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INSIDE AND OUT: THE INTERACTION OF THE U.S. IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND INDIAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

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INSIDE AND OUT: THE INTERACTION OF THE U.S. IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND
INDIAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

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"The universe is made of stories, not of atoms."

-Muriel Rukeyser

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to consider how Indian immigrant families, who come from cultures that are shaped around culturally distinct forms of family, navigate and adapt to U.S. culture and institutions that are structured based on the idealized American family form. The main research questions being considered are: How is family defined by immigration policies? How are Indian immigrant families affected by these policies? An ethnographic methodological approach, including participant observation and semi-structured interviews, is used to gather data in the Columbus metro area in order to address the above questions. Observations and semi-structured interviews were completed with local Indian immigrants, as well as with service providers and community leaders who serve the Indian immigrant population. The data collected through observations and interviews is then compared to current research findings in the existing literature on immigration, gender, and family. Findings suggest that U.S. immigration policy both hinders and fosters the acculturation process of immigrants by restricting which family members can receive a visa and by utilizing a visa sponsorship system that encourages family connections. Findings also suggest intergenerational conflict within Indian families as a result of various agents of socialization. Finally, findings point to the role that ethnic enclaves play as coping mechanisms for Indian immigrant families as they deal with the stresses of immigration. Future recommendations include welcome support groups within local school and recreational services for immigrant parents, facilitated by non-immigrant citizens, as well as an increased availability of culturally consistent mainstream social services for immigrant families. Suggestions for future research include studies of other U.S. cities and the “match/mismatch” of available services and immigrant needs.

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Introduction

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's five-year estimates from 2009-2013, the foreign-born population in the United States is 10.9 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2015, Quick Facts Beta). This percentage is projected to dramatically increase. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 National Projections predict that by 2060 approximately one in five U.S. residents will be foreign born (Colby and Ortman 2015). This demographic change means an increase in the diversity of languages spoken, religions practiced, expressions of gender roles, and structures of families represented in the U.S. Both historically and currently, cultural, governmental, and other social institutions in the United States are structured around the normative archetype of a 'typical' American family, which approximates the traditional nuclear family form. The family form of the 1950s era—which includes a breadwinner husband, along with his 'breadbaker' wife and their children—remains the dominant ideological image of American family life, yet, this family form signifies an exceptional historical moment and no longer remains the unquestioned ideal, or demographic reality.

Many immigrant families bring with them ideas about the standard family form that compete, or are inconsistent with, the normative American model. Given the dissonance between immigrant families' lived experience and their cultural values on the one hand, and U.S. normative expectations and institutional practices on the other, an important question concerns the methods and understandings immigrant families use to navigate and adapt to both U.S. culture and the institutions that privilege the idealized American family form.

According to the U.S. 2010 census, migrants from Asian nations were the fastest growing demographic group of immigrants coming to the U.S. during that period of data collection (Humes, Jones, Ramirez 2011). Between 2000-2010, the Asian population in the U.S., including

both U.S. and foreign born, sizably increased by 43.3% (Humes et al. 2011). Of the population of immigrants coming from Asia, the two main countries sending immigrants are China and India. In 2013, the nation sending the highest number of immigrants to the U.S. was China. The third highest was India (Jensen et al. 2015). Indian citizens have been immigrating to the U.S. since 1820. Their reasons for relocation have varied from work in agriculture, to educational opportunities, to positions in high-skilled professions such as nursing and information technology (Zong and Batalova 2015).

Though the 2010 U.S. census showed that the majority of Asian immigrants settled in Western U.S. states, the counties with the fastest growing Asian immigrant populations were located in the Midwest (Hoeffel et al. 2012). Today, six years after the census was taken, a community of Indian immigrants is fast growing in the Columbus, Ohio region. Columbus is home to the Ohio State University, a Honda plant, and other companies such as International Business Machines (IBM), Nationwide Insurance, and OhioHealth. Each of these companies and institutions hire significant amounts of immigrant workers or host immigrant students.

According to the American Community Survey, 4.5% of Columbus's population is Asian (American Fact Finder 2014). Of that 4.5%, 1.3% is Indian-American (American Fact Finder 2014). Driving through the streets of Columbus, one easily recognizes the existence of Indian immigrants and their families in the city by virtue of migrant-owned or migrant-serving businesses. Certain areas of the city, such as the mid-section of Sawmill Road, are home to Indian restaurants, grocery stores, and clothing stores. Furthermore, the existence of thriving Indian businesses serves as evidence that the Indian immigrant community is settling in.

As Indian immigrants and their families make the transition from living in India to life in the U.S., it is essential to consider the social services and resources that are in place to support

their successful transition. For the future of these families, and for the future of the city of Columbus, it is important to investigate the ways in which these families are affected by U.S. policies, services, and customs.

Starting from the point at which an Indian individual decides to immigrate to the United States, they come into contact with U.S. institutions. Before an immigrant is eligible to enter the U.S., they must file for and receive a visa. Currently, this process may take up to thirteen years (The Immigration Visa Process 2015). Once the visa is granted, the immigrating individual can legally make the journey to the U.S. Once they enter the U.S., Indian families are faced with a variety of secondary challenges. For example, understanding the language, familial separation, navigating school systems, and establishing networks of friendship all inform the adjustment and acculturation process. All of these adjustments are the result of two cultures meeting.

The U.S. has a network of social service supports, but the extent to which they sensitively accommodate the cultural difficulties that Indian immigrants experience informs the qualitative experience of migrants. From the time an immigrant receives a visa, the extent to which their family life and structure ‘fits’ with the expectations of U.S. normative stereotypes of family and day-to-day life in the U.S. informs Indian families’ encounters with American institutions.

If the reality is that the demographics of the United States are becoming more diverse, and more specifically, if the Indian population in the United States is increasing, it is important to consider the ramifications for United States’ citizens, communities, and social institutions, as well as the consequences for this unique migrant population. For my distinction research, I set out to learn more about the Columbus Indian immigrant population and the extent to which current services that are in place for this community meet their needs in the adjustment and acculturation process.

My research consisted of living in an apartment complex in Dublin, Ohio with a large Indian immigrant population. I made ethnographic observations while living in this residential community, and I also visited local community centers, Indian grocery stores, and Indian owned restaurants. I held semi-structured interviews with both local Indian immigrants and social service providers. My findings represent the extent of the ‘match’ between the current state of Indian immigrant families’ needs and the services that are available to them. My hope is that my research will inspire the Columbus community to consider the social service and community needs of this growing population, with consequences not only for Indian immigrants’ success, but also for the growth of our community and nation as a whole.

Literature Review

To gain a deeper understanding of current immigration policy, immigrants’ associated encounters with local social services, the effects of policy and available social services on the lifestyle and satisfaction of the Indian immigrant population, and the overall story regarding the qualitative experiences of Indian immigrant families, it is essential to consider the ways findings from the current literature on immigration, acculturation, and assimilation processes frame the experience of migrant families.

Theoretical Framework: The SNAF and Challenging the “Straight Line” Theory of Assimilation

Two theories can be used to understand the context within which Indian immigrant families experience immigrating to the U.S. The first, Dorothy Smith’s (1993) framework that delineates a specific institutional and cultural schema known as the “SNAF” (or Standard North American Family) comes from the subfield of family studies. This theory illuminates the cultural

expectations and constraints that Indian immigrants approach when immigrating to the U.S. The second, from transnational migration studies, is Deepak's (2004) critique on the "straight line" theory of assimilation, which provides a narrative of how immigrants exercise agency when confronted with U.S. cultural expectations and daily life demands.

Dorothy Smith (1993) identifies the ideological code of the Standard North American Family (SNAF), which refers to a model for family structure consisting of a husband, wife, and their children, as well as idealized roles for each family member, which dictates roles and corresponding gendered divisions of labor within the family. The husband is considered the authoritative head of the family as the breadwinner, while the wife serves as support for her husband and cares for the home and children. This ideal family form originates from American family life in the 1950s era. Today, this idealized family model, though it is not lived out by the majority of American citizens, remains the predominant ideal in American society. Furthermore, this model is race and class specific (Gerstel 2011). However, assuming that it is possible for a family to rely solely on the income of one family member is not practical in the current U.S. economy. Therefore, fulfilling the SNAF is dependent on socioeconomic class, which is inextricably linked to race in the contemporary U.S. labor market, as well as in other central social institutions. In other words, the model is race-specific because the majority of U.S. minority families are marginalized and unable to earn a "family wage". Thus, the predominant myth of the SNAF masks the reality that the majority of the United States does not fit this family form. Studies of family compositions show that less than ten percent of the United States' population lives in a family form consistent with the SNAF, including two married parents, their biological children, and no other household members (Marks 2006).

Ultimately, as more and more immigrants settle in the United States, the diversity of structures and family values continues to increase, further eroding the ideological hegemony of the SNAF, and changing the cultural benchmarks for family life in American popular culture as a whole. At the same time, the nation's immigration policies and governmental and social institutions remain structured such that the SNAF family form is the privileged cultural ideal.

The traditional Indian family structure does not fit the mold of the SNAF. The difference between U.S. ideological family structures and Indian institutionalized family structure can be further highlighted through each nation's census definitions of family. In India, the official census definition of a household and family reads, "usually a group of persons who normally live together and take their meals from a common kitchen unless the exigencies of work prevent any of them from doing so" (Census of India 2001). In contrast, in the U.S. census, a family is defined as "a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together" (U.S. Census Bureau 2015, Current Population Survey). The census definition is significant because it serves as the official delineation of the needs of the population, and serves as a basis for the policies that are formed to meet those needs. In short, the disjuncture between these two definitions is of great consequence regarding the way in which a family interacts with governmental and social structures, adjusts to the demands of their new home, and meets the expectations of the community.

The U.S. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is just one especially telling example of the effects that SNAF-associated normative assumptions regarding family life have on U.S. social policy and family practices. The FMLA allows eligible employees to take twelve workweeks of unpaid leave within a twelve-month period for personal or family medical circumstances (such as birth or adoption, or caring for sick family members). Though employers

may elect to provide compensation during this 12-week period, they do so at their own discretion in the absence of legal mandate (U. S. Department of Labor 2015). The FMLA delineates that employees can only take leave if they are caring for themselves, their spouses, their son, or daughter. This narrow definition excludes any form of extended family, the close friends of migrants who lack stateside relatives to care for them, or other fictive kin (Gerstel and Sarkisian 2013). Sudha (2013) points to the extended family in the role of elderly care in Indian immigrant families, as Indian immigrant families rely on the extended family to provide resources and support for the elderly. Rather than utilizing non-familial care services, Indian elderly expect familial care. Often, elderly Indian immigrants rely on their adult children to provide for them financially and to guide them linguistically (Nandan 2007). Therefore, it is important for Indian immigrant's to be there for their elderly family members when they are in need. Yet, caring for a parent is not included in the reasons for utilizing the FMLA. This is just one example of the ramifications that come along with Indian immigrant families not fitting within structurally defined U.S. family form.

Therefore, FMLA legislation is only helpful for the few families that live under the SNAF ideal—again, this constitutes less than ten percent of U.S. families, and that number is even smaller when one considers how many American workers are exempt from the FMLA, as well as those employers who offer leave as legally mandated, yet provide no compensation during the granted leave. Problematically, other families who do not fit this legally narrow definition of family are denied the ability to care for, and receive care from, those they love and depend on. Ultimately, many families who are immigrating to the U.S. from other cultures experience family life in varying forms. As more and more Indian immigrants arrive in the U.S., they are confronted with the realities of institutionalized preferences for idealized American

familial structures, and the FMLA requirements serve as one example of a variety of institutional preferences.

