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Re-ethnicization of Second-Generation Non-Muslim Asian Indians in the U.S.

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

When discussing Asian Indian population in the U.S. their economic success and scholastic achievement dominates the discourse. Despite their perceived economic and scholastic success and their status as a “model minority”, Asian Indians experience discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization from mainstream American society. These experiences of discrimination and perceived discrimination are causing second generation Asian Indians to give up on total assimilation and re-ethnicize. They are using different pathways of re-ethnicization to re-claim and to create an ethnic identity. This thesis provides evidence, through secondary sources, that Asian Indians in the U.S. do experience discrimination or perceived discrimination, and it is historic, cultural, and systemic. This thesis also uses secondary sources to explain several pathways of re-ethnicization utilized by second generation Asian Indians who have given up on complete assimilation. The process of re-ethnicization provides second generation Asian Indians agency, positionality, and placement in American society. Asian Indians through re-ethnicization occupy and embrace the margins that separate mainstream American society and the Asian Indians community in the U.S. It allows them to act as “go –betweens”.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Why Are Second-Generation non-Muslim Asian Indians Re-ethnicizing in the U.S.?

According to Pew Research there are approximately three million Asian Indians in the U.S. as of 2016. The Migration Policy Institute states that there are almost 800,000 second-generation Asian Indians in the U.S. and 84% of them have both an Indian born mother and father (migrationpolicy.org). In 2010, the average household income of these nearly three million Asian Indians was \$88,000 per year compared to the average white household income of \$44,000 (PewResearch.org, 2016). Of the Asian Indians surveyed, 87.2% of adults were foreign born, and 70% of them have a college degree; 40.6% have a graduate or professional degree (PewResearch.org, 2016). This is not surprising because U.S. Immigration policy encourages the immigration of highly skilled Asian Indians. According to the Migration Policy Institute nearly 76% of all H1B visas were given to Asian Indians during 2014. H1B visas are only given to individuals with specialized skill sets needed in the U.S. A Majority of the H1B visas go to individuals in the Hi-Tech/ IT industry.

Because of the 1965 Immigration Act and the Civil Rights Act many highly skilled Asian Indians immigrants were able to quickly insert themselves into white, middle- class America. They lived in neighborhoods, often times in suburbia, surrounded by whites who were as educated as themselves. Over the years the Asian Indian immigrant community has continued to flourish and succeed. Some Asian Indians have succeeded to significant prominence in the

American society: Sundar Pichai, Indian American (second generation) is the CEO of Google; Satya Nadella also a (second generation) Indian American is the CEO of Microsoft; Indra Nooyi, an Indian immigrant, is the CEO of Pepsico; Shantanu Narayaen is the CEO of Adobe; Vivek Murthy, a second generation Indian American, was the Surgeon General under the Obama Administration; Nikki Haley and Bobby Jindal are both Indian Americans (second generation) and they are the governors of South Carolina and Louisiana respectively.

According to Jeffrey Humphreys' research at the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia; Terry School of Business, Asian purchasing power in the U.S. is \$770 billion. Asian Indians contribute 25.3% to that purchasing power (\$195 billion); they have the largest purchasing power of all Asians in the U.S. They are a much younger population, when compared to the U.S. population, with a median age of 32 years; 37 years is the average median age of the U.S. population. They also have the lowest unemployment rate and have the lowest poverty rate of 5.7% in the U.S.

“In the IT industries, the numbers were even more striking. Studies by AnnaLee Saxenian, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley who researches immigrant groups, revealed that South Asian-- Americans run over 700 companies in Silicon Valley. Some executives jokingly began to refer to a South Asian IT "mafia," and one popular book on the valley noted that curry was the defining smell of IT start- ups” (Kurlantzick, 2002, p.54).

Clearly, the majority of the Second Wave Asian Indian immigrants (1965- 1987) and their children (second-generation) have attained a certain amount of economic success in the U.S. The flaws in American society that hinder other ethnic groups of colour from attaining success have not impeded Asian Indians. Having said that, “Why then are second generation non-Muslim Asian Indians re-ethnicizing?” In this thesis, I examine why so many second-

generation, non-Muslim, Asian Indians are looking back to their ethnic communities and embracing Asian Indian culture, when they have found success, opportunities, and good lives in mainstream America? The “move” to re-ethnicize is deliberate and in some ways it may seem that they are moving “backwards” or away from American mainstream culture.

If economic success and socio/economic mobility are a measure of assimilation of immigrant groups in any given society, it can be concluded that Asian Indians have assimilated into American society. In Jan Skrobanek’s (2009) research regarding the theory of re-ethnicization, discrimination is the prime reason for re-ethnicization. Skrobanek defines re-ethnicization as a “strategy to emphasize or to differentiate a specific minority group’s social, cultural, or economic properties. It is also a strategy to regain social recognition of their valued group distinctiveness and social identity in comparison with other minority groups and the dominant social group” (Skrobanek, 2009, p. 540). In his research, Turkish youth claimed discrimination or perceived discrimination for limiting their mobility and attainment of socio-economic opportunity. The economic data regarding the success of Asian Indians suggests that they do not experience discrimination or perceive to be discriminated against; as a matter of fact they are considered as a “Model Minority” by American society.

“Model Minority”, a label not exclusive to Asian Indians, also describes many ethnic groups within the Asian category. It is used by mainstream white society to minimize the embedded racism and discrimination within the American culture. It is also used to diminish the institutional racism inflicted on African Americans/ Blacks, Hispanics/ Latin Americans, and Native Americans. The pernicious nature of the Model Minority label ignores any claims of discrimination or racism experienced by Asians/ Asian Indians.

Hypothesis

I argue in this body of work that Asian Indians in the U.S., face similar discrimination that many people of colour confront everyday in the U.S., despite their substantial economic success and their socio-economic mobility. I will also argue that this discrimination is historic, cultural, and systemic and it occurs in the white, educated middle and upper middle-class strata of American society. I further assert that Asian Indians are utilizing different pathways to re-ethnicize as a response to persistent perceived discrimination that marginalizes and excludes them from mainstream American society. These pathways allow for agency when creating a social and ethnic identity for Asian Indians that differentiates them from other ethnic groups in the U.S. Social identity in the re-ethnicization process is not defined by the dominant culture but by the ethnic group seeking to create a positive social identity that is necessary for social capital. Social capital is what is needed to make a cultural, political and economic impact in any given society.

My research will also demonstrate that the process of re-ethnicization occurs in a globalized, multicultural society. Globalization processes such as migration, global economy, technology and “social remittance” contribute to the re-ethnicization process of second generation non-Muslim Asian Indians in the U.S.

Importance of Study

I believe that this research is very important because it helps us to understand discriminatory hurdles facing Asian Indians living in the U.S. and different re-ethnicization pathways to overcome them. The imagined concept of an American and the imagined American community is that of white individuals of European descent. The dominant culture is European

and Christian based, where all other people and cultures are subordinate. Theories that encouraged assimilation and the “melting pot” scenarios apply only to Whites or those who pass for White. For people of colour assimilation is not a possibility, even if they aspired to assimilate. Cultural norms in America, governmental policies, racism and ethnocentrism make it extremely difficult for non-white immigrants from non-European countries to assimilate.

Asian Indians are an interesting and a crucial case -study because they came into American society as middle and upper-middle class immigrants with certain amount of social capital. Despite being people of colour with obvious physical differences, they lived amongst mostly white population in post 1965 U.S. They strived to assimilate yet the process of complete assimilation was not possible (Kurien, 2007). Their inability to completely assimilate or integrate into American mainstream culture is not their lack of desire to integrate nor because of class/ economic reasons; it is because of race. Majority of Asian Indians despite being economically successful and living in American middle-class cannot completely assimilate because of exclusion, discrimination, and stigmatization due of their race.

All too often politicians claim the reason for lack of assimilation of certain non-white populations is their lack of social capital; lack of opportunity, the lack of willingness to assimilate on the part of the minority populations, or they are so different that they simply cannot assimilate. I argue that the Asian Indian community debunks these as the primary reasons for a lack of assimilation. Although social capital allows for a step closer to assimilation, fundamental changes must take place within dominant American culture. “Othering” of individuals different from white, European, Christians must be resolved. Beliefs rooted from the Enlightenment must be examined and altered to meet a new globalized American society. Second generation Asian Indians, who have given up on assimilation due to discriminatory barriers, utilized the process of

globalization to assist in re-ethnicizing and to define their social identity within the American culture. Re-ethnicization also allows second generation Asian Indians to act as “go- betweens” for the Asian Indian community and the dominant American society. They are in a unique position to navigate both cultures because of their intimate knowledge of both. Re-ethnicization creates a unique place and position for second-generation Asian Indians.

