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ETHNIC IDENTITIES: ASIAN INDIANS IN THE NEW YORK CITY AREA

by

MAXINE P. FISHER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1978

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

ETHNIC IDENTITIES: ASIAN INDIANS IN THE NEW YORK CITY AREA

by

MAXINE P. FISHER

Advisor: Professor Robert Glasse

This is a study of immigrants of Asian Indian origin who have settled in the metropolitan New York area since 1965. It is also an examination of the concept of ethnicity as it applies to a population which is enormously complex; Indians here are extremely heterogeneous in terms of natal language, regional origin in India, religious affiliation and caste background.

One of the major goals of this research was to discover which of these various identities Indians here perceive as being important in their classification of other Indians. This was accomplished by asking informants in informal interview sessions to enumerate the names of as many different kinds of Indians living here as they could think of. Those ethnic labels which were elicited most frequently were taken as the most salient or important. It was discovered that categories referring to a person's natal language and/or home state in India were the most salient identities, particularly for Hindus. Categories denoting religious affiliation were also frequently elicited, but these appeared to be more salient to non-Hindus. Few labels referring to a person's varna or caste were elicited.

A second goal was to determine if the salient ethnic categories elicited were the same or different from those which form the bases of formal and informal association among Indians here. It is argued that only in the case of formally organized social groups does etic behavior closely reflect emic notions of identity. That is, the majority of Indian associations in New York are organized along lines of shared state/language or religious affiliation. Only one was found to be based on varna, and no formal group was found to be organized on lines of caste. On the other hand, informal patterns of association (e.g., friendship ties) transcend these emically recognized boundaries.

A final goal was to offer an explanation as to why these particular identities (i.e., natal state/language and religious affiliation) are important in this population rather than other Indian identities which are available, such as the more specific identification sets of caste and varna, and the more inclusive fused identity of 'Indian'. To answer, it was necessary to compare the situation in the New York population with the ethnic identification of other overseas Indian societies.

A survey of the anthropological literature on the identity of Indians in Mauritius, Fiji, East Africa, South Africa, Great Britain, Trinidad and Guyana yielded a set of related hypotheses that accords well with data collected on the New York group. Firstly, commitment to an eventual permanent return to India accompanied by the economic ability to maintain the structural ties which make a return feasible is correlated with the tendency to preserve parochial identities as opposed to the

development of a fused 'Indian' identity. Secondly, where such ties are maintained (as they are in the New York group), linguistic and religious identities become important if the immigrants are of widely diverse regional/linguistic backgrounds. Where immigration is restricted to particular localized areas of India, caste will be the organizing principle in the overseas society.

Finally, the study explores the signs of an emerging fuse 'Indian' identity. Described here are the institutions which cater to New York Indians regardless of their parochial identities, as well as the efforts of a pan-Indian association here to endender 'Indo-American' identity. It is argued here that a principle motivation for this development is the awareness oi some Indian leaders that in the U.S., the allocation of certain resources (notably jobs) follows lines of ethnicity. These leaders recognize that for Indians, this means organizing on the basis of common national origin.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of identity within an overseas population of Asian Indians which has not until now been described in the anthropological literature. The unit of study is that of people of Indian origin or ancestry presently settled in New York City and its suburbs in the metropolitan tri-State area.

Beginning in the spring of 1975 I conducted research over a period of two years among the Indians of the New York area. During that time I gathered data by means of structured interviews as well as by participant observation. I regularly attended the functions of numerous Indian professional and cultural organizations as well as religious services at temples of different Indian faiths, screenings of Indian films, and the more informal gatherings of people in their homes.

The population is composed predominantly of first generation immigrants who arrived in the United States from India and the countries of East Africa since 1965. In that year a major shift in United States Immigration policy enabled Asians to enter this country in significant numbers for the first time in half a century. As a result of the new priorities established for the issuing of visas, Indians here are overwhelmingly professional by occupation. They are also cosmopolitan in background; that is, they are generally from urban areas, well-traveled within and outside of India, fluent in English, and multi-lingual in Indian languages. They are extremely diverse, however, in terms of natal language, regional, religious, and caste backgrounds. For the most part,

settlement patterns are such that the members of these categories are dispersed rather than living geographically concentrated in particular neighborhoods or suburbs.

This demographic pattern, coupled with the complexity of the indigenous Indian social domain (which provides a variety of dimensions along which social classification can take place), made the population particularly well suited for the study of group identity. In addition, a substantial literature is available for comparative study on the experience of other overseas Indian populations. In this sample are cases representing a variety of conditions under which emigration took place, differences in the demographic relationship between the Indian sector and other groups in the societies to which they emigrated, differences in the economic position attained by Indians, and differences over time in the political structures characterizing these societies. The literature thus provides a virtual laboratory in which it is possible to test hypotheses that relate patterns of identity among overseas Indian populations to other economic and political variables.

Three major goals have influenced the design of this study. One was to discover the dimensions used by Indians in New York in their social classification of the Indian sector; that is, to determine what principles of ethnic identity are emically important in this population. By 'ethnic identity', I mean any identity which indicates a person's belonging to a named category of people believed to share common traditions on the basis of a putatively, though not necessarily objective,

shared origin. The term as used here does not specify whether the judgment of shared origin is made by those referred to by the category label or outsiders, since in some cases their assessments of category membership do not coincide.

The second goal was to determine the relationship between the dimensions used for classifying individuals and those used in the internal social organizations of the population; in other words, are the emically important aspects of identity the same or different from those of etic social relations ?

Finally, if it could be shown that the principles of categorization coincided with those of social organization, then what explanations can be offered as to why these particular dimension of identity are important rather than others which are available.

The first two goals (that is, a description of emic notions of the composition of the population and an etic description of its organization) were from the beginning conceptualized as separate, though related, questions. This was done to avoid the pitfalls inherent in earlier approaches to the delimiting of social units. Traditionally, anthropologists have treated the units of their study as if they were both discrete and homogeneous entities. We are heir to a long established tradition of trying to label and classify the world's population according to criteria established a priori, -- criteria which may or may not be meaningful in terms of emic notions of identity and/or etic politico-economic relations in a particular case (Murdock 1953;Lebar 1964; Naroll 1964). In the past, the notion of a discrete

culture bearing unit was challenged only by a few anthropologists who could not reconcile the model with 'real' tribes (Fortes 1940:120), language groups (Hymes 1968), and ethnic groups (Fried 1966; Leach 1964; Schein 1975; Nagata 1974).

More recently there has been a shift in the opposite direction. "If once we worried that 'ethnic group' had an ambiguous meaning, now it is defined as something that is ambiguous" (Silverman 1976:1). The new emphasis in the 1970's on ethnicity as process has to a great extent been inspired by Barth (1969). A critic of the traditional method of establishing a priori criteria for the delimitation of social units, Barth's contribution was the idea that anthropologists should delimit social units by using whichever criteria their informants recognize to bound themselves into different categories. Although this shift in interest from establishing uniform criteria to bound units to that of boundary making itself represents a major step in ethnicity research, there are problems in operationalizing Barth's concepts of ethnic identity. They present special difficulty in the analysis of New York Indian identity.

According to Barth, "a categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively his origin" (1969:13) (my emphasis). My first research goal was to discover what this ascription would be among Indians settled in the New York area. Objectively, the people I took as my unit of study are bounded on the basis of common origin or ancestry in India. Because of U.S. Immigration priorities,

they are also relatively homogeneous in terms of level of education, occupational range, and economic position in this country. (To the extent that variation along these dimensions exists, it is unrelated to membership in a more specific ethnic category.) Furthermore, they share a common language for communication, English, though for most it is not a natal language.

In his study of ethnic identity among migrants to South Indian cities, Mattison Mines (1975) proposed the hypothesis that when people move to environments where the members of formerly localized social units disperse, membership in these loses its significance in the identity of individuals, as membership in more inclusive units gains importance. This raised the question as to whether or not New York Indians who share a common origin in a particular Indian state or linguistic group are presently dispersed in their settlement. If so, is this aspect of their identity therefore losing its significance in favor of a pan-Indian identity ?

The initial question, then was: do Indians here view and classify themselves most 'basically' as Indians, or is there another more 'basic' dimension of their identity ? If so, is this dimension one of regional origin, language, religion, sect, varna, caste ? In Barth's terms: what constitutes an ethnic ascription within the New York Indian population ? That is, is there a single identity 'basic' to all the rest ?

Fieldwork demonstrated that this was not the case. Indians here (presumably like other people living in complex

societies) simultaneously have several layers of identity, all of which can be called 'ethnic', if like Barth, we mean any identity that relates to one's origin in some way. For Indians, these include membership in varnas and castes as well as in units more traditionally regarded as being 'ethnic' -- for example, those based on natal language, religious affiliation, and country of nativity if other than India.

The memberships of these various categories do not always form discrete units. There are, for example, Gujarati Hindus as well as Muslims. In other cases, there is relative homogeneity of regional and linguistic background among the members of a unit bound by religious affiliation; most Parsis (Zoroastrians), for example, come from Bombay. Caste and varna membership transect all these categories.

Context is relevant to the importance of an individual's membership in any one of the categories to which he or she simultaneously belongs. Marriage, for example, is perhaps the only context in which caste is an important factor in the identity of many of the immigrants here. It is admittedly a "basic" institution, an important context to consider; I do not wish to minimize the significance of caste endogamy as a feature of this population. However, is it legitimate to say that caste provides the "basic" identity for Indians here when caste membership is irrelevant in almost all other forms of social interaction? Barth offers no guidelines to determine which identity is "basic" in ethnographic situations where different identities are stressed in different contexts.

Another problem with Barth's concept as it relates to

Indian immigrants is the fact that although it provides for change in the cultural content of boundaries between people, it assumes the continuity of people's identification:

> The cultural features that signal the boundary may change and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed even the organizational form of the group may change -- yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of the continuity, and to investigate the changing cultural form and content (1969:14).

Relevant in this regard is the statement of an East African born informant of Indian origin: "I used to be an East African when I arrived in America six years ago, but today I'm an Indian". Another East African Indian voiced the same opinion, adding the comment that on her one brief visit to India she experienced, in her words, "culture shock", and sought the company of other East Africans. We need to investigate the cause of changes in identification as well as the "changing cultural form and content" of boundaries.

Finally, Barth assumes that "dichotomization between members and outsiders" will always coincide. Again, Indians are problematic. Some Hindus, for example, classify Sikhs as Hindus, that is, as a sect of Hinduism, whereas Sikhs are more likely to view themselves as contrasting to Hindus. Said a Sikh informant: "Hindus think that Sikhs are a sect of Hindus rather than a distinct religion which we are... Today, Hindus are trying to absorb Sikhs".

In sum, Barth's ideas about the nature of boundaries and the existence of a single ethnic identity are not easily applied

to this population. Possibly this is because Barth's concepts derived from situations involving the identities of people in areas bordering two ethnic groups; the cases included in Ethnic Groups and Boundaries are those involving Lapps and Norwegians, bordering tribes in Western Sudan, bordering groups in Southern Ethiopia, neighboring groups in Laos and in the Middle East.

Instead of using Barth's unoperationalized concept of 'basic' identity, I have employed the ethnoscience concept of salience as developed by Romney and D'Andrade (1964) in their analysis of English kin terms. To determine the salience of different kin categories, they asked their informants to list as many kin terms as they could think of. They maintain that

> there are two indices of saliency available in the listing data. The first is the position of a term in the list. We assume that the nearer the beginning of the list that a kin term occurs, the more salient it is. The second index of saliency is the percent of subjects who remember the term. We assume that the more salient terms will be recalled more frequently (Romney and D'Andrade, 1964:155).

In this research I have tried to determine which dimensions of Indian ethnic identity are salient for my informants. Ethnic category terms were elici[illegible]n interviewing sessions by asking the question: "What kinds of Indians does one find living in New York?" The terms which appeared most frequently were taken to be the most salient categories.

My second goal was to determine the relationship of this ordering to behavior in different social contexts since salience is viewed here as being context-dependent.

The context in which the lists of category terms were elicited was that of informants' homes where they were being

interrogated by a quasi-outsider -- a person known to them, but a native member of the dominant society, nevertheless. I wished to compare the categorizations thus obtained with behavior relating to the internal social organization of the Indian immigrant population. This was established by studying the composition of the members and participants in the formally organized Indian associations in New York. I also studied patterns of informal association (e.g., friendship ties), and compared these with the ethic dimensions elicited in the first part of my research.

The results of these efforts show that patterns of social categorization correspond closely with those of formal social organization. For Hindus in particular, 'natal language' was the most salient dimension elicited in the interviews. By this term, I refer to the language informants stated that they learned first. As will be demonstrated later, this does not necessarily correspond to the formal standard or standard colloquial of the area in which they were raised. Natal langauge was also found to be the dimension that bound members of formal associations.

For non-Hindus, common religious affiliation was the most salient dimension; this, too, was reflected in patterns of association. Among Hindus, sentiment towards natal language and its preservation in America runs extremely high; among non-Hindus, preservation of natal language is deemed less important than that of a separate religious identity. It was therefore established that among Indians in New York, natal language and religious affiliation are the important dimensions both in classification and formal association.

The third research goal then remained to determine why these particular dimensions rather than others (such as those of varna and caste) are significant. Michael Moerman in his articles on Lue identity (1965, 1967) urged the raising of this question as an important one in anthropological research. He argued that the proper concern of anthropologists engaged in ethnicity research was to answer the questions how, when and why a particular identity is preferred:

> Since multiple identifications are always present, the 'truth' or 'objective correctness' of an identity is never sufficient to explain its use ... To the serious student of society, the preferring of any identity should be a problematic phenomenon, not a comforting answer ... Ethnic labels are possible identification for human objects which can also be properly given labels from other identification sets. From this observation, it follows that an ethnic identification is never self-explanatory (1967:160).

There are numerous possible 'identification sets' for Indians in New York. One, for example, would be as Americans of Indian origin, following the model of other "ethnic" groups in the United States based on national origin. The concept of "Indo-American" identity is, in fact, one which is familiar to some Indians here. As will be demonstrated in this thesis, there is one Indian organization in the New York area which actively promulgates the adoption of this label and identity. In addition, there are other Indian organizations whose members are not restricted to individuals of particular regional, linguistic, or religious backgrounds, and institutions which cater to and thus bind the general Indian public of this area (for example, newspapers radio programs, and T.V. shows).

It is argued here, however, that Indo-American identity is at the present time a very weak one. It is proposed that its development is hindered by a commitment on the part of many immigrants to an eventual permanent return to India. The unlikelihood of future repatriation for most is irrelevant to the question of Indian identity at this time. People cherish the idea of return, and this, in turn affects the way in which they view and interact with other Indians here.

For many immigrants, the notion that their life in America is a temporary episode is given support by their strategy of maintaining close structural ties with India. The marriages of immigrant bachelors, for example, are typically arranged by their families back home with girls from India. Also, patterns relating to the flow of remittances to families in India, the investment of savings earned by immigrants here in family-involved business enterprises back home, and the plans made for retirement in India all reflect this trend. In addition, there is a high frequency of travel between the two countries by the immigrants and members of their families in India. Finally, patterns reflected in citizenship acquisition within households are relevant. Frequently only one spouse becomes an American citizen while the other retains Indian citizenship. This facilitates re-entry by the couple into both countries and thus indicates a conscious strategy of keeping the options of national affiliation open.

A hypothesis offered here is that commitment to an eventual return to India accompanied by the economic ability to maintain the structural ties that make the return feasible is correlated with the tendency to preserve sub-national dimensions of identity

(such as natal language, religion, caste) in the new society. It is suggested, therefore, that for as long as Indians here continue to maintain ties with their families and government back home, the salient dimensions of their classification system and social organization will be particularistic, rather than a fused identity as Indians in America.

To answer Moerman's question, however, it is necessary to explain why in this case the relatively inclusive dimensions of natal language and religion are important rather than less inclusive dimensions such as caste. Because language proved to be such an important dimension of ethnic identification for informants, it is first necessary to spell out what is meant by the words 'language' and 'linguistic' as they are used throughout the thesis.

As Fishman points out,

> the expression 'a language' is often a judgemental one, a term that is indicative of emotion and opinion, as well as a term that elicits emotion and opinion... As a result, we use the term 'variety' in order not to become trapped in the very phenomena that we seek to investigate, namely, when and by whom is a certain variety considered to be a language and when and by whom is it considered something else (1972:16).

Henceforth, when I refer to the 'linguistic' dimensions that bound groups of Indian immigrants here, I use the word in the sense that Fishman uses the term 'variety' (i.e., variety of a language). That is, I make no judgments as to the mutual intelligibility or unintelligibilty of the 'languages' referred to. In other words, the linguistic categories mentioned throughout are those divisions which are perceived by and made use of by

informants; they may or may not correspond to the classifications of Indian languages drawn by linguists.

Following Fishman,the speech communities that comprise the Indian immigrant population of New York "... are not defined as communities of those who 'speak the same language'... but rather as communities set off by density of communication or/and by symbolic integration with respect to communicative competence..." (my emphasis) (1972:25). Here, symbolic integration is the keynote; its roots may be traced to recent political developments in India.

Das Gupta, for example, speaks of 'language demands' on the subcontinent by which he means "publicly expressed demands on the political authorities made by organized groups claiming to represent categoric ethnic collectivities based on language loyalties" (1975:472). He goes on to note that

> in India separate ethnic collectivities based on distinctively different languages have existed for centuries, but the emergence of language demands on public authorities is of relatively recent origin. Only recently, with the progress of social change and the attendant increase of political opportunities in the context of expanding public space, have these demands been generated and pursued to an extent that they have become salient facts of national political life (1975:472).

Indian 'linguistic' categories are thus labels with socio-political components; "indicative of certain interests, of certain backgrounds, or of certain origins, they come to represent the ties and aspirations, the limitations, and the opportunities with which these interests, backgrounds, and origins in turn are associated" (Fishman 1972:6). To assume that the linguistic categories that are used here have objective

validity -- whether they are those which refer to informant responses, to language-based organizations, or the statistics on language collected by government agencies in India -- would be to fall prey to the same error for which Moerman criticizes cultural anthropologists when they unquestioningly accept emic ethnic categories as etic ones. Linguistic, as well as ethnic identification must be viewed as processual.

To return to the question Moerman raises concerning why people make particular identifications rather than others, a second hypothesis is offered here. It relates the use of parochial dimensions of social classification and internal social organization to the geographic distribution of the immigrant's origin. Though no statistics are available on the relative number of immigrants coming from different areas in India, it is clear that a wide variety of regional/linguistic areas are represented here. The number of categories represented based on the more exclusive dimension of caste, therefore, is far greater here, resulting in membership groups that are much smaller. Perhaps in many cases the resulting classification would result in unit memberships too small to be viable social groups. In this regard, Victor D'Souza has remarked on the tendency of some overseas Indian populations to be derived from particular regions in India:

> ... although the Indian immigrant communities taken together belong to different regions of origin in India, in any one country the immigrant community is derived by and large from the same cultural region of India. Thus, for instance, the Indians of the West Indies and Mauritius were largely from Bihar and U.P.; those in East Africa went from Gujarat and Kutch, and the migrants in Ceylon and South Africa had their origin in the Tamil-speaking areas.

> Even within these broad areas the ancestral homes of migrants tend to cluster in certain districts and villages... Therefore, on its arrival, the Indian community was a far more homogeonous group than the cross-section of the Indian society (1971:41).

Although he does not go on to posit a relationship between this phenomenon and caste retention, it is argued here that had the immigrants to the U.S. also come from one or two districts of a particular area, there is a greater likelihood that caste would be a more significant feature of classification and organization, as is the case in East Africa (Morris:1968) and Great Britain (Desai 1963:15; Kanitkar 1972:10).

H.S. Morris suggests that any understanding of ethnic identity requires analyses of the nature of its "relationship with the society as a whole, and with other groups in it ..." (1968:167). In the same vein, Das Gupta, writing about ethnicity in India says: "Ethnicity becomes a relevant political question when ethnic divisions tend to create solidarities affecting political thinking and action". He speaks of transformations that "move ethnic groups from a social space to a political space" (1967:468).

The 'political space' in which Indian immigrants frequently operates has two loci -- that of the country of emigration as well as that of immigration. Political events in both countries may affect change in the way immigrants view the similarities and differences among themselves as well as between them and other groups.

Regarding the relationship between overseas Indian identity and political events in the countries to which they have migrated, a third hypothesis is offered. It concerns

those populations in which Indians did not maintain ties to the subcontinent and consequently developed a fused identity as 'Indians'. According to this hypothesis, parochial identities (i.e., those based on language and religion) can be successfully re-introduced into these societies only if the Indian sector has little or no power in the ethnic stratification of the overseas society, and therefore derives no loss in power as a result of fission. In other words, it is the political relationship between Indians and the society to which they have immigrated that takes primacy in whether or not fusion will take place.

To summarize, three hypotheses relating patterns of overseas Indian identity with economic and political factors have been proposed. These are:

1. The initial preservation of any subnational identities will be related to the economic ability of the immigrants to maintain ties with their homes in India.

2. Where such ties are maintained, the important dimension differentiating Indians is determined by the size and range of backgrounds represented. Where immigration is restricted to particular areas, caste is more likely to be the organizing principle.

3. Where ties are not maintained and a fused identity as 'Indians' develops, parochial identities can be re-introduced only if Indians have little power in the political structure of the dominant society.

These hypotheses are based on my own research and on comparative study of overseas Indian populations. I shall now present comparative evidence supporting each of them. The body of the dissertation which follows provides further

ethnographic evidence in support of these ideas based on data collected during my fieldwork among New York Indians over the course of two years.

THE ARGUMENT FURTHER ELABORATED

To recapitulate, two variables -- the economic ability to maintain ties with India, and the political relationship between the immigrant sector and the dominant overseas society -- predict the kind of ethnic identities that the Indian immigrants will have.

Specifically, it is hypothesized that where the pattern is for Indians to maintain ties to India in the years immediately following emigration, parochial identities such as those based on caste or natal language will be important. On the other hand, if after emigrating, Indians sever ties to India, then a fused identity as 'Indians' will develop.

Even in societies where ties to India have been severed, and where a fused identity has occurred, parochial Indian identities can be re-instituted. It is further hypothesized here that this will occur only if one or both of the following conditions prevail. The first is if the divisions which are re-introduced relate to politico-economic conflicts within the Indian sector of the overseas society. The second is if the Indian sector as a whole has little or no power in the ethnic stratification system of the society. In this case, the reappearance of internal divisions frequently results from proselytizing on the part of visiting swamis or regional leaders from India. These identities serve the kind of positive affective functions to which social scientists have given much attention elsewhere, but which are largely irrelevant to competition for economic and political resources.

De Vos characterizes this type of ethnicity as being

> oriented to a special past heritage... This primary sense of belonging may or may not bring the individual into conflict within the larger society (De Vos 1975:19).

I have divided overseas Indians into two major categories: those that consistently maintained ties with their homes in India and those that did not. Later, I will present evidence for including in the former grouping the immigrants to Great Britain (Desai 1963), Uganda (Morris 1967, 1968), and the United States as well as those who immigrated at their own expense to Fiji (Mayer 1961, 1963) and to South Africa (Kuper 1960, 1967). Evidence will also be presented to show that these populations have been consistently characterized by internal divisions based on subnational dimensions of Indian identity.

In the second category are those Indians who were unable to maintain ties with the subcontinent. Evidence will be provided to demonstrate that Indians who immigrated between 1830 and 1920 as indentured laborers to Fiji (Mayer), South Africa (Kuper), Mauritius (Benedict 1961, 1967), Trinidad (Weller 1968; Malik 1971) and British Guiana (Jayawardena 1963, 1967) were unable to maintain these ties. Evidence will also be adduced to show that in these populations during this time a fused 'Indian' identity did emerge. Caste and natal language were <u>not</u> important dimensions of identity and social organization. This was true even among those who had completed their period of indenture but who had chosen to remain in the colonies. It is with this latter category of overseas

Indian populations that I would like to begin.

The Evidence: Indentured Populations

One reason for believing that the indentured immigrants were unable to maintain ties with their homes in India has to do with the nature of the indentured immigrant population itself. Tinker argues that during the early years of the indenture system, agents recruited people who were, in fact, already homeless, people who had left their villages in search of work in the cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, also the ports of embarkation. He says:"These were the flotsam of humanity, drawn to the big city by the prospect of employment which had vanished and left them stranded" (1974:51). He quotes a colonial Immigration officer writing of Calcutta in 1867:"... the mendicant Brahmin, the Mahometan fakeer, the Juggler, etc. who in India are a drop in the ocean, introduced here in thousands, form a considerable proportion of the population" (Tinker 1974:51).

When it became necessary to search wider for recruits the agents went into the hinterlands of what is now Bihar, Bengal and the United Provinces.

> In Bihar there was a kind of semi-slavery known as 'kamcriti', by which the poor people sold their services, and sometimes those of their children in years to come in order to obtain resources to meet their passing needs. Such people were easy prey for the recruiters for emigration overseas. It required little persuasion to show that they would be better off by engaging themselves to indenture, a form of servitude which must have seemed light compared to the yoke of the landlords or moneylender (Tinker 1974:53).

In the 1840's, a flow of recruits to Mauritius emanated from the Tamil districts of the South "where the landless laborers had a hopeless struggle for survival" (Tinker 1974:53). Throughout the era of indenture, the enlistment of Punjabis, Nepalis, or any who had worked as soldiers or police was prohibited. This caused a recruiting officer for overseas colonies to remark as late as 1913: "The result is that we are confined to drawing our recruits from people who are exposed to famine, drought, and flood... and who at times are forced to undergo long periods of semi-starvation" (Tinker 1974:60).

Thus, the indentured immigrants were predominantly people who owned no land and who had no living to which they could return. If they were from the cities, it was not unlikely that their search for work had already separated them from their families. In other words, while indentured overseas there was little in India to be tied to.

A factor which no doubt further alienated the indentured immigrants from India was the difficulty they encountered in obtaining return passage. Free return passage was during the early years guaranteed in the indenture contract. But it was in the interest of the planter class in all the colonies to have these immigrants remain as laborers rather than to return to India after completing their period of indenture. Thus as early as the 1840's, the planters began to devise ways to extend the period of an individual's indenture and to limit the frequency of repatriation.

In Trinidad, for example, an order made it legal for planters to secure a second five year period of indenture from

a man if the latter had merely affixed his mark twice to a bond (Tinker 1974:85). In 1847, the Legislature of Mauritius passed an ordinance which imposed fines on the laborers for time not spent under contract (illness was not exempt) and imprisonment of immigrants for non-payment. In British Guiana in 1849 "the device of taxing or fining them into continued indenture was applied, as in Mauritius" (Tinker 1974:84). For each day of absence, a minimal penalty was the deduction of two and a half day's wages (Nath 1950:117).

In the same year in Mauritius, more than five thousand indentured Indians chose to return to India. The Mauritius planters, terrified at the exodus, negotiated with the Government of India and won the right to abolish the guarantee of free return passage (Tinker 1974:86). In Trinidad beginning in 1853,

> the various immigration ordinances contained sections designed to make it difficult for the immigrants to obtain free passage... In an apparent effort to create difficulties for return to India and to keep more immigrants in the Colony, free return passage was denied to Trinidad-born children of Indian immigrants (Weller 1968:99-100).

In addition,

> ... practices other than those specified by law were often employed in attempting to keep the immigrants in Trinidad. In the 1850's a practice developed whereby on the eve of departure to India, a statement of the immigrants' uncollected debts was sworn out and warrants issued against them when they appeared for embarkation ... (Weller 1968:101).

The Government of South Africa was an exception to the general trend. Even before the importation of indenture laborers was abolished, South African planters looked upon

the Indians who had completed their period of indenture as potentially dangerous economic competitors. Kuper reports that

> for over fifty years South African governments have been trying by every means short of direct compulsion to 'repatriate' the Indians. Under various 'assisted emigration' schemes dating from 1914, bonuses have been offered, but even these failed to draw off more than a limited number" (1960:4).

The Indians chose to remain in the politically inhospitable environment of South Africa where even their rights of occupation and ownership of houses were limited to certain areas (Kuper 1960) rather than to return to India at the expense of the Government. Kuper also states that the indentured laborers "severed the cord with India and followed leaders who deliberately emphasized the value of being 'South Africans' rather than 'Indians' (1960:xiii). What is being suggested here is that repatriation was not a viable option for these people because they were unable to maintain ties with India during the years immediately following their immigration.

Thus the evidence indicates that the indentured immigrants were people in economically desperate straits, frequently separated from their families prior to departure from India, and who often encountered difficulties in returning as a result of the power of the planter class. Yet some succeeded. Between 1830 and 1891, nearly 12,000 or roughly 10% of the Indians who had immigrated to Trinidad during that interval repatriated (Jha 1974:1). Little is known of how they fared, but the experiences of the few

recorded cases suggests that there had been no contact with their families during the period of indenture.

> Often the immigrant had been away so long that upon return to India he found himself completely unknown in his native village. One young man went to his native village, but the people did not know him for they had forgotten his father's name. When this man had spent all of his money they asked him to leave for he was 'a Pariah and polluted forever' (Weller 1968:109).

Similarly, Mayer says of indentured laborers returning to India from Fiji:

> Some of those who had returned were unable to find work or were ostracized in their villages... LF 10,000 was earmarked from the Immigration Fund to bring them back (1963:35).

And finally, Kuper says of those who returned from South Africa: "Many of those who returned to India found themselves aliens and were regarded, in Gandhi's words, as 'social lepers'" (1967:247).[1]

Tinker argues that the conditions of indenture precisely replicated those of slavery. In this regard, it is significant that most scholars of indentured labor based Indian populations agree that the indenture system prevented caste from becoming an organizing principle in these societies (Benedict 1967:24; Smith and Jayawardena 1967:50 ; Kuper 1967:243; Mayer 1967; Schwartz 1963, 1967:230; Speckman 1967:212, but see Klass 1961 for a contrary view on Trinidad). They point to the facts that recruitment was by individual rather than kin or village

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1 Gandhi's characterization of returned immigrants was published in Young India (June 1931) and was based on an investigation carried out in India (Kuper 1967:247).

units, that the gross imbalance in the sex ratio of the immigrants promoted intercaste marriage, that the accommodations on the plantations prohibited the observance of ritual exclusiveness, and finally that caste was irrelevant in terms of occupation and the attainment of economic success in the overseas societies.

It is also clear that the indenture system did much to reduce the importance of natal language as a differentiating dimension of Indian identity. Benedict reports, for example, that in Mauritius the indentured laborers

> were housed in barracks or in rows of cubicles made of thatch which had been slave quarters. Little attention was paid to the caste, religion, or linguistic group of the immigrants. Muslim might be housed with Hindu, or Brahmin with Chamar, or Tamil with Marathi (1967:29)

A variety of linguistic backgrounds was represented by the indentured laborers to each of the colonies considered here (though the degree of diversity was not uniform among them). It is argued here that during the era of indenture, differences of natal language, like those of caste, lost their significance. Even among 'free' Indians (i.e., those who had completed their period of indenture), natal language failed to become a basis of social organization. The experience of indenture, like that of slavery, promoted the development of a fused identity. In the British colonies the concept of 'Indian' identity predated its development in India during the period of nationalism prior to independence.

As the indentured immigrants came to realize that permanent return to India was not a feasible option, the

motivation to preserve their natal languages and dialects diminished. As a result, Indians in these societies began to develop a single Indian lingua franca. In addition, there was economic incentive to learn the lingua franca of the colonial society. The evidence suggests that both patterns developed in differing degrees in all of the colonies in the sample.

During the era of indenture in Fiji, for example, Mayer states that

> the immigrants spoke different dialects of Hindi and different South Indian languages unintelligible to Northeners. A debased Hindi grew into a lingua franca (1963:22).

In addition, most Indo-Fijans couls speak Fijan (1961:63). In explaining the fusion of linguistic differences in Fiji, Mayer says: "During the era of indenture, the standardized treatment of Indo-Fijans on the plantations had tended to obliterate cultural differences... only after abolition did cultural differences become significant" (1963:48).

The Indians in Mauritius, too, were initially a linguistically diverse population. Says Benedict: "We are not dealing with Indians from the same linguistic areas, but with Biharis, Bengalis, Tamils, Telugus, Marathis, and others" (1967:23). According to the 1952 Census of the island, however, 20% of Indo-Mauritians listed Creole, the lingua franca of Mauritius, as their 'mother tongue', while another 30% indicated that it was the language they now spoke exclusively. Sixty-four percent listed Creole as an additional language which they spoke (Benedict 1961:34).

In South Africa, "the majority of the indentured were Hindus

who spoke Tamil or Telugu and came from villages and towns in Madras Presidency which until 1954 included the Telugu state of Andhra" (Kuper 1967:241). Kuper reports that during the indenture era and the years immediately following its abolition "the Telugu speaking people of Andhra had been closely identified with the Tamils in South Africa" (1961:82). Telugu identity is a recent phenomenon in South Africa.

The West Indies provide the clearest examples of fusion along linguistic lines. "The majority of indentured workers to Trinidad arrived speaking a variant of Hindi. Nonetheless, there were some Tamil and other South Indian languages spoken" (Angrosino 1972:143). Niehoff estimates the percentage of Indians coming from Provinces of the South at 10% of the indentured population to Trinidad (1960:17). During the era of indenture it is reported that

> Tamil disappeared completely from Trinidad ... One thing the Madrassis did not do on their way to acculturation was to adopt English as their language once Tamil had disappeared. Instead, they made the sacrifice few Madrassis in India would ever dream of: they learned Hindi (Angrosino 1972:143-44).

According to Angrosino, the immigrants of South Indian origin in Trinidad "accepted the distinction between Indians as a whole and everyone else on the island. Hence they had to 'speak Indian'"(1972:144).

Documents showing the backgrounds of indentured immigrants to British Guiana between 1865 and 1917 show that approximately 70% came from what is now the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, an additional 15% came from Bihar, also within the Hindi-speaking

region of India (Jayawardena 1963:14). As in Trinidad, only Hindi survives in Guyana. Jayawardena reports that in the contemporary period,

> the language of daily use is the dialect of English used by other rural Guianese, taki-taki. It can be safely estimated that nine-tenths of those under the age of thirty-five do not understand Hindi (1963:24).

In sum, the indenture system fostered among the immigrants in these societies a fused identity as 'Indians'. This was manifested not only in the failure of caste to become a principle of social organization in the years following indenture, but also by the linguistic uniformity that had been achieved by this time.

With the abolition of indenture, some of the conditions which had promoted fusion were eliminated. Indians could now freely establish their own patterns of residence and association. Also, the years immediately following abolition did not see the enfranchisement of Indians in the colonies. Thus, politically there was little to be gained from a unified Indian ethnic community, particularly where Indians constituted only a small proportion of the population.

During this period fission occurred within some of the Indian populations thus far considered. A pattern is noted here. Where fission occurred, it coincided in time with related political events in India and with the appearance of community leaders from India who promulgated cleavages within the Indian sector of the overseas society. Here it is relevant to say something about the development of regional/linguistic associations both

in India and abroad.

Das Gupta speaks of the "creation of language communities" in twentieth century India. In the decades preceding independence, regionalist leaders had

> succeeded in fashioning relatively larger language-based ethnic communities out of a mess of disparate segmental ethnicities ... the leaders of the nationalist movement endorsed the formation of such communities ... The nationalist movement assumed these regional movements to be an appropriate part of integrating the nation in a two-step process: unifying the segmental small groups in viable regional communities and then integrating these regions into a multi-ethnic national community (1975:476).

The method of promoting identities based on language was the development at this time of language associations in India:

> All of them began as societies with a literature, constantly recalling the greatness of their exclusive heritage and exhorting the need to expand the sphere of their glory by strengthening their communities... It would be a mistake to assume that the leaders of these associations were merely interested in the promotion of their own communities. Most of them were at the same time involved in the nationalist movement (Das Gupta 1975:477).

Thus, in India the ultimate goal of "linguistic regionalism" was to extend the boundaries of emic significance in people's self-identity. That is, to undermine ties of caste and village and to promote identities based on more inclusive categories. In the colonies during the period of indenture, Indians were much further on their way to possessing a pan-Indian identity than Indians back home. The "cultural emissaries" from India who came to the colonies during the nationalist era to promote the development of language-based associations were thus agents

of fission , rather than fusion.

In some cases the fission that occurred in an overseas colony had a basis in the economic relations within the Indian sector. In other cases it did not. Fiji provides an example of the former case.

Fiji

Here the division which developed was that between North and South Indians. This division already had a basis in Indo-Fijan society at the end of the indenture era. Mayer reports that in Fiji the less numerous Southerners were the last to be indentured, and that "cleavage between indentured and free therefore drew in the differences between Southern and Northern" (1961:147). The split was most clearly manifested during the 1920's, the decade following the abolition of indenture.

An issue exemplifying the division was that concerning the choice of language as a medium of instruction in Indo-Fijan schools.

> The problem was: should efforts be made to teach in a single language, and thereby work towards a lingua franca for the community; or should parents be free to choose their mother tongue as medium of instruction for their children and if so which Indian languages should be recognized as worthy of official support ? Members of Hindu (sic) speaking majority naturally favored the former course; the latter was supported by members of Southern minorities... The arguments advanced showed that linguistic differences were felt to be important and worth retaining (Mayer 1963:45).

The solution was to make Hindi the initial language of instruction but "at the same time, any substantial group of parents could arrange for the additional teaching of other Indian

languages, such as Tamil, Urdu, Telugu or Gujarati" (45).

This gain had been won largely through the efforts of an Indian regional association in Fiji called the Ikya Sanmarga Sangam. In 1926 this association began to press not only for the teaching of Southern languages, but also

> to foster 'Southern culture' represented for the average man in distinctions of name, accent, food, festivals and marriage customs... In 1937, the Sangam brought over Swami Avinassandanda, a member of the Ramakrishna Mission, and as happened before, differences grew under the stimulus of an India-trained teacher... Out of his programme grew a strong Southern centre in the Nandi area of western Viti Levu which proved influential in later politics (Mayer 1963:60).

Mayer contends that in Fiji

> cultural difference was heightened in the 1920's by the arrival from India of teachers and priests. These people tended to open up divisions within the community which might have fragmented had there not been other issues... which emphasized the interests and aspirations of all Indo-Fijans at the time (1963:132).

To a certain extent, the population did become fragmented as evidenced by even contemporary residence and marriage patterns. Mayer reports, for example, that in 1957 Northern and Southern Hindus "were physically separated in the sense that there were almost no homesteads in which people of both were found" (1961:144). The two groups are said to be endogamous; language difference is the reason offered by Mayer's informants for this pattern. "Northerners maintained that a girl would feel uncomfortable in a house where her affines might speak in an incomprehensible tongue, and where she might not know that she

was being insulted or mocked" (1961:144).

It is significant that linguistic differences within the Indian sector are overestimated by Indo-Fijans. It is clear that in the contemporary period Hindi has emerged as the lingua franca among Indians. According to the 1956 Census, Southern languages were reported as being spoken in only 10% of Indian households, whereas individuals of South Indian origin constitute 29% of the Indo-Fijan population (Mayer 1961:144).