Deepak (2004) provides commentary on how immigrant families consider their adjustment to the cultural expectations of a new society. Examining the concept of the process of migration from a transnational perspective, Deepak explains that migration experiences are traditionally viewed through the lens of acculturation. Through this lens, successful migration is defined as dropping the traditions, linguistics, and culture of the immigrant's country of origin, and picking up the norms of their host culture (Deepak 2005). Deepak opposes this view of immigration, as she argues the way acculturation is traditionally conceptualized is ethnocentric and inaccurate. Alternatively, Deepak (2005) proposes a framework that considers the process of migration as a multifaceted and complex one. The process of migration theory considers immigration instead as a process characterized by a transnational negotiation of competing and sometimes conflicting forces, whereby both the host and home cultures are navigated such that a new hybrid cultural framework emerges in which immigrant adherents are neither wedded entirely to the new expectations of the host culture, nor do they hold rigidly to their culture and traditions of origin. In other words, she emphasizes the role of both the host and home cultures in shaping migrant cultural adaptations (Deepak 2005). Deepak (2005) conceptualizes the process of migration as informed by:

a set of shifting and conflicting demands, expectations, and possibilities centered on gender, power, culture, and sexuality coming from the ideologies, structural conditions, and cultural and social norms of the home and host countries (590).

Deepak (2005) analyzed the experiences of second-generation immigrant women and found that South Asian immigrants navigate these diverse, and often conflicting sociocultural norms by developing a strong identity in what it means to be South Asian in a Western setting. The

identity they form is then passed on through generations in parenting and extended kinship systems.

The literature points to the various ways that immigrants cope with and restructure their lives around the changes and stresses of acculturation. In order to answer the question at hand, it is important to gather a base of knowledge about the history and policies associated with U.S. immigration.

History of U.S. Immigration Policy

The way accepted family structure is considered in immigration policy is a defining force that shapes the process of migrant acculturation. Indian immigration to the U.S. has changed over the years due to various Immigration Acts. From 1850 to 1920, the majority of immigrants arriving in the U.S. were from northern and southern Europe due to restrictive, nativist quotas fueled by the racial anxieties of a predominantly 'white,' Anglo-Saxon population (Glick 2011). European quotas changed as the demand for cheap labor in a growing nation rose, restrictions were lifted, and a more diverse population of immigrants started traveling to the U.S. In particular, South Asian immigrants began arriving in the U.S. in the late 1800s. Beginning between 1890 to the 1920s, workers from the Indian state of Punjab arrived in California and the Pacific Northwest to work for railroad, steamship, and lumber companies (Leonard 1992). However, this brief window of diversity in immigrants came to an end in 1917 with the Asiatic Barred Zone Act, which banned immigration to the U.S. from a "barred zone" of countries, including India (Deepak 2005; 587)

The 1924 Immigration Act imposed a new set of racially-informed limits, reducing the number of individuals accepted from Eastern Europe, denying the entry of any Asian nationals, and separating families through the exclusion of female migrants which ultimately resulted in the

denial of family reunification requests (Glick 2011; Deepak 2005). This meant families had to exist across national borders, creating what are referred to as “transnational families.” The family ban was lifted in 1946, but a very small cap of 105 was placed on the number of visas given out to Indians. The cap was raised again in 1965 with the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (Deepak 2005). Specifically, this legislation raised the cap on Indian migrants to 20,000 visas, at which point the U.S. also began issuing H-1B visas (Steven). These visas allow immigrants to temporarily enter the country as high-skilled professionals, students, and their families.

While the historical perspective listed above is important for contextualizing my research, in order to understand current interactions, it is essential to examine the current state of immigration policies.

Types of Visas

Immigrants migrate to the U.S. for various reasons, each of which requires a different visa. Three of the most common reasons that Indians immigrate to the U.S. are for education, employment, or family reunification. There are two temporary student visas that are typically used for educational purposes: F-1 and J-1 (Steven). An individual qualifies for an F-1 visa if they are “enrolled in an ‘academic’ educational program, a language-training program, or a vocational program,” if the school they hope to attend is “approved by the Student and Exchange Visitors Program, Immigration and Customs Enforcement,” and they plan to be enrolled full time in the institution (U.S.C.I.S 2016, Students and Employment). Beyond these qualifications, the individual must also “be proficient in English or be enrolled in courses leading to English proficiency”, have sufficient funds to be able to support themselves through their entire course of study, and have intentions of returning to their country of origin (U.S.C.I.S 2016, Students and Employment). The dependents, including spouses and unmarried children under twenty-one

years of age, can join the F-1 visa holder on F-2 dependent visas. Under F-2 visas, dependents are not eligible to work in the U.S. (Berkeley International Office 2016).

The second educational visa format that is commonly used by Indian immigrants is a J-1 visa. This visa is granted to individuals who plan to migrate to the U.S. for the “purpose of teaching, instructing or lecturing, studying, observing, conducting research, consulting, demonstrating special skills, receiving training, or to receive graduate medical education or training” in a program that is approved by the U.S. Department of State (U.S.C.I.S 2016, Exchange Visitors). The J-1 applicant’s spouse and unmarried children under twenty-one years old are eligible to apply for a J-2 visa. With a J-1 visa, the migrating spouse and children on a J-2 visa may work as long as the income they make does not support the individual on the J-1 visa (U.S.C.I.S 2016, Exchange Visitors). The main difference between the two education based visas is the eligibility of the dependent visa holder to obtain a work permit.

Another visa format is the family based visa. Once an Indian immigrant becomes a U.S. citizen they can serve as an immigration sponsor for their immediate relatives, including spouse, unmarried children under twenty-one years of age, and parents (U.S. Department of State, Family Based Immigrant Visa 2016). An immigration sponsor is a U.S. based relative of an individual who desires to immigrate to the U.S. When agreeing to sponsorship, sponsors accept the responsibility of financially supporting the immigrant until the immigrant either becomes a U.S. citizen or works in the U.S. for forty quarters (or credits) of work, which typically equates to ten years (U.S.C.I.S. 2015, Affidavit of Support). The number of visas issued by the U.S. to immediate relatives of immigrants is unlimited.

Each year, the U.S. issues a limited number of family preference immigrant visas (U.S. Department of State, Family Based Immigrant Visa 2016). There are four different categories of

family preference immigrant visas. These four categories account for various relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents that are not accounted for under the immediate relative immigrant visas. Common uses of family preference immigrant visas for Indian families include unmarried sons and daughters over the age of twenty-one (F2 visa) and brother and sisters (F4 visa) (U.S. Department of State, Family Based Immigrant Visa 2016). F2 visas can only be sponsored by lawful permanent residents (LPR) and a yearly cap of 114,200 visas are distributed each year. F4 visas can only be sponsored by U.S. citizens and a limit of only up to 65,000 are granted each year (U.S. Department of State, Family Based Immigrant Visa 2016). Once the visa applicant applies for the visa, their request is placed in chronological order with other applicants applying for the same visa. This list of applicants is then gradually fulfilled. Currently the wait time is seven years for Indian F2 visa applicants and thirteen years for F4 Indian applicants (U.S. Department of State, Visa Bulletin For March 2016). Grandparents, aunts, uncles, in-laws, and cousins are the only familial relationships that are not permitted to act as sponsors for immigration (U.S. Department of State, Family Based Immigrant Visa 2016).

Another type of visa that is common among Indian immigrants is an H-1B specialty occupation visa. This type of visa is presented to individuals who are coming to the U.S. to work for an employer they've established a relationship with prior to their migration. The occupation in which they are planning to work must qualify as a "specialty occupation" (Understanding H-1B Requirements). Examples of specialty occupations include systems analysis and engineering (Vallance 2013). Another element of the H-1B visa is the yearly cap. A limit of 65,000 H-1B visas are issued each fiscal year (Understanding H-1B Requirements 2016). There are a few circumstances that provide for exemptions from the cap, such as applicants with a U.S. master's degree or higher or applicants who plan to work for a higher education institution, nonprofit

research organization, or government research organization (Understanding H-1B Requirements). Even with these exemptions, the cap fills very quickly (Understanding H-1B Requirements) The H-1B visa can be held for 3 years (Understanding H-1B Requirements). After 3 years, the individual can either renew the visa or move on to a green card. The H-1B visa has similar qualifications as the student visas in terms of allowances for dependents. Unmarried children under twenty-one years of age and the visa holder's spouse can receive H-4 nonimmigrant visas to accompany a family member on an H1-B visa. As of May 26, 2015, dependents can also qualify for employment authorization via an H-4 visa (DHS Extends Eligibility 2015).

Banerjee (2006) explains that the H-1B visa has been an essential part of the U.S. IT industry since the 1990s. She states:

The H-1B visa has served as the backbone of IT labor in the USA (Ayers and Syfert 2002) at a time when IT advances and IT-based economic growth have been critical to the USA for maintaining its competitiveness in the global economy (Lowell 2001).

The use of H-1B visas has had an overarching affect on the U.S. and global economies. H-1B visas are used by the U.S. to hire IT professionals, with specific expertise, on a temporary basis. These workers are a major part of the U.S.'s ability to engage in new technological ventures. Understanding the utility of H-1B visas explains the way that the H-1B visa policies are structured. It is essential to consider the impact that the way these policies are formatted has on Indian immigrant families.

Asian Indian Family Structure

As delineated above, it warrants emphasis that in the U.S., the institution of the family is shaped around the SNAF (Smith 1993). As a result, U.S. social systems have institutionalized this ideology. Relevant for the study at hand is the fact that the U.S. immigration system is no

exception to this general rule. Visa qualifications, limitations, and types reflect the institutionalized nature of the SNAF. When an Indian family decides to immigrate to the U.S., immigration policy is the first of many U.S. institutions that migrants come into contact with. Problematically, Indian family structures and ideologies do not traditionally fit within the practices and values dictated by the SNAF format.

For example, Indian families are typically multigenerational (Chadha 2013). Rather than approximating the nuclear family form, Indian families usually are governed by an extended kinship system (Deepak 2005). An Indian household often consists of parents, children, grandparents, and sometimes even cousins, prior to migration. Deepak explains that South Asian “family life is embedded in the extended family, wherein each member has a specific set of roles and duties” (Deepak 2005).

Moreover, the traditional Indian family system is patrilineal. Therefore, elders and men have the most power (Deepak 2005; Sonawat 2001). Men are traditionally the bread earners for the family (Prakash and Singh 2014). Though, males remain the head wage earners in Indian society, women are increasingly participating in the work force (Prakash and Singh 2014). Indian family traditions further dictate that marital practices are such that a husband and wife marry and move in with the husband’s parents (Deepak 2005).

In contrast to more individualistic U.S. family practices, in India, it is the legal duty of the son to care for his elderly parents, if the elders do not have the resources to care for themselves (Kalavar 2015, Sonawat 2001). If the family is not already living together, it is not unusual for an elderly family member to move in with their son (Kalavar 2015). Such traditional practices often prove to be a roadblock to acculturation once an Indian family migrates to the U.S. One option for maintaining this important care giving practice is to bring the relatives as

immigrants to the U.S. However, migrating with one's elderly relatives is not one of the most common solutions for two reasons. First, the psychological harm that immigration has on an elderly individual often serves as a deterrent (Kalavar 2015). Secondly, many elderly Indians do not want to immigrate, as they are comfortable where they are, in the home, city, and culture with which they are familiar and invested in, and therefore they may not view the necessary changes of acculturation as desirable (Kalavar 2015).

Even when extended family members are unable or unwilling to migrate, Indian immigrants have found creative ways to make up for the duty of care their culture dictates they owe to their parents. In traditional Indian families, it is the duty of the son to provide financially for his parents, if his parents are unable to do so on their own. Therefore, an important way that Indian immigrants care for their extended family is by sending financial support back to India (Kalavar 2015).