Understanding the different mechanisms of re-ethnicization may help local and federal government institutions to create these pathways for non-white, ethnic immigrant communities where persistent perceived discrimination exists. If the community experiences marginalization and exclusion then re-ethnicization pathways may provide agency for these communities. This agency can be used to define an ethnic identity that reflects a positive social identity; this in turn allows for social and political engagement and participation of these ethnic groups.

Asian Indian Studies

My aim is to contribute to the broader literature regarding Asian Indians in the U.S. Asian Indians are a relatively recent immigrant group whose immigration in significant numbers occurred after the 1965 Immigration Act and since then their migration to the U.S. continues to increase. Despite being one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the U.S. their numbers are still small; approximately three million (PewResearch.org, 2016). Because of their small demographics and their recent immigration to the U.S., large longitudinal and aggregate based research is limited.

I have found that there is significant literature on the broader topic of ethnicity and American immigration policy and its affect on Asian and other ethnic groups. The general findings and theories that address the broader topics of non-white immigration and non- white

ethnic communities in the U.S. may be extrapolated and applied to Asian Indians.

Ethnicity and the identification with a particular ethnicity in the U.S. occurs in both the white, ancestral European communities and within non-white, racialized communities. Mary Waters in her book *Ethnic Options* (1990), claims that ethnic identity is related to levels of discrimination. According to Waters, emphasis on ethnic identity in the U.S. disappears once the particular group is no longer discriminated against by the dominant society. Thus ethnic identity for white Americans is an “option”. It is a way for assimilated whites to create some sense of uniqueness from their primary identity as an “American” (Waters, 1990, p. 55). Ethnicity for non-whites in the U.S. is not an option it is tied to race, class, and being perceived, by mainstream America, as a foreigner, a stranger, and the “other”.

Ethnicity for non-whites in the U.S. is also closely tied to government policy, class, and race. Robert Lieberman in his book *Shaping Race Policy in the United States in Comparative Perspective* (2005) examines cultural framing, policies, and ideologies of race in the U.S., France, and Britain. He argues that centralization or decentralization of power within a given country affects policy regarding race and discrimination and the implementation of that policy. U.S. has a decentralized power structure; the federal government shares power with the states. An example is when the U.S. federal government created a national policy to stop discrimination of non-whites by creating equal access to voting, it left the implementation of the policy to the states. Many states, despite the urging of the federal government, acted contrary to the policy.

Lieberman’s study is important because his findings claim that minority groups in the U.S. must operate as coalitions at the “grassroots” or local levels, if they want significant changes at the national level. So, it is important for ethnic groups to create a social identity and to create social capital and political capital. According to Liebermann “ethnicization” and “re-

ethnicization” might be a genuinely American response to discrimination

There are several publications that specifically address second generation Asian Indians in the U.S. Bandana Purkayastha’s book *Negotiating Ethnicity* (2005) addresses identity formation of second generation Asian Indians. It is an ethnographic study of second generation Asian Indians in the U.S. She explores how discrimination within the middle class and upper middle- class American society affected the identity formation of second generation Asian Indians, but she never addresses re-ethnicization.

She argues that theories of transnational identity and mobility affected identity of second-generation Asian Indians and their parents. She also elucidated how second generation Asian Indians are positioned as “bridges” between their immigrant parents and American society. They intimately understand both cultures and can disseminate the similarities and differences. They are capable of navigating both cultures and can serve as important emissaries between dominant American culture and Asian Indian communities.

Peggy Levitt, a sociologist from Wellesley College, claims in her 1998 article *Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion* that international migration due to a global economy not only contributes to financial remittance (where currency is sent to families in sending countries by migrant workers), but also contributes to “social remittance”. She defines social remittances “local-level, migration-driven form of cultural diffusion” (Levitt, 1998, p.926). She further argues that social remittances are the ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving-country to sending-country communities. “They are the north-to-south equivalent of the social and cultural resources that migrants bring with them which ease their transitions from immigrants to ethnics. The role that these resources play in promoting immigrant entrepreneurship, community and family formation,

and political integration is widely acknowledged” (Levitt, 1998, p. 927). Levitt’s definition of social remittance helps to conceptualize re-ethnicization process for Asian Indians in the U.S. Their immigration into the U.S. continues to increase and this influences the existing Asian Indian diaspora in the U.S. and the pathway to re-ethnicization for second-generation Asian Indians. If nothing else there are just more Asian Indians to interact with and to encounter in their day- to -day lives. This also affects changes in retail marketing to meet the needs of Asian Indians thus creating new pathways to re-ethnicization. The theory of social remittance is pertinent to Asian Indian immigrant communities especially in the context of global migration, global commerce, and mobility.

Many second generation Asian Indians belong to extended families that live in multiple countries; such as India, UK, Australia, South Africa, Fiji, and New Zealand (Purkayastha, 2005). Their families occupy transnational spaces, identities, histories, and ideologies and all of them could be considered as social remittances. They can affect the identity formation of second generation Asian Indians. Many of the second generation Asian Indians make frequent trips back to India as children and as adults. These frequent trips potentially influence their identity, ideology and their understanding of their positionality within the U.S. and within India or other countries (Joshi, 2006). Social remittance may play a factor in the re-ethnicization of second generation Asian Indians in the U.S., but Levitt’s research on social remittance is more concerned about the effects on sending countries and non-migrants in those countries.

New Roots in America’s Sacred Ground by Khyati Joshi is an ethnographic study of religious identity formation of second generation Asian Indian. Her study revealed that more than half of the participants went back to India at least once every three years during their K-12 school years (Joshi, 2006, p. 69). Some of the participants remarked that going back to India as

adults affected their view of themselves. Since Joshi's book is about religious identity the participants felt that experiencing the Hindu temples as adults made them connect to their "Indian-ness" (Joshi, 2006, p. 70). They felt more connected spiritually because they were publicly practicing their religion with others "co-religionists". She addresses the feelings of exclusion and "the other" amongst the second generation Asian Indians within American society, but these feelings of exclusion were not directly related to discrimination. She connects these feelings within the framework of religious identity. Joshi's work is pertinent because creating a religious identity is one pathway for re-ethnicization.

Most of the works regarding second generation Asian Indians in the U.S. deal with identity formation with regards to race, ethnicity, family and community. Jean Bacon's book *Life Lines* (1996) is an ethnographic study of second generation Asian Indians and their families in the Chicago area. Her core study is about the Indian family's structure and culture and their effects on identity formation of second generation Asian Indians. In Bacon's study the emphasis is on identity formation in the private sphere.

In Shalini Shankar's *Desi Land* (2008) identity formation of second generation Asian Indians is studied in the context of the large Asian Indian communities in Silicon Valley. She was interested in the Pan Asian Indian (Desi) communities of Silicon Valley and their effect on Asian Indian teens. She observed "Desi" teens' relationships with their families and with each other within a large Asian Indian diaspora. This ethnographic study gave an intimate insight into Desi teen culture unique to large Asian Indian diaspora. Although her study is insightful with regards to second generation Asian Indians growing up in large Asian Indian diasporas it does not aid in my interest regarding re-ethnicization. The teens in *Desi land* lived their ethnicity in a multicultural and multinational way. They were immersed in Asian Indian culture at home and

in their social life. Even when they went to school their friends tend to be Asian Indians. They went to public schools and navigated the diverse Silicon Valley culture, but Shankar's findings indicate that the Desi teens were far more engaged in their Pan Asian Indian culture. Re-ethnicization does not really apply to the teens in Desi Land.

There is a gap in Asian Indian literature regarding the re-ethnicization of second – generation, non-Muslim Asian Indians. Although there is significant data regarding discrimination and perceived discrimination experienced by Asian Indians it has not been linked to the process of re-ethnicization. However, Jan Skrobanek in his 2009 study of *Perceived Discrimination, Ethnic Identity and the (Re-)Ethnicisation of Youth with a Turkish Ethnic Background in Germany* linked perceived discrimination to their re-ethnicization. Skrobanek's research only hinted at re-ethnicization by taking surveys of how closely Turkish youth identified with their ethnicity and how this ethnic identity was affected by perceived discrimination. The more they perceived discrimination the more closely the Turkish youth identified with their ethnic identity.