Also, in an Indo-Fijan school "comprised entirely of Southern children, only 14% elected to learn in the regional language, rather than in Hindi" (1961:105). Finally, Mayer reports that

> Younger Southerners were by no means agreed that it was a good thing to learn their traditional mother tongue... The younger people often had ambivalent feelings towards their traditional language. Young Southerners frequently felt self-conscious of speaking a different language, and might even refuse to talk it to their India-born parents, though they understood it well enough (1961:146).

It is also significant that Mayer makes no mention in either of his monographs of language-based associations functioning in the contemporary period.

In 1960, Indo-Fijans constituted almost half of the island's population (Mayer 1963:84). Not until 1963 did universal franchise become a reality. It is hypothesized here that with the emergence of a new set of political relations among the ethnic groups in Fiji, the significance of remaining internal divisions within the Indian sector based

on linguistic origin will be further diminished. Validation of this hypothesis will have to await future field research on Indo-Fijan identity.

Mauritius

Unfortunately, the only date available for the contemporary period in Mauritius were gathered less than a decade after the enfranchisement of Indo-Mauritians in 1948. Thus, again the full impact of newly resulting political re-alignments within Mauritius on Indian identity could not be determined at that premature time. However, the picture that emerges of the island prior to the adoption of universal franchise corresponds closely to that of Fiji.

For example, diversity of natal language initially characterized the indentured immigrants. While the island was under French occupation, Indians were brought predominantly from the South and Bengal; later, during the period of British occupation, they were brought from districts in the North (Benedict 1961:18). Benedict states that under the indenture system no attention was paid to the natal language of the Indians in their assignment to work forces or housing quarters (1967). It is not surprising, therefore, that according to the 1952 Census

> of the estimated 75,000 Tamils in Mauritius fewer than 20,000 listed Tamil as their mother tongue and less than 10,000 as the language currently spoken. A bare 5,000 listed it as a language occasionally spoken ... The Telugus follow a similar pattern. There are an estimated 30,000 in Mauritius only 6,000 of whom list Telugu as their mother tongue and only 3,500 as a language currently spoken... The Marathis are estimated at 13,000.

> They seem to have merged to a large extent with the North Indians who themselves must be a blend of Biharis, Bengalis, and other North Indian strains. The Marathi language survives in a few settlements... but in general, the Marathis seem to be losing their separate identity (Benedict 1961:37).

What is surprising about these figures and needs to be explained, is the degree to which Indian languages have survived in Mauritius despite the conditions that have militated against their persistance. Ties to India have not been maintained and thus cannot be the reason. Benedict states that for even contemporary Indo-Mauritians, "there is little actual contact with the subcontinent" (1961:140).

As in Fiji, the answer appears to lie outside of Mauritian society. Benedict refers to "the Indian revival" of the pre-independence era as the cause of renewed interest in Indian language-based identity among Indo-Mauritians. His comments suggest that the indenture era had produced a degree of fusion which has since eroded:

> ... the Indian revival has incited Tamils to the formation of island-wide Tamil associations and the establishment of vernacular schools. The Tamil language is an important symbol of differentiation between them and Northern Hindus. The Indian revival has not led Tamils to merge with Northern Hindus, but has brought about a new emphasis (underlining mine) on Tamil culture. The Telugus follow a similar pattern... (for) only 3,500 is the language currently spoken. Yet the island-wide associations and revival of the language follows the Tamil pattern (1961:37).

The island-wide Telugu association was established in the 1940's, and in 1955 had a membership of fifteen hundred. Its membership dues supported life insurance programs for members

and

> three Telugu priests who have motorcycles and serve various Telugu communities throughout the island at marriages, deaths, and special ceremonies. There seems little doubt that this island-wide association has made Telugus more aware of their identity as separate from other Hindu linguistic groups (Benedict 1961:137).

The various Indian cultural/linguistic associations (these include religion-based groups) also run vernacular schools. These employ particular Indian languages as the medium of instruction and

> tend to preserve and promote cultural differences. They build a sense of solidarity within the ethnic group and inculcate the customs and language peculiar to the group (1961:38).

Finally, in Mauritius linguistic identity has come to take precedence over common religious affiliation. Benedict reports that on the island each of the linguistically differentiated groups of Hindus has its own distinctive temples and that "although there are no restrictions on Northern Hindus, Tamils, Telugus, and Marathis visiting in each others' temples, they rarely do so" (1961:136).

South Africa

Kuper reports that in South Africa, "the majority of the indentured were Hindus who spoke Tamil or Telugu and came from villages and towns in Madras Presidency which, until 1954, included the Telugu-speaking state of Andhra" (1967:241). The Gujarati and Urdu speakers (Muslims) from Northern and Central India came not as indentured laborers, but as "passenger immigrants". These people, constituting 10% of the Indian

immigrants to the country, "entered South Africa at their own expense and came specifically to trade and serve in commerce" (Kuper 1967:247). "All passenger Indians embarked at Bombay are labelled 'Bombayees'" (1960:8).

Since the evidence suggests that passenger immigrants were able to maintain ties with their homes in India, they should be considered in the section dealing with other populations that preserved these ties. However, to understand Indian social organization in South Africa, it is necessary to discuss the passenger immigrants at this time. Kuper describes the contemporary Indian sector as characterized by a great deal of fission along religious as well as linguistic lines. Some of this fission corresponds to differences in the economic status of passenger and 'free' Indians (i.e., those descended from indentured laborers).

Kuper states that according to informants, the major cultural division ran along religious lines, the distinction between Hindus and Muslims. Most Muslims entered the country as passenger immigrants, since only about 4% of the indentured laborers to South Africa were Muslims (Kuper 1967:242). But

> the Hindus themselves are culturally diversified with differences particularly marked (my emphasis) between Tamil and Telugu speakers originally from the south of India, or Hindi and Gujarati speakers who came from north and central India (1960:xix).

This distinction, too, draws in the difference between passenger and free Indians. Furthermore, the distinction between the two categories is still drawn officially:

> The former are registered under a separate law in the Office of the Protector of Indian

> Immigrants, and are subject to separate registration of marriages, births and deaths (Kuper 1960:3).

More significant, however, is a difference in the economic position of the two groups. This, in turn, can be related to group differences in the economic situation of the individuals who left India, as well as differences relating to the experience of indenture. For example, unlike the indentured immigrants, most passenger Indians brought their wives and children; if unmarried, they turned to India for their spouse. The passenger Indians were predominantly "Gujarati Hindus who retained their identity and family contacts, and had greater economic and social freedom in the choise of domicile" (Kuper 1960:15).

An expression of South Indian hostility against the northern and central Indian groups here

> is the growing self-consciousness of a section of 'Dravidians' of South African Indians. A few leading Tamils expressed resentment against claims of 'Aryan' superiority... They advocated that certain elements of North Indian ritual be deliberately expunged from South Indian practices, that Tamil instead of Sanskrit be the language of local ritual... and that the teaching of Tamil and membership in Tamil associations be encouraged (Kuper 1960:81).

These sentiments have their roots in the anti-Brahmin movement based in South India. But here, the division between North and South Indians is relevant in the context of South African society; the two groups are differentiated economically.

On the other hand, a division which has no apparent basis in the economic sphere of South Africa is the one between Tamils and Telugus. According to Kuper, the creation of the

state of Andhra in 1957 was the "main stimulus" to the greater emphasis placed on this distinction. She believes that the event "led to the establishment of more separate Andhra schools and a greater loyalty to the existing Andhra associations" (1960:82).

In South Africa, this division predated the independence of Andhra. The evidence consists of data on residence and marriage patterns.

> A common language is a more usual symbol of unity in urban areas than are varna and jati. Thus Puntans Hill and Stella Hill are two suburbs in Durban described as 'nearly 100 per cent Telugu', and non-Telugus living among them are distinguished as 'the Tamil family' or 'the Hindustani family' (1967:248).

It is clear from the following remarks by Kuper that linguistically exclusive settlement patterns in rural areas have been a long-standing tradition in South Africa. She says that a sufficient number of people

> from the same districts of Andhra migrated at much the same time, and were able to set up small 'islands' when they had completed their indenture. They became market gardeners and hawked their products in kin units and married into similar units (1967:252).

In fact, among the 'free' Indians of South Africa, the units of endogamy are categories of religion and language of origin, rather than varna and caste. The weakest interdiction is that against marriages between Tamils and Telugus; "reaction is stronger between North Indians (Hindi- or Gujarati-speaking) and South Indians (Tamil or Telugu)..." (1967:260).

Membership in voluntary associations occurs along lines

of language and religious affiliation. Such organizations build schools, clinics, orphanages, clubs and sports fields. Such "tangible achievements of associations are rallying points of communal sentiment" (Kuper 1960:85). Frequently there is

> competition between separate associations serving the same ends which develops into hostility and there may even be attempts to drive the opposition out of existence. At present, two major religious associations are engaged in such a conflict... (1960:85).

According to the 1951 Census, 95% of South African Indians were born in Natal, South Africa (Kuper 1960:xiv). Also, 99% of the Indians in Durban are third generation South Africans (1967:243). Unfortunately, statistics on the distribution of Indian languages currently spoken are lacking. However, Kuper reports that of her 'Tamil' and 'Hindi' informants, most had a 'working knowledge' of English, and, in fact, some spoke no other language (1960:xix). Yet, it has been shown that in South Africa, patterns of residence, marriage and membership in voluntary association are, to a large extent, based on Indian language of origin. How can these two facts be reconciled ?

It is suggested here that although events on the subcontinent (such as the anti-Brahmin movement in South India and the creation of Andhra Pradesh) may be pointed to as catalysts of fission in an overseas society, they are not its cause. Explanation of why events in India were able to fragment an Indian population overseas must be sought in the situation abroad: first in the relationships among Indian

groups there, and secondly in the relationship between the Indian sector and other ethnic groups.

Regarding the first, it has been shown that the difference between Indians of southern origin and those of origin in northern and central India was embedded in the difference between indentured laborers and passenger immigrants, and that this opposition implied differences of economic status. The difference between Tamils and Telugus, though not one of economic differentiation, had roots in settlement patterns established at the end of the indenture era.

With respect to the second relationship, the position of Indians in the ethnic stratification system of contemporary South Africa differs substantially from that occupied by Indians in Fiji and Mauritius. Here, there is no political motivation for Indians to develop a fused identity. A scant 3% of the total population, they are described as

> a people excluded from the formal political structure of the country and without any centralized machinery capable of wielding authority over themselves (Kuper 1960:85).

The West Indies

Trinidad and Guyana represent cases where ties to India were not maintained during the years following immigration, where a fused 'Indian' identity did emerge, and where fission along subnational dimensions has not occurred.

The immigrants to both colonies were predominantly from northern India; relatively few ships embarked from Madras. Niehoff estimates that "the proportion of people coming (to Trinidad) from the provinces of north central India was

between 80%-90%" (1960:17). Nonetheless, a considerable degree of linguistic diversity was represented in this broad geographic area. In combination with the languages brought from South India, Trinidad's early Indian population was linguistically diverse: "It is true that Magahili ..., Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and a few other Indian languages were also brought to Trinidad..." (Jha 1974:5).

In both societies, a dialect of Hindi came to be used by all Indians regardless of their natal language. In Trinidad, "even Madrasis and other South Indians also learned to speak the Bhojpuri and Awadi dialect (of Hindi)" (Ahsan 1963:223). Niehoff concurs that "today, practically all East Indians who speak any Indian language speak Hindi" (1963:17). According to R.T. Smith, "a common 'Indian' culture developed in British Guiana" based on the language and culture of north central India (1959:36).

Also, in both societies, English is currently the language spoken by most Indians. Niehoff reports that in Trinidad "most adults are already more at ease in English than in Hindi, while there are many children growing up in this generation who do not know Hindi at all" (1960:87). Referring to Guyana, Jayawardena speaks of

> the transformation of Hindi and Urdu into esoteric languages used almost solely in religious rituals and in traditional wedding songs. Priests often deliver a short sermon in Hindi after a puja, but translate it into English for the benefit of the congregation... It can be safely estimated that nine-tenths of those under the age of thirty-five do not understand Hindi (1963:24).

In both societies a variety of castes spanning the spectrum

of ritual status arrived; in neither society has it survived as an important dimension of social organization. In Guyana, according to Smith, "caste has come to be of minor significance and its vast original complexity has disappeared in favor of a set of simple concepts focusing on the high ritual status of Brahmins" (1959:37). And "in Trinidad, marriage between castes has become quite common, with perhaps as many marriages between castes as marriages within the same caste" (Niehoff 1960:98).

In the years since indenture in neither Trinidad nor Guyana has there been an interest in the revival of particular Indian languages other than Hindi or in the revival of linguistic-based identities. On the contrary, Niehoff interprets the tendency of Trinidadian Indian leaders to encourage the use of Hindi as an impulse toward fusion. He says: "The language is viewed as a unifying factor for the whole Indian community.." (1960:85).

There is no mention in the literature on either society of voluntary associations based on the region or language of origin prior to immigration. The pro-Dravidian (and thus pro-Southern) movement in India and the independence of Andhra have had no repercussions here in contrast to other overseas Indian populations.

The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 did have some consequences for the relatively solidary Indians in Trinidad. Malik reports that since that time Muslim missionaries who

> emphasize that Muslims are Pakistanis and different from Hindus, have started coming from Pakistan... The Trinidad Muslims have responded by making efforts to establish closer contacts with Pakistan (1971:38).

Also, at that time new mosques were built and Muslin schools began to teach Urdu (Malik 1971:10). However, Malik also notes that

> in rural areas where Muslims live among other East Indian groups, they show greater ethnic identification than those living in urban areas. With the rise of politics along racial lines, this ethnic identification was further enhanced (1971:38).

Niehoff concurs, saying of the Trinidad Indians:"The majority still feel that their ethnic identity as an Indian is more important than their religious differences" (1960:98).

Similarly, Jayawardena in noting the existence of various reformist and orthodox Muslim as well as Hindu organizations in Guyana says"

> Yet, these differences are important only in some contexts. In general, it is true to say that the overall tie of 'being Indian' is strong enough to override religious distinctions (1963:13).

In sum, it seems clear that in the years since the abolition of indenture, there has been a relative lack of fission along linguistic and religious lines in the West Indies. It is argued here that the greater solidarity of the Indian populations in Trinidad and Guyana as compared with that of South Africa, for example, lies in their different political relationship to other ethnic groups in the overseas society. In both, they constitute a significant proportion of the total population -- more than 33% in the case of Trinidad (Jha 1974:19) and 50.2% in the case of Guyana (Despres 1975:131) -- and are part of political structures in which there is universal franchise. In addition, in Guyana 'ethnic data'

collected by government agencies

> are extensively used for purposes of establishing developmental priorities and policy decisions affecting the allocation of public resources (Despres 1975:130).

POPULATIONS THAT HAVE MAINTAINED TIES TO INDIA

We now turn to the first mentioned category of overseas Indian populations:those which maintained structural ties to India from the years immediately following immigration. What I wish to establish here is that in each of these populations, identity and social organization were, from the beginning, consistently based on subnational dimensions such as natal language and caste. In none of these has a fused 'Indian' identity ever emerged. The populations included in this category are the immigrants to Great Britain (Desai 1963), to Uganda (Morris 1967, 1968), the passenger Indians to South Africa (Kuper 1961, 1967), and those who immigrated at their own expense to Fiji (Mayer 1961, 1963). In the body of the thesis which follows I hope to demonstrate that in terms of identity and social organization, the present New York population of Indians are following some of the patterns which are described for these groups.

Great Britain

The Indian immigrants whom Desai studied in Birmingham differ in important respects from the Indian population here. Unlike New York Indians, they come predominantly from villages, rather than major cities. "Most immigrants have an agricultural background, the great majority of them belonging to agricultural castes" (Desai 1963:14). Though Desai states that there are approximately a thousand Indian physicians practicing in Great Britain, the majority of the total population estimated at 55,000 in 1963 work as unskilled and semi-skilled factory

and transport workers. This, too, is in sharp contrast to the New York Indian population which is a highly professional one. But Birmingham Indians are similar to those in New York in that

> on arrival most of them intend to go back to India when they have saved enough. But in many cases, departure is postponed and behavior, if not overt statement, seems to indicate that it will be deferred indefinitely (1963:12).

Despite the fact that return is 'indefinitely deferred', it is clear that these immigrants are maintaining close ties with their families back home. The arrangement of marriage provides an important link between the immigrants and their families on the subcontinent. As in New York, many more unmarried males than females immigrate. The pattern in both societies is for families in India to arrange marriages for their men overseas. In Birmingham, the men

> sometimes contract marriages through the joint family in India without actually going there; ... they leave their wives and children with it when they arrive in the United Kingdom, send money to it and help it in other ways (1963:16).

It is also clear that natal language, and to a lesser extent caste, are important dimensions of identity and social organization in Birmingham. Unlike the Indians of New York, these immigrants generally do not speak English. Linguistically, they fall into three categories; they are speakers of Punjabi, Gujarati, and Bengali. Desai states that "there is no mutual intelligibility among these linguistic categories and hardly any immigrant can speak any Indian language except his own" (1963:13).

Housing patterns reflect the linguistic divisions in the population. Birmingham Indians typically live in houses in which they must share accommodations with other Indian, and sometimes non-Indian, immigrants. Within a single household, however, are found Indians only of the same linguistic category. "Indian immigrants recognize as neighbors only those who belong to their own linguistic-regional group, and find this sufficient. They ignore the rest" (1963:30).

Regarding the development of religious organizations, language takes precedence over common religious affiliation. Hindus do not maintain temples, but "the Muslims have mosques organized on a linguistic-regional basis (although there is no real injunction behind such a limit) (1963:93). Says Desai:

> Linguistic-regional factors define the boundaries of the community... The associations that the immigrants form are also contained within the linguistic-regional group. There is no association which decisively crosses the linguistic-regional barriers... There is no all-Indian immigrant society... To sum up, it is all the Gujaratis or all the Punjabis who constitute communities (1963:18).

Caste is also clearly important in Birmingham, although less so than common natal language:"The linguistic-regional barrier operates just as strongly at the caste level as it does at the level of relgion (sic) . There are separate castes according to linguistic regions" (1963:14). Though caste rules relating to occupation and commensality are said not to operate in Great Britain, the immigrants do

> retain their caste affiliation in terms of their relationship with India... The hierarchical system of caste which stratifies the village society in India does not operate in the United Kingdom... Caste distinctions, however, are present and are used in the conflict between persons to gain an advantage (1963:15).

Desai also reports that fellow caste-men in Birmingham have at times organized to form a corporate group: "The caste sometimes also operated in forming associations. Thus, members of a caste sometimes formed a savings club or a social club and would refuse membership to outsiders" (1963:15).

In sum, the immigrants to Great Britain maintain bonds with their families in India. Both natal language and caste continue to be active dimensions of identity and social organization. The importance of natal language is manifested in housing patterns, participation in religious organizations and the development of voluntary associations. Furthermore, because this population is rural in background, and because it is to villages where caste retains its significance that these ties are maintained, caste still operates in this overseas community. As will be demonstrated, New York Indians are urban in background. Though ties are also maintained with India, these ties are to families living in major cities where caste is less significant. Thus, except in the context of marriage, it is natal language and religion -- not caste -- which are the important dimensions of Indian identity in New York.

Uganda

The economic development of East Africa in the years following the construction of the railroad from Mombasa to Lake Victoria at the turn of the century depended upon the presence of a trading population which had to be imported. The Indians who immigrated to Uganda in the decades following the railway's completion filled this need. Thus, they went not as indentured laborers, but as free petty commercants. Most of the 35,000 Indians who were in East Africa in 1900 as indentured railway workers, in fact, returned to India (Morris 1968:17). We are not concerned with them here, but rather with the subsequent wave of Indian settlers who by 1948 numbered nearly 34,000, a figure accounting for 82% of the non-African population of Uganda, though less than 1% of its total population (1968:18).

These immigrants were, from the beginning, prevented by administrative restrictions from purchasing land (1968:21). As a result, they were forced to invest their profits in some other manner. The trend was for a man to expand his business, usually by opening another shop in a neighboring settlement. But

> ... it was difficult for him to invest his profits safely by expanding his business, unless he had partners and employees whom he could trust. Small traders in this situation, in any part of the world, are always likely to rely not on strangers, but on kinsmen, or among Indians, fellow members of a caste or sect, who are in theory bound to him by indissoluble ties... when a trader was well established in any part of East Africa he usually sent for relatives or caste

> members to him. In this way a small nucleus of a caste or sectarian community was founded (1968:21).

It is clear that though few immigrants to Uganda returned permanently to India, both the commitment to such a return and the economic ability to maintain ties with the country were present. Morris says:

> The ease with which India could be visited and the frequency with which people in fact went to and from their homes meant that although they were not able to construct a caste system in Africa, they were obliged to maintain the identity and a large part of the exclusiveness of their jati. In particular, they dared not fail to arrange endogamous marriages so that on their permanent return to India -- a hope cherished by all though achieved by few -- they could once more assume their proper place in the local system... in spite of an environment almost wholly unfavorable to it, caste exclusiveness was one of the most important structural principles in organizing Indian social life in East Africa. In this respect, East Africa contrasts with other overseas settlements, where the links with India were not so close and where caste barriers in course of time were relaxed (1967:267).

Several points based on comparison with other overseas populations need to be made here. The first is that "the ease with which India could be visited" had less to do with greater physical proximity to the subcontinent than with the superior economic status of these immigrants in comparison with the indentured laborers and their descendants in the other colonies. Mauritius, for example, is even closer to India, but there ties have not been maintained with the homeland. In Birmingham and New York Indian immigrants also maintain these ties despite the relatively greater geographic distance.

Secondly, like the British immigrants, but unlike those

of New York, the Uganda Indians were predominantly from rural districts in India where caste played an important role in the ordering of social relations. In both Uganda and Birmingham, ties are maintained with families in villages; in New York these ties are to families in cities where religious and linguistic identities are more important than those of caste. In Birmingham it was shown that both caste and language are dimensions of Indian identity and social organization. There the greater emphasis on language in comparison with Uganda Indians reflects the fact that several linguistic groups are represented there. In Uganda, according to Morris, language as a differentiating feature of Indians was minimal:

> Most Indians in Uganda spoke Gujarati as their first language... It was used for instruction in most elementary classes in the schools... in general, speech was not a distinguishing mark of religious groups, and it did not define many groups of other kinds (1968:18).

Other languages such as Sindhi, Punjabi, Bengali, and Hindi were spoken by much smaller numbers of people, but there is no mention that these ever served as a basis for formal or informal association in Uganda.

A single fused Indian identity never really developed in Uganda. For much of the time, says Morris, Indians in the country constituted "a category of the population and nothing more ..." (1968:166). Instead of a unified ethnic group, there emerged "a number of separate caste and sectarian communities, each of them more significant in the everyday lives of its members than the Indian community as a whole" (1968:27).

Maintaining ties to India in the expectation of a permanent return may explain why local identities based on caste and sect were important in the early years of immigration to Uganda. After half a century of settlement, however, it seems unlikely that permanent return to the subcontinent would still appear to be feasible to Indians in Uganda. It seems doubtful, therefore, that caste and sectarian divisions would become increasingly important as the prospects for a permanent return diminished. Yet this is precisely what occurred. During the early years when the Indian settlement was small,

> the immigrants acquiesced in being treated as a united community, and frequently acted as one, for the hazards of the environment were normally enough to unite all Indians in their transactions with non-Indians. Their occupations, too, were sufficiently similar to produce a superficial unity: and their leaders, who by and large, took their opinions from the educated classes in India, did not approve of caste and sect 'communalism' (1968:28).

Within half a century, caste and sect groups were the corporate units of Uganda Indian society:

> ... in 1955, the duties of conformity placed upon them to behave as 'Indians' were so light that to speak of the community even as a quasi group in a system of ranked ethnic aggregates is not helpful (1968:166).

How can this shift be explained ? I have been arguing here that the political relationship between Indians and the dominant group in the overseas society is a major factor in the shaping of the social organization of the Indian sector. In Uganda, the politically dominant group as embodied in the Central Government played a key role in perpetuating and

strengthening caste and sect divisions.

Initially, the Government sought to administer the Indian population as a single entity. Towards this end it encouraged the development of all-Indian councils that would act as advisory bodies in matters concerning the Indians. It soon became apparent that whether the issue was land grants for cemeteries, the building of mosques and temples, or the running of schools, no single policy was acceptable to all of the constituent groups (1968:33).

The Muslim sect of Shia Imami Ismailis was the first group to recognize that they would need to negotiate on their own behalf with the Uganda Government

> if they were to maintain the separateness of their community and have complete control over its internal affairs... When other Muslim sects and Hindu castes observed how the Ismaili leaders gradually obtained complete recognition of the community in its own right and successfully defended its sectarian interests, they too were stimulated to follow the example... The process eventually undermined all the pretensions of the Central Council of Indian Associations for Uganda to represent one united Indian community. It also made it virtually impossible for anybody to establish united Muslim or Hindu organizations, because every sect or caste was anxious to obtain for itself advantages similar to those of the Ismailis. Once 'communal crystallisation' began, the process soon influenced almost all relationships with the administration and of one community with another (1968:33).

Thus, by endorsing this method of negotiation, the Uganda Government, in its pursuit of efficient administration, forced the various castes and sects to become competitors in obtaining economic and political gains.

Fiji

In Fiji, as in South Africa, it is necessary to distinguish between Indians who came as indentured laborers (and their descendants) and those who came at their own expense as 'passenger' immigrants and their descendants. Passenger Indians began to arrive in Fiji following World War I; they came predominantly from Gujarat and Punjab. These immigrants are said to differ from the indentured Indians and their descendants in two ways that are relevant to this study.

One difference is that the passenger immigrants maintained ties with their homes in India whereas the indentured population did not. The second is that from the beginning of their settlement in Fiji, the passenger immigrants consistently maintained linguistic and religious exclusiveness. Of the Gujaratis and Punjabis in Fiji, Mayer states:

> Both tended to form separate cultural groups within the community being distinguished by religion and language and especially by their close ties with India. They came from areas where emigration was known and respected and where it was assumed that the migrant would return to marry off his children and spend his old age (1963:35).

Elsewhere Mayer says that they "... in some cases appeared to regard Fiji merely as a place to make a fortune" (1961:188). Also, he finds it significant that

> ... it was a Gujarati in one of the settlements who advocated closer ties with India to prevent Fiji Indians from being imported under some future policy and to give them a place to settle if ever this policy eventuated. His Fiji-born hearers could not believe they would ever have to leave Fiji. They felt themselves to be Fiji Indians, proud of their heritage, but

> equally proud of their place in the new society... (1963:193).

Regarding the maintenance of linguistic and religious exclusiveness among the passenger Fiji immigrants, there is little available data. The following remarks by Mayer, however, are highly suggestive:

> The Gujaratis had formed a separate cultural group -- speaking the regional language, not marrying the local Fiji Indians... They felt that they were a separate community and therefore helped each other and combined to fight any non-Gujarati competitor (1961:46).

South Africa

Mention has already been made of the small minority of passenger Indian immigrants who arrived in South Africa at the turn of the century to work in commerce. The latter were predominantly Urdu-speaking Muslims from north and central Indian and Gujarati-speaking Hindus from the rural districts of Saurasthtra and the Bombay Presidency (Kuper 1967:242).

Kuper reports that the South African indentured laborers "... severed the cord with India and followed leaders who deliberately emphasized the value of being 'South Africans' rather than 'Indians'" (1960:xiii). On the other hand,

> most passenger Indians brought across their wives and children as soon as they could afford passage and had found a home, and if unmarried, they returned to India to look for wives. They did not sever their ties with India, and it became a recognized practice to have their children married in India. Sons then brought their wives to South Africa while the daughters took the domicile of their husbands and remained in India (1960:15).

Turning now to the other variable in question, that of the preservation of subnational Indian identities, we also find a difference noted between the groups. The importance of natal language as a dimension of identity and social organization in South Africa has already been discussed elsewhere. Here I am concerned with what Kuper calls "the uneven survival of caste" in South Africa. She says of the indentured group:

> The Indians who came to South Africa could not maintain, even had they so desired, the variegated and yet interlocking social patterns which had been built through the ages on the Indian continent... The Indians as a minority group of laborers, not lords, could not impose (nor even continue) their traditional values and social structure (1967:243).

The majority of those who remained in South Africa after indenture "chose to marry across caste barriers" (1967:247).

Concerning the maintenance of case and sectarian divisions in the passenger descended groups, she says: "... in Durban, the group that adheres most closely to caste is the small Gujarati-speaking Hindu trading community concentrated in the center of the city" (1967:243). And

> they retain contacts with their own caste members in India through business and/or marriage. Though described by other Indians in Durban by the general label 'Baniyas' (traders), they are very conscious of jati (Patel, Desai, Amin, and the like) within this broad Vaishya varna... In addition to endogamy, many Gujaratis retain other characteristics associated with caste. They are exclusive in their eating, selective in occupation, explicit in their evaluation of status, conservative in ritual (1967:252).

Among the Muslin passenger-descended Indians, Kuper notes

persistence of sectarian divisions, analogous to those of caste:

> While ignoring caste, South African Indian Muslims evaluate in-group differences by sect (Sunni or Shiah), place of origin, and local dialect (1967:251).

SUMMARY

The charts below summarize the hypotheses offered here and indicate how the various cases discussed in this chapter relate to one another.

Hypothesis 1

> Preservation of any parochial identities is related to the economic ability to maintain ties to India; fused identities occur where such ties are not maintained. (The notation "I" indicates the period of indenture; "II" indicates a time period after indenture, but prior to the establishment of universal sufferage.)

Figure I. MAINTENANCE OF ECONOMIC TIES TO INDIA

FUSED IDENTITY	YES	NO
YES		Fiji I South Africa I Mauritius I Trinidad Guyana
NO	Great Britain Uganda Fiji (passengers) South Africa (pass) U.S.	

Hypothesis 2

> In populations where no ties to India are maintained and where fused identities develop, parochial identities can be successfully reintroduced if Indians have no power in the political structure of the overseas society.

Figure 2. INDIANS POSSESS POWER IN THE SOCIETY

PAROCHIAL IDENTITIES ARE RE-INTRODUCED		YES	NO
	YES		Fiji II Mauritius II South Africa II
	NO	Trinidad II Guyana II	

Hypothesis 3

Among overseas societies that maintain economic ties to India, whether identities based on language and religion or caste become salient, depends on size and range of groups emigrating. Where immigration is restricted to a few areas in India, caste is more likely to be retained.

Figure 3. CASTE IDENTITY IS SIGNIFICANT AND TIES TO INDIA ARE MAINTAINED

EMIGRATION IS RESTRICTED TO A FEW AREAS IN INDIA		YES	NO
	YES	Great Britain Uganda (passengers) Fiji (passengers) South Africa (passengers)	
	NO		U.S.

Although there are some sources available on other overseas Indian populations, the date on the particular variables examined here are insufficient to establish the position of these societies in terms of the hypotheses offered here. For general information on Indians in Malaysia, see Arasaratnam (1970) and Thomson (1971); in Ceylon, see Farmer (1963); in Burma, see Chakravarti (1971); in Central Africa, see Dotson (1968); Surinam, Speckman (1967); St. Vincent, see Stone (1977); Canada, see Mayer (1959).

Plan of the thesis

Comparative study has demonstrated that two factors relate to the dimensions of identity operating among overseas Indian populations: the presence or absence of economic ties to India during the years immediately following immigration, and the political relationship between Indians and the dominant group of the overseas society.

As will be shown, the Indian population of New York differs with respect to educational background from those of Uganda, Great Britain, and the 'passenger' populations of Fiji and South Africa. The aim of this dissertation is to show that despite these differences, New York's Indian immigrants share with the latter groups two characteristics hypothesized as being causally related: the maintenance of economic ties to the subcontinent and the persistence of subnational, or parochial identities in their internal social organization.

Contemporary Indian immigrants to North America have not been extensively studied by anthropologists, though a number of dissertations have been written (Jain 1964; Chakravorti 1968; Gupta 1969; Bradfield 1971; Nasser-Bush 1974; Chadney 1977), and are thus not well-known in the ethnographic literature. Also, many of the demographic features which characterize this group have been determined by U.S. immigration policy. For these reasons, the following chapter documents the history of U.S. immigration and naturalization lesgislation as it has affected Indian immigrants to this country over the course of nearly a century. Current immigration data are provided to demonstrate the distribution of the Indian immigrants by age

and sex, range of occupation, and level of education. Immigration Service statistics on current naturalization patterns are also presented.

Chapter 3 presents demographic data based on fieldwork conducted among the present immigrant generation of Indians settled in the New York tri-State area. On the basis of this research, evidence is cited for the diversity of their ethnic origins in India, their "cosmopolitan" experience prior to immigrating, multi-lingualism in Indian languages, and family traditions of professionalism and immigration.

Chapter 4 investigates the evidence of dual national affiliation on the part of the Indian immigrants here. Specifically, the following areas are discussed: patterns of marriage, household composition, travel between India and the U.S., the sponsorship of kinsmen, and patterns of citizenship holding. It is argued that the immigrants here are consciously pursuing a course which if continued would facilitate repatriation.

In Chapter 5, I turn from a consideration of the features that Indian immigrants in America have in common to an exploration of the boundaries which are recognized as important by those in the New York area. The results of extensive interviewing with informants of diverse linguistic and religious backgrounds in India are presented. It is maintained that for these immigrants, the salient categories of 'ethnic' identity (that is, identities which relate to one's origin) are those which pertain to natal language and religion. For Hindus, the former is of greater importance; for non-Hindus it is the latter. The more inclusive, but very significant categories "North Indian" and "South Indian" are also discussed. This chapter also

examines the cues which are used by the immigrants here to assess the identities of other Indians.

Chapter 6 examines patterns of formal and informal voluntary associations. It is argued that in the case of the former, etic behavior closely reflects emic notions of identity as reported in the previous chapter. That is, the majority of voluntary Indian associations in New York are organized along lines of shared parochial identities. Cultural organizations are based on natal languages associated with particular states in India. The non-Hindu organizations based on common religious affiliation perform the same functions as the language-based associations: they affiliate members sharing a common identity. Since the memberships of the various organizations are settled in geographically dispersed areas, it is argued that they flourish because of their members' determination to preserve their respective parochial identities.

In Chapter 7, consideration is given to those institutions which cater to the Indian population of the New York area, regardless of subnational identity: newspapers, radio and television programs, festivals. Also included are descriptions of various pan-Indian organizations that have emerged.

Chapter 8 explores in detail two of the ongoing projects conceived by one pan-Indian organization active in New York. Described here are the efforts by the Association of Indians in America to obtain from the U.S. Census Bureau a separate enumeration of Indians in the 1980 Census, and from the federal government recognition of Indians as a 'minority group'. These projects and the controversy they have triggered within the

Indian population here are examined from the point of view of an emerging Indian ethnic identity. It is argued that a principle motivation for this development is an awareness on the part of pan-Indian organization leaders that particularly since the civil rights legislation of the 1960's, the allocation of certain strategic resources (notably jobs) follows lines of ethnicity; to benefit from such legislation, minorities must therefore organize into ethnic groups.

Finally, Chapter 9 summarizes the major conclusions of this study and attempts to relate these findings to other works in the social science literature that are concerned with the emergence of ethnic identities.

CHAPTER 2

INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICA: AN OVERVIEW

BOUNDARIES OF THE SOCIAL UNIT STUDIED

The category 'Immigrant'

I set out to study a population whose boundaries I did not at first know. Indeed, a major concern of the research was the theoretical problem of how to delimit social units. As the study evolved, it became clear that the majority of informants were people of Indian origin who had immigrated to the United States -- though not necessarily directly from India -- since 1965.

There were non-immigrants among the informants as well; that is, individuals whose visas do not permit them to remain in this country beyond a specified time. Included in this category are visitors, university students who are expected to return after completing their studies, diplomats and other India Government employees who are transferred to a different country every three years, as well individuals engaged in certain kinds of international business and who are not permanent residents. The latter are predominantly men in the import-export trade who commute regularly between India and the U.S. Though they may spend several months a year here, their families typically remain in India.

It is not being suggested here that the immigrant sector of the Indian population here is a discrete unit with an entirely separate identity from that of non-immigrant Indians. That would be overstating the case. As will be demonstrated later, among the immigrant households studied, nearly every one was closely bound up with the lives of non-immigrant Indians

-- visiting kinsmen, in particular. (See Chapter 4.)

Yet, while it is accurate to say that the social networks of immigrants and non-immigrants overlap to a certain degree, it is also true that much interaction takes place within one's own immigration category. This is most clearly observed in the Indians' participation in formally organized associations. Indians here as university students, for example, are generally differentiated from the immigrants by their younger age and marital status as singles. They also have their own associations separate from those formed by immigrants. At least three campuses in the New York metropolitan area have Indian student clubs: Columbia University, City College of New York, and Stevens Technological Institute in Hoboken, New Jersey. Significantly, the activities sponsored by these groups are fundamentally similar to those sponsored by the immigrant groups; they present Indian films, programs of music and dance, and holiday celebrations. (See Chapter 6 for discussion of immigrant associations.)

Diplomats and non-resident businessmen do not form associations of their own here nor do they tend to become members of associations formed by immigrants. The interests and experience of these two categories of people are quite distinctive, a fact that is reflected to a certain extent in their networks and identity. One India Government worker here, for example, in conversing used the phrase 'our community', a term typically used by Indians to designate fellow members of their caste, religious, or linguistic group, to refer to the international body of diplomats.

This study focuses on the immigrants who form the majority of the Indian population in the United States. They are also aware that as a group they face certain problems not shared by those who stay is more temporary (See chapter 8.) Finally interaction is most extensive within the immigrant category. Non-immigrants were not excluded from the study by design; rather they form a statiscally small proportion of the sample and the population as a whole.

The category 'Indian'

People of Indian origin have come to America not only from India, but from the countries of East Africa, the West Indies, Guyana and Europe (Great Britain, in particular) as well. In some cases, these immigrants date their origin in India to several generations in the past.

An initial problem was whether or not to include the latter with those who immigrated directly from India. If shared culture were to be the deciding factor, a case could be made to exclude them, for in the case of some West Indians, knowledge of an Indian language is not even present.

But because of the exploratory nature of the study, no *a priori* boundaries were set in this regard. Those of Indian origin, but immigrating from countries other than India were included to the degree that they entered the networks of informants who had immigrated from India. Consequently, many East African Indian informants participated in the study, though the majority of informants came directly from India.

Boundaries of Geography

A further limitation concerns the geographic boundaries in America of the population studied. The initial decision to limit research to the confines of New York City was altered early in the course of fieldwork when it became apparent that the boundary recognized by the Indians themselves was not the City, but rather the New York tri-State area that includes New Jersey, Connecticut, Long Island and Westchester. Thus, the Indian associations discussed in Chapter 6, though having their headquarters in New York City, function to bind memberships which are geographically dispersed throughout three states. Informal networks span this area as well (see chapter 4).

Boundaries of Time

Asian Indians are among the most recently established immigrant groups in this country. Nearly all of the informants -- as indeed the great majority of Indian immigrants in this country-- have come here since 1965. In background, this population differs notably from earlier European and Asian counterparts of this and earlier eras: it is generally urban in provenience, highly educated, professionally trained and employed, and English-speaking.

