.006.
- Colander D (2000) The death of neo-classical economics. *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 22(2): 127–143.
- Colombo E (2015) Multiculturalisms: An overview of multicultural debates in Western societies. *Current Sociology Review* 63(6): 800–824.
- Conzen K, Gerber D, Morawska E, et al. (1992) The invention of ethnicity: A perspective from the USA. *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12(1): 3–41.
- Cornell S and Hartmann D (2007) *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*. London: Sage.
- Douglas M (1982) *Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technical and Environmental Dangers*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Elahi J (2014) *Etmische Websites, behoeften en netwerken. Over het gebruik van internet door jongeren*. PhD Thesis, Tilburg University, Tilburg.
- Erasmus A, Boshoff E and Rouseau GG (2002) The potential of using script theory in consumer behavior research. *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences* 30: 1–9.
- Featherstone M (1990) Perspectives on consumer culture. *Sociology* 24(1): 5–22.
- Feldman M and Orlikowski W (2011) Theorizing practice and practicing theory. *Organization Science* 22(5): 1240–1253.
- Fligstein N and Dauter L (2007) The sociology of markets. *Annual Review of Sociology* 33: 105–128.
- Goddard C and Wierzbicka A (2004) Cultural scripts: What are they good for? *Intercultural Pragmatics* 1–2: 153–166.
- Gowricharn R (1992) *Tegen beter weten in: een kritiek op de economie en sociologie van de 'onderklasse'*. Leuven: Garant uitgevers.
- Gowricharn R (2002) Integration and social cohesion: The case of the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28(2): 259–273.
- Gowricharn R (2009) Changing forms of transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32(9): 1619–1638.
- Gowricharn R (2012) Leefcultuur en Burgerschap. Met Nederlandse Hindostanen als voorbeeld. In: Gowricharn R, Postma DW and Trienekens S (eds) *Geleefd Burgerschap. Van eenheidsdwang naar ruimte voor verschil en vitaliteit*. Utrecht: Uitgeverij De Graaf, pp. 28–46.
- Gowricharn R (2017) Shopping in Mumbai: Transnational sociability from the Netherlands. *Global Networks*. DOI: 10.1111/glob.12140.
- Guiso L, Sapienza P and Zingales L (2006) Does culture affect economic outcomes? *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20(2): 23–48.
- Haack S (1996) *Deviant Logic, Fuzzy Logic: Beyond the Formalism*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Hall S (1980) Encoding/decoding. In: Hall S, Hobson D, Lowe A, et al. (eds) *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Hutchinson, pp. 117–127.
- Hennion A (2007) Those things that hold us together: Taste and sociology. *Cultural Sociology* 1(1): 97–114.
- Hobsbawm E and Ranger T (eds) (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hoetink H (1967) *The Two Variants of Caribbean Race Relations: A Contribution to the Sociology of Segmented Societies*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Holt D (1995) How consumers consume: A typology of consumption practices. *Journal of Consumer Research* 22(1): 1–16.
- Jayaram N (2011) *Diversities in the Indian Diaspora: Nature, Implications, Responses*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.
- Kaur R and Sinha A (2005) *Bollyworld: Popular Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens*. New Delhi, India; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kraidy M (2002) Hybridity in cultural globalization. *International Communication* 12(3): 316–339.
- Lamont M and Fournier M (eds) (1992) *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequalities*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Levin P (2008) Culture and markets: How economic sociology conceptualizes culture. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 619(1): 114–129.
- Lizardo O (2008) Understand the flow of symbolic goods in the global cultural economy. *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 45(1): 13–34.
- Mani B (2006) Beauty queens: Gender, ethnicity and transnational modernities at the Miss India-US Pageant. *Positions* 14(3): 717–748.
- Mankekar P (2002) ‘India shopping’: Indian grocery stores and transnational configurations of belonging. *Ethnos* 67(1): 75–98.
- Mehta R and Belk R (1991) Artifacts, identity, and transition: Favourite possessions of Indians and Indian immigrants to the United States. *Journal of Consumer Research* 17: 398–411.
- Money A (2007) Material culture in the living room. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 7(3): 355–377.
- Oonk G (ed.) (2007) *Global Indian Diasporas: Exploring Trajectories of Migration and Theory*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Parekh B, Singh G and Vertovec S (2003) *Culture and Economy in the Indian Diaspora*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Priore M (2006) Qualitative research: Does it fit in economics? Available at: <http://economics.mit.edu/files/1125> (accessed 7 October 2016).
- Rao S (2010) ‘I need an Indian touch’: Glocalization and Bollywood films. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 3(1): 1–19.
- Rasche A and Chia R (2009) Researching strategy practices: A genealogical social theory perspective. *Organization Studies* 30(7): 713–734.
- Reckwitz A (2002) Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(2): 243–263.
- Riemer J (1977) Varieties of opportunistic research. *Urban Life* 5(4): 467–477.
- Robertson R (2012) Globalisation or glocalisation? *The Journal of International Communication* 18(2): 191–208.
- Røpke I (2009) Theories of practice – New inspiration for ecological economic studies on consumption. *Ecological Economics* 68: 2490–2497.
- Sassatelli R (2010) *Economic Theories of Consumption: Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems*. UNESCO–Paris: Eolss Publishers, pp. 194–206.
- Schatzki T, Cetina K and von Savigny E (eds) (2001) *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Schutz A and Luckmann T (1974) *The Structures of the Life-World*. London: Heinemann.
- Stiglitz JE and Walsh C (2006) *Principles of Microeconomics*. New York; London: Norton & Company.

- Storr V (2013) *Understanding the Culture of Markets*. New York: Routledge.
- Sukhla S (1997) Building diaspora and nation: The 1991 'Cultural Festival of India'. *Cultural Studies* 11(2): 296–315.
- Throsby D (2001) *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Triandis H, Marin G, Lisanski J, et al. (1984) Simpatía as cultural scripts of Hispanics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 47(6): 1363–1375.
- Warde A (1997) *Consumption, Food and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture*. London: Sage.
- Warde A (2005) Consumption and theories of practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 5(2): 131–153.
- Warde A (2014) After taste: Culture, consumption and theories of practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture*. DOI: 10.1177/1469540514547828.
- Warde A (2015) The sociology of consumption: Its recent development. *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 117–134.
- Winterrowd E, Canetto SS and Benoit K (2015) Permissive beliefs and attitudes about older adult suicide: A suicide enabling script? *Aging & Mental Health*. DOI: 10.1080/13607863.2015.1099609.
- Yaish M and Katz-Gerro T (2010) Disentangling 'cultural capital': The consequences of cultural and economic resources for taste and participation. *European Sociological Review*. DOI: 10.1093/esr/jcq056.
- Yan Y and Bissell K (2014) The globalization of beauty: How is ideal beauty influenced by globally published fashion and beauty magazines? *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*. DOI: 10.1080/17475759.2014.917432.
- Zukin S and Maguire J (2004) Consumers and consumption. *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 173–197.

### Author Biography

**Ruben Gowricharn** is a professor of social cohesion and transnational studies at the Tilburg University (Tilburg) and professor of Indian diaspora studies at the VU University (Amsterdam), the Netherlands.