Skrobanek argues that re-ethnicization in Turkish youth is occurring because of discrimination or perceived discrimination. Even though the available literature of Asian Indian does not focus on re-ethnicization, it is nevertheless obvious that this phenomenon is actually occurring in the Asian Indian community in the U.S. Between 1990 to 2010, the number Hindu temples and Sikh gurdwaras has increased, the number of Asian Indian cultural festival and movie festivals has increased, and the number of Asian Indian restaurants and shops has also increased.

Research Design and Methodology

My research question is “Why are second generation non-Muslim Asian Indians re-ethnicizing in the U.S.?” My hypothesis is second generation non-Muslim Asian Indians experience and perceive discrimination by mainstream American society. This perceived discrimination manifests itself in the form of marginalization, exclusion, and stigmatization. They are choosing different pathways to create their own ethnic identity. This ethnic identity is to differentiate themselves from other ethnic groups, create positive social capital that emphasizes the positive contributions Asian Indians make to American society. The ultimate goal is to integrate better into American society by creating social and political capital for Asian Indians in the U.S.

Because there is a gap in Asian Indian literature regarding re-ethnicization, I will be framing my research design similar to Jan Skrobanek’s 2009 research on the re-ethnicization of Turkish youth in Germany, but I will be applying the theory on non-Muslim second-generation Asian Indians in the U.S. My research takes into account the attempts second generation Asian Indians made to assimilate with mainstream American culture only to be confronted with discrimination. Using only secondary sources (because of time constraint), I will provide evidence of cultural, structural and systemic discrimination experienced by second-generation Asian Indians in particular and by Asian Indians as an aggregate group in the U.S. I will also provide the different strategies that were utilized by second generation Asian Indians to re-ethnicize, as a response to persistent discrimination and stigmatization.

There are few variables (multiculturalism, globalization processes such as transnational mobility, technology, and social remittance) within the design that I am unable to account for in this thesis. They play a role in the causal pathway that states that discrimination or perceived

discrimination leads to re-ethnicization, but I can only achieve an extrapolation of their role in this thesis. Multiculturalism is the boundary conditions or control variable because it has to exist for re-ethnicization to occur; formation of ethnic identities are encouraged in a multicultural social structure. I am considering that globalization processes such as transnational mobility, technology, and social remittance are intervening variables because they help to explain how re-ethnicization (dependent) pathways occur. The independent variable in this study is discrimination/ perceived discrimination and the dependent variable is different re-ethnicization pathways.

Unit of Analysis

My research will be a case study on second-generation non- Muslim Asian Indians in the U.S. I will concentrate on second generation non-Muslim Asian Indians between the ages of 55 years old and 35 years old born in the U.S. or those that came to the U.S. at a very young age (primary school age). These individuals are the children of the “Second Wave” Asian Indians who immigrated to the U.S. between the years of 1965 to 1987. Re-ethnicization is most measurable in this specific age group. They are the older set in the second- generation Asian Indian group. There were very few Asian Indians in the U.S. when this group was young and they tend to be the group that is the “most Americanized”. When individuals in this group were in K-12 there were very few Asian Indians in their schools or in their communities, especially if they lived in the suburbs of smaller cities. Individuals in this group tend to have more white or non-Asian Indian friends. They tend to be immersed and more comfortable in American society and culture and have adopted American values and beliefs. I believe that individuals in this age group feel a sense of marginalization from both their parents and with mainstream American

society. Their ethnic identity is in question. They are not “immigrants” like their parents and they are not considered “American” by mainstream America. As such they constitute a crucial case for assessing the importance of re-ethnicization as a strategy for integration.

Concepts and Definition

Ethnic Identity is a “type of social identity and it allows for social distinction and differentiation between different groups that exist in any given society. Ethnic identity is important because it influences and helps to create a positive or a negative personal evaluation of him/herself depending on how the ethnic identity is evaluated both internally and externally” (Kurien, 2007, p. 275).

Social positioning and comparison enable individuals to understand their own and their ethnic group’s position in society. If a group has a positive social comparison then they have a positive social identity. If a group has a negative social comparison then they have a negative social identity and this can lead to discrimination or perceived discrimination of individuals and certain ethnic groups. The Turkish ethnic group, in Skrobanek’s research, has a negative social identity in Germany and this leads to their discrimination or their perceived discrimination.

Social capital in this thesis is defined as the relationships individuals have with a social structure and with each other. These relationships can serve as resources that members of groups can draw upon. According to Yuri Jang in his 2015 article *Social Capital in Ethnic Communities and Mental Health: A Study of Older Korean Immigrants*, “social capital in ethnic communities includes social cohesion, community support, community participation, and negative interaction”

(Jang, 2015, p. 132). In multicultural societies group distinctions and group identities are encouraged and promoted (Kurien, 2007). When many different distinct racial and ethnic groups exist in a singular society that in multicultural a social hierarchy and group competition can emerge. Historically in the U.S. white, wealthy, Anglo-Saxon men were the hegemonic group and all others were considered subordinate. They created the power structure and clearly had direct access to the structure. Subordinate groups had to look within their respective ethnic, racial, socio-economic group for support, sense of inclusion, sense of participation and interaction.

The decentralized power structure in the U.S. encourages group formation and group participation to influence social change. This interaction between groups and the existing power structure to influence change is social capital. Re-ethnicization encourages the distinct group formation and group interaction, participation, and support.

Social identity, whether positive or negative, is measured through social capital. Cohesive ethnic group's identity is created by how it interacts within itself and with the dominant society. For dominant hegemonic groups such as rich, white men in Western cultures realizing social capital is simple; there are very few hindrances. For those groups who fall below the strata occupied by the hegemonic group, positive social capital becomes difficult to obtain.

Positive social identity (*social capital*) is the goal of all individuals and groups, even the goal of hegemonic groups. Hegemonic groups want to possess positive social identity because it justifies their position of privilege; without them there would be no jobs, they pay the most taxes and without them the society suffers, they take the most risks for society so they deserve privilege. The desire to create social capital can become a competition amongst different

subordinate groups and between subordinate and hegemonic groups. This competition can result in prejudice and discrimination that can reduce the status and mobility of subordinate groups by hegemonic groups.

Positionality of subordinate ethnic groups within a multicultural society is crucial in determining social capital in the U.S. For smaller demographic groups, such as the Asian ethnic groups, size is an obstacle that cannot be easily overcome. The Asian ethnic group overcomes its disadvantage of demographics by offering other forms of social capital that is important to the U.S. That social capital is their “usefulness” to mainstream American society.

In societies that are multiracial and multiethnic a hierarchy of social capital and positive and negative social identity occurs and this results in different and unequal treatment of subordinate groups. The hegemonic group determines this hierarchy. Those groups that reaffirm the hegemon’s position of power have positive social identity and those who threaten the hegemon’s position of power have negative social identity. In the U.S. and in Europe the hegemonic group/ society is white, male, European, and Christian. Any group that does not fit into this hegemonic profile is considered subordinate and it must accept the social identity and social capital it is assigned by the hegemon, it can rebel against it, or it can create its own social identity or capital. Re-ethnicization is a way for subordinate out-groups to proactively create a social or ethnic identity; thus creating social capital.

Multiculturalism leads to the institutionalization of ethnicity and to ethnic formation among immigrant groups because assimilation is not mandatory. Individuals are pressured from the outside by dominant culture and pressured from the inside by their own ethnic base to

organization on cultural similarities (Kurien, 2007). In multicultural societies many subordinate ethnic or racial groups exist. In the U.S. there are African American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian groups. All of these groups are subordinate to the dominant white, European hegemonic group.

Multiculturalism connotes many cultures thus many social identities. The assumption is that in a multicultural society each ethnic group defines its unique ethnic or social identity. This is not the case. In a multicultural society each subordinate ethnic group is *allowed* to create its ethnic community and identity within the construct of a dominant culture. The dominant group that dictates society ultimately determines ethnic social identity of subordinate groups. Social capital is what determines how much *agency* subordinate groups have in creating social identity.

The Asian Indian ethnic group is a very small group in the U.S. There are far more Hispanics, African American, and Chinese Asians in the U.S. Social capital, especially that associated with political clout is almost nonexistent in the Asian Indian ethnic group when compared to the voting blocs created by Hispanic Americans and African Americans. The desire and competition for political clout is very important for subordinate ethnic groups in a multicultural society. Since the U.S. is a country with decentralized power, where states have significant power over the federal government with regards certain issues, social capital is a further priced commodity for subordinate groups.

Ethnicization is the process of “group unification and mobilization that is central to allegiance and loyalty to ancestral homeland, culture, and religion” (Kurien, 2007, p. 765). Whilst this is beneficial to the out- group seeking a positive social identity, it can be seen as threatening by the dominant group. The dominant group could question the patriotism or loyalty

of the subordinate group, especially if ethnic mobilization is done in the public sphere (Kurien, 2007).