Since these are hardly characteristics traditionally associated with newly arrived immigrants to the United States, it is necessary to explore the reasons for this unusual profile. As will be shown in the following sections, the sudden appearance of a highly select stratum of Indians in the United States since

1965 is inextricably linked to the history of immigration policy in this country. Thus, a brief survey of immigration legislation as it has affected Indians is offered here.

Early Legislation

Prior to 1882, no Immigration law of the U.S. denied entry into this country of any individual on the basis of his or her national origin. Rather, this body of legislation taken as a whole sought to bar individuals on the basis of lack of economic productivity and what were deemed as undesirable personal characteristics. For example, the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798 authorized the President "to expel from the U.S. any alien he deemed dangerous" (Rosenfield and Gordon 1959:5). A 1875 statute barred convicts and prostitutes, and the 1882 Act excluded "idiots, lunatics, convicts and persons likely to be a public charge" (Rosenfield and Gordon 1959:6).

The year of 1882 also marked the first immigration legislation that discriminated on the basis of national origin. Significantly, it was a harbinger of future U.S. policy toward Asian immigration. This was the Chinese Exclusion Act which was not to be repealed until 1943.

In 1881 the body of extant Immigration law was codified and to the list of those denied entry were added criminals, polygamists, and those with contagious diseases. In 1903, epileptics, professional beggars and anarchists were categories also prohibited entry.

Between 1900 and 1914, one million immigrants entered the U.S. The response in 1917 was a sweeping revision of Immigration law. The two major innovations were the institution of

literacy tests and the creation of the Asiatic Barred Zone. The latter denied entry of immigrants from Oriental countries with the single exception of Japan.

The Quota Laws

In 1921, the first quota law was introduced. "With certain enumerated exceptions, it allocated quotas to each nationality totalling 3% of the foreign born persons of that nationality residing in the U.S. in 1910 for an annual total of 350,000" (Rosenfield and Gordon 1959:9). Though scheduled to expire in 1922, this law was extended until 1924. In that year, the Permanent Numerical Restriction Law based the quota for each nationality on the number of persons of their national background in the U.S. in 1920. Exempt from this quota system were the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

The Laws of 1917 and 1924 remained substantially unaltered until 1952. The Act of 1952, known as the Immigration and Nationality Act, provided a special quota system for countries within the so-called "Asia-Pacific Triangle". The thus-designated area "broadly embraces all Asiatic countries from India to Japan and all Pacific Islands north of Australia and New Guinea" (Rosenfield and Gordon 1959" 188). Countries included are Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Ceylon, China, India, Japan, Korea, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

"Initially, quotas for countries in this area generally are fixed like other quotas, but they are allocated on a racial basis to persons whose ancestry stems from countries

within the triangle" (Rosenfield and Gordon 1959:188). In other words, this legislation "charges all Asiatics wherever they are born, to the quotas of their country of racial origin" (Rosenfield and Gordon 1959:15). Since "all the quotas in the Asia-Pacific Triangle except those for Japanese and Chinese persons are in the minimum quota allotment of one hundred" (Rosenfield and Gordon 1959:188), this meant that would-be immigrants of Indian ancestry, regardless of their country of birth, would come under the annual quota allotment of one hundred for India. Consequently, the majority of Indians entering the U.S. fron 1924 to 1965 were non-immigrants, e.g., university students and government office staff.

The 1965 Immigration Act

The single most important piece of lesgislation for Indians seeking to enter the U.S. was passed in 1965. Representing the culmination of proposals initiated by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, the 1965 enactment flung open the door of Asian immigration, reversing a policy of nearly a century. The following features of this act are relevant to the Indian population here and account for many of its demographic characteristics.

Firstly, the national origins quota system was abolished effective June 30, 1968. In its stead, a worldwide annual immigration quota was fixed for areas outside the Western Hemisphere at 170,000, with a maximum of 20,000 visas to be allocated to the people of any single country in a given year.

Secondly, the special immigration restrictions relating to Asians were eliminated. Indeed, the amendments to the Act prohibit the exclusion of any immigrant on the grounds of race,

sex, or nationality.

Finally, the 1965 amendments established new criteria for the issuing of visas. Essentially, there are now three types of qualifications: professional, familial, and economic. Under the first type, called 'third preference' (see Table 1), a person qualifies for a visa on the grounds that he or she possesses a professional skill needed in the U.S. What constitutes a 'needed' skill is determined each year by the Labor Department; thus the list of qualifying professions reflects annual changes in the nation's job market. Under the familial priorities (1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th preference categories, see Table 1), an individual is granted a visa on the basis of a particular family relationship to a person who has already been granted status as an immigrant or citizen. Two preference categories are based on an individual's occupation. Finally, if a person is willing to invest a specified amount of capital in a business in the U.S., he may be granted a visa under an immigration category called "non-preference". For the proportionate number of visas granted under these different priorities, see Table 1.

Immigration data on Indians in America

As a result of the recent shift in immigration policy, thousands of Indians have become permanent residents in the U.S. during the past decade. The precise number of people of Indian origin presently residing here is highly controversial. Any statistic is necessarily only a rough estimate. There are several reasons why this is so.

One major reason is that the U.S. Immigration Service

figures are based on the country of an individual's emigration rather than that of his or her ancestral origin. Thus they exclude residents from countries other than India (e.g., Indians coming from East Africa, the West Indies, and Europe).

In addition, American-born children of Indian immigrants are not included since they are naturalized citizens of the U.S. The Census Bureau is of no assistance in this area because it does not have a separate category for those of Indian origin to identify themselves on the Census form. One Indian group here is actively attempting to rectify this situation. (See Chapter 8 for a discussion of this issue.)

The Immigration Service has delimited the Indian immigrant population in such a way that it does not coincide with the social unit studied. Consequently, their statistics are fragmentary for the purposes of this research. Nevertheless, the figures are still illuminating, especially when considered along with the extant body of Immigration law. Together, they specify the composition of the Indian population here, the trends in its immigration patterns, and this country's attitude toward the entry of Indians -- and Asians generally -- during the course of its history.

Between the years 1871 and 1965, a total of approximately sixteen thousand immigrants entered the U.S. (U. S. Immigration Service Annual Report 1975:34)[1]. A breakdown by decade yields the figures found in Table 2. The marked increase in the entry

1 Henceforth, references to the U.S. Immigration Service Annual Report will be abbreviated as "U.S. ISAR".

TABLE I

PREFERENCE CATEGORIES FOR VISA ALLOCATION

IMMIGRATION CATEGORY	PERSONS WHO QUALIFY	MAXIMUM PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL NUMBER OF VISAS TO BE GRANTED
Immediate Relatives	Spouses, parents with children over 21, and children of U.S. citizens	No limitation
First Preference	Unmarried sons and daughters (over 21) of U.S. citizens	20%
Second Preference	Spouses and unmarried sons and daughters of permanent residents (i.e., immigrants)	20%
Third Preference	Professional or persons of exceptional ability in the arts and sciences	10%
Fourth Preference	Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens	10%
Fifth Preference	Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens	24%
Sixth Preference	Skilled or unskilled labor, not of a temporary nature, for which a shortage of employable and willing persons exists in the U.S.	10%
Seventh Preference	Refugees	6%
Non-Preference	Aliens coming to invest or retire here	Depends on the number of unused visas from other categories

Source: Immigration Act of October 3, 1965, Section 203.

of Indians during the first three decades of the century deserves comment. During the period between 1904 and 1914, many of the Indians who entered the U.S. were farm laborers who had come from Punjab. There, severe economic conditions due to drought and crop failures caused farmers to move elsewhere. Because of their contact with English speakers, and India's ties with the British Commonwealth, Canada was a likely choice.

TABLE 2

INDIAN IMMIGRANTS ENTERING THE U.S.: 1871-1965

1871-1880	163
1881-1890	269
1891-1900	68
1901-1910	4,713
1911-1920	2,082
1921-1930	1,886
1931-1940	496
1941-1950	1,761
1951-1960	1,973
1961-1965	2,602
TOTAL	16,013

Source: U.S. Immigration Service Annual Report (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 62-64.

The heaviest concentration of Indians in America at this time was in California. According to C.H. Loehlin, this immigration, at least as concerns the Punjabi Sikhs was

> a 'spillover' from Canada about the turn of the century... The 1907 riots against them in Bellingham, Washington just near the Canadian border where 600 American lumber mill workers raided 400 Hindus (as many people from Hindustan were

> called) and drove them from the city would seem to show this southward migration. The Sikhs had gone from one lumbering area to another. The labor riots, albeit on a much smaller scale at Live Oak, California on January 25, 1908 and St. John, Oregon on March 21, 1910 would seem to indicate their continued southward migration (Loehlin 1972:68).

Also, between World War I and 1930, many Indians entered under student (non-immigrant) quotas, "but stayed on inconspicuously to avoid detection" (Loehlin 1972:69).

The second period of rising immigration is related to a shift in U.S. policy. Beginning in 1946, Indians were for the first time permitted to own land, obtain citizenship, and thus petition for the entry of their families. Though visas were still restricted to one hundred annually, "relatives were allowed beyond this quota and (since) the law was interpreted liberally, many more than that entered legally" (Loehlin 1972:69).

Since 1965, the number of Indians annually admitted to the U.S. both as immigrants -- defined as "aliens admitted for permanent residence" (U.S. ISAR 1975:35) -- and non-immigrants, those "admitted in temporary status" (U.S. ISAR 1975:35) has risen dramatically as the figures in Table 3 show.

TABLE 3

THE NUMBER OF INDIANS ENTERING THE U.S.: 1965-1975

YEAR	IMMIGRANTS	Non-IMMIGRANTS (NUMBERS IN THIS COLUMN ARE ROUNDED OFF AS THEY APPEAR IN THE IMMIGRATION REPORT)
1965	582	15,500
1966	2,458	16,000
1967	2,642	19,500
1968	4,682	25,000
1969	5,963	27,000
1970	10,114	32,000
1971	14,310	36,000
1972	16,926	46,000
1973	12,256	62,000
1974	11,863	68,000
1975	14,939	68,700
TOTAL	98,735	415,700

Source: U.S. Immigration Service Annual Report (Washington, D.C.: Government Priting Office, 1975), p. 42 and p. 68.

One of the most striking characteristics of the immigrant population is the degree to which it is professionally employed. For example, of the 14,939 Indians admitted as immigrants in 1975, 6,156 were classified by the U.S. Immigration Service as "professional/technical workers" (U.S. ISAR 1975:42-43).An additional 7,763 were classified as "spouses and children of professional/technical workers" (U.S. ISAR 1975:43). The combined figures account for 93% of the Indian immigrants admitted during that year. Also, of the 188 Indians admitted in 1975 as "temporary workers" (a non-immigrant status), 122 were classified as "workers of distinguished merit and ability" (U.S. ISAR 1975:70).

It is also significant that in 1974, the 'third preference' or professional skills qualifying category was over-subscribed by Indians while visas under other immigration categories were still open to them (U.S. Department of State Bulletin, Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs 1974, vol. 2, number 83).

In 1974, approximately 7,000 Indian immigrants here were employed in the medical field (Doshi 1975:xii). Hugh Tinker, writing about Indian immigrants generally explains why the number is so high:

> ... the Indian medical profession could not avoid disaster without being able to syphon off surplus doctors to Britain, Canada, etc. In 1970, 80% of the doctors in India were residing in the urban areas, which contain under 20% of the population; yet between 15,000 and 20,000 doctors in India were without employment (1977:9).

The statistics shown in Table 4 also indicate that the present immigration is one of individuals between the ages of

twenty and forty, equally divided between the sexes. Marriage patterns among the immigrants are discussed in Chapter 6, but here it is relevant to note that of the unmarried Indians who immigrate, the overwhelming percentage are males. A major trend is for such men to return to India in order to obtain brides, then to petition for their wive's immigration to the U.S. under the second preference category. This pattern accounts for the relative balance in the sex ratio despite the fact that many men have initially come here alone.

TABLE 4

THE AGE AND SEX OF IMMIGRANTS FROM INDIA, YEAR OF 1975

AGE	MALES	FEMALES
Under 5	683	657
5- 9	559	505
10-19	476	642
20-29	3,467	3,934
30-39	2,024	1,423
40-49	489	328
50-59	151	206
60-69	104	114
70-79	26	20
80+	4	6
TOTAL	7,938	7,835

Source: U.S. Immigration Service Annual Report (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 51-52.

Naturalization

The history of U.S. legislation concerning citizenship closely parallels the shifting course of the nation's immigration laws. Before presenting statistics on the numbers of immigrants who have become citizens since 1965, the following biographical sketch is offered of a man who at the age of 93 has lived through all the vicissitudes of American immigration and naturalization policy toward Indians during the last three quarters

of a century.

A Case Study

Mr. Pafulla C. Mukerji is a keenly intelligent man with the ability to ferret out from an encyclopedic memory names, facts, and figures relating to events that occurred decades ago. Today, he remains involved in public affairs of national and international scope, and as the founder of the Tagore Society is deeply committed to fostering appreciation of Indian fine arts in America.

As a third year university student in Calcutta in 1904, Mr. Mukerji became active in the Swadeshi Movement for the self-governance of Bengal. This followed the English Vice-Roy's decision at that time to divide Bengal into an Eastern and Western sector in order to facilitate its administration. Emulating the example set by the Bengali philosopher Tagore, he actively persuaded students to boycott English goods and schools. The movement showed signs of success beyond the confines of Calcutta. In the wake of violent attacks against the student organizers, Mr. Mukerji and three student companions decided to leave India. A chance meeting in Calcutta with William Jennings Bryan who provided the three with a letter of endorsement settled their decision to set out for the U.S. rather than Germany. It was in 1906 that they arrived here, each with a total of fifty dollars.

After working for a year as a hydraulics engineer in Harrison, New Jersey, Mr. Mukerji was accepted at the University of Pittsburgh from which he graduated in 1911. Upon graduation,

he went to work as an engineer for U.S. Steel Corporation in Pittsburgh where except for a year's absence to work in Siberia at a steel plant in the Ural Mountains, he remained until his retirement in 1956.

Always an ardent organizer, his first efforts in that direction in this country came in 1912 when he initiated a correspondence club for Indian students in the U.S. It was called the Hindustani Club in order to distinguish the group from American Indians. Any university with five or more Indian students could form a chapter. By 1914, there were twelve member chapters across the country.

In 1915, Mr. Mukerji helped found the Friends of Freedom for India in New York with affiliate chapters in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago and Boston. One of the aims of this organization was to persuade the U.S. not to enter World War I in support of England and France because these countries were undemocratic in the administration of their overseas colonies.

The British responded to this action with a list bearing the names of those prohibited from returning to India. Since his name appeared on this list, Mr. Mukerji applied for U.S. citizenship in 1918 "as a Caucasian" in his words, because racial criteria were used at this time in the granting of citizenship. It was granted. In 1924, however, he received a letter from the Attorney General to "show cause in court as to why your citizenship should not be revoked". Other Indians throughout the country who had likewise been granted citizenship received the same letter. Here it is necessary to provide some historical background on U.S. naturalization law and policy.

The first law to establish criteria by which individuals could become U.S. citizens was passed by the First Congress. The Act of March 26, 1790, which remained unchanged until 1870 provided only for the naturalization of "any alien, being a free white person who otherwise meets the requirement of the law". The Act of July 14, 1870 amended the 1790 law to provide naturalization rights for "aliens being free white persons, and to aliens of African nativity, and to persons of African descent".

In 1900, citizenship rights were extended by law to inhabitants of Hawaii, in 1917 to those of Puerto Rico, in 1924 to American Indians, and in 1927 to Virgin Islanders. During the early decades of the century there was concensus in the lower courts that Chinese and Japanese were to be excluded from citizenship under these laws,

> but the status of Indians remained in doubt. The opponents of their naturalization -- chiefly the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and such private groups as the Asiatic Exclusion League of San Francisco -- looked upon them as 'orientals' and hence not 'white persons'. This was also the position taken by the U.S. Attorney General Charles J. Boneparte in August 1907, in a letter to the U.S. Attorney in San Francisco in response to the latter's inquiry:
>
> In reply, I beg to inform you that it seems to me clear that under no construction of the law can natives of British India be regarded as white persons within the meaning of Section 2169.
>
> The Indians and their supporters, on the other hand pointed out that in the main they were of the same racial classification as Europeans -- namely 'caucasian' -- and that their status, therefore, should not be the same as those orientals classified as 'mongoloid' (Jacoby 1972:76).

That there was ambivalence on this issue between 1907 and 1923 is attested by the fact that despite refusals to some Indians, Mr. Mukerji received citizenship. His was not a unique case. Jacoby reports that during this interval 67 Indians were granted citizenship from 32 different courts in 17 states (1972:76).

Part of the problem was semantic, revolving around the interchangeability of the words 'white", the term used in the 1790 law and its subsequent amendments, and 'caucasian', the term used by the Indians to describe themselves. In a 1922 Supreme Court case involving a Japanese (Ozawa vs. the U.S.), "the Court officially equated the words 'white' and 'caucasian', and while the decision definitely closed the door on the naturalization of Japanese, it seemed to assure the acceptance of 'caucasians' from India as candidates for citizenship" (Jacoby: 77). (The outcome of this debate was doubly significant for Indians because in 1917 Congress had enacted an Immigration law making ineligibility for citizenship grounds for exclusion for immigration.[1] If Indians were to be denied citizenship on racial grounds, this would have meant a complete ban on Indian immigration to the U.S.

Optimism about the 1922 ruling was premature. The following year the Supreme Court under Justice George Sutherland announced that "not all 'caucasians' were 'white persons'". In the case U.S. vs. Bhagat Singh Thind (261 U.S. 204), Sutherland ruled that

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1 Act of February 5, 1917, 39 Stat. 1874.

> 'white persons' ... are words of common speech and not of scientific origin. The word 'caucasian' was not only not employed in the law, but was probably wholly unfamiliar to the original framers of the Statute in 1790... in this country, during the last half century, especially, the word (white person) by common usage has acquired a popular meaning, not clearly defined to be sure, but sufficiently so to enable us to say that the popular, as distinguished from its scientific application is of appreciably narrower scope ... The words of the statute are to be interpreted in accordance with the understanding of the common man from whose vocabulary they were taken (Jacoby 1972:77).

By 1926, as a result of this ruling, the Immigration and Naturalization Service concluded revoked citizenship in forty-two of the sixty-nine cases in which it had previously been granted to Indians. Mr. Mukerji's was one such case. At this time, he sought the assistance of Senator David Reed of Pennsylvania who was sympathetic to the cause of Indian citizenship rights. The Senator was able to get Mr. Mukerji's case postponed for a year while he attempted to introduce a joint resolution into Congress that would permit those already holding citizenship to maintain it. While Mr Mukerji was testifying before the Immigration Fact-Finding Committee, the Reed Resolution was being debated in the Senate. "The only opposition to this action came from the American Federation of Labor and the California Joint Immigration Commission, but it was sufficient to insure the death of the Resolution in committee" (Jacoby 1972:77).

Shortly after this, however, in a similar case involving an Indian in California, cancellation proceedings by the Immigration Service were contested on the grounds of res

judicata. That is, according to law, if no appeal is made within three years of a legal decision, that decision cannot be reversed. It had been over three years since citizenship had been granted in the California case; therefore, legally it could not be revoked. The case was won at the District and Appellate Court levels, then appealed to the Supreme Court. In 1926, the Court declined to rule on the case, but in 1928 in a similar case, it ruled in favor of the lower courts' decision.

For those in Mr. Mukerji's position, the case had been won. Those whose citizenship had already been cancelled were required to re-petition. For those who had not yet filed, citizenship was no longer a possibility. At this time, Mr. Mukerji helped form the Hindu Citizenship Committee aimed at establishing this right for all Indians. It was not until eighteen years later, however, that his objective would be realized with the passing of the Naturalization Act of July 2, 1946 which states in section 3 that the right to become a U.S. citizen is extended to "Chinese persons and persons of Chinese descent, and persons of races indigenous to India".

Half a century has now passed since the controversy in American courts over the 'racial' classification of Indians. As has been demonstrated, at that time, Indians here took the position that they were 'caucasian' while the American judiciary opposed that view. It is ironic, therefore, that in the 1970's the same debate should be taking place between a different generation of Indians and the U.S. Government with their positions on the matter being reversed. The latter is

arguing for the classification of Indians as Caucasian and white, while a group of Indians is protesting it. Today, the bonus of re-classification is not citizenship, but rather the economic benefits to be derived from being considered non-white. Chapter 8 deals extensively with this issue and its implications for the Indian population in the U.S.

Naturalization

We turn now to a consideration of naturalization patterns among the present generation of immigrants. As the statistics in Table 5 show, it appears that while the rate of naturalization is still not high, it is certainly climbing. It is significant that the 1975 figure represents a doubling of the average rates of the preceding three years. It is possible that the changing political climate in India in that year was a factor, though there is no concrete evidence to prove this. Marriage to U.S. citizens accounts for relatively few shifts in status among Indians. Of the 1,636 who became naturalized in 1974, only 200 were due to marriage to citizens (U.S. ISAR 1975:117).

TABLE 5

NATURALIZATION OF INDIANS, 1965-1975

YEAR	NUMBER IF INDIANS NATURALIZED
1965	202
1966	224
1967	262
1968	303
1969	384
1970	325
1971	443
1972	1,031
1973	1,210
1974	1,636
1975	2,720
TOTAL	8,742

Source: U.S. Immigration Service Annual Report (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 117.

There is also an imbalance in the number of men as opposed to women taking out American citizenship. In 1975, of the 2,720 Indians who became naturalized, 1,946 were males while only 774 were females (U.S. ISAR 1975:120). At an immigration seminar sponsored by an Indian association in New York, immigrant couples were advised that it would be beneficial for one spouse to become a U.S. citizen while the other retained Indian citizenship. This would facilitate the couple's permanent re-entry into either country, since both allow for the entry of the spouses of their citizens. Statistics and fieldwork both suggest that this strategy is being adopted by many couples here. (See Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of this subject.)

In summary, this chapter has presented a brief history of the nation's immigration and naturalization policies as these have affected Indians. It has been shown that many of the demographic characteristics of the population -- their numbers, distribution by age and profession, for example -- have been determined by these policies.

CHAPTER 3

INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN NEW YORK: ORIGINS AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

INTRODUCTION

The data presented in this chapter are derived primarily from the extensive interviewing of twenty-four Indian immigrant households in New York City. The families are of diverse geographic and linguistic backgrounds in India and engage in a variety of occupations here. The generalizations drawn are supported by the more informal conversations held with hundreds of Indian immigrants during the course of a two year period.

ORIGINS IN INDIA

The U.S. Immigration Service records only the country of an individual's emigration, not the place of his birth, or even the city of departure, as was noted in the records of the British colonies in the nineteenth century. Consequently, there are virtually no statistics maintained on the origins in India of the present generation of immigrants in America. There is considerable consensus among informants that approximately 70% of those here are originally from the western state of Gujarat (see map). However, it is impossible to verify this figure and fieldwork has demonstrated that the population derives from a large number of states and language groups; indeed, all of the broad geographic and cultural areas of the country -- north, south, east, west and central region -- are represented by immigrants here.

The regional and linguistic heterogeneity of the population is an important feature of its composition. There are sufficient number of people from at least twelve natal Indian language groups to ensure the viability of associations based on member-

ship in a particular linguistic group. (See chapter 6.) The degree of the population's heterogeneity in terms of language and state origin contrasts sharply with many of the overseas Indian communities discussed in Chapter 1. Here it is necessary to specify the relationship between 'natal state' and 'natal language group', since these terms occur throughout the thesis. In so doing, the meaning of the phrase 'origin in India' will hopefully become clarified.

Each of the nation's 22 states is associated by Indians with a particular language. (See Table 6.) This is despite the fact that in most cases the correspondence between polity and linguistic area is far from perfect. In some instances, as in the southern state of Karnataka, for example, three languages are spoken (Kannada, Tulu and Kokni). In Bihar, Maithili, Santali, and Bengali are spoken in addition to Hindi. In the state of Madya Pradesh, Hindi, Chhatisgarhi, Malvi, Marathi, and Gondi are among the tongues spoken. In Punjab, there are more speakers of Hindi than there are of Punjabi, the language associated with the state (Kanitkar 1972:5). On the other hand for some languages such as Hindi and Marathi, natal speakers include the people of a number of states.

Despite the fact that informants are aware of these discrepancies between the two kinds of boundaries, there is a general tendency among them to equate a state with a particular language group, specifically the "predominant language" of the state in question, as Helen Kanitkar has suggested in her work on Indian immigrant identity in Great Britain (1972:5).

TABLE 6

NAMES OF INDIAN STATES AND THEIR PRINCIPAL LANGUAGES

(This listing is not comprehensive; it contains only the names of those state and languages which are relevant to the origin of the informants in this study.)

STATE	PRINCIPAL LANGUAGE
Andhra Pradesh	Telugu and Urdu
Bihar	Hindi
Gujarat	Gujarati
Karnataka	Kannada
Kerala	Malayalam
Maharashtra	Marathi
Punjab	Punjabi
Rajastjan	Rajasthani and Hindi
Tamilnadu	Tamil
Uttar Oradesh	Hindi
West Bengal	Bengali

Source: India: A Reference Annual (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1975), pp. 311-352.

As will be demonstrated, the establishment of formal organizations here follows this practice. The organizations are typically named for either a state or the "predominant language" of a state' in the latter case, non-natal speakers of the predominant language are likely to be members if they hail from the state and if their numbers here are not sufficient to create a splinter group (see Chapter 6).

In referring to one's own identity the distinction between natal state and natal language is clearly made. For example, an informant who has lived almost his entire life in Calcutta (Bengal) does not call himself a Bengali, but rather a Tamil. This name refers to his natal tongue, the predominant language

of the southern state of Tamilnadu,[1] a place he has visited only infrequently on brief vacations. He readily admits that his Bengali is far better than his Tamil which he can neither read nor write, and that he is frequently "mistaken for" a Bengali. He disagrees, however, with the validity of that appellation.

All of the informants in my sample -- and the majority of Indian immigrants in the U.S. -- are fluent English-speakers. For the twenty-five interviewed, the average number of Indian languages they were able to speak was 3.1. (Knowledge of Sanskrit was not included in this computation nor was Urdu if Hindi was also mentioned.)[2] Those coming from linguistically heterogeneous states or from border areas where several languages are spoken generally were fluent in all those used in their region. Thus the practice of equating origin in a particular state and knowledge of a particular language is not entirely unwarranted. However, since natal language is such a critical feature in the immigrants' concept of their self-identity (see Chapter 5), it is necessary for us who are interested both in emic notions and etic origins to separate the two designations.

Specifying the 'origin' in India of these immigrants is therefore a complex matter. Interviewing demonstrated

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1 Tamil is listed as the "principal language" of Tamilnadu in the government published yearbook India: A Reference Annual (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1975) p. 338.

2 This was because according to many informants there is much similarity between the two as spoken languages, though they have different scripts.

that a substantial proportion of them, like the Calcutta man who calls himself a Tamil on the basis of his family's origin, were either born or raised in areas other than those in which their natal language is principally spoken. In such cases, an individual's identities based on his natal state and his natal language are quite disparate. Another informant, Mr. S., for example, identifies himself as a 'Gujarati', though he was born and raised in the southern state of Kerala. He learned his family's natal tongue by attending classes in a school for Gujarati children in Kerala after regular school hours. His 'Gujarati' wife is third generation Kenya-born, and though she attended college in Bombay, she has never seen Gujarat !

Table 7 shows the breakdown of the twenty-four households on the basis of natal language. Significantly, in all households husband and wife were of the same natal language group. This is a pattern which generally holds for the immigrant population here (see Chapter 4).

The classification of the sample presented in Table 7 is instructive only if we are interested in the emic identity of these individuals. As it turns out, this breakdown tells very little about where in India they were born or spent the major part of their lives. In fact, half (13/24) of those interviewed had been raised in areas other than the state associated with their natal language. Of these, a number have lived in several different regions of India prior to immigrating. There are two major reasons for this.

One has to do with the occupational background of the immigrants' families. In a number of cases (six of the sample),

TABLE 7

BREAKDOWN OF HOUSEHOLD SAMPLE ON THE BASIS OF NATAL LANGUAGE

NATAL LANGUAGE	WHERE SPOKEN PREDOMINANTLY	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
Sindhi	North India and Pakistan	1
Punjabi	Punjab	2
Hindi	Northern states	1
Maithili	Bihar	1
Marathi	Maharashtra	1
Bengali	Bengal	1
Gujarati	Gujarat	5
Cutchi	Gujarat	2
Kannada	Karnataka	7
Tulu	Karnataka	1
Tamil	Tamilnadu	1
Telugu	Andhra Pradesh	1
	TOTAL	24

the informant's father was in the employ of either the Federal Government or the Indian military. Both types of position entail periodic transfers (typically every three years) to different regions across India. In most cases, the man's immediate family members accompanied him. A natal Tamil-speaking informant reports that she was born in the southern city of Madras (state of Tamilnadu), but because her father was an engineer employed by the Indian army she and her family moved to Poona (Maharashtra) when she was four months old. At the age of 12, she and her family moved to Assam in the northeast;

two years later they were transferred back to Poona, then to Andhra Pradesh in the south, followed by a period in Punjab in the north. The family then returned to Andhra Pradesh where they are currently living.

In the introductory chapter, the Indian immigrant population here was characterized as being "cosmopolitan". Part of what was meant by that term is this high degree of geographic mobility within India -- an exposure to life in widely different parts of the country. Another aspect of this quality is that the immigrants are urban rather than rural in their experience. In the household sample, 79% of those interviewed were raised in cities; typically they were second or third generation city-born; 95% of them received university training in a major Indian city such as New Delhi, Bombay, or Madras.

Recently, a directory was published here (Doshi 1975) containing the names and biographical profiles of more than two thousand Indian immigrants living in the U.S. and Canada. (Payment of a ten dollar fee was the only qualification for inclusion.) A random sample of one hundred entries supports the picture gained from the interviews: nearly 90% listed the names of cities in India as their place of birth and/or education.

A third dimension of the "cosmopolitan" characteristic is the degree to which Indian immigrants here are international in their experience. A significant proportion of those in the sample (9/24), had either immigrated to other countries prior to coming to the U.S., or had worked in government sponsored projects in India or abroad that were international

efforts involving personnel from foreign countries. For example, one informant worked in Libya during the 1960's as a construction supervisor in the building of new towns in the Sahara. Except for one other family, he and his wife were the only Indians in an international milieu. As a result of his experience, he speaks Italian and Arabic as well as Hindi, Punjabi and English. Another informant held a high position in an internationally based social welfare organization in India that offered the opportunity for world-wide travel. A third taught in a school in India for the children of employees at a steel firm staffed by personnel from fourteen countries.

Few of those interviewed were the only immigrants in their families. A significant proportion (19/24) came from families in which other members had emigrated either to the U.S. or to other countries. Some are among the first generation of their families to emigrate. Others, particularly natal Gujarati-speakers, are scions of families with a tradition of immigration, especially to East Africa.

Occupational and Educational Background

Because of the restrictions imposed by the Department of Labor in granting visas to Indians, this population is among the most highly educated groups in America. Of the 24, 23 possessed undergraduate degrees; 21 had graduate degrees. The interviews revealed that not only are the immigrants themselves highly educated, but many come from families in which university education has been a tradition for generations. Genealogical data three generations deep were collected on the patrilateral

side of the families of informants. It was not unusual to find individuals in whose family 90% of the members of Ego's generation (between 5 and 20 individuals) are college graduates, with only somewhat lower rates for Ego^{-1} and Ego^{-2} generations.

The Gujarati sector deserves special note in this regard. It is often characterized by Indians as "a business community"; it is generally not associated with the pursuit of higher education and entry into 'the professions', although some recognize that Gujaratis "are beginning to come up now". In fact, it is true that many of the Indian shops and businesses that have sprung up in the New York area since 1965 are Gujarati-owned and managed. However, the interviews suggest that these entrepreneurs are not to be differentiated from non-Gujaratis on the basis of education.

Seven of the informants in the sample are engaged in some type of commercial enterprise here; five of them are natal Gujarati speakers. All are university educated and trained in another field. Some are even continuing their career while simultaneously engaged in commerce; others have abandoned their profession to become full-time entrepreneurs.

Case 1

Mr. S., a natal Gujarati speaker, is the manager of a Queens travel agency which is owned by his cousin, who manages a second office in Manhattan. Mr. S. received his M.A. in pharmacy in Bombay. He was accorded a third preference visa on the basis of his professional training. However, when he arrived in the U.S. and tried to obtain a license as a pharmacist here, he found that his credentials from India were not acceptable. An additional two thousand hours of apprenticed study and the taking of qualifying examinations already passed in India were necessary. The process would take nearly three years. Mr. S. chose to abandon this career and to manage his cousin's agency instead.

Case 2

Mrs. C., also a natal Gujarati-speaker, is the manager of a sari shop in Queens. It is owned by a friend who manages a Chicago outlet of the business. Mrs. C., whose family is scattered in India, the U.S., Great Britain, Uganda and the Sudan, was educated in Bombay and worked there as a medical technician. Since her arrival here in 1974, she has been able to obtain work in her field on the grounds that she lacks "American experience". She has held jobs here as a key-punch operator and a part-time teller in a bank before taking the position as shop manager. She sees this job as being temporary and hopes to be able to further her studies soon. During the evenings and week-ends she is joined in the shop by her husband who works during the day as a statistical analyst.

Case 3

Mr. R., a natal Telugu-speaker and son of a textile merchant in Andhra Pradesh, owns and runs a luncheonette in Queens featuring pizza, souvlaki, hamburgers, and Indian specialties such as 'dosa', a kind of filled crepe. He received his Masters degree in Hyderabad in geophysics, and was engaged in research for his doctorate in paleomathematics when he received a one-year scholarship to study in the U.S. He enrolled in the doctoral program in mathematics at a university in the South. To support himself after the year for which he received financial assistance, he worked a 30-hour week in an Italian restaurant near the campus. On his savings from this work ($2,500), he was able to start his own business -- a pizza tavern employing 14 workers. After two and a half years, he sold the restaurant for $30,000, and one year ago he purchased the shop that he now operates on a full-time basis. He has abandoned the pursuit of employment as a physicist or mathematician.

The individuals described above are examples of immigrants who come from families with business backgrounds. Theirs is the first generation of their families to pursue higher education as a strategy for gaining upward mobility. Thus when entrepreneurial activities prove more lucrative than the professions for which they were trained, these professions are frequently abandoned. In one case, an engineer of a business oriented family views his present professional employment "just as a stopgap". He is awaiting the arrival of his brother from India when they will establish a joint business.

Employment Experience in the U.S.

In no case of those interviewed was unemployability in India a reason for immigrating. Most informants state that they had "good jobs" back home. Yet, their most frequently cited reason for leaving is "greater job opportunity" within their respective fields outside India. Many informants said that given their particular skills, India offered no possibilities for career advancement. The novelist V.S. Naipaul has recently written that he, too, has found this attitude to be prevalent among Indian immigrants. "... Indians say that they have become too educated for India" (1977:136). It is not within the purview of the present study to assess the validity of their claims. Here I simply wish to note that the desire for career advancement appears to be a primary motivation for immigrating.

Many have been successful in this respect; the Immigration Service data on the occupational status of Indian immigrants is impressive. In 1974 approximately 46,000 Indians were reported as employed. Of these, approximately 16,000 were employed as engineers, 4,000 as scientists, and 7,000 as physicians or surgeons (Doshi 1975:xii).

Yet, despite these statistics and the high level of educational and occupational credentials of informants, it is clear that not all of the immigrants have been successful in finding jobs commensurate with their qualifications, as the three case histories presented show. These are not unusual cases. Success in finding suitable employment has varied depending upon a number of factors. Not the least of these

is the state of the labor market in the U.S. in any given year of the past decade.

Case 4

Mr. R., a natal Sindhi-speaker raised in Karachi, Pakistan and educated in New Delhi, has a Masters in business administration. Though his visa was approved under the professional category, he was unable upon arriving here in 1971 to find employment in his field. As a result, he accepted a job as a salesman for a life insurance company in New York. He explains the initial attraction of this work: "It was the easiest kind of work to get; it was one of the few jobs that did not require prior "American experience", and it was felt that because I was an Indian, I would bring the business of Indian clients to the company". After seven months, Mr. R. resigned because he was unsuited to this type of work. When after a year, his wife arrived, she took a factory job. Then through a neighbor he was able to obtain an evening clerical job which enabled him to spend the days searching for more satisfying work. This situation lasted for a year during which he took a course in taxation and worked temporarily for a tax consulting firm. Meanwhile his wife was laid off from her job. Then through a friend he obtained a job as clerk in a bank where he was twice promoted during the three years that he worked there. At this time he began to work evenings as well in an Indian import/export firm. A year ago he joined the company on a full-time basis as an accountant, the position he currently holds.

India Guide, an annually published compendium of organizations, businesses and professionals catering to the Indian population of the New York area. Its 1975 edition lists the names of 39 Indian insurance agents in the metropolitan area. Of 5 informants (not limited to the household sample of 24), who are agents, all have degrees in other fields, and have changed their occupation since arriving in the U.S.

Many informants have experienced bouts of unemployment in between jobs which they have had. Nearly all have either held out for better jobs in their field, or have ultimately accepted other kinds of work. For a very few Indians, however, unemploy-

ment has become a way of life. There are no statistics available on the number of Indians drawing welfare incomes; the Department of Social Services of New York considers their numbers to be too negligible to warrant the keeping of statistics on them (personal communication). Fieldwork has revealed that those who are on welfare have the same general educational background as those who are employed.

Case 5

Mr. X., a natal Maithili-speaker, is of a Brahmin family in Bihar. His late father was a lecturer at Calcutta University. His oldest brother, a Vedic lecturer, immigrated to Trinidad in 1956, then to the U.S. in the 1960's where he received his Masters and doctorate. He is now a professor at an American university. A second older brother and a younger brother both have Ph.D's in economics and teach at different universities here. Mr. X. received his undergraduate and Masters degrees in political science in Bihar, married, had four children and worked for the Indo-U.S. Technical Assistance Development Program for the development of villages in India. In 1966, he came to the U.S. to further his education and enrolled in a doctoral program at the New School for Social Research. Because of financial pressures from his wife who had remained in India, he dropped out of the program to take a clerical job which enabled him to bring her and their children to the U.S. in 1971. Beginning in that year he has held thirteen jobs lasting between one week and one year each with long periods of unemployment in between them. Most of these have been as security guards for different companies. This work typically requires neither specialized training nor prior "American experience". He has also worked as a temporary teacher and a dishwasher in restaurants.

Upon arriving, his wife immediately obtained a job as waitress while he was unemployed. Mr. X. traces their separation in 1972 and his continued unemployment to this state of affairs. He says: "My ego couldn't take it." Evicted from his tenement rooming house in upper Manhattan for inability to pay his rent, he moved to the Men's Center on the Bowery. Through a placement agency serving the Center, he twice obtained temporary work in the kitchen of a Catskill resort in upstate New York. For the past two years Mr. X. has been living on welfare. For a while he was also drawing "supplementary security income" (provided for by the

> Social Security Act), but this additional support has stopped coming because an individual cannot by law draw both. Now he receives checks of varying amounts approximating $143 on a monthly basis. He says that his experiences in America have unnerved him, and that he is presently receiving psychiatric help.