Kalavar (2015) discusses other creative ways that Indian immigrants make up for the duty of care their culture dictates they owe to their parents. She explains that transnational communication services have played an immense role in transnational elderly care (Kalavar 2015). The use of mobile phones, the Internet, and other communication services allow immigrants who cannot be physically available the opportunity to always be digitally available to the loved ones they have left behind in India.

Beyond cultural obligations to care for older family members, ties to older family members are additionally important as the elderly play a major role in the decision-making processes of Indian families. Kalavar (2015) found that older adults provide more advice for their children than parents receive from children. For example, the elderly give their children a lot of advice on how to raise their children (Deepak 2015). This may even extend to the point of

child discipline directly enacted by grandparents on grandchildren. Kalavar (2015) found that this was true even after the offspring immigrated to the U.S. Additionally, one of the major areas in which parents play a role in Indian children's lives is in decisions regarding marriage.

The traditional marriage system in India is arranged (Prakash and Singh 2014:205). An arranged marriage is "characterized by family-arranged marriages where parents and family members take a prime responsibility in [the] overall mate selection process" (Prakash and Singh 2014:205). Prakash and Singh (2014) findings suggest that the process of mate selection is shifting in urban Indian society towards an increase in self-selected marriages. Prakash and Singh (2014) findings suggest that such factors, as education and profession, influence the mate selection process that an individual takes. These findings are significant for the study at hand because Indian immigrants often migrate from Indian urban centers, similar to the city Prakash and Singh (2014) studied. Furthermore, Prakash and Singh's (2014) findings suggest that the younger generation of Indian immigrants value traits such as "physical attractiveness, economic potentiality, [and] intelligence" over the traits that are traditionally considered in arranged marriages such as caste and religion (222). This shift in desired traits suggest that Indian immigrants are not as concerned with traditional Indian cultural traits, thus, the selection of a mate while in the U.S. may prove to be accessible.

Implications of U.S. Immigration Policies for Indian Families

Gender Implications

In pursuit of answering the question at hand, it is important to consider the extent to which the way that family is institutionalized by U.S. immigration policies "matches" the traditional needs and relations within Indian immigrant families. Banerjee (2013) identifies gendered visa policies and their effects on the state of Indian immigrant families. Banerjee's

ethnographic study is primarily concerned with migrant female nurses and their male spouses in the greater Chicago region. According to Banerjee, due to employment restrictions for holders of dependent visas, the traditional Indian family structure is disrupted, which serves to limit the ability of Indian migrant families to function successfully in broader American society.

Specifically, Banerjee finds among her subjects that female Indian nurses travel to the U. S. on H-1B visas, and their husbands receive H-4 visas. Problematically, H-4 visas do not allow the dependent to work until the H-1B visa holder has reached permanent residency in the U. S., creating an inconsistency between the host culture's expectations for family life, and Indian cultural expectations that dictate that the husband is the head of the household and the wife handles all domestic and caretaking responsibilities. Therefore, the visa policy restrictions do not allow husbands and wives to carry out their culturally prescribed, typical familial gender roles. Most problematically, the gendered expectations embedded in the requirements of the H1-B and H-4 visas amplify the cultural burden borne out by the women of such families, as men are blocked from significant wage-earning. In other words, while some husbands flex to a degree and assume a measure of domestic responsibility, a significant portion of the husbands in Banerjee's sample refused to engage in domestic contributions, forcing wives to bear the majority of the burden of gendered and familial acculturation alongside their wage-earning responsibilities.

Parenting Implications

Beyond the necessity of maintaining traditional gender roles, there are other pertinent aspects of normative expectations for Indian family life that have practical relevance when a family is resettling in the U.S. Certainly, one of the greatest concerns for Indian parents is their children, given the important role subsequent generations play in preserving distinct cultural

heritage and values. Many current studies consider the ways in which Indian immigrant parents go about raising their children in the United States, how their children respond, and the subsequent impacts of parenting practices on intergenerational relationships. Ganapathy-Coleman (2013) discusses the ways in which Indian immigrant parents raise their children to maintain distinct cultural practices, despite significant pressure to assimilate to American values. Ganapathy-Coleman (2013) argues that Indian immigrants attempt to hold true to their roots in Indian culture. They do so by passing traditions and customs on to the next generation. Ganapathy-Coleman (2013) identified four core themes in the ways that Indian immigrant parents raise their children: “Have good morals and values”, “Understand themselves (you understand yourself only when you know your origins”, “Stand on their own [two] feet”, and “Family closeness (comes from doing things together)”. Each of Ganapathy-Coleman’s themes illustrates how Indian immigrant parents cope with their dual identities of Indian and “American”.

Tension may rise in immigrant families when children and the rest of their family are socialized into U.S. culture at different rates. Complicating matters is the fact that younger generations are subject to the influences of U.S. education to a far higher degree than older generations—a powerful and primary socializing institution in American culture. Dutta (2014) explains that sometimes the tension reaches a point where individuals have to choose between the two cultures:

Often the result is children who speak fluent English and listen to American music while their parents remain isolated and unable to interact in the greater community (51).

Indian immigrant children are socialized by agents such as their education, peer group, and popular media. They learn to make their own choices independent of their parents. Most often

their choices are “American” in nature, while their parents remain rooted in Indian cultural norms.

This difference between Indian immigrant parents and their children may be the result of America being an individualistic society and India being collectivist. Baptiste (2005) explains:

Cultures that tend toward collectivism emphasize the importance of family and self-sacrifice for the benefit of the whole; they value allegiance, deference to authority, family pride, and honor (qtd. in Dutta 2014).

Indian parents’ mindsets are oriented to the values of Indian society centered around the family and the unity of all of its members. To the contrary, Indian children are socialized into American society, which teaches them to be independent.

The presented literature considers the ways that current U.S. policies and social institutions are structured. Furthermore, the literature point to the values and formations of Indian families and the ways that assimilation affects Indian immigrant families. The purpose of the current research is to identify the ways that U.S. policies and social institutions define “a family” compared to the way that Indian families define themselves within the city of Columbus, Ohio.

Methods

The research questions were answered through an ethnographic methodological approach. The data collection consisted of participant-observation; writing descriptive, analytic, and reflective fieldnotes; conducting semi-structured interviews; open coding of fieldnotes and transcripts by thematic content; and analysis of secondary sources.

A participant observation method was selected in order to see and experience the interactions between individual Indian immigrants, the broader community, and service providers that address the needs of Indian immigrant families. Semi-structured interviews were useful in identifying the personal narratives of immigrants and service providers. These two

methods combined allowed me to answer my research question by gathering data on the emotions and life events of Indian immigrants in Columbus. The ethnographic approach allowed me to focus specifically on Indian immigrant family life in the city of Columbus. Comparing my findings to secondary sources broadened the analysis and provided evidence as to the extent to which my findings might be representative of the experiences of Indian immigrants in other U.S. cities.

Review of Secondary Literature Sources

I considered current academic discourse on the topic of Indian immigration and Indian family structures. Reading literature on the topic of Indian immigration inspired me to pursue research on the topic. I used this sociological literature as well as sources from other fields such as interdisciplinary gender and family studies, to formulate my research questions. While collecting and analyzing my data, I referenced secondary sources to answer secondary questions that emerged.

Ethnographic Participant Observation

Through out the period of this study, I lived in an apartment complex in a suburb of Columbus, OH. The apartment complex is home to many immigrants, the majority of whom are from India. While living in this complex I made observations of social behaviors and kept fieldnotes on what I observed. While observing, I paid particular attention to Indian immigrants' references to experiences of living as newcomers to the United States. In particular, I focused specifically on the impacts of U.S. governmental policies and social services on immigrant family life, as well as the ways in which Indian and American cultural definitions of family affected Indian immigrant families' ability to engage with other members of U.S. society, utilize U.S. social institutions, and maintain relationships within their own family. I also spent time

observing at local Indian restaurants and grocery stores. In addition, I attended the social gatherings of Indian community members, the most significant of which included a religious festival held by a local Indian organization and a lunch in the home of an Indian family.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirteen individuals. Four of the individuals were Indian-born, second-generation U.S. immigrants who currently live in Columbus, Ohio and surrounding suburbs. The term second-generation can be considered ambiguous, but for the purposes of this study I will use the term “second-generation immigrant” to refer to the subsequent generation of offspring of the first generation of individual(s) from a family who have immigrated to the U.S. The other nine participants represent social service providers in the Columbus area that work with the Columbus Indian immigrant population. Interviewing both immigrants and service providers allowed me to compare consistencies and gaps between the needs of the Indian community and the services that are currently available to meet those needs.

The four Indian immigrant participants were contacted through a snowball sampling technique. For the sake of confidentiality, I have assigned each of my interview subjects as well as any organization names, pseudonyms, as delineated in the appendix. I met one of the Indian immigrants, Aadvan, through a friend of mine who met him at a local gym. After meeting with him, he connected me with one of his friends, Hema. The other two Indian immigrant participants, Taahid and Daania, were a husband and wife. I interviewed the husband and wife separately. Doing so allowed both the husband and wife to speak candidly about their experiences and marital relationship. I was introduced to the husband through one of my

professors' professional connections. My instructor initially reached out to him and he agreed to meet with me. After he and I met, his wife agreed to meet with me as well.

While my study was originally designed such that I would begin by forming relationships with families within my apartment community, due to the secluded environment of my apartment complex and then resulting lack of face-to-face contact, I was unable to directly meet individuals in this community to interview. Therefore, the snowballing technique was effective because it allowed me to form connections in the Indian immigrant community through pre-existing social networks, which helped to establish a measure of rapport with my interview subjects.

Service providers interviewed for my study included: 1) Steven, an immigration lawyer, 2) Valini, a global business lawyer licensed to practice in America and India, 3) Bill, a Christian community center career clinic director, 4) Rachel, a Dublin City Schools English Language Learners (ELL) teacher leader 5) Helen, a Dublin City Schools ELL teacher, 6) Chintu, a former chairman of *India Connection*, a Columbus Indian Association, 7) Emily, a City of Dublin Public Information Officer 8) Douglas, Dublin City Manager's Office Manager's Assistant, and 9) Abha, the director of *Hope Exit*, an organization combating domestic violence in the Columbus South Asian community.

All of the interviews were in person with the exception of the interviews with Rachel and Valini. Rachel and Valini were only available for phone interviews. With the exception of Emily and Douglas, both representatives from the City of Dublin, all of the remaining interviews were completed individually. Emily invited Douglas to the interview in order to provide additional knowledge on the relationships between Indian immigrants and the city of Dublin. Meeting together allowed them to reflect on one another's comments and add missing details to the narratives they each shared.

Fieldnotes were taken during the interviews and a partially complete transcript was reconstructed via written notes and memory, recalled within 24 hours of the interview. With the exceptions of the interviews with Steven, Bill, Abha, and Aadvan, the remaining interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed.

As I mention above, the interviews I conducted were open-ended and semi-structured. While I created a guiding script for each of the interviews, which included specified, preestablished themes, the content of the interviewee's responses often dictated the subsequent course of the conversation and the language I used to ask subsequent questions. The intentionally chosen format of the interviews was especially advantageous for rich data collection as open ended, semi-structured conversations allowed my participants to use their own language when discussing their experience, which allowed me to avoid making any assumptions or predefining their experiences. Furthermore, the open-ended, semi-structured format allowed my interview participants to guide me to the analytic terms and themes that best described their experiences.