Re-ethnicizing is a process of “becoming ethnic” chosen by many non-white ethnic groups in a multicultural society because complete assimilation is impossible. Skrobanek defines re-ethnicization as a “resource or a strategy to emphasize or to differentiate subordinate group specific as opposed to dominant group specific cultural, social, or economic group properties to regain social recognition of their valued group distinctiveness and regain social identity in comparison with the dominant group” (Skrobanek, 2009, p. 540). The subordinate group acknowledges that there is competition for positive social identity. So the goal is to give attention and value to their group specific capital when compared to other groups. This creates positive social identity is not only attained but it is maintained long term. Re-ethnicization takes into account multiculturalism (where assimilation is not mandatory), discrimination, globalization, and the impossibility of assimilation to reach social, cultural, or economic resources to realize positive social identity (Kurien, 2007).

Organization of Thesis

In Chapter two I will discuss the history of Asian Indian migration to the U.S. in the early 1900s known as the “First Wave”. Asian Indians that migrated during First Wave were mostly uneducated, Punjabi men who worked on the railroads, lumber mills, and in agriculture. They were subject to institutional racism and marginalization. Their social and physical mobility was limited and they were marginalized, stigmatized, and racialized at an institutional and cultural level. I will also discuss the Second Wave (1965- 1987) Asian Indian immigration to the U.S. Immigration post -1965 Civil Rights Movement. Institutional restrictions that limited socio-

economic mobility of non-white immigrants to the U.S. were lifted, but it did not mean that immigration to the U.S. was unconditional. Initially, only Asian Indians with technical and scientific skills were welcomed through the H1B visa. The Asian Indian immigrants that come during the Second Wave were highly educated and they easily inserted themselves into the American middle-class and upper-middle class white society. Despite their social capital and their socio-economic mobility Second Wave Asian Indians faced cultural discrimination.

Chapter three includes different theoretical frameworks that account for patterns of immigrant incorporation into civil society. In this chapter, I discuss and analyze the assimilation theory, segmented assimilation theory, selected acculturation theory, multiculturalism, reactive ethnicity theory, and re-ethnicization theory. I consider each theory and reflect on how each addresses the positionality of Asian Indians in present day American culture. I also consider how each theory reflects contemporary discourse regarding discrimination or perceived discrimination and the need for a distinct social identity by Asian Indians.

Chapter four clarifies my research on the re-ethnicization of second-generation non-Muslim Asian Indians in the U.S. using only secondary sources. I present my proof of discrimination or perceived discrimination that Asian Indians and second-generation Asian Indians experienced in the U.S. I focus on historic discrimination of Asian Indians in post 1965 U.S. and discrimination of Asian Indians post 9/11. I also present the different pathways second generation Asian Indians can use to re-ethnicize: such as Desi Culture, the use of technology and social media, increased immigration of Asian Indians to the U.S., increase in the number of temples, Asian Indian community associations, and Asian Indian professional associations. My research reveals that Asian Indians experience perceived discrimination and it occurs in obvious forms such as violence and verbal abuse, but it also occurs in a tactic and indirect forms such as

the “model minority status”. My research also indicates that second generation Asian Indians have multiple pathways available to them for re-ethnicization. They can re-claim their ethnic identity and still maintain their integration into mainstream American society.

Chapter five concludes that under the right circumstances ethnic group that perceive discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion can re-ethnicize. There are different pathways to re-ethnicize and how a group utilizes these pathways depends on the group’s existing social capital and its socio-economic mobility within a society. This chapter also discusses possible future research.

Chapter 2

History of Asian Indian immigration to the U.S.

Introduction

In this chapter I will provide some general historical background on the migration history of Asian Indians and the specific immigration history of Asian Indians in the U.S.

Asian Indians were part of the British Empire for nearly two-hundred years and before that they were part of the Mughal Empire. Both were foreign cultures asserting their influence onto Asian Indians to benefit their own imperial interests. Both empires were not able to directly rule India thus ruled Indians through indirect methods (Metcalf, 1995). This meant that certain Asian Indians had agency, influence and were “useful” to the dominant Mughal and British powers. I believe many Indians, particularly, elite Asian Indians understand this “usefulness”. Being useful to the dominant colonizing power allows for colonized elites to thrive in an oppressive society. In the book *Ideologies of the Raj*, Thomas Metcalf writes, “Despite Whig reforms the British remained dependent on an array of intermediaries. Brahmins especially, in the courts and countryside alike, played an indispensable role both in the collection of revenue and the administration of justice” (Metcalf, 1995, p. 23). Franz Fanon refers to this group of individuals as the “colonized intellectuals” in his book *Wretched of the Earth* (1963). This group not only tried to assimilate with the colonizer but also started to behave like the colonizer; distancing themselves from the “natives”. This group attended British run schools in India and in England thus became proficient in English and adopted British/ Western philosophy. They

flourished, as much as they could in colonial India (Metcalf, 1995).

History of Asian Indian immigration to the U.S.

Prior to 1947 the British controlled Asian Indian global migration. From 1830 to 1930 most Asian Indians immigrated to peripheral colonies of the British Empire: such as, Australia, South Africa, Caribbean, Asia, and Canada. Majority of the emigrants were men, who worked as labourers, merchants, policemen, and plantation workers. For some of these men it was a forced migration because they belonged to Indian nationalist groups that were creating instability in India. In the mid 1800s, only a handful of Asian Indians came to the U.S. as scholars, students, sea captains, and diplomats. They were very small in number and stayed in the U.S. on a temporary basis (Gonzales, 1986).

By the early 1900s larger numbers of Asian Indians were sent to North America because of an increase in civil unrest in India. Anti-colonial sentiment was the main reason for the unrest, but the 1907 Plague that ravaged India killing over a million people leaving a devastated Indian population further fueled the unrest. So, the British expelled approximately fifteen to thirty thousand Asian Indians to the shores of North America. These Indians were sent to North America because Anti-Indian exclusionary policies were already implemented in Australia and South Africa. Canada's economy was thriving and the need for a labour force was in demand (Ogden, 2012).

Almost all of the expelled immigrants to Canada during this period were men of Sikh descent; labourers, farmers, students, intellectuals, scholars, and ex-military men. The students, scholars, and intellectuals went to the east coast of North America, where universities in metropolitan areas existed. Meanwhile most of immigrants, who were uneducated labourers,

farmers, and ex-military -men found themselves on the west coast in British Columbia (Sahoo & Sangha, 2010).

Initially, the increased presence of Asian Indians in British Columbia was not an issue for the mostly white, European settlers. Asian Indians, despite being unskilled, uneducated and unable to speak English, were hard working, reliable, and cheap. This also meant that they were easily exploited. The Indian immigrants soon found out that life in Canada was just as oppressive and restricted as life in India. They were still considered “second – class” (Sahoo & Sangha, 2010).

As more Asian Indians came to North America the white population feared for their economic security. They believed that the Indians would take their jobs because they were cheap labour. This perceived anxiety resulted in the passing of many restrictive laws. In 1907 British Columbia implemented a policy denying Asian Indians the right to vote, serving on juries, not permitting Indians from becoming lawyers, accountants, and pharmacists. Finally, in 1908 British Columbia passed a law discouraging Indian migration to Canada (Sahoo & Sangha, 2010).

Despite their setbacks and hostilities towards them, the Indian immigrants in Vancouver built their first gurdwara (Sikh Temple) in 1908. Two years later another gurdwara was built in Victoria. The gurdwaras were not only a place of worship but they were also safe spaces for community organization; from the gurdwara many political resistance meeting took place (Sahoo & Sangha, 2010)

Threat of physical violence from racial tensions, anti- Asian immigration policies, and a down turn of the economy in Canada, drove many Sikh workers to the United States. Anti-Asian sentiments were no better up and down the American West Coast, but the economy was better.

This strong economy attracted immigrant groups from all over the world and it also attracted unemployed American Southerners devastated by the Civil War.

Anti-Asian and Nativist movements targeted at Chinese and Japanese immigrants existed in the U.S. since the 1850s. These sentiments morphed into organized labour activist groups such as the Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL). AEL originated in San Francisco (1905) and found new members up and down the West Coast of the U.S. Sikhs soon became targets for AEL because of their easily identifiable markers, turbans and beards (Ogden, 2012).