Mr. X's case is presented here not because it is by any means typical of the Indian immigrant population, but because it is not unique. In the same rooming house where he once lived there were five cases of Indians being supported during the past year. Their stories are fundamentally similar. In one case, the outcome was suicide.

CONCLUSION

In sum, this chapter has presented evidence for the 'cosmopolitan' nature of the population studied, its educational and occupational background in India, its history of prior immigration and internationalism, and its occupational adjustment to the labor market of the U.S. Also considered was the question of their origins in India in terms of natal language and state, thus laying the groundwork for the following chapter which deals with Indian immigrant concepts of identity.

CHAPTER 4

THE BI-NATIONALITY OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, evidence is provided for what I term the 'bi-nationality' of Indian immigrants in New York. By this I mean the tendency of the immigrants to maintain close ties to India while simultaneously following a course which will ensure their remaining here permanently. There is on the part of many of the immigrants a commitment to an eventual permanent return to India. The desire to do so was expressed by 22 of the 24 informants interviewed; it is a recurring leitmotif in the self-examining articles and letters written by Indians in the Indian-American press.

Along with this desire in some cases is the realization that a permanent return may not materialize. It is argued that in general, the Indian immigrants here are pursuing a strategy aimed at facilitating their permanent settlement in either country. In the words of one informant: "we are keeping our options open".

This strategy can most clearly be seen in the following areas: patterns of marriage, sponsorship of kinsmen seeking to immigrate, citizenship holding, travel between the two countries, and the flow of remittances. In general, the bi-national strategy benefits both the immigrants and their relatives in India, (though in any particular case this mutuality may not be in evidence). In the following sections I discuss the ways in which closely maintained ties benefit the immigrants, as compared with the advantages that accrue to their families in India.

BI-NATIONALITY:

SOME BENEFITS TO KINSMEN IN INDIA; SPONSORSHIP

The first wave of immigrants from India to the U.S. in the 1960's and early 70's consisted almost entirely of professional people who came under the third preference visa category. Initially, this was the only way Indians could come here in significant numbers; as has been noted, the only other major qualification for visas-- that of kinship to an individual already here as a permanent resident -- was not applicable in light of the quota system in use prior to this time.

Today, the situation is different from the late 60's on two counts. Firstly, the thousands of immigrants here may now sponsor the immigration of certain relatives. Immigrant status confers the right to petition for the immigration of a spouse and unmarried children. However, if an immigrant chooses to become an American citizen (possible after five years as a permanent resident), the number of types of kinsmen he can sponsor increases. With citizenship one can sponsor the immigration of the following categories of people: parents with children over 21 years of age, (no limitation on the number of visas that can be awarded annually to people of this category), married children, and brothers and sisters. Significantly, as many as 24% of all visas awarded to a country in a given year may go to siblings of U.S. citizens.

Secondly, the U.S. is becoming more stringent on immigration policy. As of January 1, 1977, for example, medical graduates are ineligible for third preference (i.e., professional)

visas unless they first pass examinations given by the National Board of Medical Examiners.

The net result of these two developments is the fact that immigrants here are increasingly being called upon to sponsor the immigration of kinsmen who either do not have professional qualifications, or who have been unable to get a third preference visa. In conducting the interviews previously referred to, I collected information on the sponsoring of relatives as well as on patterns of citizenship holding. The sample is extremely small, and the generalizations offered here need to be substantiated by further research, but the data do suggest that for Indians, the important regulations are those which provide for the immigration of parents and siblings.[1]

Six of those interviewed have already sponsored the immigration of a parent; another informant moved to the U.S. from England because her parents had decided to immigrate here. Several of those that have not yet sponsored parents indicated that they can conceive of a time when they will want to do so.

In all six cases, the parent is living in the same household as the sponsoring nuclear family; in five of the six cases, their incorporation reflects the group's traditional residence rules in India. Four are trans-continental expressions of virilocal residence, for which there is a cultural bias in India (Vatuk 1972:49). That is, the parent in question -- in

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1 The generalizations offered in this chapter are based not only on the experiences of the households interviewed, but on statements made by these informants about others whom they know.

three cases a father, in one a widowed mother, in another both parents -- has been sponsored by a son and becomes a member of the son's household. In the one case involving the mother of an immigrant wife, the family originates in the south of Karnataka where their group practices uxorilocality.

The one case which is anomalous nevertheless follows another pattern of Indian social organization described by anthropologists. Sylvia Vatuk reports that in India, urban parents frequently 'give' their children to rural grandparents. She says:

> In no case does it seem that the grandparents have taken in grandchildren because of the parents' financial need ... Primarily the children have been entrusted to their grandparents in order to provide companionship and some help in the house (1972:62).

In this case, the wife is the only child of a widower. Her father's father on his deathbed predicted that the child she was carrying would be a boy, and that she would have another soon afterwards. He requested that the couple give the first son to his own son, so that he would not grow old alone. They agreed, and the boy grew up believing that his grandfather was his father, his mother was his sister, his father was his brother-in-law, etc. After the couple had immigrated, they wanted to bring their first son, too. And so to sponsor his immigration, as well as that of his grandfather, they had to apprise the boy of his true identity. All are currently living together in an apartment in Queens.

It is not suggested here that the parents of most Indian immigrants will eventually also immigrate. Many of those who

come even as temporary visitors find adjustment difficult. This is particularly true in cases where both husband and wife go to work and where the elderly parent does not speak English and is left to his or her own devices for much of the day. Male informants who have parents whose economic position in India is well-secured, and those who have other brothers who intend to remain in India discounted the idea of ever sponsoring their parents. Sponsorship is more likely to be considered in the situation where a man's mother is a widow, where she is without financial resources, and where there are no other brothers with whom she could live. The latter condition is not restricted to the case where there are no such males; the mother may choose not to live with her oldest son if she does not get on well with his wife.

This, in fact, is the case in one of the six instances of parent sponsorship. Custom dictates that a widow move in with the eldest son. The present case involves a widow who was sponsored by the older of her two immigrant sons. This man was a first-wave immigrant, professionally employed, married and living in a house in a Connecticut suburb. She chose, however, to move in with her younger son, an umarried man who was also sponsored by the brother, but who has come here recently and has been unsuccessful in obtaining full-time employment; he works nights at a factory job in Queens, during the day as an employee of a spice shop. The reason given is the conflict that has always existed between the woman and her daughter-in-law.

In only half of the households in the sample was the husband the first-born son. Yet, sometimes parents have moved in

with these younger immigrant sons. In one instance the reason given was that this son, though younger, was better able to support additional dependents than his older brothers in India. Mr. K. has recently sponsored his widowed mother and plans in the near future to sponsor the immigration of two younger school-aged siblings. He is the third eldest son in a family of eight offspring. His eldest brother has inherited the father's tailoring business, the second is a clerical worker. Mr. K., a lawyer here, has economically fared better than both of them. He claims that for this reason he feels responsible for shouldering the financial burdens of his mother's welfare and the higher education of his younger brother and sister.

It may also happen that through the effects of sibling sponsorship, parents in India may find that all or most of their offspring have immigrated. In the case of the V. family, a couple in India have become separated because of this. The V's have four sons; the oldest has remained in India whereas the other three have immigrated (the youngest of these was sponsored by an older brother who was here first). The three now here are all successfully employed professionals living in the New York area with their wives and children. Several years ago, Mr. V., who speaks English, decided he, too, wished to immigrate. One of his sons here has sponsored him and he has been a permanent member of the son's household for the past three years. Until his marriage, one of his other immigrant sons also lived in this house. Mrs. V., on the other hand, who does not speak English and is very traditional in her ways, has refused to follow her husband, and has remained in India.

Mr. V. returns to India periodically to visit her, but plans to spend his remaining years with the immigrant members of his family in the U.S.

In another case, both parents were sponsored by one of four sons living here. The elderly father installed himself for the two and a half years before his death in the household of the eldest; the mother, however, continues the practice she established of rotating stays with the four households.

For those elderly parents without substantial pension benefits, insurance, or other sources of income, it is economically advantageous to immigrate and live with an offspring -- even one who is unemployed or not faring well financially. Those that do so are automatically eligible for receiving supplementary security income (SSI) within weeks of their arrival.

Sponsorship requires the securing of American citizenship. As indicated in Chapter 2, the number of Indians applying for naturalization has more than trebled in the past four years. I suspect that as the Department of Labor makes immigration more difficult for professionals, the proportion of Indians becoming citizens in order to sponsor kinsmen will become even higher.

Citizenship confers very concrete benefits on the immigrants themselves as well as their kinsmen in India. For one thing, it enables individuals who are eligible for receiving social security checks in their retirement years to collect this source of income in India. Without citizenship, an immigrant may collect social security, but he must not leave

the U.S. for more than six months without forfeiting it.

Another advantage concerns eligibility for federal employment. On June 1, 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the right of aliens (i.e., non-citizens) to compete for federal civil service positions (Hampton vs. Mow Sun Wong). However, the Court's decision was reversed by an amendment of the U.S. Civil Service's Rule VII under an executive order by President Ford on September 2, 1976. Once again citizenship is a pre-requisite for taking competitive examination for civil service positions.

Despite all of the positive pressures for naturalization discussed here, there are countervailing forces that impede Indians from rushing to become citizens unless sponsorship of a parent or sibling requires it. Firstly, the Citizenship Act of 1955 demands that anyone who has "voluntarily acquired the citizenship of another country ... cease to be a citizen of India" (Tinker 1977:144). Prior to this time, overseas Indians, such as those in East Africa, were able to enjoy the benefits of dual citizenship. The 1955 Act precludes the possibility of an immigrant's gaining automatic re-entry into India on a permanent basis. Another consequence of the Act was to force those who shifted their citizenship status to relinquish any property they held in India.

Both of these factors are real deterrents to the acquisition of U.S. citizenship by Indians. Said an informant who has recently become a widow:

> I won't become a citizen because I own land -- fruit orchards -- in India and I don't know how long I will be staying here. Perhaps it will only be until my (teen-aged)

> daughter is married and settled. Or perhaps I will end up staying here much longer and I will return only when I'm ready to retire. If that is the case, then just before I retire, I'll take out citizenship, so that I can receive social security checks there.

Immigration Service statistics show that for the year 1975, there were more than twice as many male Indian immigrants, as compared with females, becoming citizens (see Chapter 2). Since the sex ratio among Indians here nearly balanced, this suggests that among many couples, the husband is acquiring citizenship, while the wife is not. Of the 24 households in which I conducted interviews, five followed this pattern.

Sponsorship of kinsmen frequently entails further responsibility toward them once they are here. Always with regards to parents -- many of whom do not speak English -- and frequently with siblings as well, at least initially, the pattern is for the sponsored relative to become a member of the household.

As a result, many households may be classified as the "supplemented nuclear typ" in Kolenda's (1967) typology of Indian family structure. It consists of a small number of close relatives: parents and children as well as a widowed grandparent or unmarried aunt or uncle. In her study of white collar migrants in a North Indian city, Sylvia Vatuk also found this pattern of household composition to be prevalent (1972:49).

OTHER BENEFITS OF HAVING IMMIGRANT KINSMEN

In addition to sponsoring their immigration, Indians here perform other services for their non-immigrant kinsmen (and friends as well). One is to provide accommodations for younger siblings who are here on student visas. Three informants are

either currently doing so or have done so in the past.

Another is to provide accomodations for visiting relatives and friends. The duration of visits varies from overnight stays to a period of four months (the length of a visitor visa). Since New York is a stopping point for all visitors to the United States, the New York immigrants are especially pressed to provide lodging, transportation, entertainment, and directions for all those who are bound for other points. Most informants claimed that they could not possibly recall all of the visitors whom they had accommodated within a given year. Analysis of their hosting behavior showed that they annually provided lodging for an average of six individuals whose stay was at least a month.

One of the couples interviewed have been providing lodging for the younger brother of the wife since he arrived here on a student visa three years ago. Now that he has completed his Masters degree, he has decided to remain here as an immigrant and to petition for the immigration of his new wife. Upon her arrival, they plan to move into their own apartment. Similarly in another household, the younger brother as well as the retired father of the husband received accommodations for a period of two years. Recently, the wife of the younger brother arrived and now the couple set up their own household, though the father has remained with his older son.

Said one informant in response to questioning about whom she has accommodated and for how long:

> My husband Gopal's mother recently visited us for two months, and his father will be coming for a few days shortly since he has work to see

> to in Europe and he thought he might as well stop by for a brief visit here. Then his mother's brother is coming for two weeks. And every other day it seems we have one lady or another coming here -- friends of Gopal's mother. His parents are well-known where they live, and so it is well-known that we are living here. In the past year we have put up Gopal's father's colleagues and their wives, his relatives' friends, his friends, his friends' relatives, and friends of friends.

Another informant stated that in the past year he and his wife hosted for a period of four months each six individuals who had been sent to New York as trainees from a bank in his home town. In addition, he stated that "friends who work for Air India use their free traval to come to New York. Every week I make a trip to the airport to get one of them who will of course stay with us".

Still another informant has in the course of the past year provided lodging for his oldest brother (three months), his brother's wife (nine months), and a friend and his wife (one month). In addition, his niece has been living with him for one year though she is on a visitor's visa and another friend (also on a visitor's visa) has been with him for two years.

Hosting kinsmen is an important way in which the immigrants maintain their ties with home and thus keep open the possibility of repatriation. But it is also true that some of these visits are exploratory adventures by those back home who are undecided as to whether or not they should emigrate. Assured of accommodations with friends or relatives here, they can afford to survey the job market here before making the commitment to emigrate.

I did not collect full quantitative data on the amount of remittances sent home by immigrants here. But it is clear in several cases that the incomes of those back home are being supplemented by kinsmen here. Even when an informant stated the amount of his monthly remittance (in three cases said to be between $25 and $35), it is difficult to assess the economic significance of these contributions. Traditionally, oldest sons are looked to for providing financial resources for other family members (e.g., dowries, support of ageing parents, schooling of younger brothers). Of the 11 first-born sons in the interviewed households, all but two tended to minimize their contributions. The words of one informants are typical: "My family doesn't expect any financial help from me -- my brothers and sisters are all married and well-settled. But out of my own feelings, once in a while, I will send them money". On one such 'special occasion' when his sister moved into a new house, he sent her $1,000. Considering that dollars gain almost ten times their purchasing power in India, it is likely that for less well-to-do kinsmen back home, such remittances have greater importance.

Another contribution of the immigrants here is that they help to provide husbands for female kinsmen and friends in India who wish to immigrate to the U.S. Without further research it is not possible to say how significant a trend this is, but nearly half of the informants interviewed stated that they had been involved in some way with match making for a woman in India.

There are two ways in which a person can become involved in match making. One is to agree to a family's request to search for a likely candidate here. For example, an informant, Mrs. S., has a younger sister who went to Toronto on a student visa. Upon completing her studies, she wished to immigrate to the U.S. where she has three immigrant siblings. Her parents in India "were desesperate to get her married because she was already 26 and not very pretty". Therefore, they approached Mr. and Mrs. S. to arrange a match with an immigrant here with all of the appropriate qualifications (caste, language background, financial prospects, etc.) The couple agreed, and produced two candidates. Twice the sister made the trip from Toronto to New York to meet a prospective spouse; both attempts were unsuccessful. As a result, when her visa expired, she was forced to return to India. (There she met and married a U.S. immigrant and returned with him.)

The second way a person can elect to become involved in marriage arranging is to agree to be one of those to investigate the character of a candidate who is being considered and to report the findings to the family of the bride-to-be in India. Many people are willing to do this, though they do not want to be responsible for actually suggesting a candidate. This reluctance stems from a fear of being responsible for a disastrous match. What constitutes a 'disastrous' marriage ? Almost a quarter of those interviewed knew of a case in which the immigrant man had submitted to the pressures of his family to have an arranged marriage, had undergone the ceremony in India,

but upon returning to the U.S. with the Indian wife, continued to live with or have a relationship with an American woman. The informants themselves did not know the outcome in all cases; in some, the Indian woman had returned home with dim prospects of remarriage. In one case, the man in question was a relative of one of my informants. The man, a doctor, recently went to India to marry. He accepted the dowry, returned alone to the U.S., presumably to petition for his wife's immigration, but has absconded with the money. The woman is still in India, and my informant is involved in the process of trying to locate his relative.

It is not possible to determine how many marriages have dissolved because immigrant men agreed to unions they never intended to maintain. Probably the percentage of them is quite small. Nonetheless, there is sufficient fear of this occurring on the part of families in India for them to require extensive and independent research on the character of a matrimonial candidate. An informant says that her mother-in-law has in the past year approached her to obtain information on three different men living here who are marriage candidates:

> She wants a total report from what he eats for breakfast to the clothes he wears, to whether or not he has dated American girls. We recommended one boy who was living here for five years, but my mother-in-law found out that he had dated Americans. She said to us: 'Just who do you think you're recommending here ? We are considered very bad marriage scouts as a result.

VALUE OF BI-NATIONALITY TO IMMIGRANTS

Thus far, the bi-national strategy has been examined in terms

of its effects on non-immigrant kinsmen in India. Attention is now focused on the benefits derived from this relationship by those here. It is suggested that by maintaining close ties with relatives -- and friends -- back home, the immigrants are provided with a number of assets. Among these are: wives, babysitters, and representatives to act in their behalf in commercial enterprises based in India. I will now discuss each of these in turn.

Immigrant Marriage Patterns

Of the 24 informants interviewed, 22 are married (in one case widowed); the two who are single are men. Of the 22 couples, 12 were married prior to emigrating to the U.S. The marriages of the ten remaining couples all follow the same pattern, one which conforms to other cases encountered during fieldwork and is consistent with the experiences of other Indians who my informants knew.

In each case, the husband came to the U.S. as a bachelor either as a student or as an immigrant. Loneliness in young, unmarried Indian men appears to be a very real problem. All but one of the men who arrived as bachelors commented on this. Some acquired the status of semi-adopted members in the households of their married Indian friends, taking meals with them and sleeping over periodically, even if they maintained their own apartment.

Although no statistics are available, it appears that an overwhelmingly greater number of Indian bachelors as compared with single women emigrate to the U.S. As a result, these men must turn to the women of other groups to socialize. Even

among those who have dated Americans, there is a tendency to marry Indian women. "Many a heart has been broken by an American girl's failure to appreciate this fact" (Owen Lynch: personal communication). How then do Indian bachelors here find Indian spouses when they outnumber marriageable females ?

In all ten cases, the method employed was the following. The man decided at a particular time that he wished to marry (or he received letters from his family urging him to marry). In any case, once he made known his intention, his family and friends in India began to search for suitable prospective brides (i.e., women of the appropriate caste, language background, education, etc.) When the man, received vacation time, he made a visit to India. During this time he met and talked with each of the candidates. If he was sufficiently pleased with a particular woman and both agreed to a second meeting, this was taken as evidence that a wedding would take place. At the second meeting, plans were made for the engagement and wedding which soon followed. After the wedding the man typically returned alone in order to petition for his wife's immigration from the U.S. This bureaucratic procedure can take up to six months. In three of the cases men were married in this fashion to women whom they had known prior to immigrating; in the other instances they met their wives in this way for the first time.

There is an alternative method by which Indians here can obtain an Indian spouse, although none of my informants had availed themselves of it. That is to place an advertisement in the matrimonial columns of the Indian American press or

in the newsletters of Indian language associations. (See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of the matrimonial columns.)

The consensus among my informants is that relatively few people use this method, and of those that do, few are successful in making a match. Some informants believe that the ad columns are used only as a last resort when trips to India have failed to yield a wife. There may be some truth to these ideas. A local paper recently wished to feature an article on a wedding that had resulted from an ad placed in its column. But the couple staunchly refused, suggesting that there might indeed be some stigma attached to this form of match making.

Another relevant opinion that was offered is that individuals who advertise are the most culturally dualistic of the population: i.e., people whose values have not become sufficiently Americanized to allow them to seek American spouses, but who as a result of their experience here are no longer content to marry someone with strictly traditional Indian values. What they are seeking through the ads are Americanized Indian spouses.

In any case, the major Indian-American newspaper India Abroad publishes a weekly average of 25 ads requesting matrimonial correspondence. A slightly higher rate of males over females advertise, but it would be wrong to assume that the women advertising are living in the U.S. Unless the ads specifically say so, it is safe to assume that the woman is in India and wishes to marry an immigrant here. The ads are placed in their behalf by male relatives here who then screen the respondents before making recommendations to families back home. The

important point for this study is that India is providing spouses for the immigrants here. An analysis of 100 ads placed in India Abroad over the course of a year showed that 32% of the females and 38% of the males advertising listed as one of their assets the fact that either they themselves were permanent U.S. residents or that they had relatives "established in the U.S.". Sometimes the phrase "green card" appeared after the description of the advertiser's appearance, social category, occupation. This phrase indicates the advertiser's possession of a permanent resident visa through which he may petition the immigration of a spouse. Of the males advertising, 14%, as compared with 2% of the females, explicitly listed the possession of a green card as a requirement of the potential spouse.

Babysitters

The U.S. Immigration Service does not provide separate statistics on the number of females as compared with males entering on third preference visas. Nonetheless, it is clear that a significant number of Indian women enter as professionals, particularly in the field of medicine. In four of the households interviewed, the wife is presently employed (three as physicians) on a full-time basis, and has young children.

In all four cases a child has been born since the couple immigrated to the U.S.; in all of these cases, a female kinsman in India has been persuaded to come to the U.S. in order to be a full-time babysitter. This has enabled the wife to resume her job after giving birth.

In three of the four cases, the plan materialized; a

mother, mother-in-law, or a niece (the husband's brother's daughter) arrived for this purpose. In the case of the wife's mother, this woman was eventually sponsored as an immigrant, and has remained as a permanent member of the household. In the case of the mother-in-law, the woman renewed her visitor's visa (limited to four months) several times, citing medical reasons for her inability to return.

Most interesting is the case of the babysitting niece. She is married to a man in India and arrived here while she herself was pregnant. The family's strategy was to have her give birth in the U.S., thus making the child a U.S. citizen. They hoped that this would enable the niece to remain here as an immigrant which she could otherwise not do; that is, they are counting on the possibility of using the infant child's citizenship status as a way of sponsoring the immigration of the niece. This would enable her to continue in her role as a full-time babysitter for her aunt and uncle, as well as to sponsor the immigration of her husband, who in turn would sponsor his brothers, since all these individuals are seeking to come here. Whether or not the Immigration Service will permit this remains to be seen. In the meantime, the niece has been here caring for her own child and that of her working aunt for over a year.

In the fourth and most recent instance an unmarried sister of the working woman had been approached to come to the U.S. as a babysitter, but the sister in India has been denied a visitor's visa. One informant stated that "if an unmarried sister is asked to come as a babysitter, the expect-

ation is that the couple will find her an immigrant husband here". It is possible that the Immigration Service is becoming aware of these strategies, and that their refusal to grant a visa under these circumstances is in accordance with their desire to restrict immigration.

Immigrants and Commercial Enterprises Abroad

This is an area which definitely requires further research. The majority of my informants are professionals, rather than full-time business people; thus I have not been able to assess the significance of India-based kinship connections for those engaged in international commerce. Nor do I have quantitative data on commercial enterprises involving the immigrant professionals. Nonetheless, the following cases are suggestive, and point to the fact that kinsmen in India may be relied on in matters involving financial negotiations.

> Mr. R. and his brother jointly own an Indian spice and grocery shop with two outlets in Queens. Mr. R. also works as an engineer; his wife manages his store during the day. She is from Kenya where her father is still engaged in commerce. Through his father-in-law in Kenya, Mr. R. and his brother purchase most of the food items sold in their shops. And it is the father-in-law who is involved in overseeing the quality control of the goods that leave Africa for their business in New York.
>
> Dr. D. is a physician in New York who has been living here for six years; before coming here, he had emigrated to Great Britain. He is extremely desirous of returning to India. To facilitate his repatriation, he has been remitting his savings regularly to his sister in India. Under his instructions and her aegis, a medical facility has been constructed where

Dr. D. hopes to practice in the near future. He has recently put his house on the market and plans to return after its sale.

A third example involves Dr. G., an immigrant physician in New York whose brother is a social worker in India. Dr. G. plans to establish a philanthropic organization dedicated to the collection of funds in America to support various projects of social welfare in India; his brother would play an important role in their administration. Dr. G. has met and talked with various officials in the Indian government about these plans.

Travel

In a previous section I discussed the importance of hosting behavior as a way of preserving the bonds between immigrants and their families in India. Friends, relatives, relatives of friends, and friends of relatives can all expect to receive accommodations here. The other aspect of this phenomenon is that the immigrants can likewise expect hospitality not only when they make return visits to India, but also when they travel anywhere in the world where their kinsmen or Indian friends reside.

Bharati Mukerji, an Indian immigrant to Canada, writes that "because the expectations of hospitality is absolute, there can be no excuses" (1977:72). While on vacation with her Canadian husband in Italy, she made the mistake of making hotel arrangements rather than staying with a cousin who lived there. Upon hearing of this, the cousin's father in India was furious: "She made you stay in a hotel, and all Calcutta knows about it, and it is reflecting badly on me. Why have they done this to me ?" (1977:72).

My informants make return visits to India on an average of once every two and half years. But they also visit relatives in Canada and Europe and thus keep in contact with those back home. For example, two years ago, the mother of Mr. K., one of my informants, came to the U.S. in order to visit with her two sons living in the U.S. Last year, she went instead to Great Britain to visit a son and daughter living there. Therefore, Mr. K. and his brother here went to England for a family reunion.

Comparisons

Some comparisons with other overseas Indian populations are relevant here. Some of the evidence for dual national affiliations among Indians in other countries has been discussed in Chapter 1. In addition, Desai indicates that in Great Britain, as in the U.S., most of the unmarried immigrants are males, "that women migrate only as dependents of a male immigrant" (1963:7), and that marriages are contracted through kinsmen in India (1963:16).

He also found that those who immigrated were younger males who then frequently sponsored their kinsmen:

> This junior member is the young son or the brother; unemployed or badly employed in India, and his journey is financed by the family: sometimes he sponsors older members of his family (e.g., father or brother (1963:17).

Indian immigrants in Uganda also practiced the bi-national strategy. Morris notes that they made frequent visits to India (1967:267) and that they tended to expand their businesses by sponsoring the immigration of kinsmen in India (1968a:21).

He also states that during the initial period when there was a marked sex ratio imbalance in favor of men, wives were brought from India. "Later, as girls of the new African-born generation began to grow-up, husbands were also imported from India (1968a: 41). Morris eloquently describes the bi-nationality of East African Indians in the following way:

> Many East Africans lived in two worlds and could neither maintain nor change their habits to be completely at home in either. If they did join one world, they would not easily be able to perform their expected roles in the other. There is a junction in the railway from Bombay to Delhi which the women from that area who lived in Africa called 'Anand raise the veil' or 'Anand lower the veil' because passing through this station homeward they were expected to cover their faces (1968a:41).

SUMMARY

This chapter has provided evidence in support of the view that Indian immigrants in New York generally maintain two national affiliations. The interview material suggests that the major manifestations of close ties with India include patterns of marriage, sponsorship of kinsmen, citizenship holding, travel and hospitality. The practice of sending remittances may also be a factor, but determination of its importance will have to await further research.

That Indians here perceive themselves as marginal to two societies is evident from the letters and articles that appear in the Indian-American press. For example, in a letter to India Abroad, a reader refers to the Indian immigrant population in America by quoting Harry Roskolenko. The letter reads: "We live 'between bits and pieces of two countries, the

mixture serving to fuse and confuse us all the more'" (November 26, 1976). A short story appearing in another newspaper (Trans-India, July 29, 1974) probes "the dilemna of two hyphenated Americans" -- one Jewish and one Indian. Both are old men who have lived most of their lives in America, but who are nostalgic for their respective homelands. Their explanations for remaining here so long make it clear that neither will ever return. The story's tone of irony makes clear that the author takes a dim view of her countrymen's bi-nationality.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL CATEGORIES AND CUES OF IDENTITY AMONG INDIAN IMMIGRANTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports the results of another series of interviews. The goal in this case was to discover what types of social categories Indian immigrants of New York recognize as important. The ethnoscience concepts of salience as developed by Romney and D'Andrade (1964) were used as indices for measuring the relative importance of particular kinds of categories.

As indicated in Chapter 1, there are two indices of salience: the position of a term in a list of words elicited in response to a particular question and the frequency with which a term appears in the responses of different informants. It is this second measure I will use when I refer to more or less salient terms.

THE INTERVIEWS

Interviews with 24 immigrants (15 men, 9 women) were conducted during the summer of 1976 at the homes (in a few cases, the offices) of informants; they were arranged by appointment. Typically, they lasted between two and three hours. None of those asked to participate refused, and in no case did the informants receive financial remuneration for their time. All of the interviews were tape-recorded.

Since the questions asked related to the composition of the population in terms of its origin in India, it was necessary to initially select informants representing a variety of backgrounds. As Table 8 indicates, a breakdown of the informants' backgrounds shows considerable diversity

in terms of natal language and religious affiliation. They include natal speakers of seven languages which are associated with states covering all of the broad geographic regions of India. Four religious affiliations are represented. The preponderance of Hindus reflects their numerical strength in the Indian population at large. The ratio of natal languages represented here, however, should not be taken as reflective of the composition of the population, though Gujarati-speakers are undoubtedly numerically most significant.

Initial use of the question frame: "What kinds of Indians does one find living in New York ?" produced category labels denoting occupation or student status. In terms of the order of response, occupation was therefore most salient as a social category. However, since the research interest was limited to categories denoting origin, the question-frame was revised to the following: "people say that the Indians here are of many different backgrounds. What kinds of Indians are living in New York ?" In order of their salience, the responses to this question consisted of terms denoting membership in categories of natal language, religion, cultural region, varna and caste. I will now discuss each of these in turn.

LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS CATEGORIES

Of those interviewed, 21 answered the question by enumerating the names of linguistic groups associated with particular states, the "predominant language" of these states, in Kamitkar's terms. The term "state language" is used throughout this study to refer to such categories. Forty-seven instances of state language categories were elicited. In order of their salience,

TABLE 8

LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF 24 INDIAN INFORMANTS

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	NUMBER OF INFORMANTS
Hindu	17
Sikh	3
Muslim	2
Ismaili .. 1	
Bohra 1	
Zoroastrian	2
total	24

NATAL LANGUAGE	NUMBER OF INFORMANTS
Punjabi	5
Hindi	3
Gujarati	5
Marathi	1
Bengali	4
Kannada	4
Tamil	2
total	24

these were: Gujaratis, Bengalis, Punjabis, Marathis (or Maharashtrans), Tamils, Telugus (or Andhras), Kannidagas (i.e., natal speakers of Kannada), Malayalis and Sindhis. (See Table 9.)

Lack of statistics on the origin of Indian immigrants makes it impossible to compare the order of salience of particular categories with their relative numerical representations, but it is clear that "Gujarati" is not only the most salient term, but the most numerous language group here. It is also interesting to note that nearly all of the categories

TABLE 9

LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS CATEGORIES ELICITED FROM INFORMANTS

LANGUAGE GROUPS	NUMBER OF INFORMANTS WHO MENTIONED THE TERM
Gujaratis	12
Bengalis	9
Punjabis	7
Marathis (or Maharashtrans)	5
Tamils	3
Telugus (or Andhras)	3
Kannidagas (i.e., speakers of Kannada)	3
Malayalis	3
Sindhis	2

RELIGIOUS GROUPS	NUMBER OF INFORMANTS WHO MENTIONED THE TERM
Sikhs	9
Hindus	6
Muslims	3
Parsis (i.e., Zoroastrians)	3
Jains	3

elicited coincide with groups that are organized into formal associations here.

Of the 24 informants to whom the initial question posed, the responses of only nine included religious categories. In order of their salience, these are Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis (a term for Indian Zoroastrians) and Jains. (See Table 9.) Significantly, of the seven non-Hindu informants, five responded with religious categories; put another way, of the 17 Hindus, only four responded with religious categories. The order in which these labels were elicited is also suggestive: of the seven non-Hindu informants, three listed religious

category terms prior to linguistic ones, while an additional two listed only religious categories.

The remarks of the non-Hindu informants also support a position that religious differences may be more significant to the non-Hindu sector of the population, while state language is most salient to Hindus. For example, in response to the question posed, a Muslim woman stated:

> Well, because I'm a Muslim I would first think of the major divisions -- people who have a Hindu affiliation and people who have a Muslim affiliation. And after that, I'm probably more aware of the kinds of people within the Muslim environment.

A Parsi informant had this to say about the relative importance of maintaining one's religious identity as opposed to Indian identity, no less one's more specific linguistic identity"

> ... We'll always be Parsis. In terms of religion, you can't be converted, you have to be born into it. But that's as far as you should go. You don't have to keep saying 'I want to hold on to my Indian heritage, which is what so many want to do... In America the religion you follow may be different; you can practice whatever you want to. But as far as race goes, you can't hold on to being Indian -- or Chinese or Japanese or whatever. That's what creates conflicts. By your attempting to hold on to that, the children grow up with that race distinction... You have to bring up the children as true Americans. I have a son. I tell him: 'I may be an Indian, but you were born here -- you're an American. A follower of the Zoroastrian religion, but that's it. As for race, you're an American'.

In contrast to the remarks of non-Hindus, those of Hindus tend to stress the religious homogeneity of the population. For example, a woman stated that

> groupings are according to state. There are so many languages spoken that mixing

> up (she means interaction) is not total because of the language barriers that remain. Religion is the same. All of us are Hindus.

She later modified the last statement by conceding that there are other religious groups among Indians, but that these are numerically negligible.

Because analysis of these interviews suggested that the most salient categories for Hindus are linguistic, while for non-Hindus they are religious, a further survey was taken of non-Hindus on this question.

I sent a letter to each of the 111 members of the Muslim Bohra association for the tri-State area, stating the nature of my research and requesting certain demographic information about their household. Of the 38 who replied, ten also provided their telephone numbers and the message that they could be contacted for further information. This enabled me to conduct a poll by phone, using the same initial question-frame used in the interviews. For seven of these ten Muslims, religious categories are more salient than linguistic ones.

Because linguistic categories are by far the most salient type for most informants, they deserve special comment. The informants consistently stressed the importance of language. Speaking one's natal language is viewed as a way of "relaxing". A multi-lingual informant who is fluent in English expressed a popular sentiment:"We don't really feel completely free when we speak in any but our own language".

The following remark is a typical preface to the enumeration of linguistic categories: "Because our country is a vast place with different languages and different cultures, the main

groupings here are language groupings".

The "culture" referred to by many informants is closely associated in their minds with food habits: what is typically eaten, how it is prepared, how it is eaten. This was made explicit in the interviews when informants juxtaposed references to food preferences and cooking styles with allusions to linguistic diversity. In fact, the differences between the cognitive categories 'Punjabi' and 'Tamil' or 'Bengali' have as much to do with food as they do with language. Theoretically, Gujaratis and Bengalis do not freely associate with one another (in Indian-English parlance, "they are not mixing up") because they cannot 'relax' in each other's presence, not having a common tongue or cuisine with which they are both comfortable. A Bengali man explains why one would expect to find mostly Bengalis at any gathering given by a Bengali family where food is served:

> Because there is a communication problem -- the food is different. It's not that Bengalis hate Gujaratis; it's that their foods are different. Gujaratis are usually vegetarian. Take "C". He invited a Gujerati family for dinner. They had dinner at home and then they went to his house. They knew that Bengalis would have fish. We like meat. They can't have fish; they can't have meat. They did have a little of the vegetables -- just for the sake of formality.

CATEGORIES OF CULTURAL REGION: "NORTH INDIAN" AND "SOUTH INDIAN"

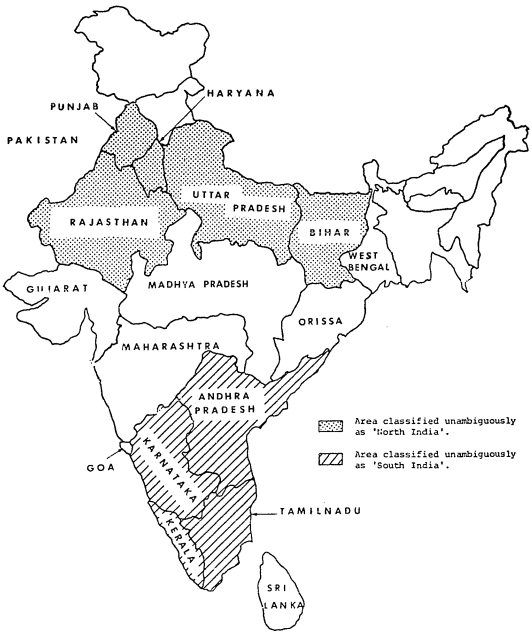
In their response to the question: "what kinds of Indians live in New York ?", half of those interviewed included in their enumeration the terms 'North Indian' and/or 'South Indian'. The frequency with which these terms were elicited made it necessary to discover their precise meanings.

Anthropologists writing on India frequently use these terms as if they referred to relatively clearly bounded and discrete geographic entities. The interviews show that the terms 'North Indian' and 'South Indian' refer to more than just geographic background. They are value-laden terms which are intimately associated with ideas about physiognomy, language, and food habits. The boundaries of these social units are not unanimously agreed upon, but the variation that exists follows definite patterns. I will now present data from the interviews to support these generalizations.

First, it is necessary to state that 'North Indian' and 'South Indian' are the only regional terms which exist in Indian English for the purpose of identifying individuals. That is, there is no such appellation as 'West Indian' to describe someone from western India (though the latter is recognized as a legitimate geographic term). Nor is it correct to refer to a Bengali as an 'East Indian' though he comes from eastern India. Because of the apparently dichotomous nature of the regional merging terms as used to refer to people, I had initially assumed that an Indian must be either one or the other. The data show this is not the case.

In asking people where the border between North and South India occurred, it became obvious that some found this question to be inappropriate, while others did not. Origin in India was a critical factor. With regard to South Indian identity, there was agreement: for all the informants, South Indians are the people from the four southernmost states of Kerala, Tamilnadu (formerly Madras), Karnataka (formerly Mysore), and Andhra Pradesh. (See map on following page.)

MAP 1. STATES CLASSIFIED AS 'NORTH INDIA' AND 'SOUTH INDIA'



For the six informants who trace their origin to these states, there is truly a dichotomous classification of Indians: all of the peoples not of these states are North Indians. As one Tamil informant said: "'North Indian' is a much broader classification which includes both east and west. They're all 'North Indians'. A Karnataka woman concurred: "As far as South Indians are concerned, everyone not in these four states is a North Indian".

Though this is the view of the South Indian contingent of informants, it is one not shared by non-South Indians, some of whom classify themselves neither as North nor South Indians. When the ten informants who are natal speakers of either Gujarati, Marathi or Bengali were asked how they classify themselves in terms of the North/South distinction, nine replied that they should not be included in either category, but simply by the name of their particular state language.

For example, a Bengali said: "I would say definitely that if one would say 'North Indian', they would not mean to include Bengalis". Another Bengali informant stated: "People from Gujarat are simply known as Gujaratis and people from Maharashtra are called simply Marathis. And with Bengalis, we have the same problem."