Coding

After all the field notes from observations and interviews, were collected, I read through the field notes using a note-on-note method. (Kleinman 1993). More specifically, after reading each interview transcription I wrote a summarizing, analytic paragraph about the pertinent information found in the interview. Doing so allowed me to consider relevant themes in each of the interviews. After completing all interviews and 'notes-on-notes,' I used the identified themes to develop a coding scheme that directly corresponded with answers to my research questions. The codes I used were 1) "Visa:" visa use and implications, 2) "Women/femininity:" the familial role of females, 3) "Men/masculinity:" the familial role of males, 4) "Parent-child:" parent-child relationships, 5) "Marriage:" marriage practices, traditions, and opinions, 6) "Migration

reasons:” reasons for immigrating, 7) “Extended family:” relations with extended family 8) “Unmet needs:” unmet needs of the Indian immigrant community, 9) “Indian communities:” the import of Indian U.S.-based communities, 10) “Outsider understandings:” Americans’ cultural understanding of Indian culture and experiences 11) “Outside networks:” Indian immigrant involvement outside of Indian immigrant community, and 12) “Language:” spoken and written language use and difficulty. Next, I went back through the transcribed interviews and applied each of the codes to relevant passages. Finally, I wrote analytic notes for each of the codes, which were later used to draft the final report of my analysis.

Throughout the research process, I was conscious of possible bias that may affect my findings. I was aware of the possible effects of my social location as a proponent of social justice, specifically in the realm of immigration. I made consistent efforts to cultivate an awareness of this bias during both data collection and analysis, and paid special attention to the ways in which my commitment to social justice may have influenced my analysis of the experience of Indian immigrants and service providers.

Not being a member of the Indian community made it difficult for me to make trusting connections with immigrant families. However, living in the apartment complex helped me to relate to the community, given my status as ‘neighbor.’ My observations while being present in this community allowed me to act as a ‘insider’ in terms of my ability to observe daily life, but my inability to form close personal connections with my neighbors caused me to remain an ‘outsider’ from the Indian immigrant social community. Being an ‘outsider’, yet being present in the community allowed me to make observations without being swayed by the agenda of the Indian immigrant community. Being a white, young, female impacted the way that my interview subjects perceived me. Each of these factors may have caused my interview subjects to perceive

me as less threatening. Consequently, they may have felt more comfortable to share information with me. Furthermore, being a student allowed me to continuously ask questions without seeming overly obtrusive.

Many of my interviews began with the interview participant asking me why I chose to study the Indian immigrant population. Each time I would explain that I had recently moved into an apartment complex in Dublin, which has a large Indian immigrant population. Sharing this information served as a common link between Indian immigrant individuals and myself. As a member of the Indian immigrant community, my interview subjects were able to view me as an insider, yet my lack of personal connections within the community, in some ways, allowed the interview subjects to share candidly with me. To the contrary, my participants may have presented me with a more positive picture of immigrant family life due to their concerns about outside judgment and prejudice towards their community.

Respondent Profiles

Immigrant Stories and Experiences

Aadvan

I was introduced to Aadvan through a mutual friend. Aadvan has lived in the U.S. for just over twenty years. In 1994, at the age of six, he emigrated from Gujarat, India, with his mom, dad, and two sisters. Aadvan's uncle served as the family's visa sponsor and for the first year, Aadvan's immediate family lived with his uncle in Tallahassee, Florida.

When asked why his family decided to immigrate to the United States, he answered, "for the American dream." When I asked what he meant by the American dream he added that his parents desired for Aadvan and his two sisters to receive a good education. Their family viewed

the U.S. as a land of further opportunity for their children, to be achieved through the avenue of educational attainment. Aadvan's family was, in his terms, "well off" in India. His parents both had master's degrees and worked at a private high school, but both felt that coming to the U.S. would provide Aadvan and his siblings greater opportunities to receive an education and continue on into a good career.

Aadvan's uncle owned a Greek restaurant and a laundry mat. When Aadvan and his family first arrived in the U.S. his dad, through a friend, found a position as a gas station cashier and Aadvan's mom began working at his Uncle's laundry mat. Eventually Aadvan's uncle passed the laundry mat down to Aadvan's immediate family. Now, Aadvan's family leases the laundry mat, his dad is still a gas station cashier and his mom is a Wal-Mart cashier.

When Aadvan was young his family attended Indian events in Tallahassee where Aadvan and his sisters participated in Indian dances and festivals. In middle school and high, Aadvan became busy with other things and hung out more with non-Indian friends. Aadvan explained that his family was never fully accepted into the Tallahassee Indian community. He joked that his parents "did not own a gas station", meaning they did not have high enough status to be accepted by the other Indians in the city.

Aadvan completed high school in Tallahassee. He then attended Florida State for his undergraduate degree, as well as a university in West Virginia for medical school. A year ago, Aadvan moved to Columbus for a residency at a local hospital in Internal Medicine. Aadvan explained that his parents are very proud of his status as a resident. He was certain to comment that his parents' approval was not the sole reason he chose to be a resident. He has always had an interest in medicine.

His parents still live in Florida, but he and his two sisters now live in different states, are pursuing their own careers, and now have their own families. His oldest sister is thirty-eight. She received a degree in computer science and now works for a company that is contracted to evaluate highway infrastructure. She is married and has two children. His second oldest sister is thirty-three. She began a degree in computer science, but never completed her schooling. She got married and now has one child. I also asked Aadvan about his extended family members. Aadvan answered that the majority of his father's side of the family now lives in the U.S., while his mother's side remains in India.

Aadvan's experiences should be considered in the greater context of what it is like as a second-generation Indian immigrant to immigrate and grow up in the U.S., in general. For example, Aadvan shared with me the pressure that he feels from his parents to get married. He explained that his parents want him to get married to an Indian girl. On the other hand, he would prefer to marry a girl who is more "Americanized".

Aadvan provides unique insight via the juxtaposition of his personal experiences alongside those of his married sister. Aadvan does not interact with the greater Indian immigrant community. He lives on his own in Columbus amongst other residency students. On the other hand, his sister is married to an Indian man, they live in a community of other Indian immigrants, and his sister focuses on raising her children with certain Indian cultural traditions.

The information Aadvan shares is helpful in understanding the various ways that Indian immigrant children mature and pursue building a life in the U.S. His experience of becoming "Americanized", as he calls it, converges with findings in the literature that state that Indian immigrant children are socialized by American institutions and begin to think and act more "American" (Dutta 2014). Aadvan's experience is representative of other Indian families that

utilize family-based immigration. His family's disconnect from the greater Indian immigrant community is unlike the stories that I gathered from most families in the Columbus region. Yet, Aadvan's current lack of connection and relationships with Indian culture is, to some degree, consistent with findings in the literature on the divergence of Indian immigrant children from traditional Indian lifestyles (Dutta 2014).

Hema

I was introduced to Hema through Aadvan. The two work together in the same residency program. Hema is currently in the first year of the program. Hema's story is valuable to add to the analysis, because though it is similar to Aadvan's, Hema's story provides a female viewpoint.

Hema's uncle immigrated to the U.S. in the 1970s. In 2001, he served as a sponsor for her, her mom, dad and brother to immigrate to the U.S. She was twelve years old. Hema's family's reasons for immigrating were also very similar to Aadvan's. Hema explained:

I guess a lot of our family was already here and just the opportunities for kids in terms of education. Like my dad always says if you were in India, it would have been really hard for you to become a doctor. Cause there is so much competition, just so many people striving for the same thing...So just more opportunities overall for my brother and I.

Before immigrating, Hema's family lived and owned a tobacco farm in Gujarat, India. Her family had the means to support themselves, yet Hema's parents chose to immigrate to the U.S. I asked Hema if immigrating was a common trend amongst people from her home city. She said it was very typical. Many people emigrate from her city to the U.S. and have historically emigrated to Fiji and Africa as well.

She went on to explain the financial situation of her town. She explained that there were opportunities within her town, but if you had enough additional resources to support your family in emigrating, there were greater opportunities to be had in the U.S. Hema's story, told in the

context of other proximate families and viewed in conversation with the literature on Indian immigration patterns, implied that her family was not unique and can serve as an example of an Indian family immigrating for even greater opportunities.

For both Hema and Aadvan's families, the U.S. was not only a place of opportunities for the second generation, but also, immigrating to the U.S. meant reuniting with family members. I asked Hema what it was like to transition into life in the U.S. She expressed that it was actually better than her last few years in India because she was reunited with her family. She explained:

It was harder in India and then I moved here and it was everyone. All my cousins that I grew up with, they were all here. So it was actually a lot better when we moved here because everyone that I grew up with was already here.

Overall, Hema's experiences speak to the importance of extended family as a motivating force for Indian immigrant families.

When Hema's family first immigrated to the U.S., they lived with Hema's uncle in New Jersey. Hema's immediate family along with fourteen other family members all lived together in the same house. Today, her parents still live in New Jersey about twenty minutes from her uncle. Hema spoke of great affection for visiting her family and friends that remain in New Jersey.

After immigrating, Hema's parents had to acquire jobs. They did so through their social network of family and friends. Hema shared that her parents started out working "odd" jobs, such as a part time job at the post office and a donut shop. About five years ago, they both found jobs in the pharmaceutical industry. I asked Hema how they acquired these jobs. She explained that the pharmaceutical company that they work for is owned by an Indian man and her parents were originally introduced to the manager by an Indian friend. This is just one example of the role that Hema's community of friends and family plays in her life. The way that her family and

other individuals from her home town in India have gathered in New Jersey, is an example of other ethnic enclaves in large metropolitan areas such as Columbus.

Beyond the U.S. immigrant community that Hema associates with is her extended family that remains in India. Hema referenced her grandparents, explaining that her grandparents would never immigrate to the U.S. Jokingly she said, “because it is too cold” but she went on to elaborate that her grandparents have “established their ties” in India and would not want to leave those behind.

Hema speaks from the perspective of a second generation, female, Indian immigrant. Her particular history tells of what it is like for an Indian immigrant family to remain connected with other Indian immigrants within a U.S. city. Her experiences show the reliance of various family members on transnational networks.

Taahid

I met Taahid through one of my sociology professors. His story is useful for considering the experiences of young Indian immigrants who migrate to the U.S. for educational purposes. His story of marrying his wife is representative of other Indian immigrants who juggle traditional Indian marital norms of arranged marriage and the American norm of love based marriages. Furthermore, his role as a father to third generation immigrants provides insight into the ways that Indian immigrant families transform through generations.

Taahid is a book salesman. Like Aadvan and Hema, Taahid’s uncle served as his sponsor for immigration. Taahid’s uncle immigrated to the U.S. in 1971 with several other students to complete his master’s degree. In 1995, Taahid emigrated from Uttar Pradesh, India, to the U.S. to complete his bachelor’s degree.

Taahid explained, that similarly to others in India, he was drawn to the U.S. based on

images and stories he had heard about the opportunities and material assets that are available in this western country. Taahid states:

Your future is secure in a way in the U.S., better quality of life, cause you would see these pictures of people from your own family or far relatives and friends, what they were wearing, the houses they were in, the cars they drove, everything looked cleaner, better, when they visit their clothing looks like ten times better than yours, you know, shoes, hair texture, everything, like their skin looked better because they were probably drinking cleaner water, eating better food...

Taahid suggests that other Indian's share similar motivations, of better health, better belongings, overall better quality of life, when migrating to the U.S. Taahid's inkling is representative of the findings of other scholars and the comments of Aadvan, that suggest that Indian culture emphasizes the importance of status and immigrating to the U.S. is one way for Indians to raise their status.

Taahid's family's experience with U.S. immigration is representative of the experiences of other Indian immigrant families that must juggle the wait times placed on U.S. immigrant visas. When Taahid's family applied for their visas, they applied for Taahid, his father, mother, and brother to immigrate. It took them eleven years until the visa was granted. By the time Taahid's visas were granted, his brother had just reached the age of twenty-one. U.S. immigration services informed Taahid's family that his brother was now past the age limit of twenty-one years and would not be able to immigrate with the family.