Sikhs in Washington and Oregon

Many of the Sikhs who left Vancouver in 1905 found work in the mill town of Bellingham, Washington, not far from the Canadian border. In September 1907, job insecurity from an economic downturn resulted in riots, where white workers not only beat over two hundred Sikhs but also destroyed their property. All Sikhs, Chinese, and Japanese migrant workers were driven out of Bellingham. The story of the Bellingham Riots spread throughout the West Coast by way of newspaper. Some Sikh migrant workers went back to Canada, but most went further south to Oregon. News of increased anti-Asian violence in Alaska, Washington, and California continued to be reported by mainstream newspapers.

The American government and the British government ignored the racial violence experienced by the Sikh migrant workers in North America. By 1908 Britain banned direct migration and travel between Canada and India because of racial tensions in British Columbia. Furthermore, migration from Punjab, the home state of the Sikh population, was highly restricted. Immigration restrictions on Asian Indians were not yet in place in the U.S. Direct migration from India to Oregon was still in place, as a result hundreds of Punjabis settled along

the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon to Astoria, Oregon.

Although anti-Asian sentiment was present in Oregon, it was not allowed to escalate to the levels that matched California, Washington, and Canada. The Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL) was not allowed to thrive in the state of Oregon. Many of the politicians and business leaders depended on the cheap, reliable labour the Asian migrants provided. Despite all the efforts to curb racial violence, it could not be avoided.

On March 14, 1919 three hundred white men attacked Asian Indian mill workers and destroyed their homes and property in the town of St. John, Oregon (Ogden, 2012). The mob then went to the mill and drove out the remaining Sikh labourers still at work. The Sikh workers left for nearby Portland. “The next day, the Sikhs returned with the county District Attorney and identified the perpetrators. The District Attorney issues 190 warrants and charged the mayor and the police chief of dereliction of duty” (Ogden, 2012, p. 173). The Sikhs returned to their jobs and to their homes in St. John. The fact that the Multnomah District Attorney backed the Sikhs’ claim and supported the Sikhs was a great “win” for the Sikh population in Oregon.

Sikhs in Astoria, Oregon and the Ghadar Movement

In the early 1900s, Astoria was a remote coastal town in Oregon that thrived economically because of the Hammond Lumber Mill and the Hume Salmon Fisheries and Canneries. Foreign immigrants, mostly the Chinese and Finnish, were instrumental in the economic success of the town and made up half of the town’s population. A.B. Hammond, the owner of the Hammond Lumber Mill, personally went to India to recruit labourers for the mill. Because of the remoteness of Astoria a supply of labour was “hard to come by”; so when more and more Sikhs arrived from India, Canada and California, they were welcomed. The mill

employed 600 people from various nationalities.

The Sikh community in Astoria thrived. The town leadership understood its dependence on Asian labour for its mills and canneries, so it did its best to quell anti-Asian sentiments. The Sikhs, mostly men, participated fully in the community. They interacted with all different ethnic groups but they were deeply influenced by the Chinese and the Finnish community (Ogden, 2012).

The significant number of Finns in Astoria belonged to the Astoria Finnish Socialist Club (ASSK). They were instrumental in influencing the Sikhs about organizing as a group by way of assembly and by way of the press. The Sikhs participated in marches for better wages alongside the Finns, Chinese, and other ethnic groups.

The Sikh community, influenced by ASSK , created a second chapter of Hindustani Association of America and founded the Ghadar Movement; “ghadar” means mutiny and revolution in Punjabi. Ghadar was a nationalist movement created to overthrow the British rule in Punjab. Sikhs from Portland, Washington, California, and Vancouver gathered at the Finnish Assembly Hall in Astoria to give speeches about Indian nationalism and their visions of an independent India; meetings were held every Sunday and they published a short-lived newspaper in Urdu (Ogden, 2012).

There were many Indian nationalist groups up and down the West Coast of North America, but the Ghadar Movement was started in Astoria. Soon the Ghadar movement spread all over the world, wherever Punjabi diaspora existed. In 1914, hundreds of Punjabi men living on the West Coast of North America made their way back to India to overthrow the British rule in the state of Punjab, because they believed “that overseas workers in the United States were key to liberation. They had gained political consciousness and money. They now needed an

organization to end British rule in India through armed revolution; with the aim of establishing an American-type democratic government, a so-called United States of India” (Ogden, 2012, 179-186). Many of the Ghadar members were killed, executed and imprisoned. “In 1922, fire at the Hammond Mill, forced the remaining few Punjabis to leave Astoria. Most went back to Canada, while other moved further south to California to join the remaining Punjabis in North America” (Ogden, 2012, p.179).

Sikhs in California early 1900s

Asian Indian presence in California was far more prominent than in Oregon. Most of the Asian Indians population in California was composed of Sikh men; there were some Sikh women but they were not significant in number. Some of the Sikh immigrants came directly from India, but most migrated from Canada. In the early 1900s, life in Canada proved to be difficult and hostile for many Sikh migrant workers, thus California was more promising. The economy in California was strong in agriculture and its climate was very similar to their home state of Punjab. Many of the Sikh migrant workers had experience as farmers in Punjab and soon found out that food grown in Punjab could also be grown in Northern California (Gonzales, 1986).

By 1907 many of the Sikhs worked in the fruit growing area of the Sacramento Valley, while others founded and created rice farms in Marysville and Yuba City (Gonzales, 1986). As fruit growers and rice planters, the Sikhs followed the example of the Japanese workers and created “labour gangs” that evolved to agricultural and economic cooperatives. Labour gangs were group of Sikh men that lived and worked together; the person who spoke the most proficient English became the leader of the labour gang. They pooled their resources together and bought parcels of land and equipment. The cooperative that evolved from the labour gangs

consisted of five to ten men. Initially, they bought forty acres of land at a time, especially in the fruit growing areas of Sacramento. In the rice growing areas they bought 500 to 1000 acres. The cooperative worked the farms together and shared the profits. Most of the time the profits were invested in acquiring more land (Gonzales, 1986).

The economic prosperity of the Sikh community in Northern California helped to establish, in 1912, the first Sikh Gurdwara Sahib, a Sikh Temple, in Stockton. The gurdwara was a place for religious, social, and political organization for the Sikh community in California. The Ghadar Party that extended itself to Astoria, Oregon originated by the two founding members of Sikh Gurdwara Sahib; Baba Javala Singh and Baba Wasakha Singh. The Ghadar Party was an Indian Nationalist Party that promoted the overthrow of British Colonial Rule. Both Baba Javala and Baba Wasakha led a group of Sikhs back to India to stage a revolt against the British in Punjab. Neither man came back to California (Gonzales, 1986; Odgen, 2012).

Effects of U.S. Policy Towards Asians

The prosperity of the Sikh farmers was met with racist and nativist rhetoric from groups such as Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL). The AEL was extremely powerful and it waged racist campaigns against the Japanese and Chinese migrant workers before it spread its racist agenda to include Asian Indians. AEL politics influenced local papers, magazines, and politicians. Terms such as “Hindu Invasion” and “The Tide of Turban” were used as propaganda to stop Asian Indians from coming to the U.S. In 1919, California papers and magazines made false claims that there were over 10,000 “Hindus” living in California (Gonzales, 1986, p. 44). In reality there were less than 6,000 Asian Indians living in the entire U.S. Sikhs, like other ethnic groups of colour, were depicted as “less than human” by the mainstream newspapers and magazines.

Local politicians in California realized the popularity of the anti-Asian sentiment of the voting population and made anti-Asian policies a part of their campaign platforms. California was not alone in its racist sentiment, up and down the West Coast and at the federal government level anti-Asian rhetoric and policies became useful political instruments in the U.S.

In 1913 the California legislature passes the Alien Land Law. The law was primarily aimed at Japanese farmers, but it was also against Asian Indians. Individuals who were not eligible for citizenship (aliens) were barred from owning or leasing land in California. Subsequently two more laws were passed, but they were at the federal level. “In 1917 the federal government of the U.S. passed the Immigration Act that banned immigration of individuals from certain regions of Asian from coming to the U.S. India, Burma, Siam and other parts of Asia were labeled as “Pacific Barred Zone”” (Gonzales, 1986, p.44). In 1927, the Supreme Court ruled against Bhagat Singh Thind stating that Asian Indians were not “free white persons” and thus were not eligible for American citizenship; only white people of European heritage and Blacks from African descent/ slavery were eligible for citizenship. Singh claimed to be white because of his “Caucasian / Aryan” ancestry, but it was not upheld by the Supreme Court. The Court went further and stated that any Asian Indian naturalized as an American citizen, prior to the 1927 ruling, was fraudulent. Asian Indians could not become American citizens until 1946 (Gonzales, 1986, p.44).