When the five Guj rati informants were asked if Guja ratis were considered North Indians, all replied negatively. One Gujarati informant commented: "Several groups do not fit anywhere. For example, although Maharashtra falls in the southern part (of the country), Marathis don't include themselves as South Indians".

The last informant went on to stress the cultural diversity present among the anomalous states. "In Central India we have four countries -- I mean states. Our languages are different, our orientations are different. For example, in Gujarat, they are a business community; in Maharashtra we are a more religious and educated community".

A Punjabi friend of hers countered this statement with the observation that non-South Indians similarly tend to merge the peoples of the four southern states as "South Indians" despite the linguistic diversity among them. This observation is accurate. Non-South Indians also use the term 'Madrassi' synonymously with 'South Indian'. South Indians from states other than Madras (Tamilnadu) resent this merging label when it is applied to them. Explained one Karnataka woman: "It's not so much that I don't want to be identified with Madras, but that I do want itknown that I'm from Karnataka". Usage of the term may derive from an earlier time when the polity known as Madras encompassed parts of Karnataka. Non-South Indians seemed to be aware of the current unpopularity of the term. Frequently, they corrected themselves after using it, saying things such as: "I mean South Indians; I really shouldn't say 'Madrassis'".

Berreman has gathered data on social categories in the Indian city of Dehra Dun (1972, 1975). He reports that some of his informants "identified people of Maharashtra and Gujarat, who come from western India and share the Indo-Aryan culture of the North, rather than the Dravidian culture of the South as 'Madrassi', i.e., South Indian" (1975:81). None of my informants in New York classified Gujaratis or Marathis as

Southerners. A possible reason for this discrepancy is that Berreman interrogated people of a much wider range of educational backgrounds than are represented in my sample. The fact that Berreman conducted his research in the North may also account for the discrepancy between our findings. Informants here were in many instances aware of the linguistic rationales for the division between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian culture, as will be demonstrated in a later section of this chapter.

Of the five South Indian informants, only one stated Gujaratis, Bengalis and Marathis are definitely not North Indian. Her unique categorization is explained by her experience. When told that most South Indians had classified these people as 'North Indian', she replied: "Yes, South Indians would. But I was brought up in Bombay, spent five years of my childhood in North India, and spent 15 years in Gujarat after my marriage. So I understand the differences between these groups".

One pattern which emerged is consistent with Berreman's findings. That is, that the terms 'North Indian' and 'South Indian' occur at the same level of contrast as state language terms such as 'Gujaratis'. In the interviews, the category 'South Indian' was used in this way only by non-South Indians. Use of the term 'North Indian' as a contrasting term with 'Tamil', for example, was similarly restricted to South Indians.

The people classified by all informants as North Indian are those of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Bihar. It is likely that further study would show that state language

groups other than those mentioned here are perceived as anomalous in terms of the North/South dichotomy (Orissa and Assam, for example). Discussion revolved around Bengalis, Gujaratis and Marathis because these are the peoples who are represented by sizeable populations in New York.

CATEGORIES OF VARNA AND CASTE

Significantly, only one caste category (Patel) appears in the enumeration of a single informant. Varna terms are likewise conspicuously absent from the responses. To the question-frame "What kinds of Indians live here ?", only the separate enumeration of "Brahmins" and "non-Brahmins" are given by two informants, one of whom had immigrated to the U.S. only a short time prior to the interview. As will be shown in the following chapter, the social organization of the Indian immigrant population here likewise reflects a relative disinterest in caste membership. Generally, membership in both formal associations and friendship groups disregard caste lines. In this country, marriage may be the only situation where an individual's caste or varna membership is significant.

THE CORRELATES OF SOCIAL CATEGORIES

Regardless of how particular Indian categories are bounded, most are defined by more than a single dimension. The terms 'North Indian' and 'South Indian', in particular, trigger layers of 'racial', linguistic, and cultural connotations. When I use the term 'race' in this study, I use it in the sense of "ethno-physical anthropology", i.e., race as the

concept is understood by Indian informants, not by physicial anthropologists. On the basis of the interview data, I now discuss each of these connotations in turn.

Phenotype and the Categories 'North Indian' and 'South Indian'

The most salient dimension of contrast between the terms North and South Indian is phenotype: of the 24 informants, 22 referred to differences of physiognomy in discussing the two categories. Typically they were the first set of differences to be elicited. Three-quarters of those interviewed made mention of the fact that North Indians tend to have fairer complexions (the adjective "good" is sometimes used synonymously with "fair") than do Southerners. Six associated greater height with the former group, and five indicated that the two can be differentiated on the basis of facial features although they claimed that it was difficult to articulate what these differences are.

Informants associate these phenotypic differences with ancestry in one of two named racial stocks in India: Aryan and Dravidian. These categories, however, were not freely elicited in response to the question: "What kinds of Indians are living in New York ?". Rather, they emerged in response to the question: "What is the difference between North and South Indians ?"

Several informants stated that these categories are relevant only in the context of India's early history -- at least five millenia ago, according to informants. "There are no pure Aryans today" and "nobody is pure Dravidian" are statements which appear repeatedly in the transcripts of the

interviews. Nevertheless, the data show that these categories are still in use; they provide a kind of historical framework for explaining the perceived differences between North and South Indians. In some cases, the terms 'Aryan' and 'Dravidian' are used synonymously with 'North Indian' and 'South Indian' as will be demonstrated.

Informants agree on the original relationship between the ancient Aryans and Dravidians. The basic elements of the origin myth/history are these: the dark-skinned Dravidians were the original inhabitants of the sub-continent. About five thousand years ago, the country was invaded from the north by a fair-skinned people (whose place of origin varies but is usually given as the Middle East). The latter pushed the indigenous people towards the far south where today they retain what remains of their genetic and cultural legacy. The Aryans spread throughout the northern and central parts of India and established themselves as the dominant group.

The presentations of the myth that follow as stated by two informants show the current usage of the terms Aryan and Dravidian despite the denials voiced here that they are no longer relevant. A Marathi woman says:

> North Indians are Aryans and South Indians are Dravidians who were basically there right from the beginning -- the natives of India, as you would say, like the Red Indians here. These Aryans came from the northern Middle East. Some of them went down, some went west, some came east. Out of the eastern lot were the Aryans that went to India via Afghanistan... I'm an Aryan, but now there is no pure Aryan, as they say. Today, we're all mixed up.

A Gujarati man's rendition:

> Somewhere from the middle of Russia through northwest India, a group of people came in. Years went by and they identified themselves as Aryans. These people pushed further and further south. The original Indians who were living there were known as Dravidians. The majority of them went to South India and there formed the entire South India. In South India today there is a very powerful political party in operation -- the DMK. They are all Dravidians; they feel that basically they are all Dravidians. The Aryans spread throughout the North and divided themselves into different groups. These Aryans considered the Dravidians backward. Aryans felt they were more advanced and superior to the Dravidians -- the South Indians... If you look to the South Indians and then to the North Indians from the Punjab, -- there they look superior to the South Indians. I mean they have a black skin and they look a little bit tiny. It has no meaning in these days, but there was a time when the people in the North considered themselves to be superior to the people in the South. So there were two main groups, but today they have no meaning. The only meaning is in the state, the religion, the language.

South Indians are keenly aware of the fact that they are thought to be inferior-looking by non-South Indians. A Karnataka woman said: "I shouldn't say this, but since you are doing a study -- I feel that North Indians look down upon South Indians; I don't know why". Three other South Indians stated that they felt the color bias had been reinforced by the fact that every successful invasion of India had been achieved by a lighter-skinned population than the indigenous one, beginning with the Middle Eastern conquests and ending with that of the British.

A Punjabi informant described South Indians not only as dark-skinned, but as having 'Negroid' facial features and bone structure. Her Marathi friend vehemently disagreed.

Except for one informant who suggested a possible relationship between African Blacks and South Indians in the distant past, most informants explicitly disavowed any such link. South Indians, though said to be darker than Northerners, were "not black like the Blacks in this country". I pointed out to the Punjabi informant that her verbal description of South Indians did not coincide with the features of several South Indians whom we both knew. This was correct, she said, the reason being that these people were Brahmins. Brahmins, in her classification, were by definition, not true South Indians; they were the descendants of Aryan North Indians who had migrated to the South in the distant past.

Her statement led to further questioning on this issue. A Bengali man said: "I'm not sure about the race of that particular group of people. They may be Dravidian, but they may be something else". Political developments in South India dating from the early decades of the century have complicated the question of the racial identity of South Indian Brahmins (Irschicl 1969) so that it is unclear even to the Brahmins themselves. An extremely dark-skinned Tamil Brahmin speaks to this point in his version of the Aryan/Dravidian origin myth:

> History is not so clear as to where we came from. They say we came from Tibet. At that time most of the people stayed in the North; later they moved to South India. They became two different groups called Aryans and Dravidians. The South Indians are all Dravidians; the Aryans are the North Indian people. The Dravidians do not accept the Brahmins of the South as Dravidians... The Dravidians -- who are the people presently doing research on this feel that we Brahmins cannot be called Dravidians because we originally

> came from the North. The Brahmins of the South should be kicked out, to the North. And the Northerners are not going to accept the South Indian Brahmins as their class of people. When I was in the North, I was not accepted as a 'pure, unadulterated' Brahmin by the North Indian Brahmins... By geographic distribution, I'm a Dravidian. Until things are clearly established otherwise, that's what I am.

A natal Tamil-speaker born in Kerala but raised in Calcutta all his life said: "I'm supposed to be a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian. I don't know myself which group I belong to. It's a big conflict. Nobody really knows which group he belongs to. People originally from Taminadu are supposed to be Dravidian, I think."

A Karmataka man felt that the people of his state are not Dravidians,

> but in Madras, you find these people who are shorter and have charcoal skin. Sure, they belong to the Dravidian classification. The aboriginal people who live in the forests of Nilgiris who are employed in the coffee plantations -- these people are Dravidians. The Kasmiris, or tall Punjabis, the aristocratic-looking Sikhs, they belong to the Aryan classification. While a man like me is a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian. But then we don't think in these terms anymore.

There is consensus on the following: the North/South and Aryan/Dravidian oppositions are equated with polarities of phenotype. As a Karnataka woman put it: "The North Indians are fair-skinned and have light eyes; we have dark skin and dark eyes. They are Aryans and we are Dravidians. Racial difference is there". Of the 13 informants who spoke in terms of these categories, 12 associated Aryans with the North, Dravidians with the South. Only one informant who

was born and raised in East Africa was completely unfamiliar with these categories.

Phenotype and Linguistic Categories

In the interviews I did not raise the question of the phenotype of groups anomalous in the North/South dichotomy, i.e., Gujaratis, Marathis and Bengalis. The following statements are nevertheless suggestive. A Gujarati man, for example, said:

> The persons coming from Punjab have a faire skin compared to persons coming from extreme south, such as Kerala, who have a completely black skin. You will find that the people from Gujarat have a skin color which is very delicate -- not too black and not too white. If a person is Bengali, his appearance looks very delicate, too.

And a Tamil-speaker stated that

> Bengalis are a compromise between the North and the South; they are light brown people. As a matter of fact, that's not always true either. You se -- as I said before there can never be one general rule with Bengalis.

LANGUAGE AND THE CATEGORIES 'NORTH INDIAN' AND 'SOUTH INDIAN'

Inquiries into the differences between these two categories yielded statements about linguistic as well as phenotypic differences. For 14 of the 24 informants, the natal languages spoken within each category are more closely related than they are to others. There is general agreement that the predominant languages of the four South Indian states (Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Telugu) are more closely related to each other than to all other Indian languages. Some informants claimed that these were non-Sanskrit derived while others ventured the opposite opinion that "South Indian languages are closer

to Sanskrit than the North Indian languages". The question has apparently been debated by linguists, too. Linguist Gordon Fairbanks states that "William Carey made a step forward in recognizing that the languages of North India were derived from Sanskrit, but was misled in that he considered the Dravidian languages to be similarly derived from Sanskrit" (1969:36). In Fairbank's classification, the Indo-Aryan languages include: Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sindhi, Urdu, Nepali, Kasmiri, and Pahari. Dravidian languages are said to include the four languages of South India mentioned above (1969:36).

There is also the idea that the opposition between Aryan and Dravidian is relevant to language differentiation. A Punjabi woman said:

> Tamils is the language of Madrassis. (Here she meant people of Madras, not all South Indians.) It is not an Aryan language, but the rest are -- Kannada is, Telugu is, Malayalem is. They're all Aryan languages. Highly Sanskritized.

A Bengali man who classifies Bengalis as North Indians used a linguistic rationale:

> We call ourselves North Indians because North and South is this way: culturally, it becomes Aryan and Dravidian. This has to do with the languages. The languages of these four states in the South do not descend from Sanskrit. The languages of all the other states do.

Another Bengali man who does not classify Bengalis as North Indian also uses a linguistic rationale for not doing so. While he admitted that there was a basic dichotomy between the four languages of the South and all other Indian

languages, the significant criterion for him -- as for nearly all non-South Indian informants -- was the relative extent to which Hindi is spoken in a given area. "In the North they all speak Hindi" is the proverbial way in which this equation is expressed.

A Bengali man explained the anomalous positions of Gujarati, Maharashtra and Bengal along the North/South axis in these terms:

> North India is a Hindi-speaking area, a zone that is language-based. It includes the people of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, part of Madya Pradesh and Delhi. People from Gujerat are called Gujaratis and Mahrashtra Marathis not East or West Indians. Because when you make a classification like North Indian, South Indian -- you want to cover an area, a zone. But in this case, the zone is only language-based. Perhaps a hundred and fifty miles from the coast the people will be speaking a different language so that it makes no sense to classify then together with a regional term. The North Indians, the Hindi-speaking people actually cover most of the area. It's only the people from North India that can be classified on a zone basis. You can't call me an East Indian or a man from Gujarat a West Indian because it's only the language that's defining us. If I want to learn Hindi or Tamil, it makes no difference; either of them would be as difficult for me to learn as Russian or German. That's how different they are from Bengali.

The fact that South Indians tend to categorize Gujaratis, Marathis and Bengalis as North Indians stems in part from their view that linguistic variation among non-South Indian states is minimal. According to South Indians interviewed, all non-

South Indians are thought to be Hindi-speakers. A Tamil man, for example, says

> The North Indians -- the east and west people -- seem to accept Hindi as a common language between them all. A South Indian always struggles for (maintaining) his own language, though the South Indian does not have a common language like the North Indians have. These four peoples have their four languages. But when you take Hindi -- the Bengalis on the east, the Gujaratis and Marathis on the west, people in Madya Pradesh and in Punjab on the north -- they all seem to understand it, or for some reason have accepted, by evolution, I suppose, Hindi as a language which unifies them.

In an interview, a Karnataka woman included Gujaratis as North Indians in response to the question of how to classify them. Her Punjabi friend who was present strongly disagreed: "No, they're not; they are completely different. Their language, their cooking, everything is different". The South Indian woman countered with: "Yes, cooking is different, but they know Hindi, no ?" This evidently was the key criterion. Her Punjabi friend replied: "No, many Gujaratis don't know Hindi. Those that went to Bombay learned Hindi; there you have to know Hindi to understand the servants".

The picture that emerges from exchanges such as this one is that individuals classify groups differentially depending upon the extent of their knowledge of the behavior of these groups. This in turn is directly related to the degree of their personal interaction with them. Berreman has made this point as well:

> Clearly, social identity cannot be understood without understanding the variation in people's

> knowledge of and use of the categorical terms and the individual and circumstantial sources of that variation... This is partly a matter of knowledge which in turn is a matter of sub-culture, social distance and social relevance (1975:80).

In this case, it was obviously news to the South Indian woman that Gujaratis are not necessarily Hindi-speakers. Even though she and her friend agreed upon the dimension for categorization (i.e., knowledge of Hindi), their actual classifications differed because their funds of knowledge were different. People alter the boundaries of their cognitive maps as they gain new and relevant information.

In this respect it was also interesting to discover that informants would occasionally steer me to sources that they recognized as authorities on the subject of social categorization. For example, those who did not trust their own judgments as to whether Gujaratis are North Indians or Mysorians are Dravidians, either recommended I speak with someone they knew whom they felt had greater expertise, or else advised me to seek out more scholarly sources of such information.

Only one informant (a Gujarati man) disputed the idea that there was any correlation between knowledge of Hindi and classification as North Indian. He agreed with the anomalous positions of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Bengal in the North/South dichotomy, but pointed out the following:members of all three groups speak Hindi, though not necessarily as a natal tongue; furthermore, Punjabis are consistently classified as North Indian despite the fact that many are natal speakers of a language other than Hindi, namely Punjabi. These are

astute observations. This informant claimed that he could think of no satisfying rationale for explaining why some peoples are considered neither North nor South Indians.

The interview data suggests the following explanation. The way in which a person classifies the peoples of Indian states into larger regional categories depends largely on his or her ideas about language. This includes ideas about the degree of similarity between particular languages as well as ideas about the extent to which Hindi is spoken by a particular population. A person's classification of a particular group as Hindi-speakers is based ultimately on his opinion of the extent to which they speak Hindi.

FOOD HABITS AND THE CATEGORIES 'NORTH INDIAN', 'SOUTH INDIAN' AND ANOMALOUS STATE LANGUAGE GROUPS

There is yet another structural opposition associated with the North/South distinction: nine of the 24 informants cited differences in the food habits of the two categories of people. Differences of language and food are, in fact, closely associated by Indian immigrants. Frequently they are alluded to in the same breath as in the statement of the Bengali man: "There's a communication problem between us; our foods are different". A Tamil man put it this way: "Language and food are the two things that are so close to a man or woman's heart -- they want to cherish these things". The activities sponsored by formal associations are a reflection of this sentiment (see Chapter 5).

Most salient of the food habits distinguishing North and South Indians was the staple foods of their diets; nine of

the informants alluded to this difference. A common saying was: "North Indians are wheat-eaters; South Indians are rice-eaters". Inquiry into the classification of peoples in terms of the North/South distinction met with this statement by a Marathi informant: "All you have to do is ask a person what she eats. If he tells you he eats rice at every meal, he's a South Indian, if he tells you wheat, then he's North Indian. If he eats both wheat and rice at meals, then he's from Central India -- from Maharashtra, for example".

The differences between North and South Indian food habits rest on more than just the staples eaten. Although the latter was the most consistently mentioned, the vegetarian/non-vegetarian distinction is also important. In general, it is believed that vegetarianism is practiced to a greater extent by South Indians. It should be noted here that North Indians include Punjabi Sikhs whose religion does not enjoin them to avoid meat-eating.

Again, the positions of Marathis, Gujaratis, and Bengalis are anomalous. Marathis eat rice and wheat. Gujaratis do also, but they, like Southerners are associated with vegetarianism. Bengalis, like Southerners, are rice-eaters, but unlike them, they are non-vegetarian. Among other groups their reputation as fish lovers is legendary; they themselves admit to a near obsessive predilection for it. A Bengali informant said: "All Bengalis love fish. If you don't have it once a day you go crazy... Even here, by trial and error, we've found the best places to get fresh fish".

A final opposition based on food habits was reported by

only one informant, but it was a pattern which I observed during the course of fieldwork: North Indians and South Indians are distinguished by their respective preferences for tea and coffee (heavily sweetened and with milk). At an Indian banquet held in a New York hotel I attempted to test this correlation. A waiter approached the table in order to take orders to tea and coffee after dinner. Noticing that all those at the table were from the North, I decided to anticipated his questioning and be the spokesman for the table: "Tea for all us North Indians", I ventured, and was heartened to find the remark had met with vigorous nods and smiles of approval from those with whom I was seated.

At an interview in the home of a Karnataka couple, I registered surprise when tea was served, noting that it was unusual among South Indians. They laughed and the husband said: "Yes, you're right, but we've both spent a good deal of time living in the North and acquired the habit of drinking tea there".

The anomalous Bengalis are tea drinkers, but unlike the North Indians those here take their tea without milk. Maharashtrans, but not Gujaratis, share this characteristic.

As with the discussion of language, I do not mean to imply that these ideals strictly coincide with behavioral performance. Rather, I wish to specify the dimensions which serve to differentiate groups. In reality, exposure to foods not readily accessible in India, the needs of bachelors to obtain food during their student days here, and the pressures in American society that militate against maintaining a

vegetarian diet are factors which have contributed to modifying the diets of many Indian immigrants (especially men).

In 'vegetarian' households that I visited, for example, the husband (less frequently the wife) had admitted to occasionally partaking a meat outside the home. Typically each night, though, an Indian meal is served in the traditional style of the natal state. Thus, "vegetarian" for Gujaratis includes a ban not only on meat and fish, but on eggs as well as foods grown in the ground, such as potatoes, garlic and onions.

As with issues relating to natal language, people have strong emotions about the foods associated with their particular identity; they also project these values onto others. A Punjabi man, for example, stated that in India, South Indians would prefer to starve than eat 'choppatis' (a type of North Indian bread). Preferences for traditional foods of the natal state language group run high. Some people express a blatant dislike for the cuisine of other groups or are hesitant about trying them. But there is another side of the coin as well. Several informants said that as a result of having friends from a variety of backgrounds, their culinary repertoires had increased appreciably. Also, at most gatherings attended by members of diverse backgrounds such as parties given at home for friends and at pan-Indian organization banquets (see Chapter 7), there is usually a wide selection of foods of different regions, vegetarian and non-vegetarian alike.

INDIAN CATEGORIES: VARIATION IN THEIR FEATURES OF MEANING

Throughout I have been referring to the social categories that are meaningful to Indians. Some of these like the terms Aryan and Dravidian are recognized by informants as being problematic. Others -- such as North and South Indian, Hindu, and Sikh -- are conceptualized as more or less discrete units with non-overlapping memberships, even though individuals draw their boundaries differently. Though the interviews involved a relatively small number of individuals, they provide evidence that suggests the ascription of particular identities to Indians here is not always so clear-cut.

I now present sketches of three informants who are typical of a larger number of Indians living here. In the first case, the question is "what is an Indian ?". In the second, it is "what makes a person South Indian ?" (as distinct from the question of how to bound South India). And finally, the third is an exploration of the question "what is a Sikh ?".

The first informant is a young woman, Z, who immigrated in 1973. A Muslim of the Ismaili branch of the Shiah sect, she was born and raised in Tanzania, where her parents were also born. Her grandparents were from Gujarat, but she does not know more specifically where in that state. She said "I guess they were from Gujarat because we speak Gujarati". Z also speaks an African language. She attended a Catholic college in Ireland. Today she works as a statistician for a New York City firm. She usually wears Western dress. She strongly identifies with Ismailis and East African Indians.

Asked if she identifies herself as an Indian, Z said:

> I don't have any link with India at all. I don't have any relatives there. To me it's a whole new cultural environment. When I was in India for a visit I went into culture shock. In Pakistan, also, I hung around with people from East Africa. We more or less spoke the same language. I just couldn't communicate with the Pakistanis. It was a much more conservative culture, a whole different way of life. If I had to choose between saying I was an Indian or a Pakistani, I would choose only on the basis of religion. I'd choose Pakistan because I'm a Muslim. And I don't have very strong religious convictions. I mean I have an identity (emphasis is hers) as an Ismaili, but I'm not religious-oriented.

Asked if she identifies herself as Indian or East African when people ask her background, she said:

> I would say I'm Indian. But I'm really African. My citizenship is African; my passport is African. It causes so much confusion to say: 'I'm African' that it's easier for me to say I'm Indian. I used to say I was African. And then culturally, I'm not really African. My generation doesn't fit anywhere. We're a transition group. We're partly African, partly Indian, and partly British -- a lot of our ways are very British. When you put us against more typical Indians, you see the difference.

She also talked about how her identification with Indians has come about as a result of coming to New York:

> One thing about coming to New York is that it has made me want to feel more Indian. I would like to learn more about Indian culture. I get the feeling from other East Africans that they feel the same way. Back home in East Africa you didn't think about this. In Ireland, when people learned that my family was from India, they wanted to know which part. I didn't even know where my grandparents came from. I had never though about it. In New York, everyone is looking for an identity. So we East Africans are becoming more Indian.

> In New York I feel very proud to be an Indian. The Indian community here is so respected not like in England or in Canada... In Belfast, when someone asked what you were, you knew they meant: Catholic or Protestant. At first I said Muslim. It was meaningless. They would say: 'Yes, but are you Catholic or Protestant ?' I would then answer that I hadn't made up my mind yet.

Z finds categorizing herself according to national origin difficult. If, for example, a Census questionnaire asked her to choose between calling herself an Indian or a Pakistani, she says there would be conflict

> because those are political divisions. If a choice was 'of Indian origin', then right away I would put that down because that is accurate.

Z is thus an East African American, a Muslim Shiah Ismaili of Indian origin.

The second case is that of V, a young man who also immigrated here in 1973. He was born in a village in Kerala of a Tamil-speaking family. A few months after his birth, his family moved to Calcutta where he spent the next 18 years. Since then he has spend a total of 15 days in South India. He speaks Bengali. Asked if he identifies himself as a Bengali he said:

> Yes, I think of myself as Bengali because I know more about Bengal than my own South India. I know Bengali customs better than South Indian customs. Just my name is South Indian -- that's about it. I'd rather say I'm Indian than South Indian.

Asked if he is ever mistaken for a Bengali, he stated:

> It's very hard for people to find out I'm not Bengali. They usually say: 'You're a Bengali, right ? I say: 'no, I'm not',

> If people ask where I'm from, I say that I'm from Calcutta. That's all. I don't say I'm from the South. How can I say I'm from South. I don't know anything about that place. Just by the name ?

When asked if all people who were "of Calcutta" weren't Bengalis, however, he adamently replied: "No;take me, for example, I'm a South Indian." (my emphasis.) As it turned out, this informant did have ties to South India through the cooking traditions maintained at home and the study of Tamil at school as well as its use in the home.

This case is not unusual. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, the picture of the Indian community here is that of a population disparate in its origins, but nonetheless raised in the major ethnically heterogeneous cities of India. For these people, being "from Calcutta" or "from Bombay" is yet another in the many layers of their ethnic identity.

The third informant, R, is a New Delhi-raised Punjabi and a Hindu by self-classification. Her family includes members (both consanguineal and affinal relatives) who are Sikh. R always wears the steel bangle signifying Sikh identity, and when on occasion she attends religious services, it is to the Sikh gurudwara, rather than any of the local Hindu temples that she goes. She says that she acquired the habit of attending Sikh services from her father with whom she would go as a young child. She says that "his mother was the daughter of a Sikh man. As a result I came to know and like many of the Sikh customs". R says that she "believes in Sikhism, in the Sikh prophets and ideals", but states that "we are Hindu, not Sikh".

DIACRITICAL MARKERS OF INDIAN IDENTITY

As has been shown, the ethnic categories elicited by informants in the interviews were in order of their salience, those relating to state language, religion, and more inclusive cultural regions of India. In this section I discuss the responses of the 24 informants to the question: "How can you recognize or identify people belonging to these different groups which you have mentioned ?" In order of their frequency, the cues elicited relate to a) language, b) phenotype, c) dress and ornamentation, d) names, and e) food habits.

Linguistic Cues

Linguistic cues are of various types. They include an individual's pronunciation in English and in Indian languages as well as which language a person is speaking. A total of 33 instances of linguistic cues were elicited by the 24 informants; some included in their responses more than one type of linguistic cue.

The most salient of these was pronunciation in English; it was cited by 17 or nearly three quarters of the informants as a good predictor of a person's identity. A major division recognized by the informants in the speech patterns of Indians is that differentiating North from South Indians as the following informant remarks show:

> A Gujarati would speak English differently than a Punjabi or South Indian.
>
> South Indians have a totally different accent, even when talking in English.
>
> When people speak, even if they are speaking English, you can make out whether they're from North or South.

And according to a Gujarati man,

> As soon as a person starts to talk you can make out if he's from South... there is some type of shivering in his pronunciation. And the Bengali is different also. For example, I say 'Bengali' whereas the man who is actually from Bengal will say 'BenGAUli'. So their pronunciation is a little bit broad.

The Bengali language is also attributed with a "sweet" mellifluous quality which is said to influence their pronunciation in English. A South Indian man said: "A Bengali speaks English in a sing-song way". And a Punjabi woman said:

> Bengali is supposed to be a sweet language. When Punjabis talk, they talk as if they're fighting. And when Bengalis fight, it sounds as if they're making love.

A Bihari woman claimed that

> ... if you hear the main South Indian languages, and then you hear Bengali, there are miles of difference. It (Bengali) is so sweet, and theirs is so sharp because they (South Indians) stress each word. They don't roll it; the sound is sharp, not round.

The South Indian "accent" in English is specifically recognizable to the informants. It is identified by two main features. One is described as a "rolling of r's": "South Indians stress the 'r' more; they drag them" is the way a Bihari woman put it. A South Indian man describes it this way:

> I've had a lot of difficulty in this country. I've always tended to speak in the guttural rolling Indian accent. So sometimes I have to modulate my 'r's consciously saying things slowly to smooth out my 'r's, especially on the phone.

The second characteristic is the interpolation of a'y' sound before initial vowels. A Marathi woman explained it this way:

> If you look back at their (South Indians') mother tongue, they have so many "y'el"s and "y'em"s and "y'en"s and "y'o"s that they pronounce the letter 'n' as 'yen', the word 'eggs' as 'yeggs' and so on.

Five informants in these interviews (and others in more casual conversation) remarked on this particular linguistic trait of South Indians. It was also mentioned that in ethnically heterogenous universities in Calcutta, for example, that South Indians were teased a good deal about it.

Nonetheless, South Indians claimed that they are, on the whole, better speakers of English. Three informants attributed this to the fact that in elementary schools where there is an option to pursue the curriculum in either Hindi or English, most South Indians opt for the latter. A Karnataka man stated:

> The dark-skinned shorter people from Madras have a much better command of the English language than the Northerners do.

A Tamil man said:

> If you want to hear proper English, English as it should be with all the grammar, the South Indians are better. Because they are taught English in the proper way right from the beginning, whereas the North Indians always finds it difficult to speak in English. His fluency is very bad; he's unable to express himself in English as fast or as clearly as a South Indian could.

One informant cited the relatively greater influence of the Christian missionaries in the South and the consequently larger number of mission (and therefore English) schools in the region, particularly in Kerala. Another, a Gujarati man, contended that South Indians have a greater natural facility

for learning languages: "They (South Indians) learn Hindi easily, but we can never, never pick up South Indian languages".

There is a sound materialist basis for this discrepancy. That is, to obtain a government post in India it is necessary to understand Hindi; Hindi-speakers, on the other hand, have no such economic motivation to master South Indian languages (Shirley Lindenbaum: personal communication).

The second most frequently cited linguistic cue was the Indian language a person was heard to be speaking; this was mentioned by nearly half of those interviewed. Although informants feel that the language a person speaks is an accurate predictor of his identity, I suspect that this is not the case. As has been mentioned in the earlier chapter, the immigrants here generally speak several Indian languages. One cannot therefore assume that on any given occasion, a person is speaking his natal language, from which deduction about his ethnic identity are made, (for example, the Bengali-raised Tamil).

Four informants mentioned that pronunciation in an Indian language is a cue to a person's identity. Although elicited from fewer people, this cue is probably important in conveying accurate information about a person's background.

A Gujarati informant, for example, claimed that within one's natal language group, one could place a person's background within a rather precise geographic location. He said: "We have a saying in Gujarat that language there changes every 24 miles. So a person from South Gujarat and

North Gujarat you can easily differentiate".

Speaking about the pronunciation of a certain phoneme in Hindi, another informant said:

> The Bengalis will pronounce it very broadly. The person who is from North India -- the typical Hindi-speaking area -- will pronounce it in a very different manner. Whereas the person from Gujerat will pronounce the word in still a different way.

Skill at predicting a person's identity through linguistic cues, like the ability to classify groups into broader taxa, varies according to individual experience; this fact is recognized by the informants. Said one woman: "By experience, I can say 'he's from Bengal' or 'he's from Bihar or Punjab or South India'. Pronunciation is the key to identify which state a person belongs to."

A final linguistic cue concerns differential employment of English by Indians of different backgrounds. Two informants, both South Indian, claimed that South Indians use English to a greater extent that North Indians, that its usage among them is not dictated by the presence of individuals who do not know South Indian languages. A Tamil man spoke about this difference:

> Suppose a North Indian meets an Indian. He automatically takes it for granted that his language is known, and he starts speaking it. The moment a North Indian sees me, he will say: 'Sahib' -- which means 'sir', and then will go on to say 'how do you do ?' in his language. Whereas a South Indian, even if he knows that I speak his language will say -- 'Hi, how are you ?' in English. Later on when we get deeper into conversation, he'll jump into his own language. Even then,

> it's a mixture of English and his own language.

Phenotype

The next cue in order of salience was that of phenotype. Of the 24 informants, 21 replied that they could differentiate Indians "by looks". They then proceeded to give specific correlations between particular physiognomic traits and background.

Informants agreed that to differentiate North from South Indians, "you just have to look". The following are typical responses to the question: can you tell Northerners and Southerners apart ?

> Sure, 95% of the time. By color and facial expresssion.
>
> By the features. You can guess 90% of the time.
>
> Most of the time you can make out. Color of the skin, mainly, and general facial features.

Althought fair and dark complexions are generally associated with Northerners and Southerners respectively, informants were emphatic that phenotype is not always an accurate predictor. In this connection, a Gujarati referred to the group of light-skinned South Indians. "But, he said, "if you exclude that group, usually you can make out North from South".

Others referred to "bone structure" and "facial features", or "physique". A Bengali man, for example, said:

> We really don't differentiate on complexion. There is something in the features. People in the Northern areas are a terrible mixture of Mongolians, Aryans, Dravidians. North-

> western people have more Aryan influence; northeastern people have more Mongolian influence; they are short in stature. Whereas in Pakistan, Kasmir, and Punjab, people are quite tall in comparison with the rest of the country.

According to informants, phenotype also serves to differentiate state language groups. The degree to which people are able to distinguish these, however, depends upon the extent of their personal contact with particular groups. A Karnataka woman claimed: "I can just say that a person is North Indian, but I can't say from which state he is. Except Bengal I can make out. But not Punjab or Gujarat. Her Punjabi friend was incredulous, responding: "Gujarat you can't make out ?? But they are the easiest !" The Karnataka woman admitted that her inability to differentiate them probably stemmed from her lack of interaction with members of this group.

Other responses showing how phenotype is associated with particular linguistic groups include the following:

> From his appearance -- his physique, the shape of his eyes, nose, lips, jaws -- I can be quite sure that a person belongs to a particular state. For example, if a man is Bengali, his appearance looks very delicate. Maybe its because of their food habits because they eat lots of rice and fish and sweets made of milk, whereas a Punjabi or Bihari -- his physique is strong and he is taller than the Bengali... From the color of the skin also, I can make out. Persons from Punjab have a fair skin whereas people from Kerala have a completely black skin. You will find that the people from Gujarat have a similar kind of skin color to Bengalis.

> Bengali women are of different build than women from North India: color of skin, eyes, features of the face -- they differ.

> Bengalis are not that strong looking. If you go to Punjab, there men and women are stronger looking, well-built. The men are usually six-footers. Women are taller, too. because when a man is six foot, you have be something to balance him. And they usually are. Bengalis -- their scale is different: they're shorter and thinner.

Dress, Ornamentations and Bodily Markings

Patterns of dress may be a key indicator of ethnic category membership in India (Berreman 1972:578). Here, however, the evidence seems to show that dress is becoming an increasingly less reliable marker. Only four informants enumerated dress in their responses; an additional nine indicated that while it would be a helpful predictor in India, it is much less so here.

In most spheres of public life, Indian men here cannot be differentiated on the basis of dress. An exception is that many Sikh men continue to wear the garb that differentiates them as a religious group. This includes the wearing of a turban, the unshorn and netted beard, and a steel bangle worn on the left hand. Not all Sikh men, however, have maintained these symbols of their religious identity. According to some informants, here as in Great Britain (Desai 1972:77) there have been cases in which maintenance of these dress patterns have been obstacles in gaining employment.

The white loincloth or "dhoti", the traditional South Indian male attire is worn here to a limited extent in only two contexts. In the temple and at religiously-oriented festivals celebrated at public schools (see Chapter 5), a few men, notably those actively engaged in performing the services, may be observed wearing it. The second setting is in

the privacy of the home. On week-ends or after work, a South Indian Brahmin informant who lives in a Jersey suburb "relaxes" by changing into his dhoti and performing worship ceremonies in his home.

For women the situation is different because the traditional national Indian dress or "sari" has been retained. But even in this case the correlation between dress and category identity is relatively weak. Three women said that although dress was an accurate predictor in India in their parents' generation, it is no longer true within their own circles either in India or the U.S. Informants indicated that although there are a few guidelines which can be used to make assessments about a person's identity based on her dress, these are becoming less valid. They pointed out that there are traditional designs, colors, and fabrics associated with particular cities and regions of India. It is therefore possible to accurately identify the place of origin of a particular sari. But it is not equally valid to assume a corresponding identity of the woman wearing it. Informants frequently showed me examples from their wardrobes of different types of saris and regional dress associated with places other than those of their own background.

Other factors militate against the use of dress as a reliable marker. One is the tendency of many young Indian women to adopt Western clothing, pants suits in particular. Most of those who wear Western dress shift between the two patterns; they wear slacks when going to work or doing the daily rounds of household activities (shopping, transporting

children, working in the house, etc.) and wear saris or traditional regional Indian dress when going out with or entertaining Indians (e.g., dinner parties, association functions, etc.).

There is another factor in the decreasing usefulness of female dress patterns for purposes of identification. That is, the sari emporiums in New York deal predominantly in sari fabrics imported from Japan, rather than India. The materials, as well as the designs, are therefore different from those traditionally associated with particular areas in India; consequently these saris are neutral in terms of identifying Indian women.

In spite of these factors which make predicting difficult, there are a few generalizations on which informants agree: South Indian women prefer darkly colored saris of silk with wide borders brocaded in gold; non-South Indians are more likely to wear pastel-colored saris of light-weight material. South Indian women, however, can wear white, whereas "in the North, only widows wear white".

The manner in which a sari is draped can be a cue to the woman's regional origin. There is a national style followed by most young and cosmopolitan women. The palau, or upper part of the sari, is worn over the left shoulder, so that the right shoulder is undraped. The regional style of wearing it in Gujarat, however, dictates that the left shoulder is undraped.

In Madras, the traditional sari consists of nine, rather than six yards of cloth. It is also draped in a unique way.

This style is seen here worn only by old women. The only time I saw a young South Indian woman dressed in the traditional Madras style was on the occasion of her marriage. The event was celebrated in a manner as close to that prescribed by orthodox South Indian Brahmin tradition as was possible in New York City. Maharashtrans, in former days, also wore nine yard saris, though draped in a different way. One Maharshtran informant claimed that her grandmother, but not her mother continues to wear the nine yard sari in the old style.

The traditional style of dress for Punjabi women consists of a tight-fitting pyjama-like bottom, a long-sleeved tunic reaching the knees, called a "kurta", and a sheer, oblong veil worn about the shoulders. Women here seen in this dress are likely to be Punjabi.