When Taahid's family was granted immigrant visas, his father decided that he did not want to immigrate. His father had a government job and did not want to leave his job and make the transition to the U.S. Therefore, Taahid ended up being the only member of his immediate family to immigrate to the U.S. Today, his parents both still live in India, but they maintain their U.S. green cards by visiting the U.S. every six months.

When Taahid first immigrated, he lived with his uncle in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio.

After spending some time with his uncle in Cleveland, he decided to move with one of his childhood friends, who is also a U.S. immigrant, to the Ohio State University. Similar to Aadvan and Hema, Taahid made many non-Indian friends in college. Taahid and his wife, Daania, remain friends with these people to this day.

Taahid and his wife Daania were married in India in 2005. Taahid had been living in the U.S., but his past dating relationships had not gone well and his parents decided it was time for him to marry. His parents wanted him to marry an Indian woman so when it came time for him to travel to India for his brother's wedding, he focused his time in India on finding a spouse. He met up with several women. He explained that he would call their fathers and ask if he could speak with their daughter. Then he would be invited to meet their daughter in their family home. The role that the young women's fathers played in the lives of the women that Taahid met is typical of Indian pre-marital practice (Poulson 2009).

One of the women that he met up with was Daania. He contacted her father and received his permission to marry his daughter. Taahid and Daania met in person once for a conversation lasting about fifteen minutes. Soon after Taahid had to travel back to the U.S. so the two resorted to talking on the phone. Six months later Taahid returned to India and they got married. Daania was granted a visa and moved to the U.S. to join Taahid. Taahid and Daania's marriage story is consistent with the information my other interview subjects shared about the norm of Indian immigrants returning to India to hold their weddings.

Taahid offered a lot of information on how Indian families, at least in urban settings, are transitioning to more westernized lifestyles. He referenced an increased need in large Indian cities for both parents to earn a wage. Taahid explained:

So I mean you might meet families in India that you would think they are very American by how they are living and you would say both parties are

working...they are putting their kids in daycare or someone is coming to look after them, it is very, very westernized in that sense

Taahid went on to explain that Indians have a desire for westernized items and lifestyles, but the economic reality in major Indian cities, is that prices for these items and lifestyles are extremely high:

...because both parties in Delhi are working to get to the next level, to buy that condo, or to buy that whatever, so you're a doctor, your husband is a doctor...My wife is a physician so her classmates, she would say she is working, her husband works, they both leave in the morning, this, this, this, and they are trying to buy a four bedroom condominium, high rise, in kind of the outskirts of Delhi.

Taahid's example of his wife's friends is representative of many other Indian families. Rahman and Witenstein (2014) findings show that South Asian women are increasingly expected to hold a career.

Taahid is non-representative of many Indians who remain immersed in Indian culture once settled in the U.S. Taahid's vast interest in western culture and success as a U.S. business man have attributed to his "Americanized" lifestyle and ability to reflect on Indian, as well as western customs. Taahid and Daania, still live in Columbus, and have a six-year-old and a two-year-old daughter.

Daania

At the end of my interview with Taahid, I asked if he knew anyone else who would be interested in participating in an interview. He mentioned that he would check with his wife and see if she would be available and interested in meeting. She agreed to meet. Considering Taahid and Daania's personal immigration and family experiences provides representative stories of both the male and female experiences of immigrant marriage and subsequent family life.

Daania, is from the same city in Uttar Pradesh, India, as Taahid. Daania explained that she immigrated to the U.S. in 2006; six months after her and Taahid were married. Daania's first

few years in the U.S. were consumed with her completion of a residency program. For a few years, Daania lived in Pennsylvania and Cincinnati while Taahid lived in Columbus. This was a difficult time for their family, but it allowed Daania to complete her residency program. Now, the two live with their two young daughters in a Columbus suburb. Taahid runs his company and Daania works part time as a transfusion medicine professor at a local university.

Daania's experiences speak to what it is like to immigrate for marriage. Daania shared about her relationship with her father and the impact that he had on her and Taahid's pre-marital processes. She explained that her father would find men that he thought she should marry, he would introduce her to the man for a short period of time and then ask her if she will marry him. Daania explained that she strongly disagreed with her father and believed that she needed more time with a man before deciding to marry him.

When she met Taahid, they spoke in person for fifteen minutes and then carried on conversations over the phone for six months before deciding to get married. Daania explained that even though Taahid had lived in the U.S., the two were able to have conversations and connect with one another.

Taahid and Daania also shared information regarding what it is like for them to raise their two daughters in Columbus. When Daania was working on her residency, she needed a way to care for her daughters while accommodating her complicated residency schedule. She explained that her mother in law would travel from India to the U.S. for several months to help care for the kids. Daania's mother in law's trips to the U.S. served two purposes: to help care for Taahid and Daania's girls and to maintain her green card. Daania explains:

My mom works so she came, but like for a couple months in her break. It was hard for her to come. She came more during the birth of my two girls, but other than that, I mean once I was taking boards and had to read a lot, so she came to

help out for a month. But yeah my mother in law, she comes for four months, five months, otherwise I could have never survived those four years [of residency].

Though the 180-day green card restriction requires immigrants to closely manage the amount of time they spend outside the U.S., the policy gracefully allows for the traditional Indian family practice of grandparents playing a major role in the raising of grandchildren.

Provider stories and experiences

The opportunities for education, language acquisition, community connections and other needs that Indian immigrants have when they arrive in the U.S. are facilitated by various service providers in the community. In order to gain an understanding of the services that are provided, the motivations for providing such services, the extent to which services provided match with immigrants' articulated needs, and the ways in which service provisions can be improved, I spoke with various local service providers. Three of the individuals that I spoke with, Chintu, Valini, and Abha, offer a unique viewpoint because they all serve as service providers for the local Indian community and are members of the Indian immigrant community themselves.

Chintu, India Connection

The first service provider I interviewed was Chintu, the director of a local Indian association, *India Connection*. Based on a targeted search for Indian association involvement in Columbus, I used *Google* to find upcoming Indian community events. While doing so I came across *India Connection's* flag hoisting event at the Statehouse. *India Connection* sponsored the event to celebrate India's Republic Day. Included in the event information was a link to *India Connection's* website. On the website I found Chintu's contact information. I called him, introduced myself, explained that I was interested in learning about the services that his organization provides for the Columbus Indian immigrant population, and he agreed to meet with

me. Through the interview, he provided me with valuable information about his organization, as well as his personal immigration experience.

India Connection was founded in 1983 by Indian immigrants living in Central Ohio.

Chintu explained:

Started in 1983 by early immigrants at that that time in the Central Ohio area, I wasn't here, but from what I have been told there were a handful of families, primarily at OSU that were professors, a few other people working in engineering companies and like that. There was a need, as every ethnic community has, there was a need to connect and with that in mind they formed an organization. Just a few people got together, formed the organization and then they took it off from there. It grew, as the community grew, the organization grew, and it grew and grew.

Since the founding of *India Connection*, more specified organizations have formed around the diverse regional cultures and religious practices of India. Today, there are over twenty Indian organizations in Columbus ranging from the Bengali Cultural Association to the Tamil Church Group (Chintu). As the number of Indian immigrants in Columbus has increased, the mission of *India Connection* has been redefined. Chintu explained that *India Connection* now acts as an umbrella organization for all of the individual Columbus Indian organizations. In Chintu's words,

Chintu: To give one voice to all these organizations is the purpose of *India Connection*. So it is more like an umbrella organization, so all these different regional organizations, they all are a part of this umbrella organization, *India Connection*. So if there is an issue or if there is a statement that needs to be made about India...we are like a spokesperson for India. *India Connection's* functionality is all based on making sure...that our members, become successful.

Madeline: How would you define successful?

Chintu: Successful would be help them in growing, help them in staging cultural activities or...since *India Connection* has been there for so long they know the process of how to get established here how to become successful here, how to go about the dos and don'ts for an organization's structure, legally, for taxes purposes, what papers to file and all the infrastructure stuff.

India Connection acts as a bridge between American institutions and the Indian community.

The reliance of Indian immigrants on Indian associations as a source of community and Indian culture is consistent with literature that suggests this is a trend within Indian ethnic enclaves across the U.S.

Chintu immigrated to the U.S. in 1980. His sister served as his visa sponsor. His purpose for immigration was to complete his master's degree in Information Technology. For Chintu's first three years in the U.S. he lived in Greenville, South Carolina with his brother. Currently he works in hospitality in Columbus. This year, he stepped down as the chairman of his organization and is now serving as a trustee.

Valini, Global Business Lawyer

While researching current news on Indian immigration to Columbus, I came across a Columbus magazine with a feature on an Indian global business lawyer named Valini. I sent her an email and she graciously set up a time to meet. We met in a conference room at her law firm, located in downtown Columbus. She shared with me the story of how she, like Daania, immigrated to the U.S. for marriage. She shared her personal experiences as well as the standpoint that she has as a Columbus Indian professional.

Before Valini and her husband were married, Valini's husband already lived in the U.S. Valini and her husband had an arranged marriage in India, and then she moved to the U.S. to live with him. Before immigrating, Valini was a licensed lawyer in India. After six months of living in the U.S., Valini decided she wanted to continue her career as a lawyer, so she worked towards her U.S. license to practice law. Valini explained:

I was already a licensed lawyer in India, I was working for a law firm there before I came here. The kind of work I used to do with that law firm was helping U.S. companies who were setting up operations in India. So I did the legal work. So when I came here, for me, after I sat home for six months and enjoyed my marital

life I was like “oh my god” I need to do something, you know, or I will drive myself crazy just sitting at home doing nothing. For me then it made sense that I want to continue to do what I used to do back home in India, be a lawyer, because I love doing what I do.

Valini’s professional attainment is consistent with literature that states that female Indians are now participating in the workforce. Valini’s desire to work in the U.S. is also consistent with Daania’s experiences as well as literature that cites the use of H-1B visas by female professionals (Banerjee 2014).

She is now a global business lawyer in Columbus. Valini’s double licensure, in the U.S. and India, makes her a desirable client to both U.S. businesses who want to expand globally and businesses outside of the U.S. who are interested in expanding their markets in the U.S. Her experience in the global business field allows her to speak as a representative of current international business affairs between Columbus and India.

Abha, Hope Exit

Abha focuses her work directly on the local Indian immigrant population. Abha is the president of a non-profit formed to help individuals in Columbus’s South Asian community deal with domestic violence issues: *Hope Exit*. The organization was founded informally by a small group of Indian women in 2003. The original focus was solely the Indian immigrant population, but since it’s founding the organization has expanded its reach and now serves other South Asian immigrants. Abha was asked to join the board early on in the organization’s formation. Her experiences serving on this board make her a valuable resource for information on the current needs of the Indian immigrant community and the best ways that these needs can be met. She provided insight into the difficulty that Indian women, as well as other South Asian women experience when they decide to step outside of their ethnic enclaves and risk reporting cases of domestic violence.

Steven, Immigration Lawyer

In order to better understand the format and uses of immigration policies I interviewed Steven, an immigration lawyer. Steven has vast experience with immigration law and the common effects that these laws have on individuals, global business, and politics. Steven provided details on the most common visas that Indian immigrants use, ways the U.S. immigration system could be improved, as well as insight into how non-immigrant Americans view migrants to the U.S. Some of the information that Steven shared was bias towards his belief that the U.S. needs to compete in the world economy, and one way the U.S. can compete is by increasing the cap on immigrant visas in order to lessen the wait time. Yet, Steven's extensive experience as an immigration lawyer in Columbus, Ohio classifies him as a reliable source for information on the statistics and trends of immigration policy.