The 1913 Alien Land Law and the 1917 Immigration Act were the most devastating policies for the Asian Indians in California. It meant that the Sikh migrant workers could not buy or lease land, bring their families to the U.S. to share in their prosperity in America. It also meant that unmarried Asian Indian men could not go to India to bring back an Indian bride. This meant that the existence of a second generation of Asian Indians in America was impossible. It

also meant that any form of assimilation, as an Asian Indian community, was not possible in the U.S. The second generation of any immigrant community is needed to bridge the gap between the immigrants (parents) and the culture of the receiving country. The third generation assimilates and adopts the culture of the receiving country.

Sikh- Mexican Community in California

U.S. laws restricted the physical, social, and economic mobility of the Sikh men in California. The Sikh community was stuck and socially isolated. While some men stayed single, others married Mexican women, Anglo, African Americans and Native American women (Gonzales, 1986; La Brack, 1988). A majority of the marriages occurred between Mexican women and Sikh men. Approximately three hundred marriages between South Asian men and Mexican women were recorded in California between 1916 and 1949 (La Brack, 1988, p.287). Most of the women were much younger than the Sikh men, Catholic, Spanish speaking, poor, and were used to a female-centered networks. For many of the Mexican women these were their second marriages so, often times, children from previous marriages were brought into their marriages to the Sikh men. Most of these unions seem to be marriages of convenience and practicality (La Brock, 1988).

Sikh men provided financial security for the Mexican women who were from poor families, and the women provided comfortable homes, hot meals and children. Since both Sikh men and the Mexican women did not believe in birth control, a new generation of Mexican-Sikh offspring emerged. The Mexican- Sikh offspring were brought up in a Catholic dominated home where they spoke Spanish and English. The children from these marriages were not familiar with most aspect of Sikh culture. Most of the Sikh men were illiterate in Punjabi, so they were

not able to teach Punjabi to their offspring. They also kept their religious views to themselves, rarely sharing them with their offspring; they were indifferent to their children being raised Catholic (La Brack, 1988).

The Sikh-Mexican children created a community where they identify themselves as both “Hindu” and Mexican label. They have not gravitated towards one ethnic group or the other, and this is still maintained today. They have maintained their separate and distinct identity, despite an increase of Sikhs in the California (La Brock, 1988)

By the 1930s, the Great Depression and anti-immigrant hostilities forced the deportation of 2,000 thousand Indians from the U.S. By 1950 4750 Indians voluntarily returned to India, majority of Asian Indian immigrant left the U.S. According to Juan Gonzales in his article *Asian India Immigration Patterns* by the 1940s only 2,405 Asian Indians remained in the U.S. mostly in California (Yuba City, CA.).

Why did Second Wave (1965 – 1987) Asian Indians come to the U.S.?

When India gained its independence in 1947, there was a push to modernize. Education that emphasized the sciences, mathematics, and technology was encouraged and supported by the Indian government. The beneficiaries of India’s modernization efforts were the “Second Wave” Asian Indians immigrants who migrated to the U.S. during 1965 to 1987 (Segal, 2002, p. 92).

First, most of the Asian Indians of the Second Wave came from elite backgrounds and led relatively comfortable lives in India. They were already assimilated to Western culture, because many of them were children in British India and their parents were raised under British rule. Their parents understood the advantages of assimilation and urged their children, the second wave immigrants, to assimilate (Segal, 2002).

The job market for educated professionals in India was depressed and young Indian professional looked abroad for employment opportunities. Many went to United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia but immigration to Britain and its Commonwealth was limited. Others refused these opportunities because their life in India was comfortable and life in Britain and its Commonwealth would mean a second -class citizen status. One of the reasons for the long won fight for independence from Britain was to discard a second-class citizenship status (Segal, 2002).

Secondly, the decade of the 1960s brought not only social but also economic changes to the U.S. Together the Civil Rights Movement and fast paced technological innovations forced Congress to enact a new immigration policy. The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 removed quota systems based on national origins, endorsed new immigration policy for family reunification, and attracted a skilled labour force to the U.S. Elite Asian Indians immigrants of the Second Wave were once again beneficiaries of governmental policy. Since they were already proficient in English, well educated in science, medicine, mathematics, and engineering the U.S. welcomed their immigration. The U.S. government encouraged Indian immigration because they believed that Asian Indians were already assimilated to Western views, since they spoke English, came from a democratic country and were aware of Western culture. They also believed that Indians were willing to assimilate (Segal, 2002).

The Second Wave Asian Indian immigrants quickly settled into middle-class predominantly white neighborhoods in the American suburbs. Again they were able to do this because they benefitted from the Civil Rights Act that removed restrictions on employment, housing and education based on race, religion and national origins. The children of the Second Wave Asian Indian immigrants were raised in the comfort of middle -America, in a dominant

white community (Segal, 2002).

Post 1965 Immigration of Asian Indians to the U.S.

The “Second Wave” of Asian Indian immigration occurred after the 1965 Immigration Nationality Act. The act increased Indian visa from 105 per year to 20,000 per year; preferences were given only to scientists, technical workers, and professionals (Deepak, 2005). From 1965 to 1976, 85% of immigrants coming from South Asia were highly educated (Deepak, 2005). The high tech boom of the 1980s forced immigration laws to be altered so as to meet the demands of the “infant industry”. Immigration laws were altered so that highly skilled temporary workers were allowed admission into the U.S. by way of H1B visas (Deepak, 2005). The U.S. targeted increasing visas for Asian Indians because they were highly skilled in their respective fields, they were proficient in English, they were cosmopolitan, and they were familiar with a democratic society. U.S. policy makers believed that transition to American society would not be very difficult for new Asian Indian immigrants (Purkayastha, 2005). Asian Indians from this wave of immigration to the U.S. were mostly Hindus and most of them came from privileged socio-economic backgrounds in India. They were from all over India not just one region, unlike the “First Wave” immigrants who were predominantly from Punjab.

Many Asian Indians that immigrated during this time period settled throughout the U.S., and not just in large metropolitan areas of the East and West coast. They tended to live in middle class and upper middle class white suburbs. Their children attended suburban schools, where they interfaced with mostly white children. Often times these children were the only Asian Indians in the schools or even the only people of colour in the schools (Purkayastha, 2005). The success of these Asian Indians of the Second Wave and their children resulted in the mainstream

media and American politicians labeling them as the “Model Minority”. This label was given to many different Asian ethnic groups throughout the U.S. The “Model Minority” label was used to convey that the American Dream was still alive and that the U.S. was still a land of opportunity to all. It was also used as a way to identify Asian Indians as different from other minority groups of colour in the U.S.; they were set apart.

Conclusion

Despite their economic success, the Second Wave Asian Indians faced discrimination and racism. In the mid 1980s they lobbied Congress to change their racial status from Caucasian to Asian, otherwise their claims of racism would go unnoticed and they would not be acknowledged as minorities (Biswas, 2005, p. 53).

Chapter 3

Patterns of Immigrant Incorporation into Civil Societies

Introduction

In this chapter I will introduce and explain some of the theoretical frameworks that are applicable to this thesis. They are all frameworks used to explain how ethnic immigrant groups are incorporated into American society.

Assimilation Theory

According to Prema Kurien in her 2005 article, *Being, Brown, and Hindu*, Asian Indians, belong in the “colonized” racial minority category. She argues that there are two models of immigrant incorporation. The “ethnic” model is “reserved for white, Europeans who were able to reconcile and or submerge their ethnic identity with their American identity” (Kurien, 2005, p. 437). The other model is the “colonized” racial minority and for this group complete assimilation is not possible (Kurien, 2005). Bandana Purkayastha in her book (2005) *Negotiating Ethnicity*, an ethnographic study of second-generation Asian Indians, further confirms assertions made by Kurien. Many of the participants in Purkayastha’s study recalled being verbally abused and excluded by white middle-class Americans throughout their k-12 years.

Assimilation theory, proposed by Warner and Stole in 1945, assumed that assimilation was a linear process. Warner and Stole studied the assimilation of white, European immigration into the U.S. They argued that assimilation and acculturation was a straight –line theory with regards to second -generation immigrant population. Straight- line assimilation states that (when

compared to first generation immigrants) family standard of living of the second-generation increased. It also claims that second- generation productivity involved more status related values with reference to the upper-classes. The second generation also experienced less conflict with respect to language barriers and class distinction; overall second generation encountered more rapid acculturation affiliated with host group (Ziyanak, 2015).