The traditional dress in Rajasthan is a long printed skirt in bold colors often adorned with small mirrors and a short-sleeved tunic. However, several non-Rajasthani informants showed me examples of this type of outfit which they purchased "when it was the fashion" in Indian cities.

I was twice told that Bengali women are identifiable by their habit of attaching their set of keys to the end of the palau of their saris. According to other informants, the practice has been largely abandoned here (I have only observed it once) and some say that it is considered "old-fashioned" even in Calcutta.

Styles of ornamentation vary also, but these are subject to the same limitations of generalization as are patterns

of dress. Preference for certain kinds of jewelry are believed to be correlated with some identities. Most women, for example, associated the wearing of a great deal of gold and a marked preference for precious gems with South India.

The jewelry that a woman receives from her husband's family on the occasion of her wedding differs notably from region to region. To those familiar with the different patterns, these can identify a woman's origin. Women seem to have greater knowledge in this area than do men. When men were asked about the subject they invariably called to their wives to join the discussion.

In Gujarat and Maharshtra, a sign of a woman's married status is the "mangal sutra"; in these states it consists of a necklace of gold and black beads. The women of the South also wear a mangal sutra; there it is made entirely of gold. Also, in the South, the particular configuration of the pendant part of the necklace varies from caste to caste. To a knowledgeable eye, therefore, a South Indian woman's jewelry communicates her caste identity, as well as regional identity. South Indian female informants wear their mangal sutras, but it is not clearly visible, being covered by part of the sari. Bengali women wear bangles of steel overlaid with gold as a sign of their married state. At the death of the husband, they are supposed to be discarded. Bangles of white conch shell are also worn by Bengali married women.

It should be stated that Indian women like to collect and wear jewelry associated with regions other than their own, and that this also hinders accurate identification on

the basis of ornamentation. A lively exchange between a Karnataka woman and her Punjabi friend shows how a piece of jewelry considered to be traditionally associated with one area, may be considered as "fashion" jewelry -- and consequently neutral as a cue about origin -- in another area.

The South Indian woman removed her ring saying: "This is a typical South Indian ring". Her friend protested, saying "no, this is just a fashion ring". The South Indian woman responded with emotion that this was definitely not a "fashion" ring. To back her claim she explained how she had lost it about a year ago in the neighborhood. Soon after, she saw a note posted in the local Indian spice shop stating that a "South Indian ring" had been found. She accurately identified it and thus retrieved her ring.

Long earrings, and diamond nose rings worn in both nostrils are also forms of jewelry associated with South Indian women, as is the custom of wearing fresh flowers plaited in the hair.

With regard to bodily marking, the "bindi", or typically red circle of powder worn by women in the center of the forehead is traditionally associated with married status. Nowadays, it is worn by young unmarried women as well for strictly cosmetic purposes. Although its usage is universal in India, North Indian women are identified by a bindi which is noticeably larger than that worn in the South. Bengali women are identified by their custom of wearing red dye in the parting of the hair, also as a sign of married status.

Names

Names were not freely elicited as were the aforementioned markers of identity. However, when asked if a person's name indicates anything about his or her background, 22 of the informants admitted that they were a valuable source of information. A Bengali man, for example, said:

> Surnames are especially important for telling about a person's background. From the name you can immediately distinguish between a Christian, a Muslim, and a Hindu. That is 100% sure. And then among the Hindus, by the surname, in 95% of the cases you can find out if he's from Northern part or Southern part. And in Northern part, in 80% of the cases you can find out from the surname which language group he's from.

People also agreed that when Indian surnames are retained in their original form, they communicate information about a person's varna or caste group to those familiar with the naming system of the particular locality. A few general rules about naming outside of one's area are known by most informants. For example, most people were aware that Bengali names ending with the syllable "ji" (as in the names Mukerji or Banerji) are those of Brahmins. A Bengali informant, however, was able to identify the varna membership of more than forty Bengali surnames.

In addition to the example given, these other associations appear to be part of the general fund of knowledge of most informants:

1. Individuals with the surname Shah or Patel are likely to be Gujarati in origin.

2. The surname "Singh" indicates Sikh or Rajput identity.

3. Individuals whose surname ends in the syllables "lal" or "wal" are likely to be North Indian.

4. Those that end in the syllable "ni" are more specifically Sindhi names.

5. Long, agglutinated names that use the names of deities such as "Krishnanarayan" are South Indian.

6. Also said to be South Indian are names ending with the syllables "an", "am", or "nath".

7. Names ending with the syllable "wala" are Parsi names.

Many names are used in widely different areas by different groups. A Gujarati man stated that his surname was shared by the president of the Muslim League in Kerala. He said: "This is really a mystery to me. How is it that a surname occurs in the Muslim community when it is also a name in a purely traditional Hindu religious Bania community ?"

Because of this fact, people do make mistakes in judging the identity of others. When I asked a South Indian friend for the name and phone number of a Parsi, he quickly flipped through his telephone book and came up with the name of a friend. When I met the man, it turned out that he was a Muslim. "My name is a common Parsi name, he explained, "so many people think I'm a Parsi."

And finally at a dinner party given for some Indian friends at my home, we were awaiting the arrival of the last guest whose name I was asked. "Sherma", I replied. "Oh, a Punjabi", said one person. There were protests and an animated discussion ensued as to the probable origin of Mr. Sherma. The moment he entered, he was greeted with a chorus who demanded to know where he was from. "Rajasthan" was the answer.

South Indians have a particular problem with names when they migrate to the U.S., or even to North India. Their indigenous naming system is quite distinct from that prevailing in other places and there is considerable variation within South India. Traditionally, for example, when a Karnataka Brahmin was born, he or she was given four names. The first to appear was that of the father's given name. The second was the name of the natal village or place of origin of the father's family. The third was the given name of the individual. The last to appear was the caste name. Typically the first two names are abbreviated by their initials. Here, and even in India, many people have dropped entirely the name indicating their caste.

Non-Indians here mistakenly assume that the initials stand for the individual's first and middle names, and that the third is a surname. What has happened in a large number of South Indian households here is that the husband's given name has been transferred into the surname of his entire nuclear family.

The shift in usage usually begins as soon as the person files for a visa, since all forms require a surname. The pressures for maintaining it increase once the family is settled here and children are enrolled in schools. As a result of this phenomenon, a South Indian wife addresses her husband by the name which the family simultaneously uses as its new surname. Another consequence of this is that full brothers who immigrate here do not share the same surname. In one South Indian family I know, three brothers and their elderly father have immigrated and live in the same household; yet

each has a different "surname". A Tamil man talks about his feelings on this subject:

> By coming to America, my (given) name is going to last for eternity. In India, it would have gone with me. My sons would have carried my initial. When my grandson would have been born, my name would have been eliminated. But my sons have cheated and are changing the system. This is just an adaptation to the surroundings. But for myself, I am adamant. My name is M.K. V-----. Every form I fill out for the Federal Government, when they ask for my first name, I put V------ ; for the last name, I put M.K. I have no other name. I'm not going to change my name.

Others who have changed do not necessarily use the husband's name as the family surname. A Karnataka woman said that her new surname is that of her husband's family's place of origin, in this case a small village. "When we came here, my husband said: 'let's make the S. be our last name'. And so we did!"

Another common solution to the South Indian name problem is that of dividing the husband's given name in half. The first part then serves as a given name for the man; the second is the new surname for the entire family. Thus, a Karnataka man whose given name was Harimohan has now become Mr. Hari Mohan. A further transformation has taken place. This man has come to expect to hear his new first name pronounced 'Harry'. Thus, in his place of work and among American acquaintances, he is 'Harry Mohan'.

The Americanization of Indian names and 'half-names' appears to be quite common. Others that I have come across include 'Dennis' for Dinesh, 'Manny' for Manjanit, 'Shirley'

for Shefali, 'Phil' for Firoz, 'Jay' for Jayshree, 'Sam' for Sampath (itself a divided name) and also for Surendra, 'Sandy' for Sanghamitra, and 'Mike' for Mahendra. Usage of these Americanized forms is usually restricted to contexts in which Americans are present; it therefore parallels the shifting patterns of dress depending upon whether the social context involves primarily Indians or Americans.

Food Habits

As mentioned, food habits (i.e., diet, cuisine) were seen as a major differentiating correlate of social categories. Food behavior, however, does not usually function as a cue to a person's identity unless the context is one where people are eating. As a result, food habits is not a cue that was freely elicited. When asked if food habits help to identify a person's background if the context is one which involves eating, 20 informants concurred.

When asked how, all reported that each state language group has its own cooking style and that they use different repertoires of spices in preparing the foods more generally associated with their geographic region. Six informants remarked on the Bengali predilection for fish. Said a Gujarati informant: "A Bengali -- he loves fish too much. Immediately he can be identified by this preference as a Bengali".

Three informants associated greater use of cutlery with North Indians. A Bengali informant agreed and felt that this had to do with a difference in the foods eaten. She attributed the more extensive use of knives by North

Indians as relating to the fact that they are more extensive meat-eaters. A North Indian informant (who was not in the interview sample) once scolded her daughter for using her hands to eat. She then turned to me and explained:"She picked up this habit from our South Indian neighbors".

In New York, organizations based on state/language affiliation perpetuate differences of cuisine. A fuller discussion of this subject is contained in the following chapter.

A Note on Stereotypes

The following can not strictly be called diacritical makers of identity. However, it should be noted that many of the categories elicited are associated with particular temperaments and interests. As Berreman has pointed out, among Indians, "there is no term of social identity which is not richly characterized in stereotypic metaphor and simile" (1975:83).

Eight of the 24 informants referred to Gujaratis and Sindhis as "business-oriented communities." Five used the terms "enterprising", "industrious" or "adventurous" in alluding to Sikhs. Five informants of diverse background referred to the intellectual and esthetic inclinations of both Bengalis and South Indians, pointing to the rich traditions of classical music, art and literature in these areas. A Punjabi woman whose daughter is studying classical Indian dance but who is not doing well, explains: "It's just not in the blood of North Indians". A Tamil man describes the different proclivities of Indians of diverse origins:

> The Gujaratis are principally business people. Wherever they go, by some reason or another they go into business. They're born merchants. Whereas the South Indian, he is a born salaried man. He's a genius when it comes to a job given him, but he can never think of doing something for himself. I am here as a doctor. I cannot think of starting my own practice; I'll be a great failure; I know it. But given a department to run, I'm perfect. But I can never be an independent person. Ninety-nine per cent of the Gujaratis are business people. The most colorful people in India, the Punjabis with the turbans on -- are extremely manual labor-oriented people. You find very few high positioned doctors among the Punjabis in India. They're just coming up, but not as much as South Indians. They can use their brain, not the body. The Bengalis are all brain-oriented people the same as South Indians.

A Bengali man on the differences between Bengalis and Gujaratis:

> I can tell you about Bengalis. They're supposed to be intellects so they waste their time discussing politics over cups of tea. I mean we don't like to work. That's Bengalis. North Indians -- say Punjabis -- they're hardworking, enterprising people. South Indians are similar to Bengalis; they're also intellects. I'll give you an example: here, if a Bengali is unemployed, he'll be very happy just to collect $75 unemployment insurance. He will somehow manage. Gujaratis -- I should say, rather, non-Bengalis, -- they'll collect their unemployment and do something on the side -- drive a cab, work in a friend's place, sell newspapers. A Bengali figures that the money just isn't worth the time put it. But the Gujaratis won't think like that at all. Ten dollars is ten dollars to them. And they'll work for it.

Finally, four informants claimed that South Indians are more culturally conservative than Northerners. They agreed that in matters of dress, food habits, and sex roles, North Indians are more "Westernized" or "modern" than South Indians.

A Punjabi woman offered this example: In the North, she maintained, a well-educated professional man with good financial prospects would not demand a dowry of his bride's family; on the contrary it would be considered "awkward" of him to do so. But in the South, she felt, the matter of dowry would be important regardless of the man's potential earning capacity.

SOCIAL CATEGORIES AND MATRIMONIAL ADS

In the previous chapter mention was made of the matrimonial ads appearing weekly in India Abroad. Analysis of these ads also yields data on the ethnic category terms people use to identify themselves and others.

The practice of placing matrimonial ads in newspapers is not limited to those Indians living abroad. In 1965, Indian sociologist K. Anand analyzed 1000 ads which appeared in several English language papers in North India. These included The Hindustani Times in which people from all regions of the country advertise (Anand 1965:59). He found that those who advertised were, like the immigrants here, predominantly working middle-class urban professionals who were making good salaries, at least according to the ads.

Comparison between the ads placed in newspapers in India with one hundred ads placed in India Abroad during 1975 shows some significant differences (see Table 10). And in general, the categories that appear in the ads here are consistent with those elicited during the interviews.

Anand reports that in his sample, approximately 65% of the advertisers "mentioned their caste, the expectation being that persons belonging to the same caste will contact the

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF MATRIMONIAL ADS IN

The Hindustani Times AND India Abroad

	The Hindustani Times	India Abroad
Caste mentioned		
male advertisers	65%	28%
female advertisers	63%	18%
Desired caste of spouse mentioned		
male advertisers	29%	6%
female advertisers	40%	14%
Caste said to be irrelevant		
male advertisers	33%	48%
female advertisers	13%	18%
Religion mentioned by		
male advertisers	70%	28%
female advertisers	79%	34%
State/language category mentioned by		
male advertisers	23%	64%
female advertisers	19%	54%

advertiser" (1965:61). In comparison only 18% of the females and 28% of the males in the immigrant sample mentioned their caste in the ads. In addition, 60% of the ads explicitly stated "caste no bar" (i.e., caste is irrelevant).

Religion is mentioned twice as frequently in Anand's study in comparison with the India Abroad sample. However, state/language categories appeared more than twice as frequently in the immigrant ads.

CONCLUSIONS AND COMPARISONS

The major conclusions of this chapter are these:

1. Among Indian immigrants in New York, the most important identities are those denoting state/language for Hindus, religion for non-Hindus.

2. 'North Indian' and 'South Indian' are broader, more inclusive categories which are used by Hindus and non-Hindus alike. These terms have associated meanings apart from indicating a particular origin in India; they trigger ideas about 'race', language, and 'culture'. Knowledge of Hindi is an important feature of the category 'North Indian'. However, judgments as to which category people belong to vary depending upon an individual's experience and his own category membership.

3. Caste and varna membership appear to be far less important identities; only a very few of these terms were elicited in the interviews; they also appear infrequently in matrimonial advertisements.

4. The major cues that Indians here use to judge the identities of others are -- in order of the frequency with which they were elicited -- those relating to language, phenotype, names, dress, and in certain contexts, food-related behavior.

The question-frame that I used in the interviews is similar to the one used by Berreman in his study of identity in Dehra Dun; this fact invites a comparison of our findings.

Firstly, Berreman reports that the labels he elicited fall into four broad categories which he terms the following: "religious groups", "regional-linguistic-national-racial groups", "caste groups" (including varna and phraty labels), and "social class, life-style, and occupational categories" (1972:569). No order of their relative salience is indicated; thus, it is not possible to compare the order of their importance in the two settings.

The caste terms Berreman collected form a far more complex domain than in my sample in which such terms were relatively few and inclusive (e.g., "non-Brahmin"). In Dehra Dun, on the other hand, terms were collected denoting twice-born castes, varna, jati, phratries within a jati, and further subdivisions of some jatis "based on traditional occupational subspecialty, on region of origin, or on patron deity, rather than on phratry" (1972:570).

Regarding the cues that are employed as category markers, Berreman found that the

> readily apparent but often subtle indicators of identity that were most used and most diagnostic in casual interaction were speech, dress and adornment, manners, life-style, and physiognomy in roughly that order (my emphasis) (1975:84).

Again, a problem arises in making strict comparisons because his data have not been subjected to quantitative analysis.

Berreman does not include food habits as a cue used by informants to assess the identity of others. It is possible that there is greater sensitivity to regional differences in food by the Indians here because of the frequency of inter-category commensality. Immigrants who entertain friends of different backgrounds must know their food habits if they are to cater to them. Many informants set a vegetarian, as well as non-vegetarian buffet table at parties and frequently serve culinary specialties of other than their own areas. Proper preparations for a large and heterogeneous gathering requires knowledge of the dietary customs of the guests.

Finally, an important difference between the two populations of Indians has to do with the extent to which individuals attempt to manipulate their identity. Berreman reports that in Dehra Dun, people try to hide their identities -- if they are stigmatized -- in particular contexts. Thus, for example,

> applicants for waiters' jobs in high class or high caste restaurants concealed their low caste status by their manner and the temporary adoption of high-caste names while Muslims did the same ... Speech patterns are manipulated much as are manners and patterns of dress and for the same purposes, but perhaps with more difficulty or less success (1972:578).

The situation in the U.S. is not comparable; consequently, no such dissimulation of identity can be observed. Here the only relevant option for identity change among Indians is a shift to American identity. In this chapter I have discussed patterns of name-changing and the tendency to shift between Western and Indian modes of dress.

CHAPTER 6

PATTERNS OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present evidence to support the following theses. One is that in general, the composition of formal Indian immigrant associations in New York accurately reflects the emic notions of ethnic identity described in the previous chapter, whereas patterns of informal voluntary association do not. In other word, membership in formally chartered groups tends to follow lines of natal state/language and religious affiliation, but friendship networks are not limited by these ethnic considerations. The second thesis is that the principal function of the formal associations here is to celebrate and perpetuate the respective parochial identities of the different memberships.

FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS

The associations referred to here -- both those based on natal state/language and on religious affiliation -- are groups which have incorporated in accordance with New York State law. Generally, they have been established as "non-profit", and hence "tax-exempt" organizations. The goal of each of these, according to their charters, is to sponsor events that will foster the 'culture' of the particular group.

THE STATE/LANGUAGE ASSOCIATIONS

Of the 44 Indian organizations in New York, 12 are named for either the natal state or language of their memberships (see Appendix 1, part 2 for a list and description of each of these.) These figures are based on the listing of

organizations in India Guide 1975. (See Chapter 7 for further information on India Guide.) Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) also has an association. In the category of state named associations are those representing the people of Bengal, Bihar, Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan; those named for linguistic communities are associations for the natal speakers of Gujarati, Kannada (principal language of Karnataka), Tamil (principal language of Tamilnadu), Telugu (principal language of Andhra Pradesh), and Sindhi (spoken in North India and Pakistan; the area known as Sindh corresponds to no polity in contemporary India.)

As has been mentioned earlier, state and language boundaries do not necessarily coincide: some states are linguistically heterogeneous and several languages are spoken in more than one state. It is significant, therefore, that the associations named for particular states function in the same way as linguistically based associations. That is, the events they sponsor and the newsletters they publish are in the principal language of that state; i.e., Bengali for the Bengal association, Marathi for the Maharashtra association, Malayalam for the Kerala group.

It is also significant that there is no Hindi-speakers association as such, but that there are two state associations -- those representing Bihar and Rajasthan -- whose members are Hindi-speakers. Helen Kanitkar, in her study of the social organization of Indian students in London, found associations for the speakers of six Indian languages but Hindi was not among them. She feels that this is because

"its speakers cover too vast an area embracing too widely differing cultural milieu for them to achieve a sense of linguistic unity" (1972:8). This, in fact, may explain the existence here of two associations of Hindi speakers based on state, rather than linguistic, lines.

The number of state/language associations in New York appears to be on the rise. Each year since 1970 has seen the establishment of additional groups. Whereas in the 1960's, there was one amalgamating association for all four states of South India, by 1975 there were separate organizations for each of them.

Most recently, there has been an attempt to formally organize the speakers of Tulu, one of the languages spoken in the state of Karnataka, where the principal language is Kannada. Until now, the Tulu speakers have participated in the events of the Kannada-speakers association; all of them, in fact, speak Kannada as well as Tulu. At present, there are only about 20 Tulu families in New York; they gather together informally at one another's homes on a bi-monthly basis. Although they would like to form a separate association, their numbers are too few at this time to ensure the viability of a permanent corporate group. Should the number of Tulu immigrants here increase substantially, it is likely that fission within the Kannada association will take place.

The membership of these associations varies from 75 to 1500 families; most have memberships between one and three hundred families. The local Gujarati association has a

relatively larger membership (1500 families) than most, and is an indication of the greater numerical strength of the Gujarati community here. The Sindhi association, which estimates its membership at 2000 families is also unusual, but this figure includes its members on a nation-wide basis. Half of the state/language associations in New York have affiliate chapters in other North American cities, notably in Chicago, Washington, Toronto, and Montreal.

Composition of Membership

Members of these associations tend to be young, married couples with infants and school-aged children. Adolescents are conspicuously absent from association events, a reflection of the age-range of the immigrants.

In all state/language associations, with the exception of one, membership is according to charter open to all people regardless of their origin. (Membership in the Sindhi association, alone, is restricted to Sindhi-speaking families.) Nonetheless, the memberships of the associations tend to be mutually exclusive. An exception to this general rule concerns a group of people from Karnataka whose families originated in Tamilnadu several generations ago. These people who speak both Tamil and Kanada (which in any case are perceived as being closely related) participate in both Tamil and Kannada associations. Non-Indians are conspicuously absent from most association events, although at the concerts which they frequently sponsor, one occasionally finds an American or two in the audience.

In terms of religious affiliation, all but one of the language/state-based groups are overwhelmingly Hindu: the Maharashtran, Kannada and Tamil associations are 99% Hindu, the Bihar association is 90% Hindu; the Gujarati association is 85% Hindu. The single exception to this generalization is the Kerala group. Seventy-five percent of its members are Christian: Syrian Christians predominate, but Catholics and Protestants are also represented. The remaining 25% of its members are Hindu.

In only one organization is varna a meaningful factor in the composition of the membership. The parent South Indian organization which now consists predominantly of Tamil-speakers since the Telugu, Kannada, and Kerala groups splintered, is the single exception. Its members readily admit that the organization is almost exclusively Brahmin. The non-Brahmin Tamil-speakers have left it to create their own splinter association.

I know of no formal Indian association in New York based on caste (i.e., jati).

The language/state associations have widely dispersed memberships. Of the 325 member families of a Tamil association, for example, only 172 -- or nearly a half -- live in New York City (all five boroughs are represented). Approximately 20% of the members live in New Jersey with remaining members dispersed throughout neighboring states. Similarly, of the 184 member families of the Kannada group, again only 50% live in New York City; 25% live in suburbs scattered throughout New Jersey; an additional 10% live in New York State

but not New York City; 15% reside in Connecticut, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Massachusetts.

Those living in these outlying regions are not restricted to nominal members; active participants in associations are likely to live in neighboring states as well. A drive of several hours is not viewed as an obstacle to involvement in groups. A man who had driven from Boston to New York City to attend an association function expressed a popular view: "But this is only natural; these are my people!"

The picture that emerges from analysis of the association membership lists (of which the two discussed above are typical) is that of a population expanding outwards to the suburbs. This view is supported by interview data. Of the 24 New York City informants initially interviewed, 22 were renting apartment. Of these, 20 expressed hopes of purchasing a home outside of New York City in the forseeable future. Several informants (not among those interviewed) who currently live in the suburbs, stated that theirs was the only Indian household in their neighborhood. Even in New York City, where several Indian families find themselves as neighbors on the same block, they frequently belong to different state/language groups. Consequently, current residence patterns do not always reinforce identities based on natal state or language. The associations thus bind the dispersed members of state/language categories; they wield them into a group. And they do so by providing contexts which emphasize their common identity.

Establishing Associations

In sharp contrast to the Indian immigrants of New York, those of Birmingham, Great Britain, are predominantly agrarian in background, non-English-speaking, and currently employed in factory or transport work. Despite these differences, Desai's description of the objectives, activities and process of forming a state/language association might as readily refer to a New York group. He describes how a group of Gujarati friends decided to invite all the Gujaratis in their networks and in the neighborhood to celebrate the major Hindu holiday "Diwali":

> Their aim was a permanent cultural association. They hoped to provide a library with Gujarati books, periodicals, newspapers, and a recreation club where local Gujarati families could meet each other ... and finally an education centre for children who would learn to read and write Gujarati (1963:88).

Most of the New York associations were formed in precisely this manner and have similar objectives. Half of them maintain libraries containing books in the group's natal language and presently offer courses in the natal language for the American-born children of the group. A concern voiced by many immigrants is that their children will not retain the ability to speak the natal language once they enter public schools here.

In both New York and Birmingham, the first meetings of the associations took place in members' homes. In New York, most are still without permanent headquarters. The Gujarati association did maintain a permanent clubhouse

in a Queens office building where recreation equipment and Gujarati periodicals were available for local members until the clubroom was vandalized by non-Indians in the neighborhood. The Sindhi association is presently collecting funds in order to establish a permanent home for its activities.

The major gatherings of all the associations typically last several hours and draw crowds of upwards of 200 people. Consequently, they require a large space. The solution has been to hold the gatherings in local public school auditorium and recreation areas which are rented for the occasion, typically a week-end day or evening.

Association Events and Immigrant Identity

Desai claims that in the Indian community of Birmingham, "the associations promote and maintain cultural and moral values which the immigrants bring with them from India" (1963:107). He does not specify further what these values are. But in New York, the values most graphically given expression at association functions involve precisely those cues which the interviewed informants identified as ethnic category markers: that is, language, food, and dress.

Language

At association affairs, people do not merely "feel free" to converse in their natal tongue. It is the group's language which is being celebrated at these gatherings. In fact, the functions sponsored by the Kannada-speakers association regularly begin with the recitation of a Kannada poem which exhorts the people of Karnataka to preserve and revere their

natal language and culture wherever they may find themselves.

The entertainment portion of the programs is always in the natal state/language. This may consist of a drama (written by a natal state playwright) staged by some of the members, a talk given by a visiting member of the natal state government, or a program of indigenous song and dance performed by visiting artists from the natal state or by local talent. Frequently, a program will consist of a combination of these; it may also include a film.

Hindi films can readily be seen in New York. The Bombay Cinema is a theatre in Manhattan devoted entirely to the screening of Indian films, and most of these are in Hindi. In addition, there are other distributors of Hindi films who screen the movies in Mahattan and Queens public schools during the week-ends. A recent issue of the major India-American newspaper India Abroad listed 10 Hindi films to be shown in New York within a three-week interval. Finally, on Sunday mornings it is now possible to view Hindi films on television as well.

Other Indian language films, however, are less frequently shown because their commercial distribution is far more limited. When available, non-Hindi language films are frequently rented by the linguistic associations and presented as the entertainment portion of a day or evening's program.

These films both assuage and awaken tinges of nostalgia in their viewers. They also promote the solidarity of fellow language speakers. The comments of informants lead to the conclusion that the content of these films is secondary, if

not totally irrelevant to the enjoyment of the audience. For example, at a screening of a Kannada movie, the man beside me confided: "This film is as boring to us as it must be to you. (I couldn't understand a word of it, there being no English subtitles.) But you see, it was filmed in our home town, so the sights are all familiar to us. And it's good to hear the language".

Food

Since a program typically lasts for several hours, if not an entire day, a meal is invariably included as part of the function. The food is typically prepared in advance by a group of association women. It is always limited to regional fare prepared in the culinary style traditionally associated with the home state. To the women also usually falls the task of distributing food, although men sometimes assist. A table in the school's recreation area is set aside for the vessels containing the half dozen or more different specialties that comprise a meal.

For example, at a Kannada association function, a meal may consist of lemon rice with almonds, curd rice, tamarind rice, "raita" (a salad made with yoghurt), coffee and fruit cocktail sweetened with brown sugar, honey and spices. At a Bihar association gathering one is likely to find a meat dish, potatoes, nan (a type of bread made with yoghurt), and coffee. At Bengali gatherings, fried fish cakes are the featured item.

Dress

Women always wear saris to association events even if they wear Western dress at work or at home. Typically, they wear the type of sari associated with the home state. Thus, for example, one observes a predominance of dark colored heavy silk saris with wide brocaded gold borders at gatherings of the Kanna association, more pastel colored saris of lighter weight fabrics at those of Gujaratis and Maharashtrans, and the long skirts with short-sleeved tunics at the functions of the Rajasthan group. At meetings of a Tamil association, one may occasionally see an older woman wearing the sari draped so that it falls between the legs in the traditional "Madras style". Men typically wear casual Western dress.

Sexual Segregation

A pan-Indian value expressed at the gatherings of all the state/language associations concerns the interaction between the sexes. Sexual segregation is quite marked at these events. In the auditorium during the programs, clusters of men sit apart from similar groupings of men. (Young children shift between their parents, and older children form sexually exclusive groups of their own.)

During the breaks for meals and snacks, the same patterns of congregating is evident. It is not the strict spatial segregation observed in temples where all men sit on one side, all women on the other. Rather, the composition of groupings is constantly in flux; men and women join their spouses temporarily and people do a considerable amount of circulating. Nonetheless, men and women tend to cluster separately.

The Picnics

A much anticipated event in the social calendar of all language/state associations is the annual picnic. Each summer they are held in the various state parks of Long Island, New Jersey, and upstate New York. They are day-long affairs usually attended by between one and four hundred people. Thus, reservations for the site must be made in advance with the park administration; this task falls to the members of the Executive Committee of each association.

In addition, there is a Food Committee charged with providing and transporting all the food and beverages. The cooking is characteristically divided among a number of the association women. The food served at picnics is always regional. At the Kannada picnic of 1975, lunch consisted of tamarind rice, curd rice, lemon rice, raita, and kesari, a sweet dish made with cream of wheat. (No meat dishes were offered.) Bananas, potato chips, soda and coffee were also served.

In sharp contrast, the Bihari picnic fare consisted of spiced barbecued chicken, frankfurters, (eaten mostly by the youngsters), nan, aldodam (balls of potato mixed with peas and curry), kachaalu (uncooked potatoes mixed with yoghurt and spices), and ghoogni, consisting predominantly of chickpeas. Tea, rather than coffee, was served, with the potato chips and cookies.

With the exception of a few young women who wear pants suits, most women wear saris to the association picnics. This is in spite of the fact that they spend much of the day

engaged in activities such as volleyball and running races. The latter demands that the woman's left foot be tied to her husband's right one while both run.

Patterns of sexual segregation obtain at picnics as well; men congregate separately around particular tables while women are more likely to sit together in groups, yoga-style on the ground. In the games that are played at picnics, too, there is a tendency to divide the teams according to sex. Some games, such as an Indian version of musical chairs in which men substitute for chairs, also structurally separate the "ladies" from the "gents".

Gatherings of Affiliate Chapters

Some of the associations like the Kannada group sponsor an annual function in cooperation with their affiliated chapters in other cities, such as Philadelphia or Washington. In May 1977, the Telugu association in New York hosted a week-end long conference in cooperation with Telugu associations in Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Philadelphia, Washington, Toronto and Edmonton.

The programs which were held in a Queens public school consisted of music and dance performances as well as panel discussions on such topics as "Bringing Up Children in North America", "Dissemination of Telugu Culture in North America", and "Legal and Immigration Problems of Telugus in North America".

Six committees consisting of 53 individuals from the seven affiliate chapters organized the conference which was attended by several hundred people. Participants paid their

way to New York and the cost of registration was $10 per couple. Sixty-one women pooled their labor and cooking vessels to provide the food that was served throughout the week-end free of charge to those attending: snacks during the day, a full meal in the evening. Fifty-seven couples provided overnight accomodations and transportation to the school for those who arrived in New York from distant cities to attend the conference.

The enormous degree of organizational effort required by such an undertaking -- and the distances traveled by those who participated -- underscore the importance attached by these immigrants to the maintenance of ties with fellow language speakers.

Associations and Ties to the Home State

As Chapter 4 demonstrated, the immigrants here maintain close ties to India. Although the associations are principally concerned with fulfilling the social needs of the members here, they also serve as agents for maintaining ties with their respective home states. One way in which they do this is to provide a forum for discussion with visiting state level government officials from India.

Within one year, for example, representatives of the state branches of the Indian Investment Center (a federal government agency in India) addressed separately -- though in English -- the memberships of four different state/language associations here. The purpose of each of the association-sponsored seminars was to disseminate information concerning procedures for investing in industries based in India (in the home state, in particular.)

The delegates at these seminars, as well as the brochures later received through the mail by those who attended the sessions, assured the immigrants that there is no need for them to return to India in order to participate in these enterprises. Said one official: "You may work with a partner -- a friend or relative -- who is there. You shouldn't take your boots off from here". In particular, the Investment Center is seeking immigrant professionals who are interested in marketing Indian products abroad and who can identify exportable products which could be manufactured in India.

Another example of how associations demonstrate their home-state orientation involves their newsletters. Approximately half of the language associations publish monthly or quarterly newsletters either entirely or partially in the natal language. (The Sindhi association, alone, publishes its newsletter, "Sindhvasi" in English.) Generally, at least some of the information contained in these relates to the home state: news events or ongoing projects of social welfare.

With regard to the latter, members are sometimes asked to make financial contributions to these. For example, in August 1976, the Bengali association appealed to its members through its newsletter to contribute to the renovation of the Bengali Boys' Higher Secondary School in Delhi. Similarly, the Bihar association collected money from its members to send to its state government when Patna suffered severe flooding in 1975. Through the newsletter of a New York Tamil association, members learned of the following project initiated by a sister organization in Baltimore.

Tamil professionals here would travel to institutions in their home state "in order to demonstrate, explain, or lecture on modern developments in their field ... and how this technology may be implemented". One Tamil association has also collected funds from its members for scholarships to needy students in their home state.

State/Language vs Pan-Indian Identity

The strength of natal state/language sentiment is evinced on occasions in which individuals must choose between participating in their parochial associations or in events organized on an all-India basis. A case in point occurred in June 1975 when three associations planned their annual picnic (or the rain date) to coincide with the second annual India Festival Day in Central Park (see Chapter 7). When I asked the president of one of the associations if this would deter members from attending the picnic, she claimed confidently that the correspondence in dates would cause no conflict; association members would consistently opt to attend their picnic.

Another case involves the celebration of "Diwali" or the "Festival of Lights", a major Hindu holiday celebrated in the fall throughout India. It is usually marked by social gatherings, exchange of gifts and greetings, and in India, the lighting of candles. (Here many Indians have substituted Christmas lights on their porches and terraces for the traditional candles.)

During the week-end of Diwali in November 1975, the state/language associations celebrated the occasion separately; many of the programs overlapped in time, forcing one to choose

which group to identify with. In fact, on the entrance door of one public shool in Queens was a sign indicating that two associations were simultaneously celebrating Diwali within a block of each other:

Telugu Society Diwali here

Gujarati Diwali

1 block ----------->

RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS

Several different relationships are possible between linguistic and religious organizations in terms of the composition of their memberships. In one relationship, memberships of the two types are not mutually exclusive. Thus, for example, Rajasthani Jains can belong to an association based either on their natal state or their religious affiliation; or they can simultaneously belong to both, as some do.

The boundaries of other religious organizations coincide more closely with that of a particular state/language group. The members of a Syrian Christian organization here are almost exclusively Malayalam speakers (associated with the state of Kerala); the membership of the Kerala association is estimated to be 75% Christian. Again, one can belong to either or both groups, with the difference being that in this case, the memberships more closely overlap in terms of language and religious affiliation.

A third possible relationship involves the one between Gujarat Hindus and non-Hindus. The Gujarati speakers organization is 85% Hindu. But there are four non-Hindu religious

organizations that include sizeable proportions of Gujarati-speakers: Ismaili Muslims, Bohra Muslims, Parsis, and Jains. Among Gujaratis, therefore, the linguistic dimension appears to take precedence as a unifying factor in the identity of Hindus, the religious dimension in the case of non-Hindus. This pattern is in accordance with the emic categorization data reported in the preceding chapter. For a list and brief history of each of New York's major Indian religious organizations, see Appendix 1.

Comparisons Between State/Language and Religious Organizations

Regardless of their particular relationship to linguistic associations, the religious organizations are comparable to them in several ways. Firstly, like them, they serve to bind geographically dispersed members of a social category. Of the 111 member families of the Muslim Bohra association, for example, less than half live in New York City. Thirty-six families (32%) live in 25 different towns throughout New Jersey. The remaining members live in the suburbs of four neighboring states. The breakdown is consistent with the membership patterns of linguistic associations.

Secondly, like the latter, these groups are concerned with the preservation of a particular identity. In a Parsi newsletter circulated in Bombay, a New Jersey informant explained the need for a Zoroastrian association here:

> ... what about Parsi children born or raised here: where will their Parsi identity come from? ... The immigrant Parsis having grown up in India or Pakistan at least know who they are, and if they do not know their religion

> too well, they have at least a knowledge of it as a living religion ... Will a child brought up without these influences remain a Zoroastrian? I think we are asking for a miracle if we want this to happen... Yet it appears to me that if our community does not survive into the second and third generation further, it will not be because American society has hungrily absorbed us, but because we will not have taken precautions against it ...

There is no state/language association for Punjabis. There are, however, two Sikh organizations whose members are predominantly Punjabi-speakers (Sindhi-speakers are among the Sikhs as well). One is a splinter group of the other. Fission occurred following a disagreement between two factions within the parent group; the factionalism and resulting division did not occur along ethnic lines.

Both groups offer Sunday religious services, one in a Jewish War Veterans Building rented for the occasion, the other in a former Presbyterian church which was purchased and which has been converted to a gurudwara (Sikh temple). Though the memberships are based on religious affiliation, both are incorporated as 'cultural' rather than religious societies. According to the constitution of one group, the Sikh Center of New York, Inc., a goal of the organization is "to inculcate the fundamentals of Sikhism, including its distinct identity and character as well as its literary and cultural traditions..".

The other group (the Sikh Cultural Society, Inc.), offers language and history courses in addition to religious services. One of its founders explains why:

> Sikh temples in India were never learning centers as such... Here, in the U.S., though

> our children are growing up to be culturally American. They do not even understand Punjabi. It should be possible, though, to have a social or political identity as Americans and to maintain our religious identity as Sikhs. But we who are Sikh parents here do not necessarily know very much about our religion. Hence the need for Sunday school classes -- which are not a feature of Sikh temples in India.

To accomplish their goals of affiliating dispersed members and preserving their unique identities, some of the religious organizations sponsor the same type of function as the state/language associations. For example, both the Parsi and Jain groups organize annual picnics. In the case of the latter group, the offering of foods associated with different regions reflects the heterogeneity of the members' backgrounds and thus contrasts sharply with the emphasis on food as a unifying symbol at the picnics of linguistic associations. The 1974 Jain picnic was described in an Indian newspaper here as a gathering of about 450 people that featured a community dinner with dozens of different food specialties from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madya Pradesh, Bengal, and Maharashtra" (Trans-India, June 24, 1974).

Some of the other gatherings of religious organizations are similarly devoid of religious ritual content. For example, in 1976 the Zoroastrian New Year was celebrated by the approximately 200 members of the Zoroastrian association here, in a hall rented in the United Nations School in Manhattan. The event was marked by socializing of small clusters of people followed by ameal and dancing to Western-style music. (Parsis maintain that they are among the most Westernized ethnic groups

in India.)

When I asked if there was to be any religious ceremony marking the occasion of the New Year, I was told: "Well, actually, there ought to be, but the rituals are so long and boring -- they are in a language none of us can understand, an old form of Persian -- that we've eliminated them entirely".