Emily and Douglas, City of Dublin

As my specific unit of analysis is Columbus, Ohio, I interviewed service providers on the metropolitan level. Through personal observation, I found that a large population of Indian immigrants have congregated in Dublin, which is a suburb of Columbus. Therefore, I spoke with two representatives from the city of Dublin. Emily, a public information officer and Douglas, manager's assistant in the city manager's office, shared with me about the ways that the city of Dublin aims to meet the needs and encourage the growth of the diverse population living within their city.

Emily shared that about fifteen percent of Dublin's population is foreign born and eight percent of the city's businesses are Asian owned. I asked Emily and Douglas if there are any services they provide or any experiences that they have had specifically for/with the Indian immigrant community. The answer to Indian immigrant specific questions was always that they

“think of the community as a whole”. Rather than distinguishing between the various immigrant communities, the city focuses on being open to every nationality within its borders.

Emily mentioned two international initiatives that the city of Dublin is taking: 1) sister city relationships and 2) maintaining positive interactions between the city and immigrant populations in Dublin. The City of Dublin currently has a sister city relationship with a city in Japan and is preparing to develop a second relationship with a city in India. The purpose of these relationships is to encourage business relationships between Dublin and foreign cities. Furthermore, sister city relationships means a future increase in immigrant families living in Dublin, Ohio. Secondly, Emily mentioned that the city of Dublin wants to provide the necessary support for immigrants living in the city. I asked how they go about forming positive relationships with immigrants, Douglas shared two examples: he discussed the cities focus on building trust between the Dublin police force and immigrant populations and an upcoming cultural center that the city plans to build that will accommodate for international art and cultural events.

Emily and Douglas provide information that is helpful in understanding the intentions and viewpoint of U.S. institutions. The information they shared contributes to findings on the services provided by Columbus governmental and cultural institutions.

Helen and Rachel, Dublin City Schools

Through personal observation and word of mouth, I learned that many Indian immigrants to the Columbus metro area are settling in Dublin because of the reputation of Dublin City Schools. Knowing the importance that Indian families place on educational attainment and a child’s success, I decided to interview representatives of the local school district. I spoke with Helen, an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher. Helen explained the process that students go

through when they are new to the school. She explained that the students are given a form on which they indicate if English is their first language. If they mark that it is not then they are given an English placement test to take. Their results on this test determine the amount of additional English language support they are provided.

Helen suggested that I also speak with Rachel, another Dublin City Schools ELL teacher who has more experience working with Indian children and their families. Rachel provided information on how Indian immigrant families are affected by the services that the local school district provides for immigrant children. Her examples also provide data on how these services specifically, and Indian immigrant children's schooling more generally, affects Indian immigrant families as a whole.

I asked both Helen and Rachel if there are other services available for immigrant students who do not qualify for language assistance. Rachel said that there are no other formal support services, but she personally checks in with teachers to inform them of the student's English level and situation.

Helen and Rachel provide additional insight into the motivations of service providers that strive to meet the needs of the Indian immigrant community.

Bill, Columbus Christian community center

I interviewed, Bill, the career center director at a Columbus Christian community center, as his experiences provide an outlook on the interaction between American Christian organizations and immigrants who identify with non-Christian religious identities. In the U.S. there are several major institutions that structure how individuals live their lives in the states. For immigrants, aside from governmental institutions that determine their ability to legally be within the country, and educational institutions that contribute to socialization, another major institution

that holds influence in the Indian immigrant experience is religion. In the U.S., the church is one of the main providers of social services.

Several churches in the Columbus area provide programs such as language classes and free legal and health clinics. It is important to consider how, and in what ways, the religious identities of these service providers impacts the way they provide services for Indian immigrant families and the impact that the service providers' religious identities have on the Indian families they serve.

Patterns and Generalizations

Implications of U.S. Visas

The most obvious U.S. institution with a significant impact on the lives of Indian immigrant families is the immigration system. Therefore, I began by examining how immigration policy definitions of family influence immigrant lifestyle in the U.S.

Family Based Sponsorship

Due to Institutional Review Board liability concerns, I was unable to ask my interview subjects which type of visa they used. I can only make assumptions based on my respondent's reasons for immigrating. Among my respondents, I came across instances where employment, education, and family were the driving factors for migration.

Each of the Indian immigrants I interviewed shared that their visa sponsor was one of their family members that was already living in the U.S. For Aadvan, Hema, and Taahid, their uncles served as their immigration sponsors. Chintu was sponsored by his sister and Daania and Valini were granted visas due to their marital relationship with their husbands. The process of immigration sponsorship appears to work well within the Indian immigrant community, as there is a preexisting value of family and community within Indian culture (Sonowat 2001). Aadvan

shared that his uncle already being settled in the U.S. served as a “trigger” for his family to immigrate. Before, Aadvan and his family immigrated to the U.S., Aadvan’s uncle had already been living in the U.S. for about twenty years. His uncle was able to help the family by providing them with a place to stay and aiding them in learning the lay of the land.

Chintu was sponsored by his sister, but lived with his brother for his early years in the U.S. The time his brother had spent in the U.S. allowed him to guide Chintu through the acculturation process. Chintu’s brother provided Chintu with knowledge as well as a group of supportive friends.

By the time I came, the news of my arrival had already spread in my brother’s circle. So almost for the next fifteen days, everyday I was visiting a different friend of his, so basically every evening I would be going out and eating dinner at this guy and the next day the next friend, etc., that way I am introduced to the whole family there, it was amazing (Chintu)

Chintu was immediately welcomed into a U.S. based Indian immigrant community. This allowed him to make friends and connections that helped him to navigate his first few years in the U.S. To this day, he remains connected with these friends.

Hema spoke about how moving to the U.S. meant reuniting with her extended family. Her family moved to New Jersey where several families from her town back in India had already immigrated. The U.S. immigration process of sponsorship runs parallel to Indian immigrant’s desire and need to reconnect with U.S. based family members

Restrictions on Twenty One Year Old Dependents

Children over the age of twenty-one are restricted in their ability to immigrate to the U.S. (U.S.C.I.S. 2016, Green Card Eligibility). In the U.S., a child is no longer considered a legal guardian after the age of eighteen (U.S. Department of State 2016, When a Child Becomes an Adult; Bill). On the other hand, in India, a child lives in their family’s household until they are

married. The average age at which Indian men marry is 23.5 years and the average age for women is 18.4 years (Sonawat 2001). This means that many Indian children are not married by the time they are twenty one, yet they are unable to immigrate with their families. In Taahid's case, the twenty one year old restriction combined with the extensive wait time to receive a visa, resulted in the separation of Taahid and his brother. This particular restriction delineated in U.S. immigration policy results in the separation of Indian families. Considering the importance of familial support and relationships for Indian families, the restriction on twenty one year old family member immigration impacts the ability of Indian families to live out their traditional family structures.

Policy Changes for Dependent Visa Holders

Immigration policies dictate the permitted reasons for immigration, legal relationships between individuals, as well as the age of immigrants. Another set of restrictions that are not explicitly stated in immigration policy, but have a structural effect on immigrant families, are requirements that restrict gender roles. As Banerjee (2013) found in her own research on the U.S. Indian immigrant community, women may be granted an H-1 B visa while their husbands receive a dependent visa. In these cases, traditional gender roles within Indian immigrant families are disturbed.

On May 26, 2015, H-4 visa policy changed to allow H-4 dependents of H-1B visa holders, who are in the process of applying for a green card, to qualify for work approval. (U.S.C.I.S 2015, DHS Extends Eligibility). It is estimated that this change will allow "as high as 179,600" immigrants to apply for employment authorization. This means that families living in the U.S. through H-1B visas can now rely on both spouses working outside of the home. The justification for the H-4 visa policy change is presented by León Rodríguez, director of U.S.

Citizenship and Immigration Services:

Allowing the spouses of these visa holders to legally work in the United States makes perfect sense. It helps U.S. businesses keep their highly skilled workers by increasing the chances these workers will choose to stay in this country during the transition from temporary workers to permanent residents. It also provides more economic stability and better quality of life for the affected families. (U.S.C.I.S 2015, DHS Extends Eligibility)”

The explanation Rodríguez provides matches the expressed needs of the Indian immigrant community. Granting H-4 visa holders the ability to work begins to address the concerns of gender conflict within Indian immigrant homes where only one spouse is permitted to work.

Indian Immigrant Families

Shifting Gender Roles

Traditional Indian gender roles state that the woman remains in the home, caring for the household and children, while her husband works outside the home. The way that my interview subjects experience gender roles within their households suggest either that their experiences are non-representative of Indian immigrants as a whole or that Indian immigrant gender norms are shifting away from tradition.

Hema, Daania, and Valini are all examples of female Indian immigrants who are pursuing high professional statuses. Hema, specifically, spoke of the pressure she feels from her parents to perform well academically and professionally. Traditional Indian norms would account for the women remaining in the home, caring for the children and the household. The current literature, and the anecdotes of my interview subjects suggest that Indian immigrant gender norms are shifting away from tradition and towards the “working woman” (Das 2014).

Daania and Valini both expressed a dissatisfaction of remaining in the home. They both mentioned that their first few months in the U.S. were spent in the home. Daania discussed being “depressed” and Valini stated that she was extremely “bored”. Daania’s solution to her boredom

was to become reengaged in the educational system and to work towards her PhD. Valini similarly returned to her studies and became a U.S. lawyer.

Typical gender roles are changing due to the expectation for female education and wage-earning (Rahman and Witenstein 2014; Poulsen 2009). Nevertheless, Indian women continue to bear the majority of responsibility for childcare and domestic duties, in addition to expectations for educational attainment and labor market participation. In these ways, Indian immigrant families bear a marked similarity to native-born U.S. family dynamics.

Process of Socialization for Parents versus Children

Despite the efforts of Indian immigrant parents, U.S. social institutions have a major effect on the socialization of immigrant children. One such institution is the U.S. school system. Children spend the majority of their days in a school building, surrounded by other students, learning from their teachers. The time that Indian immigrant children spend at school influences the extent to which they are Americanized. This is where conflict often arises within families. The agents of socialization for Indian parents are different than those that are influencing their children.

For some parents, this works out just fine. Helen explained that some of the parents of her students desire for their children to become Americanized. On the other hand, many families experience tension when their children come home and begin to question their parent's dominance.

Valini provided an example of college students. She explained that she thinks the university system is supportive of Indian family norms, but it is the child's desire to live out the "typical" American, college, lifestyle that conflicts with Indian immigrant parent's views of how their children should be living.

They may not want to be at home with their parents so I think the tension always arises like ‘hey my kid can stay at home’, when the kid is like, ‘no I want to live in a dorm, I want to get an apartment’. They are like why do you want to spend that money when you can stay at home with us. We will get you a car, you know. I think that is the tension that they face because it is a different generation (Valini).

It is not necessarily the way the school system is run or the way the policies are written, but rather the influence that the school, peer group, and popular culture have on Indian immigrant children that cause tension within Indian families. Poulson (2009) explains the discord well:

For Indian adolescents, ethnic identity is resolved through a sense of belonging, developing positive and negative attitudes toward their own ethnic group, and participating in cultural and social practices within the cultural context of the United States. Balancing these influences can be challenging because their expectations may differ from those of their Indian-born parents (172).

Indian immigrant children are presented with two, often contradictory, socializing agents, and it is up to them to make the final decision on how they will respond. When this response, differs from the socializing goals of their parents, tension arises within the family.