Warner and Stole could only study white immigrant population when theorizing straight-line immigration, because majority of the immigrants to the U.S. before 1950 were white, Europeans and they were the only one who had social, economic, and geographic mobility and opportunity in the U.S. Non-white immigration was banned by the early 1900s and all non-white people in the U.S. lived a very restricted existence, until the Civil Rights Act were adopted, as a result Warner and Stoles theory of linear assimilation would not apply to non-whites living in the U.S. prior to 1965.

Assimilation theory cannot be successfully applied to Asian Indians of the Second Wave (1965- 1987) or second generation Asian Indians. The economic success of Asian Indians immigrants in the U.S. is a result of U.S. immigration policy. Although the Immigration Act of 1965 allowed the immigration of Asian Indians into the U.S., it severely restricted what type of Indians were allowed to initially immigrate. Their immigration was initially contingent upon the requirements of the H1B visa. Those with special talents or expertise in science, engineering and other technologies were allowed to immigrate to the U.S. So this resulted in the immigration of elite and highly educated and skilled individuals, who had guaranteed employment (Segal, 2002, p. 77).

The Second Wave Asian Indians immigrants were quite different from their Sikh cohorts of the early 1900s. These highly skilled immigrants were proficient English speakers, and they

understood Western culture and ideology. They were raised in a British education system because India was a British colony until its independence in 1947. Many of the Second Wave Asian Indian immigrants were children during the British rule and had parents who benefitted from assimilating to British ideology and customs. Many understood democratic principles because they were children during India's Independence. U.S. Immigration policy allowed these new immigrants to achieve success very quickly (Segal, 2002).

Culturally, America went through the Civil Rights movement prior to the immigration of Second Wave Asian Indians. Civil Rights laws allowed for unrestricted access to employment, housing, and schooling regardless of race, religion and country of origin. Asian Indians benefitted from the Civil Rights movement because they were able to live in white –middle class suburbs, not far from their place of work. Their children went to neighborhood schools with mostly white children. The newly enacted Civil Rights Act enabled these new non-white immigrants to try to assimilate into white dominated neighborhoods, schools and workplaces.

Economically, Asian Indian immigration is unique because most of them immediately entered into the American middle-class and they were spread out throughout the country in suburbs as well as urban areas. Since most of the Second Wave immigrants were specialists in medicine, sciences, and technology they lived and worked in vibrant and intellectually stimulating environments where acceptance of their intellect was valued over their skin colour, for the most part. Since, many lived in smaller, suburban areas, they often times were the only Asian Indians in the area. They had no options but try to assimilate with predominantly white middle-class Americans (Purkayastha, 2005).

Despite all the existing factors that should help in assimilating Asian Indians into mainstream America, it did not happen to the extent that the assimilation theory insists. Being a

non-white and non-Christian is still a large barrier to assimilation in a white and Christian dominated American society.

Limiting immigration by way of H1B visas allowed for highly educated and successful Asian Indian community in the U.S. It also created what the dominant white society called the “Model Minority” status of Asian Indians. The Model Minority status was used to promote meritocracy and it was used to exemplify successful assimilation of non- white ethnic groups into American society. It was also used to invalidate claims made by other ethnic groups of colour that embedded racism exists in American culture and it prevents them from attaining economic success (Segal, 2002). The status of Model Minority had pernicious consequences for Asian Indians. To mainstream America they were a success story and this meant that they did not experience any discrimination.

If Asian Indians were victims of racially motivated violence, they never reported or under- reported them to the authorities. They believed that it would bring negative attention to their families. They were also unsure of support or protection from the authorities. This was further exasperated by the fact that Asian Indians were categorized as “Dark Caucasians” by the government. So racially motivated violence perpetrated against Asian Indians (if it was reported) was indistinguishable from the white population (Biswas, 2005).

Economic assimilation was also not possible for Asian Indians of the Second Wave and their children despite being highly skilled in prestigious disciplines with monetary success and mobility. “Economic assimilation studies view the labor market performance of immigrants in the host country as a measure of the immigrant contribution to the economy’s skill endowments and productivity. Given the slower rate of immigrant assimilation found in recent studies, it is tempting to conclude that post-1960s, immigrants have not been productive contributors to the

U.S. economy” (Tiagi, 2013, p. 515).

Tiagi’s research published in 2013, *Economic Assimilation of Asian Indians in the U.S.*, found that Asian Indian economic assimilation has not been considered by “mainstream” economists because they are a new and a small immigrant class. It was also assumed that the Asian Indian immigrants had successfully assimilated economically because they were employed in a highly demanding and skilled labour segments and lived in middle-class communities (Tiagi, 2013).

His research in 2013 revealed that assimilation studies documenting post-1965 immigrants, “Asian Indians are assimilating at a slower rate into the US economy than previously assumed. It may be worthwhile for the government to introduce various programs—skill upgrading, language training, and so on—that may help speed-up such assimilation” (Tiagi, 2013, p. 515). First generation Asian Indians made \$.75 for every dollar when compared to their native born, white (non-Hispanic) male cohorts. This parity existed for periods spanning twenty years. Although the gap between the two groups lessened over time: it still existed. The reasons for this gap were the need to upgrade certain skill sets such as language skills.

Although these are valid reasons, Tiagi found that wage disparity also existed between second generation Asian Indians and their white, non-Hispanic cohorts. Second generation Asian Indians were born in America or came to America at an early age. They went to American schools and universities. They were fluent in English and other languages and performed comparable if not better than their average white male cohorts, still Asian Indians were paid less, “Study by Singh and Augustine (1996) reveals that both native born and foreign born Asian Indians do not reach earning parity with the native born white populations, and this parity is more pronounced in blue collars wages than in professional wages” (Tiagi, 2013, p516).

Complete economic assimilation and cultural assimilation is not possible for non-whites despite having social capital and despite wanting and trying to assimilate.

Theorists such as Gans challenge Straight - Line Assimilation theory, by arguing that it does not represent the economic or cultural experiences of many non-white second generation immigrants. Second – generations of certain groups still grapple with poverty and lack of economic mobility, even though they have culturally assimilated by being fluent in English and adhering to American values. Even if the subsequent generations of a certain group assimilates culturally, the group may not be readily accepted by the dominant society. Clearly, when analyzing the immigrant experience of the Second Wave Asian Indians immigrants and their children cultural barriers trump economic barriers to assimilation (Ziyanak, 2015).

Segmented Assimilation Theory

Segmented Assimilation Theory developed by Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou (1993) examines adaptation of the second generation, non-white immigrants. It was developed to address assimilation with regards to children of immigrants. The theory strives to understand assimilation of non-white immigrant children. Portes and Zhou claim that assimilation is dependent on factors such as the social capital of the parents and the social capital of the community. Social capital of the family is dependent on the social network existent in the co-ethnic community, because they can provide support and “tools” to overcome obstacles facing immigrant families. Education and translatable skills from home country also help in creating social capital and strong ethnic support groups such as religious organizations that can help to keep immigrant families intact (Ziyanak, 2015).

Segmented Assimilation theory falls short in providing successful pathway to

assimilation and it only alludes to middle class assimilation but never really addresses middle-class assimilation. In fact it is quite pessimistic in its projected prospects of middle-class assimilation by certain non-white ethnic groups. Both Portes and Zhoë claim that even if certain ethnic groups are willing to assimilate they may not be accepted into middle-class American society (Ziyanak, 2015).

Although Segmented Assimilation theory is correct that social capital is very important for assimilation, but it does not fully explain why Asian Indians were able to assimilate to a certain extent into white middle-class and upper middle class neighborhoods in the 1960s through the 1980s. They could economically afford to live in these neighborhoods but they did not have much “network” support by way of an Asian Indian community. Often times many Asian Indians were the only people of colour in their neighborhoods; a claim made by many of the participants in Bandana Purkayastha’s book *Negotiating Ethnicity*.

Selected Acculturation Theory

Portes and Rumbout (2001) theorized that for second-generation non-European immigrants selective acculturation is the best method of incorporating into American society. They argue that second-generation non-white immigrants “should choose to retain cultural aspects of their parents’ home country while they incorporate themselves into American mainstream” (Kurien, 2005, p. 437). This allows them to be embedded in their ethnic culture and community. This allows them protection from racism and it also provides them with a community network and support. This of course only works when there is a large enough ethnic community and network.