Helen Kanitkar has likewise remarked on the secular nature of the Parsi association in London. She says that it is

> marginally a regional-linguistic association which can be seen to be similarly socio-cultural in aim, not primarily for religious purposes. Although membership is based on religious affiliation, even if only in name, the benefits of membership are secular (1972:195).

Religious Organizations and Ties to India

It has been the goal of eight Indian religious organizations in New York to either secure a permanent building where one was lacking, or to enlarge and renovate an existing structure already in use. In the case of one group, the goal of building a temple is close to being realized. The relatively rapid success of this group can be traced to the close ties it has had as an organization with institutions in India.

The organization in question is the Hindu Temple of North America, Inc. established in 1970 by a group of South Indians. In 1972, the organization purchased a plot of land in Flushing, Queens, on which stood a small, unimposing building. Here, for several years, weekly "pujas" (worship ceremonies) were performed. From the beginning, it was the hope of the

founders to replace this interim temple with a granite structure designed in the traditional architectural style of South Indian temples. Along with architectural differences, there are regional differences in conducting worship ceremonies. Therefore, to broaden support for the project, the organization described the proposed temple in its publicity literature as "an ecumenical institution that endeavors to bring out the best liberal traditions in Hinduism".

The most remarkable aspect of this ambitious undertaking is that construction has taken place largely in India. Beginning in 1973, under the aegis of the Temple Endowments Commission, a governmental agency in Andhra Pradesh, more than a hundred skilled artisans worked on the structure. In 1976, approximately 25 of them were sent to New York where they are presently reassembling the Temple.

The organization estimates the cost of completing the edifice at $300,000. This relatively low figure is possible only because the labor and materials have been secured on a cost-free basis from India under state government sponsorship. According to a progress report published by the organization's executive committee, "it is a fundamental principle that the financial equivalent of all the aid that is received will be returned in due course in the form of equipment, material and books" (Narasimhan 1973).

Another temple is simultaneously being constructed in Pittsburgh. Though organized independently by a local group in that city it will bear the same name and utilize the same channels of financial support as the Flushing project.

Still another example involves the organizing of members of the Swami Narayan Satsang, a Hindu sect which traces its origin in Gujarat to the 18th century. The organization has seven affiliated chapters in North America, three of which including its continental headquarters, are in the New York area. The organization of the Satsang immigrants, their decision to build a temple, the drawing of up the plans, and the collection of funds for the project have all been supervised by their High Priest and his disciples in India.

In 1970, four monks chosen by the religious leader came to America to assist with the founding of the establishment of the Flushing organization and its affiliate chapters in the U.S. and Canada. In 1974, after the decision was made to build a temple -- on the same block as the Hindu temple -- the High Priest arrived from India to make a continental tour to raise funds for the temple project. As a result of his tour, over a hundred thousand dollars were contributed towards its construction which is now underway.

FRIENDSHIP PATTERNS

It has been shown that among Indian immigrants in New York, participation in formal associations follow lines of natal state/language and religious affiliation. Such behavior is in accordance with the salient emic notions of identity elicited in the interviews. In contrast, informal friendship patterns do not conform to these principles.

The interviews showed that all of the informants count among their friends here individuals having a different

ethnic identity than their own. During the course of four afternoon interviews with women, the informant was spontaneously visited by a friend of a different Indian linguistic background from her own.

In order to obtain additional contacts for my research, I regularly requested the names and telephone number of friends of the informant at the close of each interview. Discussions with informants concerning the backgrounds of individuals listed in their address books confirmed their claims of knowing people of a wide number of different Indian ethnic categories. This exercise proved to be pleasureable to informants as well as instructive for me since many displayed pride in the extensiveness of their social networks.

In some cases, friendships that have developed between two people of different backgrounds come to include members of their respective families and networks. At the core of one such network are two nearly inseparable friends, Ruki and Geeta (fictitious names). Ruki is a Punjabi Hindu with strong attachments to Sikhism; Geeta is a Hindu Karnataka woman. They live in the same Queens neighborhood, their children attend the same school. Both are presently unemployed and married to physicians. They were introduced in 1972 by a mutual friend, a Sikh woman.

"We're not supposed to like each other", Ruki once said, "North Indians and South Indians traditionally don't get along very well, but we liked each other right from the beginning". Together they drive to Manhattan and Long Island to shop or

to visit mutual friends. Frequently they lunch together at one another's home before driving to school to pick up and redistribute their children to their after-school activities: scout meetings, dance lessons, the local Y, or the homes of friends. They attend school board meetings together, take care of each other's children and attend each other's parties.

Through the friendship of these two women, they and their respective families and friends have been drawn into the networks of the other. As evidence of this, a special relationship has developed between Ruki's family and Murali, one of Geeta's Karnataka (Brahmin) friends. Ruki and Murali have become so attached to one another that Ruki once promised that for the following celebration of "rakhi", she would adopt him as her brother.

"Rachi", which occurs in the fall, is a holiday celebrated by many North Indians and Gujaratis (but not South Indians), in which the close bond between brothers and sisters is reaffirmed. On this occasion every girl who has a brother ties "rakhi", a slender bracelet with a flower at its center, onto the wrist of each brother in a ritual during which she prays for his well-being. In return, the brother is obliged to bestow a gift on each sister.

In September 1975, Ruki kept her word. She performed a ceremony made special by the fact that it symbolized a blood brotherhood relationship between two friends of social categories stereotyped as mutually incompatible. The "rakhi" ceremony was celebrated at Murali's home.

In honor of their Punjabi guests, Murali's wife had prepared several North Indian specialties for the dinner that followed.

These two cases of extremely close friendship extending across ethnic categories do not appear to be isolated ones. Five of the informants count as their closest Indian friend here a person of a different ethnic background. A native Marathi-speaker from Karnataka used his wife's culinary development as an index of the ethnic heterogeneity of their friends. He said:"Since we have come here, my wife has learned to cook in a great number of different Indian styles. This is because she has learned from friends here who come from many different areas of India".

These friendships cross lines of religion as well as natal language. A Gujarati Muslim man stated: "I feel very close to the Gujarati Hindus here. Most of my friends in fact are Gujarati and North Indian Hindus". Another Muslim informant said: "Even though my wife and I are Muslim, we don't go out of our way to seek Pakistani or Muslim friends. Whoever we happen to like and likes us become our friends. Although there is rivalry between India and Pakistan, this doesn't affect our choice of friends. In fact, I've found that many Hindus take a special pride in having a Muslim friend".

A Hindu Bengali informant who was interviewed indicated that prior to emigrating to the U.S. he had been working in Libya. There he met a North Indian who became a close friend, though the two spoke different natal languages. He said:

"I liked this man so much that when he told me he was planning to emigrate to the U.S., I decided that I would go, too." At the time of our interview he was providing accommodiation for a Muslim friend who had joined his household three months before. His other friends are of various Indian backgrounds; nevertheless, he frequently attends the programs offered by the Bengali association.

CONCLUSIONS AND COMPARISONS

The major conclusions drawn from the data presented in this chapter are the following. Firstly, membership and participation in formal Indian organizations here are based on common natal state/language or on common religious affiliation. They are not based on caste.

Anthropologists who have studied the contemporary Indian population in Great Britain have noted the existence there of caste associations. Desai reports, for example, that among the immigrants of Birmingham, "caste sometimes also operated in forming associations. Thus, members of a caste sometimes form a savings club or a social club and refuse membership to outsiders..." (1963:14).

Kanitkar, reporting on Indian associations in London states:

> The numerical strength of the Gujaratis in United Kingdom has proved, paradoxically, to be the downfall of the original Gujarati Sabha; a subsidiary divisive force, namely caste, has split the united association into smaller groups, so that now Shahs, Patels, etc. have their own quite separate independent associations... Maharashtra Mandal appeared to be following this trend recently"(1972:10).

In accordance with a hypothesis put forward in Chapter 1 and

supported by the above comparative data, it is suggested here that caste will not become a salient dimension of Indian social organization in New York until sizeable populations covering a range of castes from localized areas in India immigrate. It is also predicted that caste will not be a prominent aspect of Indian identity in the event that Indians cease to maintain close ties with their families in India.

A second conclusion is that religious organizations may be viewed as functional equivalents to state/language associations. They share the same basic goal (i.e., to preserve a particular identity), and in some cases, their strategies for accomplishing it (offering of language and history courses). Both types sponsor picnics, concerts, and holiday celebrations to promote solidarity between members while simultaneously providing entertainment. In other cases, the content of the two types of organization gathering differs. In such instances, attendance at worship ceremonies in a temple can be seen as a behavioral analogue to attendance at a state/language association sponsored movie.

Thirdly, the memberships of both types of organizations are geographically dispersed throughout several states here. In view of this fact, Mattison Mines' (1975) study of identity among Muslim migrants to South Indian cities is relevant. Mines maintains that as members of formerly localized units become geographically dispersed, their membership in these units tends to lose significance in their self-identity. It is this "dispersing characteristic" of cities, he argues that

explains why in India, Muslim migrants to cities identify themselves as Muslims more strongly than their kinsmen remaining in the villages, and why the migrants no longer think of themselves as members of the localized village-based groups -- such as named kin groups (Mines 1975:417).

The evidence presented here argues against Mines' hypothesis that when some members of a localized group become geographically dispersed, their identification with that group necessarily weakens. The New York tri-state Indian population provides a negative case: geographic dispersal appears to have little effect on the strength of parochial ties -- either in terms of emic or etic behavior.

Finally, both informant statements and observations suggests that informal voluntary association in the form of friendship ties transcends the boundaries of natal state/language and religion, as well as caste.

CHAPTER 7

PAN-INDIAN IDENTITY, INSTITUTIONS, AND ASSOCIATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter evidence was presented to demonstrate the linguistic and religious separatism evinced by the Indian immigrant population here, in the sphere of formal association. In the present Chapter I present the growing testimony of a pan-Indian identity. Two categories of evidence are cited: institutions which cater to the needs of Indian immigrants irrespective of parochial background, and organizations whose memberships are not limited to individuals of a particular background.

It is argued here that currently there are two competing models of ethnic identity available to Indian immigrants: a parochial identity based on natal state/language or religion, and pan-Indian identity. For those who participate extensively in associations, a choice between the two must be made.

PAN-INDIAN INSTITUTIONS: THE MEDIA

The major publication serving the Indian population here is India Abroad, a 12 page weekly newspaper which was established by its present publisher in 1970. It has a national circulation of approximately 10,000 and a full-time staff of five persons.

About two thirds of each issue is devoted to news events occurring in India. Other features are aimed at the Indian sector here. Among these is a column in which a lawyer responds to readers' questions on immigration procedure; announcements of upcoming events in major cities that are of interest to Indians (e.g., the festivals, picnics, movies, lectures, concerts and meetings sponsored by the various associations); a page

of letters to the editor; and an advertisement column where along with ads for housing, business opportunities and astrological services appear those requesting matrimonial correspondance.

Although the paper has no editorial column as such, the publisher occasionally prints an open letter to the readers on the first page. Invariably, the thrust of these editorialized messages is that Indians here are a united community faced with common problems and interests. For example, the April 1975 New York Times editorial concerning the annexation of Sikkim by India was reprinted on the front page of India Abroad with the following exhortation by its publisher:

> We ask our readers: 'Is this the kind of image you want your American co-workers, friends, and neighbors to have about India through such twisted editorials ? If not, what can Indian nationals living here do to correct this and help an average American to really understand India as a country, its fears and aspirations ?'

There are a host of other English language newspapers and periodicals which cater to Indians here. Among those published in the U.S. and currently available by mail subscription are: Trans-India (formerly a newspaper, but now a magazine), India Express, News and Cine India, India News, India Times, India West and Voice of India. Also available, but published in Montreal are India Express International, Canadian India Times, and Star and Style (a monthly film magazine).

Another periodical published by a group of Indian immigrants here deserves special note. India Guide, in its fourth annual edition is a 174 page compendium listing the

names, addresses and telephone numbers of Indian service, businesses and associations in the New York tri-State area. It is published by the Literary Guild of India, a group whose goal, as stated in the Guide is to foster an appreciation of Indian authors in America. Toward this end, it has sponsored two annual week-long Indian book fairs at major New York libraries.

In addition, in 1975 there were, according to India Guide, 13 weekly half-hour radio programs aired in the New York area catering to people of Indian origin (see Appendix 2 for times and stations.) Most feature programs of Indian music. One show, "Bharat Vani" also presents -- in English -- interviews with Indians noted in the fields of science, the fine arts, business and politics as well as Americans involved in Indian affairs.

September 1976 marked the appearance of the first weekly television show catering to Indian immigrants in the U.S. "Vision of Asia", an hour and a half show on U.H.F. channel 47, regularly presents Hindi films. Its producer, an Indian immigrant physician in New York, hopes to expand the show's format in the future to include interviews on issues of interest to Indians here.

PAN-INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS

Pan-Indian associations vary in terms of the general age range and interests of their memberships as well as their more specific purposes. The Joint Committee of Indian Organizations, for example, until recently, was a single purpose group whose aim was to coordinate the celebrations of major Indian national

holidays, specifically Independence Day (August 15), Republic Day (January 26) and Gandhi's birthday (October 2).

This group consists of elected representatives of 20 member associations, which in turn are based on common natal state/language, religion, or student status. The Joint Committee was founded in 1971 when its organizers feared that without such a coordinating organ, each of the linguistic and religious communities would plan separate celebrations of India's national holidays. Until recently, the group normally met only three times a year. Now with a revised constitution the organization is seeking to broaden its sphere of activities. For example, in 1977, the Joint Committe represented the Indian population in America at a meeting of ethnic group leaders called by President Carter to discuss the issue of amnesty for illegal aliens in the U.S.

Another group diverse in the backgrounds represented is the India Festival Committee. Founded in 1974, its purpose is to coordinate an annual India Festival Day in Central Park. These feature offering of Indian music, home-prepared regional foods sold at stalls set up in the Park, and displays of Indian fashions.

The goals of the Festival Committee are these: to promote ethnic solidarity among Indians of diverse background; to introduce Americans to Indians and Indian 'culture' in a convivial setting; and to make politicians aware of the emerging Indian ethnic presence. The composition of the Festival Committee reflects these goals. Of its 21 members, there are individuals from Bihar, Bengal, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Kasmir,

Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamilnadu, and Bangladesh. Its Advisory Board of ten is composed of five Americans and five Indians, chosen for their prestige.

The political aspect of the festival is evinced by the choice of guests invited to address the gathering. At the 1977 Park Festival, speeches were given by Congressman Edward Koch, City Council President Paul O'Dwyer, and Manhattan Borough President and Democratic mayoral candidate, Percy Sutton.

The Student Associations

As noted in Chapter 2, three campuses in the New York area have Indian student associations. All regularly screen Hindi movies. In addition, the Columbia University group also sponsors concerts of Indian music, although unlike the state/language associations, its programming is not restricted to the musical style associated with any one particular area. Also, it occasionally co-sponsors debate on issues of interest to all Indians irrespective of background -- the issue of minority status for Indian immigrants, for example (see Chapter 8). Finally, this group has begun to publish a newsletter called "Bharat Darsham" (meaning Indian View). It features profiles of prominent Indians here (not restricted to students) and a regular column entitled 'Identity', aimed at the exploration of various aspects of what it terms "the identity problems" of Indian immigrants.

An Indian-American Association

The most recently formed group is called Indus. Founded during the summer of 1977, it is unique among Indian associations

in that its primary goal is to bring unmarried Indians and Americans together in a discotheque-style setting. Generalizations about its membership size and composition and its success in attracting Americans would be premature at this time.

A Nationally Based Pan-Indian Association

The Association of Indians in America (referred to as AIA) is also unique among the formally chartered Indian groups here. Its objectives, the composition of its membership, and the nature and extent of its activities are all wider in scope than any of the other Indian organizations in New York at this time.

The Association was conceived during the late 1960's when several of its co-founders independently came to the conclusion that the ever-growing number of parochial associations were symptomatic of a tendency by the immigrants here to avoid involvement in American society. A co-founder of the organization said: "We saw ourselves becoming a sub-culture of many cultures and we felt that this was not a healthy development". In 1967, a conference was called in Princeton at which the co-founders hoped to lay down the framework for the formation of a pan-Indian organization. In recalling that meeting, the same man said:

> The principle problem that we faced was the fact that people were unable or unwilling to accept the fact that they were immigrants. They nurtured the idea of returning to India soon, while we who advocated the establishment of the organization called ourselves 'Indian-Americans'. If we could collectively do something to aid India, that would be fine, but our main purpose, as we envisioned it from the beginning, was to get involved in the social issues and political process of this country.

In 1971, the Association was formally incorporated. Since then its leadership has remained committed to the two goals concerning the re-identification of Indian immigrants. One is the collapse of parochial identities; AIA favors 'Indian' identity in their stead. The other is the addition of an American identity. AIA's slogan, taken from an idea expressed in its constitution, is: 'Indian identity; American commitment. Similarly, on its membership form is the statement: 'Be a proud Indo-American'. And in its quarterly journal, Indians here are referred to alternately as 'the Indian-American community' and the 'Indian immigrants in the U.S.', frequent and consistent use of the term is intentional. It is meant to underscore to the government officials in India and the U.S. to whom it is sent, the point that Indians are here to stay, that they are, in the words of AIA's current president "the newest group of hyphenated Americans".

To foster pan-Indian identity, the Association leaders have over the past decade consciously developed strategies for affiliating Indian immigrants on other than a parochial basis. One such strategy has been to create subsidiary organs of the association based on common professional interests, rather than on shared ethnic background.

An example is the Council on Medical Affairs. Its main purpose is to provide a forum of discussion for Indian immigrant physicians. According to AIA literature, Indian physicians constitute the largest national group of foreign medical graduates (FMG's) working in the U.S. As such, they have been the main target of adverse publicity published by the American

medical associations against foreign medical graduates. Assertions have been made in the media that in general they (foreign-trained physicians) have received poor training, have language problems, and suffer from cultural maladjustment.

In the spring of 1975, the Medical Council organized a program consisting of a dinner and panel discussion which was held in a Queens hotel. The guest speakers, both Indian and American, were members of the medical profession who debated different aspects of "the FMG issue". Following the talks by the guest speakers, the floor was opened to those in attendance.

In addition to the Medical Council, there are the following subsidiary organs: Engineers Council, Council on Trade, and the Council on Travel and Tourism (see Chapter 4). These do not meet regularly but plan periodic seminars probing relevant questions that concern Indian immigrants as a group irrespective of parochial background.

Another strategy employed by the Association leadership to unify is ethnically diverse members has been to generate involvement in political issues which are not internally divisive. During the war between Bangladesh and West Pakistan in 1971-72, for example, AIA raised funds in support of Bangladesh. The group also initiated a telegram campaign to the White House urging the American government not to become involved in a war with India.

The following year saw AIA's involvement in the resettlement of Asian Uganda refugees (predominantly Indians) after their expulsion from East Africa. Association members worked with the International Rescue Committee in New York City in relocating

the East Africans. Initially, a bill called for the absorption of 1,000 refugees in this country. Due largely to the success of relocation efforts on the part of AIA, for which the group was cited in the Congressional Record (Feb. 27, 1973, vol. 119, No. 30), an additional 1500 were admitted.

In 1973, AIA inaugurated an annual 'Honor Banquet', a gala occasion which brings together the members of its four affiliate chapters. The institution of the Honor Banquet clearly demonstrates AIA's objectives concerning its members' ethnic identification.

The context of the event is both pan-Indian and Americanized; it therefore contrasts sharply with the public school gatherings of the parochial associations where emphasis is on indigenous language, food and dress. The Banquet is held each year in the grand ballroom of a Manhattan hotel. Its overt function is to honor individuals -- Americans as well as Indians -- who have made significant scientific or artistic contributions to either or both peoples. The Association particularly seeks to honor those who through their work have served as cultural liaisons between the two countries; for example, Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, and Norman Borlaug (father of the 'Green Revolution' in India and other countries) have been honored in different years. The guests, typically numbering approximately four hundred include American friends and colleagues of the members.

The speeches given by those honored and the Association officers as well as the cocktail hour and dinner conversation are in English, rather than in Indian languages. Likewise, the food served is usually non-Indian, although guests are

able to choose between a vegetarian and non-vegetarian meal. At the 1976 Banquet, after dinner entertainment consisted of a selection of French piano music performed by an Association member. All the women present wore saris, but there were no examples of regional dress to be seen.

The Banquet is a vehicle for demonstration to elected public officials and to the American press that there is an emerging Indian ethnic group in the U.S. The latter are apprised of the Banquet in advance; they acknowledge the Association via telegrams which are then read to the assembled guests by the officers and reported subsequently in the Indian press. Among the telegrams that arrived bearing good wishes to the Association at the 1976 Banquet were those received from Mayor Beame, Governor Carey, and the then Democratic presidential hopeful, Senator Henry Jackson.

PAN-INDIAN vs PAROCHIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Although parochial Indian associations flourish in New York, they are not without critics within the Indian immigrant population. In a letter submitted to India Abroad, a reader censured his fellow immigrant countrymen:

> We are divided into a multitude of redundant and inconsequential organizations ... Such fragmentation weakens the collective interest of the Indian community as a whole. A valid argument could be made for the plurality of organizations on the basis of the diversity of Indian culture. However, a counter argument would be that our roots and ethics were firmly fashion by a common condition -- being born Indian.

It appears that for those who are active in Indian organ-

izations, a choice must be made between participation in a parochial or pan-Indian group. This tentative generalization is based on a poll I took of the active leadership of AIA. Included were the current president, a past president, one of the founders and eight current chairmen of the organization's various subsidiary committees. None of these individuals currently participates in a parochial Indian association, though they are active members of their respective professional organizations (the American Medical Association, for instance). It would seem that by making the choice between the two types of organizational activity, these individuals were also making a choice about their ethnic identification.

CONCLUSIONS AND COMPARISONS

Two related conclusions follow from the material presented here. One is that there is a body of evidence for pan-Indian identity in the immigrant population here. A second is that individuals who are active in pan-Indian associations tend to emphasize their Indian, rather than parochial, identity. Such individuals do not generally participate in parochial assciations as well. Because involvement in organizations is time consuming, and because both types tend to limit their activities to weekends, it is necessary to choose between the two. The data further suggest that there is a difference in orientation between the people who choose to participate in pan-Indian groups as opposed to those who do not; those who do are less committed to a permanent return to India.

These findings accord well with an observation made by

Kanitkar in her study of Indians in London. She says that while office bearers of pan-Indian associations frequently serve as representatives in non-Indian groups, "it is rare to find an office holder in a regional association holding a similar post in an all-Indian organization" (1972:192).

Other comparisons with pan-Indian associations in overseas Indian societies are relevant here. Desai reports, for example, that in Birmingham where parochial associations flourish, the attempt to establish a pan-Indian association failed:

> In name, an All-Indian body, its first meeting was attended almost exclusively by Gujaratis... The formal rigidity of the constitution, the association's vague and generalized aims, its concern with the relationship with the host society and absence of unanimity, all made it easy prey to schisms within the local community (1963:92).

Initially, AIA faced similar problems. It was accused of being dominated by "New Jersey Bengalis". Today, a decade after its inception, the Association seems to have overcome this charge. The composition of the 1975 nominating committee consisted of individuals from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and the chairman was from Karnataka. Eleven of the 15 members of the executive committee in that year were non-Bengalis.

In East Africa, the pattern was one which favored the establishment of pan-Indian associations only during the early years of immigration. Morris reports that prior to World War II, there were several such groups in Uganda which enjoyed the respect of the Administration. Gaining leadership in one of these was one way in which an Indian in Uganda could obtain influence and power. However, after 1945

> the position of the older inclusive Indian councils had been undermined by the development of caste and sectarian associations, and the more usual route to influence then came to be the gaining of power within the communities... Once a caste or sect had emerged as a corporate group it was necessarily in competition with other similar groups for favors from the Government (Morris 1967:280).

In contrast, one of the goals of AIA, according to one of its active members, is "to avoid repeating the East African experiences of Indians". While AIA leaders recognize that the parochial associations fulfill certain immigrant needs, they believe that in addition to these, a strong and broad-based Indian association is necessary if Indians are ever to become an ethnic group to be reckoned with in this country.

CHAPTER 8

THE CATEGORIZATION OF INDIANS AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I report on the development of two related projects initiated by AIA since 1974 and the reactions they have sparked in the larger Indian community in the U.S. Both projects relate to the categorization of Indians. Consequently they are extremely pertinent to this study and are discussed in some detail.

The goal of one project is to obtain government recognition of Indian immigrants as a "minority group". What precisely "minority group" status signifies and what benefits it confers are controversial points. There is disagreement even among spokesmen for the government agencies which employ the term and recently the issue has been debated in the courts.[1]

What is important is that the leadership of AIA is convinced that government recognition of Indians as a minority will confer economic benefits on the immigrants -- irrespective of their parochial identities -- in the areas of employment, housing, education, and eligibility for loans and health services. Towards this end, the Association initiated a relationship with the federal agencies in Washington responsible for making decisions as to which ethnic groups constitute "minorities". In 1974, the leaders were told that one

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1 California's Supreme Court has recently ruled in favor of a young man, Allan Bakke, who sued the University of California at Davis for not admitting him because he was white. The Court ruled that discrimination is illegal even if "the race discriminated against is the majority rather than the minority".

qualification for inclusion as a minority is a sizeable population.

AIA then approached the U.S. Census Bureau in order to obtain statistics on the number of Indians living in this country. This led them to the discovery that the Bureau has no such data. On the Census questionnaire, the question pertaining to background has only one box that is appropriate for Indian self-identification: a large residual category labeled "others".

A second project was therefore undertaken to rectify this situation. Its goal is to obtain from the Census Bureau a separate category listing appropriate for identifying Indians on the 1980 questionnaire. This will enable the Bureau to collect demographic information on Indians here, which in turn will aid the Indians in obtaining minority status.

Both projects have entailed the question of how to classify Indians in terms of "race". In the case of the negotiations with the Census Bureau, the issue arose in the following way. In the 1970 questionnaire, the categories available for self-identification were a set of terms denoting national background (e.g., Japanese), broader based common origin (e.g., American Indian) and race or color. In the case of the latter, the labels made no distinction between the two. There was one box, for example, labeled 'Negro (or Black)'. On other federal government forms that ask for self-identification, one category is labeled 'White/Caucasian'.

Until now it has been the assumption of the Census Bureau and other federal agencies involved with the collection

of demographic data that Indians are classified as Caucasians. As a result of the equation between race and color, they are also categorized as "whites", a discovery which amazed the AIA people investigating the government reporting procedures.

In the case of agencies specifically concerned with the problems of "minority groups", this pratice of equating racial and color categories had special significance. It meant that Indians were specifically not to be considered a minority because of the officially drawn opposition between "white" and "minority" groups. According to a February 18, 1975 memorandum on the subject of 'Ethnic Identity and Citizenship' distributed to the staff of a major government agency devoted to minority group rights (Office of Federal Contract Compliance), by its director, Philip Davis:

> Minority groups, as that term is used in the rules and regulations, includes Blacks, Spanish-surnamed Americans, American Indians, and Asian Americans (or Orientals) ... Please note that persons of Pakistani, Indian (East), and Portuguese descent are not included in the definition of minority group, unless some other condition is met. Black should include persons of African descent as well as those identified as Jamaican, Trinidadian, and West Indian ... Asian-Americans should include persons of Japanese, Chinese, Korean, or Filipino descent, or whose appearance reveals Oriental or Polynesian origin. Persons of Indo-European, e.g., Pakistanis and East Indians, as well as Malayans, Thais, and others not falling within the above, are regarded as white. (Underscoring is mine.)

AIA has taken a public position on three of the issues concerning the categorization of Indians that arose from its discoveries about how government agencies process demographic data. In the following sections I will specify what these are. I will also compare the positions taken by

the Association with the views of 24 informants who were interviewed in New York City. In addition, I will present the results of a polling of 159 Indian immigrants in the Chicago area by another pan-Indian association with national headquarters in the Mid-West.

AIA AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF INDIANS

Two of AIA's claims are so closely interrelated that it is necessary to consider them together. Analytically, however, they can be separated into the following propositions:

1. None of the categories for self-identification listed on the Census Bureau's questionnaire uniquely describes all Indians; consequently no demographic statistics on this group can be computed. 1

2. Whereas 'race' and 'color' are interchangeable terms forming a single domain for Americans, the two are not isomorphic for Indians. That is, Indians differentiate between labels describing individuals in terms of their color, and those which describe their 'racial' stock; they are two distinct considerations.

Because of the above stated belief, the present classification procedure used by the Census Bureau as well as the choice of categories now being recommended for use by all federal agencies is unacceptable to AIA. The 1970 Census questionnaire offered the following choice of categories for self-identification:

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1 According to Bureau official Nampeo McKenney, only a rough estimate of the number of Indian respondents was obtained and that only by combining the responses to six separate questions. This is a long and costly procedure which prohibits the Bureau from collecting further data on Indians (personal communication).

Question # 4 Race or Color[1]

--- White	--- Japanese	--- Hawaiian
--- Negro (or Black)	--- Chinese	--- Korean
--- Indian (Amer.)	--- Filipino	--- Other

Melynda Mason, who works for the legal counsel retained by AIA, was charged with researching the racial classification of Asian Indians by government agencies. She questioned Charles Johnson, Assitant Chief of the Population Division of the Census Bureau, as to how responses "other" were treated statistically. In her report to the organization, she states that he responded: "they are added to the statistics on whites".

In September 1975, AIA presented its case to Census Bureau officials in Washington. The Bureau had independently decided to convene representatives of various Asian-American and Pacific Island ethnic groups for a day-long conference at its headquarters in Suitland, Maryland. Its purpose was to gain feedback from these communities concerning the categories currently in use; preparations will soon be under way for the 1980 Census.

On March 12, 1976 the meeting materialized and AIA's president was invited to participate. Twenty-one individuals representing communities of Chinese, Japanese, Pilipino[2],

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1 Data-Collection Forms and Procedures (Washington, D.C.:U.S. Department of Commerce, 1971), p. 21.

2 "The contemporary Pilipinos in America prefer the "p" spelling and pronunciation in referring to themselves. This is a product of the emergence of Pilipino ethnic identity in America during the mid-sixties and the first half of this decade" (Ignacio 1976:4).

Korean, Pacific Island and Indian origin were present. This was the first time that an Indian had been invited to any U.S. Government sponsored gathering of Asian-Americans. Their past exclusion stemmed directly from their classification as Caucasians. The following were the recommendations submitted by AIA to the Conference:

1. that there be a separate listing for Asian Indians to identify themselves on the 1980 Census 1

2. that the synonymous usage of the terms 'caucasian' and 'white' be discontinued because the two terms do not describe a discrete membership from the Indian point of view; and

3. that if color terms must be used at all, they should include 'brown' as well because Indians classify themselves as neither 'Black' nor 'White'.

As it turned out, the participants in the Conference which I attended did not receive an opportunity to orally present their respective policy recommendations. At the outset of the meeting, the Bureau Director referred to the possibility of establishing a formal Asian-American/Pacific Island Advisory Board. This would be a permanent liaison group between the Bureau and representatives of the Asian ethnic organizations. This was also the method employed for tapping informational input from the Black and Hispanic communities on how to gain a more accurate demographic picture of these populations. In the case of American Indians, it was decided that an amalgamating committee of different tribes would not be the "most meaningful relationship" the Bureau could establish with this

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1 This recommendation was, in fact, ultimately accepted by the Bureau in September 1977. The 1980 Census questionnaire will include a category "Asian Indian".

population. The alternatives for the Asian-Americans, therefore, were the formation of the Advisory Board or continuing to deal with the Bureau informally as independent ethnic groups.

The majority of time remaining was spent by the participants in caucasing on the pros and cons of the proposals put to them. There were no objections to forming an alliance between the peoples represented. In fact, much of the organizational structure for amalgamating Asian ethnic groups already exists. Several of the participants representing different ethnic communities were also members of PAC, the National Coalition of Asian-Americans and Pacific Island Peoples for Human Services and Action (known popularly as the Pacific/Asian Coalition). This is a highly organized and active group based in San Francisco and having chapters in cities throughout the country.

Certainly there were no objections to the inclusion of Indians at the Conference. There were objections raised about the absence of representation of other Asian groups (such as Vietnamese). The general feeling demonstrated was one of great solidarity. The objections voiced against forming the Advisory Board were based solely on fears that the group's power would be debilitated by its officialdom. For example, the Board comes under the regulations of a Federal Act requiring that an agenda be published in the Federal Register 35 days prior to a meeting and that this agenda be adhered to. The outcome of the conference was a vote in favor of forming the Advisory Board. As a result of AIA's initiative in gaining admission to the Conference, its president has been elected to the Asian

American Advisory Council as a representative of the Indian population in the United States.

THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED NEW CATEGORIES

The Federal Interagency on Culture and Education (FICE) is a government organ under which is subsumed the Civil Rights Commission. At the same time that AIA was first approaching the Census Bureau, FICE had established an Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions. The members of this committee were representatives of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, the Commission on Civil Rights, and the Bureau of the Census.

According to its May 1975 Report,

> the Committee's assigned task was to develop common racial and ethnic definitions for use by all Federal agencies to assure collection and reporting of racial and ethnic data on a compatible and non-duplicative basis (FICE Report, May 1975, vol. 2(1).

What has emerged from its meetings is a proposed set of five major categories for the collection and reporting of ethnic/racial data. According to the same report, "these categories should not be interpreted as scientific or anthropological in nature". In her report to AIA, Melynda Mason claims that Committee members in Washington told her that the categories represent the major "anthropological divisions" but that those peoples "who on the basis of a previous history of discrimination need identification apart from the traditional groupings were given a category of their own".

As quoted in FICE's April 1975 Report, the proposed new categories are: 1) American Indian or Alaskan native; 2) Asian

or Pacific Islander (defined as "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asian, of the Pacific Islands"); 3) Black/Negro; 4) Caucasian/white (defined as "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North America, the Middle East, or the Indian subcontinent"); 5) Hispanic. A sixth category "other" requiring the respondent to supply his affiliation was rejected because of the costs entailed in compiling such data.

The Committee indicates that in the deliberations on the meaning of the term "Caucasian/white", Indians were the major taxonomic problem:

> Where to draw the geographic line ... east or west of the Indian subcontinent? ... The question was whether to include them (Indians) in the minority category 'Asian' (underlining mine) because they come from Asia... or to include them in this category because they are Caucasian, though frequently of darker skin than other Caucasians. The final decision favored the latter. While evidence of discrimination against Asian Indians exists, it appears to be concentrated in specific geographic and occupational areas.

AIA responded to these decisions in a report submitted to FICE in September 1975. It reads in part:

> It is erroneous and misleading to 1) equate the terms 'Caucasian' and 'White' and 2) use the term Caucasian to describe all Indians (original underlining). 'Caucasian' is an anthropological classification that includes non-white groups... At the same time not all Indians are, anthropologically speaking, Caucasian. The only label that can clearly apply to all Indians is Asian by virtue of geographic origin... The 1917 Asiatic Exclusion provision does set a precedent which the FICE Committee might consider when re-evaluating the Asian category.

The official position of the Government on the question

of the racial classification of Indians should not be equated with the categorizing behavior of most Americans. On the contrary, Americans tend not to know how to categorize Indians racially. Or rather, they do not agree. (See Appendix 3 for the results of a survey taken of American undergraduates on this question.)

An informant recalled an experience which shows dramatically the degree of intracultural variability that exists in terms of social categorization. He was driving through the South in the U.S. during the mid-1960's with an Indian friend and his pregnant wife. All were students at an American university. At nightfall, they stopped at a motel, but were denied lodghings because they were perceived as Black. The motel manager provided them with the name and address of a place where he was sure they could stay. They arrived, exhausted, at a Black establishment only to be denied lodging on the grounds that they weren't Black. Their solution finally lay in contacting the nearest university several hours drive away where they ultimately received accommodation.

Several Indian male informants have indicated that during their stay in the South during the last decade, they were initially perceived as being Black. Once their cultural distinctiveness became apparent, however, they were not "treated as Black". In this respect, the traditional dress maintained by Indian women functioned as an important cue to the identity of both sexes. A female informant who normally wears Western dress unless in the company of other Indians remarked that she always wears the red 'bindi' on her forehead

when going outside lest she be "taken for Puerto Rican".

INFORMANT RESPONSE TO CLASSIFICATION OF INDIANS BY 'RACE'

To determine the extent to which the cognitive map of AIA's leaders is shared, I included questions about the 'race' and color of Indians in the set of 24 interviews that explored social categories and cues. Analysis of informant responses shows that on the issue of how Indians should be categorized in terms of 'race', there is little consensus and much confusion; on the question of classification by color, there is much more agreement.

In only one case of 24 was a color label elicited in response to the initial question:'What race do Indians belong to? '. This fact supports AIA's contention that the two are conceptually distinct for Indians. Of the 24 responses, 15 employed the term 'Aryan'; 10 of these included the term 'Dravidian'. In some cases, the response was "they are a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian"; in others, it was "there are Aryans and also Dravidians". Four responded that they are of the 'Indian' race; two replied 'Oriental'; one said 'East Indian'; and two stated that they did not know. No one stated "Caucasian" in response to the question.

Regardless of an individual's response, I then asked if Indians are 'Caucasians'. Five informants replied in the affirmative, six informants stated that Indians are not Caucasian. Five indicated that some Indians are while others are not. An additional eight informants either stated explicitly that they did not know or expressed doubt. For example, one man said: "Possibly some of us are Caucasian

and other not -- possibly we are all Caucasians."

On the question: "What color are Indians ?", twelve informants stated "Brown", one other said "between black and white". Ten claimed that there is too much variation in skin color among Indians to make the use of a single color term meaningful; one informant said only that color terms should not be used as labels to refer to people.

Of the ten informants who classified Indians as 'brown', several emphasized that they are neither Blacks nor whites. Their comments, often emotional, indicate that this is not merely an abstract question, but one which they have had to answer in concrete situations, as the following sampling of remarks shows. A Bengali man says:

> I can't call myself white. But Caucasian, that's the blood, I think, as far as racial things go ... On forms I put myself down as brown. I can't help it -- I can't write myself down as white and I can't write myself black.

A Punjabi woman said:

> I'm not white. And I'm not a Black, either. I put myself down as 'Black' on forms several times. Once was at a hospital, and the lady at the desk crossed it out and put down 'white'. I asked her why; it was my choice. She said: 'I know what you mean, but you don't have to worry. You're a Caucasian, not a Negro.

An East African woman of Gujarati origin:

> When I had to fill out a form for Immigration, I didn't know how to answer the race question. The woman there told me to put down 'white'. I was amazed. Because coming from an East African country, you know that you're not white. There we weren't black and we weren't white. So I felt funny checking off 'white'. It didn't feel right because I knew I wasn't white.

A Karnataka woman said:

> Most Indians would identify themselves as 'brown' if that were a choice... An Indian who was very fair might check off 'white' but that wouldn't be right. The thing is not all non-Black people are white.

Informants who claimed that no single color term could be applied to all Indians referred to the diversity of phenotype displayed in their own families. A Bihari woman:

> My uncle is very dark and my aunt is very fair. Their son is very fair and one daughter is very dark; one is in the middle. Their colors are different, but the race is the same... Many Indians call their complexion 'wheatish'. All the matrimonial correspondance coming in for my brother says: 'wheatish complexion'. They don't like saying they're dark. 'Wheat' is brown. Fair wheatish is fair; dark wheatish is dark.