Parent Child Relationships: Expectations and Conflict

A common theme amongst all of the Indian immigrants that I interviewed is the importance of family. Valini put it well, “the family always comes first, nothing else matters, that is just a hallmark of an Indian community.” Sonawat (2001) shines light on the same theme:

Right from ancient times, family, caste, and community have dominated the entire texture of Indian society. Family has been the dominating institution both in the life of the individual and in the life of the community. There was virtually no scope to exit without being a member of a family (178)

Valini continued on to say, “family comes first and the parents will take a back seat for themselves but the kids will always be first, and their needs will always be first.” This was the thinking of the majority of the Indian parents that were referenced in the stories immigrants shared. Both Aadvan and Hema explained that their families were relatively “well-off” in India,

but their parents decided to move them to the U.S. in order for the children in the family to have even more opportunities to succeed. Due to the great importance that Indian immigrant families place on the educational success of their children, U.S. child-focused institutions have a major impact on family dynamics, specifically parent child relationships.

Indian immigrant families come from a culture where parent child relationships are traditionally hierarchical. The child is to respect and obey the generations above them, including parents and grandparents (Hines et. al 2005 qtd. in Dutta 2014). In the U.S., however, children generally have greater independence and are encouraged to make more of their own decisions (Dutta 2014).

Overall, U.S. social institutions act as agents of socialization for Indian immigrant children. Deepak (2005) argues, once Indian immigrants enter the U.S. their lifestyle is influenced by the cultures of home that persist as well as the new norms of the host culture. My findings suggest that this blending leads to tension between parents and their children.

Chintu explained that the most important thing for Indian immigrant parents is to pass on their native culture to their children. One of the ways they go about doing so is through Indian associations. In Columbus, there are over twenty different Indian associations. The associations host art events, holiday celebrations, and various get togethers with people from the same regions in India. Chintu explained that India is a very old country so there is a lot of tradition and each region has its own rich culture. Talking about Columbus Indian parents, Chintu said, “So what they want to do is maintain that culture, they want to maintain whatever they brought from there and they want to pass that on to the next generation.”

Participation in Indian associations provides Indian parents with a formal community of people and experiences that socialize their children into Indian culture. With the great amount of

stress and change that comes with immigrating to the U.S., Poulson (2009) recognizes that focusing on passing down cultural values may be one of the ways that Indian parents cope with the changes. Participating in Indian associations allows Indian parents to gain a sense of control over their children's socialization, while at the same time, they are surrounded by U.S. culture on a daily basis.

Poulson (2009) cites the focus that Indian immigrant parents have on their children's educational attainment. Helen, an ELL teacher for Dublin City Schools, explained that many of the Indian families selected to live in her particular suburb because of the school district's reputation (Helen). Living in a city, surrounded by unfamiliar, U.S. institutions, Indian parents seem to choose to push their children to succeed in the educational system. Rachel addressed a concern in her school district amongst Indian families with children who qualify for special education. Rachel explained that Indian children are typically very high achieving so for parents to hear that their child qualifies for special services, they do not allow them to receive services. Status and achievement is of highest regard and the school's recommendation is not well received. Poulson (2009) explains, "South Asian immigrant families take a collectivist approach to their children's education experience". Therefore, children's success in school equates to success for the entire immigrant family.

Secondly, Poulson suggests that Indian immigrants' focus on educational achievements serves as a source of stability when managing the stressors of migration.

Adherence to a closely proscribed trajectory toward academic and professional goals seem to provide some measure of success and stability for East Indian families in the aftermath of immigration (Poulson 2009).

Indian immigrant families, often, rely on educational institutions as a source of support and strength while navigating and adjusting their family to U.S. society. Their children's educational

achievements, is one thing that Indian parents can hold on to, at times when everything else around them may seem uncontrollable.

One of the reasons that Poulson cites for this emphasis is that educational attainment acts as a measure of success in the U.S (2009). The question is, do Indian immigrants develop this value for educational attainment, or is it a concern that originates in Indian culture? Considering the fact that the majority of my Indian interview subjects stated that one of the main reasons they immigrated to the U.S. was for educational purpose, I concluded that the emphasis on educational achievements originates in Indian culture and is strengthened once the immigrants arrive in the U.S.

Marriage

Another context in which intergenerational family conflict manifests itself is marriage. The marital institution in the U.S. is one in which dating and marrying for love is traditional. To the contrary, traditional Indian practice is arranged marriage set up by the bride and groom's parents (Sonawat 2001). Furthermore, it is expected that Indian children will marry within their "regional, social, religious, and cultural backgrounds" (Poulson 2009). Poulson (2009) found that Indian families continue to hold the expectation that their children will have some form of an arranged marriage. They expect that the family will be involved to an extent (Poulson 2009).

Each of my interview subjects shared that their parents would be involved in their mate selection process to an extent. My subject's parent's expectations range from Daania's, who dictated her meetings with potential mates, to Valini, as a first generation Indian immigrant parent who is open to her daughter marrying outside of an arranged marriage. I concur that the divergence between Daania's parent's and Valini's expectations for her children is the outcome of the U.S. social institution of marriage, as well as shifting marital practice in Indian society.

A major difference between Daania's parents and Valini is their immigration experiences. Daania's parents have never traveled to the U.S. Valini, on the other hand, has lived in the U.S. for thirteen years. Therefore, the comparison can be easily seen between the traditional marriage practices of Daania's parents who are immersed in Indian culture, compared to Valini, who recognizes the different pre-marital norms of U.S. culture, as well as the shift in Indian culture away from arranged marriage practices, and she welcomes this for her daughter (Prakash and Singh 2014).

Extended Family

Smith (1993) established the ideological code of the Standard North American Family, made up of a husband, wife, and their children. This is the ideological code that shapes America's definition of family. On the other hand, Indian families typically consist of the immediate family as well as extended family members such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. As delineated above, many of these family members all live together in ethnic enclaves in the U.S. At the same time, there are certain circumstances that require extended family members, often, the elderly, to remain in India, separated from immigrant family members.

Each of the individuals I spoke with had family members that still live in India. Daania referenced the role that her extended family plays in childcare. Daania's mother-in-law holds a green card. In order to maintain her green card she must come to the U.S. every year (Daania). Daania's mother-in-law uses her time in the U.S. to visit her grandchildren. Daania explained that her mother in law was able to spend time with her youngest daughter when she was born and Daania was working on her residency. Aadvan's grandmother did the same thing. She spent six months in the U.S. with his family and six months at her home in India. This arrangement of six

months in the U.S. and six months outside of the U.S. perfectly fits the green card requirements of not remaining outside of the U.S. for more than 180 days per year.

Other elderly extended family members are unable or unwilling to travel out of India.

Hema shared stories about visiting her grandfather in India. She said:

It is too cold for them [in the U.S.] and also my grandpa, he used to be... a professor, like he taught Organic Chemistry at the college and he has kind of established his ties there and he has a home in an area where you still need to stimulate young minds almost, that is what he says. He is constantly, he is like one of those old grandpas who like sits in like the town square, I would say, and picks on kids.

Hema's grandparents are settled in India and are not considering immigrating to the U.S., so her family takes the time to travel back to India to visit them.

Indian immigrant's connection to extended family members, living outside of the U.S., is one way they live out traditional Indian values. U.S. green card policies allow family members to easily travel between the two countries to visit and care for one another.

Passing down the legacy

The immigrants that I spoke with have lived in the U.S. for ten to twenty years. They grew up in Indian families, but have lived under U.S. institutions and culture. One way to evaluate the extent to which immigrant's experience in the U.S. has had an affect on family values is to consider what they plan to pass down to the next generation. I asked several of my interview subjects and received various answers. Each answer sheds light on a different aspect of Indian culture and how it may persist within the greater U.S. culture.

When I asked Hema if there are traditional Indian values that she plans to pass on to her children, her response related to the amount of time that she has spent in Indian culture. Her answer to the question, "when you have a family do you plan to pass on any customs, traditions from your family on to your kids," was:

I think yes more in a sense of, you know it is different because I don't think my family is very traditional, even though we are from India we just lived there for awhile. But some things I do want to pass on are just getting together every year, having a family meal.

The traditions that Hema does want to pass on are related to family relationships. It appears that she is not as affected by the time she spent in India, but rather she values the comfort and support she has received from the U.S. Indian immigrant community, and therefore, this is what she plans to carry on for her children.

Aadvan explained the difference between his sister and himself. His sister lives in South Carolina and is married to an Indian man. In Aadvan's words he said his sister, "forces religion on her children". On the other hand, he plans to continue to practice his own religious beliefs, but does not believe it is necessary to enforce them upon his children (Aadvan). The difference between Aadvan's sister's connection to the Indian community and his own may be the result of the nine year age gap between his sister and himself. Aadvan's sister's desire to pass on Indian culture may also be her way of fulfilling her necessary familial and gender roles. Aadvan's parents are proponents of their children marrying other Indian individuals; therefore Aadvan's sister may be showing respect to her parents. Furthermore, Indian women are accepted to take on the role of carrying on traditions and culture (Rahman and Witenstein 2014; Poulson 2009) Rahman and Witenstein (2014) explain, "Today, South Asian immigrant women are...assigned the role of preserving tradition, culture, and family honour." Both of Aadvan's sisters, uphold this role within their families.

The greatest factor for Aadvan, when considering what Indian values and practices to pass on will be whom he marries. He said if he marries an Indian, like his sister married an Indian man, he would be more likely to pass on his religious beliefs to his children (Aadvan). Aadvan recognizes that the extent to which Indian culture is enforced within a family depends on

the family's connection to Indian culture, yet he recognizes that it is very unlikely that he will meet a traditional Indian woman in the U.S. because the majority of them are socialized into U.S. culture.

Both Aadvan and Daania desire for their children to learn their native language. She explained:

My daughter is very comfortable, of course, because her school and her friends is in English but I talk to her in my language at home the whole time and the reason is ...I don't want...her to miss out on the Indian culture because when you go to India and visit and not everybody is fluent in English, like even my mother in law, she doesn't talk in English, so I want [my daughter] to understand the culture.

Language serves as a tool for the children of Indian immigrants to understand and connect with Indian culture.

The diverse answers I received from my interview subjects are consistent with Deepak's (2005) findings. Deepak (2005) found that "sociodemographic factors such as age, religion, language, education, class, and years spent in the United States" influence Indian families assimilation processes (590)." The extent to which families are connected to each of these systems in India or within the Columbus Indian community, determines the extent to which they continue to value their customs.

I asked Valini the same question that I asked my other Indian immigrant subjects. Her answer pointed to an overall shift in the way that the current generation of young Indian immigrants will carry on Indian cultural in the U.S. Valini commented:

Oh yeah, I mean the immigrant generation, the generation that came in from India, and the generation of Asian Indian that were born here are poles apart, I mean my daughter is one of them. She is different from me. She is an American first and then an Indian and we will see that in the second generation. They will be very different from the first generation because in their mindset this is home. But I think if you see across the board, even kids that are born here from the Indian families, the Indian families do a good job of keeping the culture intact in the house. I think that will keep passing on from generation to generation it may

not be adopted completely from the new generation, but I don't think they will lose all of that. You know but I do think the generation that was born here is very different from the generation that comes from India. Even in terms of marriage, like I don't think marriage, between an Indian and Caucasian would have been a norm with the Indian immigrants that came here. But with their kids, it is pretty okay. So that is a big change.

Valini recognizes the effort that Indian immigrant parents, especially the first generation, put into passing on Indian cultural norms. Yet, Valini predicts that future Indian generations will take on more American cultural norms, with the result being a greater diversity in Indian immigrant family demographics.

Discrimination

Discrimination is a concern that I did not directly address in my interviews and observations. At the same time, in several of my interviews there were anecdotes alluding to the impact that discrimination has on the acculturation stresses of Indian immigrants and their families.