And a Parsi man:

> My daughter is fairer than my wife, and my wife is fairer than I am. And if you attend a Parsi function, you will see that 75%-80% of the people will appear white to you.

REACTIONS TO AIA'S PROJECTS: INDIA LEAGUE OF AMERICA

AIA's endeavors to gain a separate enumeration of Indians in the 1980 Census and its efforts to gain minority group status have received considerable attention in the Indian-American press. Both have caused heated debate among Indians here. India League of America (ILA), a pan-Indian association based in Chicago, has responded by challenging AIA's right to represent the views of the Indian immigrant population in America.

In October 1976, ILA sponsored a symposium in Chicago aimed at exploring the two issues. The panelists included officials representing the Census Bureau and other federal agencies as well as anthropologist Sylvia Vatuk, to whom the

group turned for an authoritative answer to the question: "What race do Indians belong to? " Another participating anthropologist was Ralph Nicholas who reported on the results of a survey he had jointly conducted at the request of ILA on Indian immigrants in the Chicago area. The goals of the survey were to determine which racial terms the immigrants prefer as self-designations, and also the extent to which they have experienced racial discrimination.

The survey was obtained by circulating questionnaires among Indian immigrants in the Chicago area. The returned sample of 159 is similar to the 24 informants I interviewed in terms of their age, occupation, immigration status and diverse origin in India. The results of the poll support my findings:

> In a preliminary test of our questionnaire, we tried to inquire into racial identity using the contemporary American racial designations of 'white' and 'Black'. Most preliminary respondents were indignant about these categories; there was so much resistance to answering a question about race with skin color, that we changed the question to "what do you consider your skin color to be? 1) white 2) Black 3) Other (Specify)." Only 11 percent chose white and only 3 percent Black, 70 percent wrote in "Brown". A further 8 percent named another color such as "Blue" or "Olive", and 8 percent would not name a color but frequently commented on the undesireability of using skin color as a criterion of race (Elkhanialy and Nicholas 1976:45).

Informants were also asked to approve or disapprove of various racial designations such as 'Indic', 'East Indian', 'Caucasian', 'Indo-Caucasian', and 'Indo-European'. None of these was acceptable to even a third of the respondents (1976:46).

In addition, people were asked to suggest alternate racial terms. The returns included: Oriental, Asian, Indian, Indo-Asian, Indo-Aryan, Aryan, Dravidian, Mongol, and a host of others. The authors conclude that

> such dissensus and particularism, which seems distressing to Americans, are integral to life in India. There is what might be called a cultural bias in favor of particularism (1976:47).

THE ISSUE OF MINORITY STATUS

In conducting investigations for its two related projects, AIA leaders discovered that the term "minority group" does not appear in a single piece of U.S. legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with which it is associated. Consequently no statute specifies what constitutes a minority group in the U.S. The Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. However, as Glazer and Moynihan have pointed out,

> within hours of the enactment of the statute in order to enforce it, the federal government, for the first time, began to require ever more detailed accountings of subgroups... in terms of race, color, and sex... Skewed distributions would not do: quotas appeared in American society. The instrument of national social policy designed ostensibly to prevent discrimination inevitably went beyond that to positive efforts on behalf of those presumptively discriminated against, a list which in short order commenced to lengthen (1976:11).

It is on this list that AIA wishes to have Indians included. The Association's leaders believe that classification as a minority will benefit Indians in obtaining employment, and will insure their eligibility for certain housing, health services, and loans. It is their belief that the federal

government pressures industries and institutions to observe quota allotments for minority members. Whether, in fact, the government is authorized to do this is a controversial point now being debated in the courts (see footnote, p. 235). But one thing is clear. By simply demanding that employers and educational institutions report on the number of individuals being accepted from minority groups, the government does influence the ethnic composition of these institutions. For example, Glazer and Moynihan report that "an application form of the Graduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University now states: 'It is to your advantage to state if you are a member of an ethnic minority" (1976:10).

In the U.S., minority status is associated with a history of being victimized by discrimination in this country. The present generation of Indian immigrants have not been here long enough to claim such a history. AIA has therefore focused attention on examples of current discrimination against them and has also projected into the future. In January 1975, AIA leaders submitted the following statement to FICE:

> The only guideline (in defining a minority) is 41CFR 60-2.1 which provides that affirmative action programs should benefit "members of an 'affected class', who by virtue of past discrimination continue to suffer the present effects of that discrimination". The language of the Civil Rights Act clearly intends to protect those individuals who might be disadvantaged on the basis of appearance. It is undeniable that Indians are different in appearance; they are equally dark-skinned as other non-white individuals and are, therefore, subject to the same prejudices... Indians are disadvantaged, we believe, for reasons of racial discrimination.

AIA further pointed out that under the present classification of Indians as whites, it is virtually impossible for them to prove that they are discriminated on 'racial' grounds:

> When an individual files charges of racial discrimination, he must prove that he is a member of a minority group (Mc Donnell Corporation vs. Green 411 U.S. 792, 1973).

And in response to the FICE Report's claim that discrimination against Indians is limited to local areas, the Association's statement reads:

> The Association of Indians in America has found that discrimination against Indians is not concentrated in limited geographic and occupational areas. Examples of discrimination are widespread... And while it is commonly believed that the majority of Indians working in this country are well-educated and employed in jobs of a professional nature, their profiles are not at all unlike those of Korean and Japanese immigrants who derive the benefits from the ethnic classifications in the form of preferential hiring... Vis-a-vis other professionals, Indians are disadvantaged, we believe, for reasons of racial discrimination. As Indians become permanent residents and citizens, they are able to bring family members to this country who might otherwise have difficulty immigrating, i.e., those who are employed in skilled or unskilled occupations for which there is an abundance of qualified U.S. workers. Once here they enter the labor market and must compete with other ethnic groups for the kinds of jobs for which affirmative action programs are particularly applicable.

In my interviewing I did not collect data on the experience of discrimination. On the Elkhanialy-Nicholas questionnaire, however, respondents were asked to report cases in which they felt that they had been the victims of racial prejudice. The results are reported here.

> ... 70 or 44 percent of our respondents reported experiences of discrimination, many of them more than one such experience. Slightly more than half of the incidents reported by our respondents related to jobs. Some of these persons felt that they were not hired for positions for which they were qualified, but the most frequent complaint was in being passed over for raises and promotions in favor of white Americans. Twenty-seven percent of discriminatory incidents related to refusals to rent houses or apartments that seemed clearly to be on the market... About 21 percent of these incidents occurred in social situations where discrimination is more difficult to prove, but nonetheless real (1976:47).

Approximately three quarters of the immigrants in the Chicago poll favored minority status (Elkhanialy and Nicholas 1976:49). However, because of the relatively high incidence of discrimination reported by those who returned the questionnaire, this figure should not be taken as reflective of the viewpoint of the community at large.

On the contrary, in the past year, the pages of India Abroad have been filled with debate over the desireability of minority status. In addition, two conferences have been held in New York City to debate the issue; one was sponsored by AIA, the other by the Chicago based ILA, which hopes to establish a New York chapter in the near future. AIA's position has already been stated; the organization is, in fact, solely responsible for making minority status an issue. The major points made by those opposing its stand (including ILA's leadership) are these.

If Indians are re-classified as a minority, they may stand to lose job opportunities, rather than to gain them.

The example given by ILA's president in a December 10, 1976 interview with India Abroad is of a company located in any area where 7% of the general population are classified as minority group members. Under such a condition, an employer would legally be required to recruit only 7% of his work force from the minority groups; the remaining positions can legally be allocated to non-minority group members. This would exclude Indians if the shift in status takes place. The ILA leadership sees Indians then competing with Blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities for the relatively small percentage of jobs allocated to these groups. In fact, it is not at all clear if and how re-classification would alter the picture of job competition for Indians. Presently they compete with the large 'white' majority, but they are competing for a proportionately larger number of job allocations.

The other and more generally shared anxiety connected with minority status that has been expressed in the press and at the conferences is that concerning white backlash. In a January 14, 1977 article in India Abroad, an opponent of minority status articulated this fear:

> With an average income higher than the American norm, Indians cannot seriously expect the sympathetic support of others in demanding de jure advantages in employment. Under these conditions, it is entirely reasonable to expect that those whose jobs and promotions would suffer from preferential treatment for Indians -- the well-educated, highly skilled professionals -- would be likely to develop strong anti-Indian sentiments... (This) could develop tragic consequences in immigration restrictions and public

> sentiment regarding relations between the United States and India.

There is likewise fear of backlash from other groups presently classified as minorities. ILA's president has argued that

> if employers find it possible to fill some kind of minority "quota" by reporting high-level Indo-American employees, while continuing to discriminate against the truly disadvantaged minorities we may find many Americans turning against us.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Association of Indians in America, a New York based pan-Indian organization, made the following discoveries: that Indians are not enumerated by the Census Bureau, that for the purposes of data collection, Indians are categorized as "white", and that they are not considered by the government as a minority group. The organization's leaders have attempted to use these facts as rallying issues to unify their own membership and Indian immigrants in general, irrespective of parochial background. They have also seen the two related projects as means of furthering the Association's prestige and power. These two contentions are supported by the remarks addressed by AIA's president to a gathering of individuals representing 12 parochial associations and representatives of the Indian-American press and radio programs. The meeting, held in February 1976, was sponsored by AIA and aimed at broadening its support for the projects within the Indian population:

> We are one of the most highly professional ethnic groups in America. Though we are few in numbers, we want to be recognized. We do not want to be ignored socially,

> politically, or economically. We have learned that to make any impact on issues that affect our lives, we have to deal with the power structure. Three years ago, the State Department hadn't heard of AIA. Today it grants us interviews. The Human Rights Commission seeks our presence at its meetings; now we are invited to meetings of the Census Bureau. But if all of us are not united, what kind of impact can we make?

What has happened is that AIA's position on reclassification has been challenged most vociferously by another pan-Indian association based in the Mid-west. ILA's explicit goals as an organization are generally similar to those of AIA. The fact that it now plans to establish a New York chapter suggests that the two organizations will be competing to represent the emerging Indian ethnic group in the sphere of national power politics.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

To return to the point of departure of this dissertation, the goals I set out to accomplish were the following: to discover which dimensions of ethnic identity are emically salient among Indians living in New York; to determine the relationship between emic categorization and etic behavior; and to discover why particular dimensions of ethnic identity in this population are more important than others.

In terms of emic categorization, the findings reveal that natal language (with its associated state idendtity) is the most salient dimension for Hindus, religious affiliation for non-Hindu groups. The more inclusive categories 'North Indian' and 'South Indian' are also important and are used by Hindus and non-Hindus alike. These terms connote differences of language and phenotype as well as 'culture'.

Regarding the degree of fit between emic and etic behavior, it was discovered that there is a close correlation between the ethnic categories elicited by informants and membership in formal voluntary associations. Patterns of informal voluntary association, on the other hand, are more open; friendship ties cross the boundaries of natal language and religious affiliation.

In addition to the evidence of parochial identity maintenance among Indians in New York, I have also provided evidence of an emerging pan-Indian identity. It is evinced not only by friendship patterns which transcend parochial boundaries, but also by institutions catering to the Indian immigrant population at large: e.g., press, radio, television. At the organization

level, too, pan-Indian and Indo-American identities are consciously being forged by groups such as the Association of Indians in America and India League of America.

Regarding ethnic boundaries, De Vos accurately points out that

> strictly used, 'nationality' is indistinguishable from ethnicity. But in a looser sense, the words 'nation' and 'nationality' very often encompass diverse groups that have achieved political unification. It can be argued that for many people, national identity and subjective cultural identity cannot be distinguished, especially when ethnic and national identity have been one historically. (In other cases) ethnic identity is either a more specific or broader identity than national identity (1975:11).

On the basis of the evidence provided here, it is argued that the immigrants in New York have a choice of two models of Indian ethnic identity: one parochial, or in De Vos' terms, "specific" identity, another based on common national origin. The latter is more familiar and more readily acceptable to Americans and more importantly to the U.S. Government. Consequently, it is the type of identity favored by the more politically ambitious Indians here, those who lack commitment to an eventual permanent return to India.

This brings us to the third goal of explaining why certain dimensions of identity are more important than others in particular cases. In Chapter 1, I hypothesized a relationship between the maintenance of immigrant ties to India and the preservation of parochial identities. It has been demonstrated here that the immigrants of New York tend to preserve close ties with kinsmen back home; patterns of marriage, sponsorship and travel between the two countries support this claim. According to

this hypothesis, parochial identities should be in evidence, as indeed they are, in the form of the linguistic and religiously based associations.

According to another hypothesis, the preservation of caste identity is correlated with a restricted range of geographic backgrounds represented by the immigrant population. Contrary to the situation in many overseas Indian communities, the present generation of Indian immigrants to America are derived from a large range of geographic and linguistic backgrounds. Though raised and educated predominantly in India's major cities, they are nonetheless diverse in their ethnic origin within the subcontinent: all of the broad linguistic and cultural areas of India are represented here.

According to this hypothesis, caste should not be an important aspect of identity or principle of organization, and presently it is not. This does not mean that the situation will remain static. As Kanitkar's London study demonstrates, when sufficient numbers of people emigrate from particular localized areas, and are able to maintain ties with India, lingualism gives way to casteism (1972:10). In New York, it appears that the Gujarati community is the strongest numerically, although no comparative statistics are available. On this basis, it is predicted that if the present immigration rates continue, they will be the first community to develop caste associations.

A final hypothesis offered relates the phenomenon of fused identity (based on common national origin) to the Indian sector's position in the power structure of the overseas

society. It is with respect to this last hypothesis that the most interesting findings emerged.

In the three overseas populations considered in which Indians form a numerical minority of the society (i.e., in South Africa, East Africa and Great Britain), their political position is extremely weak. In the U.S., Indians form an even smaller minority than in these societies -- a fraction of one percent of the total population. Nonetheless, individuals who have political aspirations for themselves and for Indians as a group, have discovered that even if one represents a numerically insignificant minority, it is possible to gain power by properly exploiting American concepts of ethnicity. As a phenomenon, this dates to the Black Power movement of the 1960's. Since then, both government and ethnic groups have become aware of what Glazer and Moynihan call "the strategic efficacy of ethnicity in making legitimate claims on the resources of the modern state" (1976:11).

It is this awareness that has guided both the endeavors of AIA's leadership to gain minority status for Indians and the attempts of the federal government to treat Asian-Americans as a homogeneous social unit. The major reason for AIA's desire to have Indians re-classified from 'whites' to 'Asians' is, I believe, one of economic power: Asians are officially recognized as minorities and therefore derive economic benefits in compensation for their past history of discrimination in this country.

What AIA leaders learned is that on the cognitive maps of those who formulate the rules for allocating certain

strategic resources in this country, ethnicity and class are isomorphic: the government's labeling of a group as an ethnic 'minority' is a statement of its belief that its members have uniformly experienced economic discrimination. As Muriel Schein has noted, used in this way, the concept of ethnicity distorts reality by obscuring class differences within ethnic units. She says: "The ideology and symbolism, or emics, of ethnicity emphasize similarity and equality within the group in the face of very great concrete differences..." (1975:95). The present study suggests that the American government has adopted this emic view of ethnicity and thereby stimulates the formation of such identities.

An Indian opponent of re-classification reacted against this entire process. Deploring AIA's initiative on the minority issue as an example of opportunism, he says in a letter published in India Abroad (January 14, 1977):

> The push to be classified as 'non-white', 'Asian', or whatever, seeks to adopt the tactics of xenophobes of an earlier generation, this time for the ostensibly positive purpose of quick gains in the job market... in earlier periods of American history, no Indian in full possession of his senses would have argued for his right to be classified as an 'Asian'. Indeed if we are to insist on this, or some similar label now, we ought to do so because we share the culture and immigration history of 'Asian'. To argue, therefore, that Indians, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, etc. constitute a group in any meaningful sense is to perpetuate in principle, an unsophisticated racism, and to revive the myth of the 'melting pot', only this time an Asian melting pot.

Who, in fact, is responsible for the creation of the

ethnic category 'Asian-American'? Lemuel Ignacio, who has been active in Asian-American ethnic group organization, offers some clues in a book he wrote tracing its development over the past decade. He says at the outset that there is no such group as such:

> The ethnic groups of Asian and Pacific Island origin on their own accord coalesced to deal with a dominant society which was hostile to them ... Adopting the 'Asian-American and Pacific Island Peoples' designation was a matter of political strategy ... There is no common language, customs, culture, lifestyle, and other marks of ethnicity that bind them into a single identity (Ignacio 1976:xvii).

This development is traced in turn to the rise of a single identity among Pilipinos in America, whom the author describes as a "people at the threshold of ethnic emergence". Like Indians, the Pilipino population here is divided on lines of natal language: "It is composed of different cultural and linguistic groups such as Tagalog, Ilocano, Pampangueno, Bicolano, Visayan, Zamboangueno, etc. " (Ignacio 1976:108). Ignacio believes the Pilipinos had initially fared poorly in attempts to receive government funding for their proposals of community development because of Black domination "in the whole minority enterprise in this country" (1976:43).

The organization known as the Pacific/Asian Coalition founded in the early 1970's resulted largely from the efforts of a pan-Pilipino organization to oppose this tendency. The Coalition, based in San Francisco, includes in its membership Pacific Islanders (notably those from Guam, Hawaii, and Samoa) as well as Asian groups. Its purpose was to broaden the power

of the Pilipino group in obtaining the benefits of minority status from the government for all of the member ethnic groups.

Ignacio is fully cognizant that Asian-American ethnicity - and even Pilipino ethnicity, to a lesser extent -- are artifacts which he has helped create. In fact, he argues against taxonomic merger for all purposes except for getting money from the federal government. He says, and the caps are his:

> YOU CANNOT LUMP US TOGETHER ... WE AFFIRM OUR INDIVIDUAL ETHNICITY. WE SHALL PERPETUATE OUR DIVERSITY. WE SHALL BE FOREVER PLURALISTIC (1976:122).

COMPARISONS

Another case of ethnic fusion stimulated by the government has been documented by Nina Glick Schiller (1977). Her description of emerging Haitian identity in New York City is analogous in many ways to the situation described for Indians. She stresses the importance of associations, leaders with political ambitions, and government pressures to organize along ethnic lines, -- all elements discussed in relation to pan-Indian identity.

> ... leaders and members of the Haitian population have formed an ethnic organization, the Haitian-American Citizens Council, with the encouragement of the Democratic party. The result of this organization effort is a growing commitment on the part of members of the Haitian population to act as if the Haitian population of New York forms a single community. However, an examination of the activities and beliefs of the members of the Haitian-American Citizens Council reveals that the members continue to be divided from one another in culture and identity, and their working together is not the result of a common culture or a need to be with their

> own kind, but rather a shared interest in establishing a stake in the American political system... historically, and increasingly since the 1960's resources and opportunities have been made available to ethnic groups (1977:26).

Like Indians, the Haitians are extremely heterogeneous. They are divided along lines of language (French versus Creole-speakers) and religious practices; to a greater extent than Indians, they are additionally divided by differences of color and class.

Schiller reports that during the 1968 presidential election campaign, there was a general "attempt by the National (Democratic) Party to organize as many constituent ethnic groups as possible (1977:27). There is in fact a 'Nationalities Division' of the Democratic National Committee in Washington.

Their attempts coincided with the political ambitions of a Haitian who had tried unsuccessfully to achieve a position of leadership within the Black American political groups. She reports that in contrast, he "received a cordial welcome when he approached the regulars of the Democratic Party as a Haitian" (1977:28). From then on,

> the Democratic Party responded to the Haitians by providing them with access to people with political and economic power if the immigrants chose to organize themselves around a shared Haitian identity. The party provided the stimulus and organization necessary for those interested in gaining positions of leadership (1977:27).

As a result of the new organization's activities, Schiller concludes that

> a Haitian ethnic identity has emerged where previously none existed. Ethnic identity is not a primitive instinct, but a situational response that can be elicited after the hard work of ethnic group organization has taken place (1977:35).

Thusfar, emphasis has been laid on the Black Power movement of the 1960's (and the government's response to it in the form of affirmative action legislation, organizing of party constituency) as an impetus to minority ethnic group formation in the U.S. Certainly the leaders of pan-Indian groups are following the models set by Blacks and Hispanics before them. But also relevant to the Indian case is the comparative study of a group whose ethnicity emerged under a different set of circumstances. In several respects, the early stages of the course followed by Italian immigrants to the U.S. in the early decades of this century parallels the present situation of the Indians.

In her study of Greenwich Village during the 1920's, Caroline Ware (1935) describes its South Italian community as one that initially maintained close ties with families back home:

> ... the new wave of immigrants were largely migratory, pausing in the area for a few years and then returning with their gains to their native village. The turnover of population between 1910 and 1914 was estimated at 75 percent ... Many of those who remained ... had come with the intention of a temporary stay and had remained through the accident of the War, because their gains had not met their expectations, or because they had put off the day of return so long that their children established in the American community could not be uprooted (1935:154).

Like the Indians, they maintained parochial identities and associations:

> Social organizations were formed on the basis of the part of Italy from which people had come. Village and provincial groups from both North and South Italy organized societies for mutual aid ... and for carrying on their social life. The number of these societies was legion... Fifty percent of the local Italian men in 1910 were estimated to have held membership in town or provincial societies. A few of the more prosperous of these societies had their own clubrooms, but most had held their meetings in the various public halls (1935:155).

Language, or more accurately, dialect was closely associated with provincial identities. Its importance as a boundary is attested to by one of Ware's informants. "As one person put it, 'It is not that we cannot understand one another, but we feel more at ease in a language which is thoroughly familiar'" (1935:159). The statement is identical in sentiment to those elicited from Indian immigrants.

The boundary between 'North Italian' and 'South Italian' was also important. A major difference here is that the North Italians had immigrated a generation earlier; the division between the two corresponded with a difference in their degree of acculturation. Nonetheless, the net result was a situation paralleled by the Indian situation. Ware says:

> The North Italians were at pains to maintain the distinction between themselves and the Southerners... Whenever a North Italian thought that a question implied criticism of something which was not American, he took pains, often gratuitously, to insist that the particular thing in question was done by the South Italians and to turn the question into a criticism of the latter (1935:160).

The breakdown of parochial identities and organizations occurred in the 1920's. But although the path followed by the Italian population from this point on in some ways resembles that taken by some Indians, there is one major difference. Ware was able to state in 1935 that

> It has never been part of the American code to treat its ethnic minorities in any official or positive way, as groups rather than as individuals ... Only when the War revealed the fact that hyphenism had survived the process of laissez-faire individualism, and that the country was made up not of a mass of 'Americans', but of a number of undigested lumps of different nationalities, was official cognizance taken of ethnic differences (1935:166).

In fact, this 'official cognizance' was only in regard to external policy such as immigration, not to domestic policy.

According to Ware, the development of a fused Italian identity was seen as a first step to assimilation; it was closely related to the emergence of an American identity among those of Italian origin. In their particulars, the Italian associations that appeared in the 1930's resembled AIA. One group, the Sons of Italy, "was considering changing its name to 'Americans, Sons of Italy'; and its acknowledged purpose now was to educate Italians in American political methods in order to make possible their political participation" (1935:161).

Another such group was the Association of Italian Physicians, analogous to AIA's Medical Council. Its purpose was "to secure status for the Italian doctors in New York". Its organizers had

> little or no patience with the Italian trained older man who had wanted to use the society for cultural purposes, to maintain the Italian language and interests ... The only reason for acting in an Italian group was to remove the handicap under which Italian doctors had to practice and to break down the attitude of the American community -- 'He may be good even though he is Italian' (1935:164).

Ware points to a number of factors that help account for the replacement of Italian parochial identities with one based on national origin beginning in the 1920's. Two of these are relevant to the Indian case. One reason offered is that during this time, U.S. immigration policy changed. "When the stream of immigrants stopped, both the constant supply of new members and the close connection with home villages were cut off" (1935:157; underlining is mine).

The second important reason cited is the social and economic discrimination faced by Italians, a trend which continued during the Depression years: "In view of their treatment under the quota immigration law and the tendency to assume them to be gangsters, the Italians were left in no doubt of the fact that they had been classed among the 'undesireables' and were on the country of sufference" (1935" 170).

How much discrimination is being faced by Indians here has been shown to be a point of controversy, both within and outside the Indian population. AIA's fear that it will become more pervasive if economic trends in the U.S. worsen may have some validity. Recently, the New York Times (August 2, 1977) reported that the newly

constructed Hindu Temple in Queens has been a repeated target of vandalism, and that Indian residents of the area are increasingly becoming victims of violence.

Regardless of whether or not discrimination becomes a serious issue in the future, it is clear from what has been stated here that Hugh Tinker may well be proved wrong in his prophecies about the Indian population in America. He has stated that

> Indians and Pakistanis in North America are unlikely to make a separate mark upon the continent. The most distinguished... become part of the top level of the technocracy of America, and there is not much that is distinctively Indian left over. The remainder form an unnoticed minority among all the other minorities (1977:195).

On the contrary, it is predicted here that as Indians gain more experience in what Lemuel Ignacio calls "the whole minority enterprise in America", their presence will be felt far more than their small numbers would suggest.

APPENDIX I

PART 1: INDIAN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN NEW YORK

Hindu groups

The Swami Narayan Satsang

With national headquarters in Flushing, New York and affiliate chapters in Chicago, Cincinatti, Cleveland, Toronto, Hoboken, and Newark, this group represents the North American Indian immigrant members of a sect of Hinduism that arose in Gujarat during the eighteenth century. Although membership is open to all and there is now a temple in Clacutta to which local members belong, the vast majority of the sect's adherents are Gujarati. The Supreme God worshipped by members is Swami Narayan, the founder of the religion whose presence is believed to still be in the world and is embodied in the continuing succession of High Priests. The current High Priest and psiritual leader of this group is His Holiness Supreme Divine Shree Pramukh Swami, a man who is largely responsible for the formation of the North American chapters.

Some Hindu deities such as Shiva, God of Destruction, and Vishnu, the Preserver God, are incorporated into the religion, but these are accorded a status inferior to that of Narayan, while other deities of the Hindu pantheon have been completely rejected.

Weekly services are held on Sundays between 5 and 7 P.M. and are attended by approximately 25 people during the winter months and between two and three hundred people during the summer. The premises are open for worship every morning and evening. Once a month the members of the New York, Newark and Hoboken centers meet jointly. In addition, two annual celebrations are held on a nation-wide basis: each August, the anniversary of the group is commemorated in New York, and every Memorial Day there is a "samiya" -- a gathering in which the geographically dispersed Satsang families can meet and get to know one another. The location for this event varies.

The organization dates its founding to 1970 when its current president went to Great Britain to visit the High Priest who was then on tour here. The latter suggested the founding of an American branch of the Satsang. Shortly thereafter, four Swami Narayan monks arrived from India in order to assist with its establishment. They brought with them the addresses of fifty Narayan members living in the U.S. The monks went on tour visiting with these families and establishing chapters of the Satsang wherever there was a concentration of them. The organization was effected largely through this correspondence network. In each of these centers, families

would gather regularly in the homes of members in order to conduct religious services. They also kept in contact with the Flushing branch.

In February 1972, the group registered as a non-profit organization in New York State. In 1973, at the suggestion of the High Priest the group pruchased a piece of property on which they plan to erect a temple. On July 6, 1974, the High Priest came to Flushing to inaugurate its construction with an "idol-installation ceremony". On this occasion 1500 Satsang members assembled from India, Africa, Canada, and other parts of the U.S. The High Priest then toured North America, raising an additional $152,000 for the construction, of which the organization has collected approximately two thirds.

The Geeta Temple

Founded in 1972, this is a Hindu place of worship currently housed in what used to be a store in Elmhurst, Queens. At present, the building is undergoing extensive renovation. The organization has a mailing list of nearly nine thousand members dispersed throughout the U.S. and Canada. The large majority of these people have contact with the Temple only indirectly through the visits of touring swamis who have been acting as liaison officers of the organization.

Regular Sunday afternoon services are attended by an average of four hundred people, predominantly of Gujarati and North Indian background. Inauguration of the renovated Temple will be marked by a ten day long celebration to which the dispersed members will be invited.

The Geeta Temple is not devoted to the worship of any particular deity, nor does it cater to any particular sect. Shiva and Vishnu enjoy equal prominence here along with idols of Brahma, Ganesh, Krishna, Lakshmi, Hanuman, and a host of others.

Recently, the Temple has made available at cost price cassette tape recording of the "bhajans", or prayers that are chanted during the service. These were recorded for those who wish to learn the chants, and also for those whow cannot attend the Temple, but wish to conduct services at home.

The Radhasoami Satsang

This group was founded in 1971 and represents the overseas members of a Hindu sect that came into being during the early years of this century. It is described by one of its members as "a religion of saints" in which private and communal meditation are stressed rather than the worship of deities. The sixth leader of the faith died in 1974 after a reign of 38 years.

The membership is small and extremely dispersed. A total of 75 members are spread throughout 15 States and six Canadian provinces. An annual meeting is held in a different location each year, and a weekly congregation of approximately 12 members who live in the metropolitan area takes place each Friday evening in the home of a member. Here at each meeting both men and women take turns at leading the group in offering prayers chanted in Hindi. The sect differentiates between initiated members who must be accepted by the Satsang headquarters in India and uninitiated "seekers" who are free to participate in the proceedings.

Despite the small size of its membership, in July 1975 the organization set up a fund to be used for the eventual establishment of "Satsang halls", to be used as meeting places and temporary lodgings for Satsang members traveling from abroad or distant areas in North America.

The Mahatma Gandhi Satsang

Founded in August 1969, and incorporated in 1971, this group represents Indians from Trinidad and Guyana in New York. Its formation was due largely to the efforts of its currently presiding priest who conceived the satsang as an "interreligious Indian organization". Today, he estimates the composition of its membership of approximately 200 people to consist of 85% Hindus, 15% Christians, and 10% Muslims. By country of birth, the group's composition is roughly 45% Trinidadian, 40% Guyanese, 10% Indians from the subcontinent, and 5% of other people who have been attracted to the group.

Services are hel regularly each Sunday evening in the midtown apartment of the group's leader, and are attended by approximately 50 people. Although the emphasis is on the worship of Vishnu, other Hindu deities are also represented. In addition, services regularly include Muslim, as well as Christian prayers. The ceremonies are alternately conducted in English, Hindi and Urdu.

In the past year, the society has established a fund for the eventual purchase of property on which it will erect a temple.

Sikh groups

The Sikh Cultural Society, Inc.

Was founded in 1965. Until 1972, members met on Sundays initially in one another's homes, then in rented halls, and finally in the basement of a Flushing church. From its inception, the organization aimed to establish a local "gurudwara" (temple). By April 1972, $67,000 had been raised for the purchase of a

church in Richmond Hill, Queens, which formerly housed a Baptist congregation. The stained glass windows remain, but the pews are gone to enable the congregants to assume the traditional posture for temple worship. Seated cross-legged on the wall-to-wall carpeted floor, men occupy the left side of the temple, women the right. More than five hundred congregants gather regularly on Sundays from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. and on the first Friday of every month. Here they listen to the words of the 'Granth', the Sikh scriptures, chanted in chorus and unison to the music of tabla (drums) and harmonium. The services conclude with a traditional free meal served in the Temple's basement.

This group has hopes of expanding its activities and services in the future. An elected officer spoke of the need to teach the children of Sikh immigrants about their religion as well as providing language instruction. To achieve these and other goals relating to expanding educational and social facilities, the Society wrote a proposal in 1974 for the establishment of a new organization whose activities they had hoped would be underwritten by federal funds distributed by New York City. The inspiration behind this idea was the awareness that a Greek community in Astoria, Queens, was receiving such funds under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act for the purposes of community development and that the United Jewish Agency was also receiving monies for community projects.

The officers felt sure that a group with such a relatively small membership size as their own would not be funded. Therefore, they christened the new organization "The Unity Foundation" and stated their hope of eventually reaching all immigrants of Indian origin in the New York area. The structure that would house the new facilities would, of course, be the Sikh Temple.

With the decline of New York City's economy, the group is pessimistic about receiving financial aid in the foreseeable future; some members have urged that the Society's own resources be used for the establishment of the proposed services which include the following:bi-langual education programs, health and social services, and a twenty-four hour a day emergency referral service.

The Sikh Center of New York

A splinter group of the Sikh Cultural Society became a separate incorporated organization in October 1972. According to its constitution, one of the organization's primary goals is "to inculcate the fundamentals of Sikhism, including its distinct identity and character as well as its literary and cultural traditions in a trans-cultural perspective".

For the organization's current secretary, this implies actively projecting an image to the non-Indian population here and creating an awareness in them of the Sikh presence here.

Since 1972, the group has been conducting its Sunday services at various meeting halls (including a Jewish War Veterans Building). In December 1974, a Building Committee was established and charged with finding a suitable building to purchase. A sum of $10,000 has thusfar been raised for this purpose.

The Jain Center of New York

Founded in 1965, represents the immigrant adherants of Jainism, a religion which arose in North India two and a half millenia ago. Until 1975, the Jain Center held its monthly meetings in members' homes. Now the group holds its functions in a studio of an East Side building in Manhattan. Like other Indian religious groups here, the members perceive the building to be only a temporary home. The Jain Center, too, plans for the construction of a temple which will house a Jain library and art collection as well as being a center for worship.

The Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, Inc.

Represents New York's Parsis, a religious group which, according to tradition, came to India from Persia in the 7th century. Formally organized in January 1973, there are approximately two hundred member families today. The group is still without a permanent edifice, but a large contribution made by an Iranian Zoroastrian businessman in September 1976 has enabled the Association to pursue plans to purchase a building in Westchester.

Muslim Groups

There are at least two organized Indian Muslim groups in New York; (there are many more all-Muslim organizations in which Indian Muslims participate). One is a Bohra community (of the Shia sect) which consists of about 70 families. They are predominantly Gujarati-speakers. The organization, the Bohra Jamaat of the Eastern United States, meets monthly to perform religious services at rented halls.

The other group is an Ismaili community. In New York, Ismailis come predominantly from East Africa, and they are also natal Gujarati-speakers. They gather in each other's homes for worship, but in contrast to all of the other groups thusfar mentioned, these gatherings are not open to non-members.

Syrian Christians

From Kerala are organized into at least four different congregation in New York: two are in Manhattan, one is located in Queens, the other in the Bronx. The Bronx congregation has

a membership of 250 families and has collected $30,000 to date towards the purchase of its own church.

PART 2: ASSOCIATIONS BASED ON STATE/LANGUAGE IN NEW YORK CITY IN 1975

The Cultural Association of Bengal, Inc.

Founded in 1971 had in 1975 a membership of 300 households. It publishes a newsletter called Sanbad Bichitra in Bengali once every three weeks. The association maintains 22 libraries devoted to Bengali leterature, 11 of which are located in New York City. A total of 2500 books are available in Bengali. This group also organizes relief funds to aid people in Bengal and Bangladesh who have been stricken by flood or famine. The Cultural Association of Bengal also offers instruction in the Bengali language in Brooklyn and in Queens.

The Bihar Association of North America, Inc.

Was founded in November 1975 and had a membership size of 75 households at that time. It does not yet publish a newsletter, but plans for one exist. If they materialize, this will be the first association newsletter to be published in Hindi. The group sponsors bi-monthly gatherings which usually focus on the celebration of a holiday. Each year, for example, it offers a program in honor of "Holi", a holiday which in North India celebrates the arrival of spring. It was also the first association in the New York area to celebrate a Muslim holiday when it presented a program to mark "Eid".

The Gujarati Samaj of New York, Inc.

Was founded in 1973 and has a membership list of approximately 1500 names. A newsletter is published in Gujarati twice annually and the group organizes 15-20 events annually. In 1975 there were no affiliate chapters, but there were plans to inaugurate branches in Toronto, Baltimore, and Boston. The organization was providing Sunday school classes in Gujarati for children at the Geeta Temple. This group also maintains a Gujarati library of 300 books at the Temple. In addition, they sponsor drives to collect old clothing to be sent to India.

The Kerala Samajam of New York, Inc.

Was founded in 1971 and had a membership of approximately 200 households in 1975. A newsletter is published monthly in Malayalam. Bi-monthly programs are offered and affiliate chapters have already been established in Washington, Montreal, Chicago, Detroit, and Boston.

The Kannada Koota of New York, Inc.

Was founded in 1973 and had a membership of 185 households in 1975. A newsletter is published in Kannada twice annually and bi-monthly gatherings are sponsored. There is an affiliate chapter in Philadelphia.

The organization also maintains a library of books in Kannada.

The Maharashtra Mandal of New York, Inc.

Was founded in 1970 and had a membership of approximately 150 households in 1975. A newsletter in Marathi is published monthly and programs are offered on a bi-monthly basis. Affiliate chapters are located in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles.

The Rajasthan Parishad of America, Inc.

Was founded in June 1975 and had a membership of 200 in that year.

Sindhi Association of America, Inc.

Was founded in October 1974 and had a membership list of 200 names in 1975. A newsletter, "Sindhvasi", is published in English and mailed to 3500 Sindhi families living in North America. In 1975 the Sindhi association was in the process of publishing a directory of Sindhi families residing in the U.S. and Canada. The group was also pursuing plans to obtain a building where its members could meet to socialize.

Tamil Sangam

Founded in 1970 had a membership of 250 families whose names and addresses were listed in a directory published by the group. A newsletter is published in Tamil on a monthly basis.

Telugu Literary and Cultural Society

Founded in 1971 had a membership list of approximately 200 households. A newsletter in Telugu is published quarterly.

APPENDIX 2

INDIAN RADIO PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK

STATION		TIME	
WNYC	93.9 FM	Monday	9:30-10:00 p.m.
WHBI	105.9 FM	Tuesday	9:30-10:30 p.m.
		Wednesday	10:00-10:30 p.m.
		Thursday	7:05- 7:30 p.m.
			9:30-10:30 p.m.
		Friday	7:05- 7:30 p.m.
		Sunday	10:00-11:00 p.m.
WBNX	13.80 AM	Friday	11:30-12:30 a.m.
		Saturday	10:00-10:30 p.m.
			10:30-11:00 p.m.
WRSU	88.7 FM	Saturday	9:00-10:00 a.m.
WNYC	830 AM	Saturday	12:30- 1:00 p.m.
WKCR	89.9 FM	Sunday	10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Source: India Guide 1975, p. 136.

APPENDIX 3

SURVEY OF UNDERGRADUATE CATEGORIZATION OF INDIANS

A class of 100 Queens College undergraduates was asked on a questionnaire: "To what race do people from India belong? " Thirteen responded with either the terms 'Caucasian' or 'white'. Five respondents answered 'Black'; an additional 18 replied with combinations of color labels such as "they are a mixture of black and yellow" or "yellow-brown". Significantly, 27, or almost a third of them either could not or would not answer the question although they did answer other questions about 'race' on the questionnaire. Although admittedly limited in scope, the poll supports the contention that Asian Indians are not on the cognitive map of many Americans, and that they do not fit clearly into any of the American folk categories of race.

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