I interviewed Abha from *Hope Exit*, a non-profit that was created to address domestic violence in the South Asian immigrant community. When asked why the South Asian community needs their own organization, Abha explained some of the unique situations her organization has dealt with. In India, domestic violence is a private matter within a home. Unlike in India, if a report of domestic violence is made in the U.S. the police intervene. For Indian families, where this police and governmental enforcement is not common, the arrival of police officers to the front door sometimes leads to violence towards the officer. Abha explained this is just one example of the cultural disconnects between Indian traditional social services and U.S. services. The availability of culturally sensitive social services for Indian immigrants is discriminatory towards Indian immigrants.

Taahid discussed the common practice among immigrants of changing their names.

Taahid explained:

So when I left engineering and started doing what I do now. I met a marketing professor...and she said you should change your name for this purpose, become like a Mark or a Ben. Because people would remember it much easy and they might say, they might have a nephew that name or there is somebody that they can relate to. Because I am trying to get their business. When I was leaving engineering they said no it is unique keep it. If I work with you everyday you will eventually know how to say it. I don't think it hurt, it did help because it is a small name, simpler, and seems more American. A lot of Indians don't do that. So if you go to a job and it is at a gas station or if it is white collar they are not changing their names, whether it is Raji or Srikant, they are not going to change it. I have never heard of that. Because they are thinking it is coming from my parents, my ancestors, whatever I should keep it.

It is to the benefit of Americans for immigrants to change their names, yet the practice is framed by Americans in a way that the immigrant is the one to benefit. An Indian immigrant's name is given to them by their family. Changing their name in order for Americans to be able to say it more easily, because it is "more American", dictates that in order to participate in U.S. society you must become more "American."

Similarly to immigrants changing their first name, an emphasis is placed on the importance of immigrants learning to speak English. Helen shared about the pride that her young students gain as they learn to speak English. Speaking English means that they are accepted and able to participate in the classroom and within social circles. Helen explained:

Kids are naturally group oriented. They want to have friends, they want to be part of what is going on, and kids that were already in school in another country they are used to being successful so sometimes you do get a bit of frustration when they don't know what is going on, especially the new arrivals, there can be some tears, especially the first few months, they don't know what is going on.

Helen teaches in an elementary school. In elementary school it is very important for young students to make friends and feel a part of what is going on. Thus, language acquisition is

essential for these young children because it allows them to participate and be welcomed in by their teachers and peers.

Bill, a Columbus immigration lawyer, discussed U.S. institutional discrimination against Indian immigrant workers. He explained that there are many non-immigrant individuals who work in the technology sector who feel that they would have a job if it were not for the hiring of foreign workers. Bill referred to this type of discrimination as, organized opposition. In addition to organized opposition, Bill explained that people are fearful of the changing composition of the U.S. He explained that the U.S. is no longer white, Anglo-Saxon, and protestant. They fear the changes this demographic shift causes in U.S. society. Finally, some people oppose all immigration. They think of low skilled workers as people who are using the system, using the free education, have heavy drug usage, are criminals, etc. Indian immigrants are then grouped within this pool of all immigrants.

These are just a few examples of references made by members of the Indian immigrant community, as well as their advocates, to incidents of discrimination, both of great consequence, and seemingly, of lesser or more benign impact. The way that an Indian immigrant family adjusts to life in the U.S. is affected by the way that the U.S. community welcomes and accepts them. As referenced earlier in the literature review, the U.S. has a history of discrimination, particularly towards immigrants. In order to avoid repetition of the past, awareness must be raised about the ways, like the ones shared by my interview subjects, that immigrants are discriminated against.

Discrimination is one of the challenges that Indian immigrant families face when coming to the U.S. and they are left to find a way to cope. One method is to engage in a U.S. based Indian immigrant community.

Ethnic Enclaves

Building community with other Indian immigrant families was a constant theme in the stories I collected from each of my interview subjects. Particularly as a result of the sponsorship format of immigration policy, Indian immigrants most often arrive in the U.S. and begin by living, if not in the same home, in the same neighborhood as close friends and family.

I asked Hema what it was like to immigrate to a new place. In her case, her immediate family was some of the last of her family members to immigrate to the U.S. Therefore, moving to the U.S. meant reuniting with her family. Hema's story is not unique. Many Indian families have immigrated to the U.S. and live together in various apartment complexes and neighborhoods. Living together allows immigrants to navigate the new culture together—an important, if not vital, part of the acculturation process, which highlights the blending of both 'home' and 'host' cultural influences.

I asked Chintu if there are any social services in the Columbus area that are helpful for immigrants who are first arriving in Columbus. His response was, "No this is one area that I feel like the community in itself is very self sufficient. The internal infrastructure is such and the community itself is so well knit that there is no need for any outside service" (Chintu). On the surface, it appears that the Indian communities provide sufficient emotional and physical support, yet, there are hidden needs in the Indian immigrant community that must be addressed.

Abha, the director of *Hope Exit*, explained that it is extremely difficult for women to take the step of reporting domestic violence. Women struggle to report that they are experiencing domestic violence, because they are so interlocked with their communities. Reporting abuse means risking judgment from their ethnic community. Abha explained that the aim of *Hope Exit* is to care for the patient; separate from the community they come from. Abha emphasized that

there are communities without checks and balances. The job of *Hope Exit* is to act outside of the communities to challenge the communities' negative norms.

Religion

The dominant religions in India are Hinduism and Islam (Religion). Several of my interview subjects made references to their families religious identities and practices. For Hema, religious practice was minimal in her family:

Sometimes religion is huge in Indian families, my parents are not very religious either like they are not the ones who go to temples and go and listen to like I don't know, saints who come in from India. They don't do that...They spend a lot of time with each other and their kids and they always tell us like instead of us leaving the house and going and sitting at the temple...we can spend more time with you guys. So they kind of make like our family their center of everything.

Aadvan discussed how his parents are Hindu, but they have never forced it upon him. He explained that he used to go to a Hari Krishna temple in Columbus because they conveyed the philosophy in English, and therefore he was able to understand it. Since then, he has stopped going to the temple because he disagrees with some of the Hari Krishna beliefs.

Taahid's commentary about why he is cautious about passing his Islamic faith practices on to his daughters, relate to the previous discussion on discrimination. Taahid comments:

So I don't know how much I will take and how much I will pass on. [Islam] is the most attacked religion in the country right now, so I don't know how safe she would feel mentioning it all the time, "I'm Muslim".

Like many other cultural norms and family values that Indian families hold, Indian immigrant families have to decide how to live out their religious faith in a country with normative religious practices and values that are often contrary to those of India.

Conclusion

Each immigrant family has their own unique story, but amongst them all there are common themes. Indian immigrant families navigate U.S. immigration and social institutions through a process of migration that blends values of their host culture with American culture and norms. Relationships within the family and the greater Indian immigrant community serve as sources of support and conflict. As Indian families and other immigrants continue to arrive in the U.S. (Colby and Ortman 2015), it is important to consider the future relations within and amongst racial, cultural, and ethnic groups in U.S. cities.

The current study illustrates today's immigrant relations in Columbus, Ohio. Findings suggest that the Columbus Indian community works together in some instances as a separate community, while also taking the initiative to raise their voice outside of their ethnic enclave. Initiatives like *India Connection* and Indian business organizations serve as a voice for the Indian immigrant community as a whole. In particular, *India Connection* invites governmental leaders to their events, to speak and hold conversations on topics of importance for the Indian immigrant community. Chintu explained:

We also host dignitaries from India, like the ambassador to the United States from India...we invite him to come in and he will come in on like a three day visit or something and we arrange meetings with the governor and the mayor, department of commerce people, the trade and development people, just to see how we can enhance the trade between the two countries. Then they may address the chamber of commerce, council of world affairs, and things like that.

India Connection and Indian business organizations are examples of initiatives started by Indian immigrants in order to support Indian immigrants as minorities in American society.

I asked Valini if there is anything that she would improve in Columbus in order to increase the voice of the Indian community. Her response was:

I think there is some scope of improvement with respect to outreach to the community because currently all the outreach is being done by the community but not to the community...If there could be some way where there is a better outreach towards the community, and it could be from a business perspective, from a political perspective, from an economic perspective, where an effort is made to say, “hey we want to reach out to the Asian community and have somebody on our board from that community because we believe that community is really important.

The final step of integration for Indian families is the welcoming by other U.S. families and individuals. The ideal way for these connections to be formed is through local school districts and recreational centers. For example, a parent organization within Dublin City schools, aimed towards welcoming new immigrant families to the district, would be one way for immigrant families to meet non-immigrants. The early connection of immigrant and non-immigrant families may result in a decrease of segregation, because immigrant families would have experienced individuals outside of the immigrant community to consult with acculturation concerns.

Furthermore, culturally appropriate services should be provided by mainstream service providers. Abha, referenced the lack of domestic violence organizations that consider the cultural needs of their immigrant clients. Sudha (2013) references elder care practices amongst Indian immigrant families. Sudha found that families of elderly immigrants would prefer to have culturally appropriate services available to aid in caring for their loved ones. Dutta (2014) refers to this concern of culturally competent services as well. Dutta states:

While immigration, adjustment, and intergenerational conflict are well described in the literature, Indian families do not readily seek out therapeutic services due to mistrust of North American culture (Inman, Howard, Beaumont & Walker, 2007). In fact, the notion of ‘well, you don’t know how our Indian families are’ is an oft-used mentality, keeping problems within families, and isolating them from using counseling services.

Integrated services would provide opportunities for understanding across cultural boundaries and lessen ethnic segregation within U.S. institutions.

Family research has just recently begun to focus on the role of communities, environment, and individual family member's attitudes (Mazzucato and Schans 2011). In the past, families were studied "as nuclear, living together, and bounded by the nation-state" (Mazzucato and Schans 2011). The purpose of the current study is to look both inside the family, by speaking with individual members of Indian families, as well as outside of the family by talking with service providers, to identify what affect, if any, the U.S. immigration system and social institutions have on immigrant families. This study focused on a particular city, Columbus, Ohio, to identify the affects that the institution of immigration has on a particular community and the families within it. As more refugees and immigrants settle in U.S. cities, such as Columbus, it is essential that we understand the process of migration and the ways in which cultures interact. In particular, it is essential that a focus be placed on the experience of individuals within family units, as the experience of individuals varies on the basis of age, gender, marital status, and a variety of other factors. Dutta (2014) explains:

Although services directed at addressing acculturation stresses (adjusting to the new culture's way of doing things, learning a new language, learning to fit in, and discerning what parts of the old culture to maintain) exist, there is less professional focus on the internal family processes that accompany the adjustment.

The U.S. is a nation based in the ideology of the family. Immigrants bring with them unique family structures. In order to effectively approach the future of the U.S. it is essential to consider the changes in terms of family.

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Appendix.

Name	Immigrant/Non-Immigrant	Professional Title/Organization
Aadvan	Immigrant	Resident
Hema	Immigrant	Resident
Taahid	Immigrant	Book Salesman
Daania	Immigrant	Professor
Chintu	Immigrant	Hospitality/ <i>India Connection</i>
Valini	Immigrant	Global Business Lawyer
Abha	Immigrant	<i>Hope Exit</i>
Steven	Non-Immigrant	Immigration Lawyer
Emily	Non-Immigrants	City of Dublin Public Information Officer
Douglas	Non-Immigrant	Dublin City Manager's Office Manager's Assistant
Helen	Non-Immigrant	Dublin City Schools ELL teacher
Rachel	Non-Immigrant	Dublin City Schools ELL teacher leader
Bill	Non-Immigrant	Christian community center career clinic director