For many of the second generation Asian Indians who are presently in their early 50’s to

their mid 30's, this was not a possibility. Indian communities were very small in mostly white middle class suburbs; there were no large Indian communities in these areas in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s; only large cities in Illinois, New York, New Jersey and the Bay Area in California had significant Asian Indian populations (Segal, 2002). Networking was not an option in the suburbs, so incorporating Indian culture into their lives while they incorporated themselves into mainstream American life was difficult; especially when American society and their parents encouraged assimilation in the 1960s and 1970s.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is an ideology promoted in the U.S. since the 1980s. It has come into favour because of the increase in immigration of non-white and non-Christian people. According to Prema Kurien in her 2007 article *Who Speaks for Indian Americans* “assimilation stresses the formation of a private identity and assimilation into the dominant culture. (Kurien, 2007, p.764). Multiculturalism like assimilation exists in a Western and Christian context. It stresses “tolerance” from the dominant society. Tolerance in this context is highly charged because there is unmistakable power of the dominant society defining the meaning and the expression of multiculturalism. “Institutionalization of ethnicity and ethnic formation occurs in a multicultural society” (Kurien, 2007, p.764). Immigrants are not forced to adhere to host country's culture, but they are pressured from both dominant society and their own ethnic groups to form recognized ethnic communities. These organized ethnic communities create representation to secure economic, social, and political resources (Kurien, 2007) (Biswas, 2005).

“Multiculturalism can be a successful path to integrate immigrants and win their loyalty to the host country because it allows for a public display of an ethnic identity. It can also create

conflict and competition for recognition amongst different ethnic groups in multicultural societies. It can also sustain and increase immigrants' attachment to their country of origin" (Kurien, 2007, p. 765). It creates hyphenated ethnic or racial identities. In Mary C. Waters book, *Ethnic Options*, she explores hyphenated identities in multicultural societies, where assimilation was also promoted. Hyphenated identity is a matter of choice for people of a dominant group such as white Americans in the U.S. It is a "symbolic identity" and it is quite benign (Waters, 1990). It connotes assimilation through intermarriages. For people of colour, hyphenated identity is not a matter of choice, it does not automatically imply assimilation, and it can promote "othering". It can be a constant reminder that you are not part of the in-group.

Multiculturalism has always manifested itself through religion in the U.S. According to Prema Kurien in her article *Who Speaks for Indian Americans?* "community formation through religion is seen as a non-threatening form of expression because it adheres to the founding principle of America" (Kurien, 2007, 764). In the U.S. multiculturalism in the form of religious expression co-exists with assimilation in the same way that individual freedom exists with nationalism. "Religious institutions have been instrumental in the formation of ethnic communities in America, and they have become more important in the immigrant context in the U.S. than in the home country" (Kurien, 2007, p. 765).

I argue that religious expression that was seen as a benign way to publicly express ethnic identity in a multicultural society has come into question since 9/11. Ethnic groups who practice Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism reported an increase in violence and vandalism to their places of religious worship since 9/11 (Mahalingam, 2012). The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), "the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, released a preliminary report on incidents targeting American mosques and religious institutions in 2015

that shows a greater frequency of damage, destruction, vandalism, and intimidation than in any other year since CAIR started tracking such cases in 2009” (CAIR, 2015). Right wing groups in the U.S., who question the loyalty of non-Christian immigrant groups cause tensions within America’s multicultural society, thus increasing “hate crimes” against non-Christian ethnic groups. This may cause ethnic groups of colour to perceive further discrimination and to heighten perception of non-permeability of group boundaries.

Reactive Ethnicity Theory

Portes and Rumbout (2001) argue that in a multicultural society religious or ethnic tensions and systemic discrimination against certain ethnic groups occur over a long period of time. Those ethnic groups that perceive systemic and cultural discrimination may revert back to the culture and traditions of their home country. They claim that “reactive ethnicity” is a pathway that some second generation immigrants use as a “defense mechanism” (Kurien, 2007). Reactive ethnicity is a way to promote one’s ethnicity, increase the significance of one’s ethnic group within the ethnic community and to mainstream society, and it is a mechanism against further marginalization and discrimination.

The Asian Indian community in the U.S. does not have a negative social identity and is generally viewed in a positive light, but they are not immune to acts of violence, discrimination, and exclusion. The reactive ethnicity theory proposed by Portes and Rumbout may apply to Asian Indians in specific cases but I do not think that Asian Indians are experiencing the level of discrimination or violence implied by the reactive ethnicity theory. Other ethnic groups experience far more discrimination and violence in the U.S.

Re-ethnicization Theory

Post 1965 discourse around concepts of citizenship is discussed in the context of multiculturalism and globalization. Citizenship in terms of de-ethnicisation and re-ethnicisation created tension with regards to defining citizenship within traditional state structures. De-ethnicisation ideology stresses global citizenship and deemphasizes citizenship requirements of immigrant groups in host countries. “Re-ethnicisation ideology promotes existing ethnic immigrants to embrace the culture of their home country by strengthening ties to their country of origins thus strengthening the ties with members abroad even across foreign-born generations” (Joppke, 2003, p. 432).

In multicultural, Western, Christian host countries re-ethnicization of its non-white immigrant populations is yet another way to create a distinct ethnic identity. Marginalized communities facing identity issues, prejudice, and systemic and cultural discrimination may find that the process of re-ethnicization as a path forward to creating distinct social identity. In the article, *Perceived Discrimination, Ethnic Identity and the (Re-)Ethnicisation of Youth with a Turkish Ethnic Background in Germany*, by Jan Skrobanek, the theory of re-ethnicization is investigated with regards to Turkish youth in Germany.

Skrobanek’s research framework concentrated on perceived discrimination as the cause for re-ethnicization. Perceived discrimination can occur at the group level or individual level (Skrobanek, 2009). Studies done by Dion and Kawakami in 1996 revealed that South Asians (includes Asian Indians) along with African Americans, Chinese, Italians, and Jews perceive discrimination more significantly than any other groups. They perceive discrimination in the fields of employment, salary, access to higher education, and clubs (Skrobanek, 2009, p. 537-538). These groups also perceived discrimination at an aggregate level more often than at a

subjective level.

Groups that perceive discrimination at an aggregate level believe that ethnic group boundaries are non-permeable. They believe that they will never really be accepted as part of the mainstream culture. They believe they are marginalized and discriminated against because of their ethnicity. Young individuals or second generation of these marginalized ethnic group feel that they are at a disadvantage in mainstream society because of their ethnicity. These beliefs of marginalization and exclusion cause many second- generation individuals to re-ethnicize.

Re-ethnicization process is used to emphasize an ethnic identity; “a special form of social identity that differentiates individuals from other ethnic groups and constitutes a basis for a comparison” (Skrobanek, 2009, p. 540). Re-ethnicization is also used to regain social recognition for the group’s distinctiveness and value to mainstream society. It is also used to regain positive social identity and this helps to combat against discrimination from mainstream culture.

Conclusion

Re-ethnicization theory seems the most helpful theoretical framework for my research. It assumes that complete assimilation is not possible for certain ethnic groups. Its framework allows for a multicultural and globalized society. Asian Indians in the U.S. are influenced by both of these factors in their process to re-ethnicize. Re-ethnicization also accounts for perceived discrimination despite economic success of the Asian Indian community in the U.S. Re-ethnicization is pursued not necessarily for economic reasons, rather for improving the social and ethnic identity of a marginalized ethnic group.

Chapter 4

Re-ethnicization of Second- Generation Asian Indians in the U.S.

Introduction

Skrobanek's (2009) research revealed that perceived discrimination at an aggregate level has the strongest effect on re-ethnicization, but discrimination at a subjective level also had some effect. Perceived non-permeable group boundaries (marginalization or never being accepted as "American" or "German" despite ethnic groups being in these countries for a few generations) also lead to re-ethnicization; this was a more indirect reason.

Skrobanek concluded that re-ethnicization theory should be studied further by applying it to other ethnic groups and different socioeconomic strata within a specific ethnic group. I decided to apply it to the Asian Indian ethnic group in the U.S. I have personally experienced the re-ethnicization of my siblings (second- generation Asian Indians) and close friends (second-generation Asian Indians) within my own Asian Indian community. Because I have had the opportunity to reside in several areas of the U.S. during the past few years, I have witnessed re-ethnicization of second-generation Asians Indians in other South Asian communities.

I designed my research to prove that in fact Asian Indians do face discrimination in the U.S. despite their economic success and I also present the different pathways Asian Indians could use to re-ethnicize.

Proof of Discrimination

Historical Discrimination of Asian Indians in the U.S.

Historically, immigration of all Asians into the U.S. was always restricted and racialized.

Asian migrant workers were brought to the U.S. to fulfill specific tasks, and once these tasks were completed their permanent presence in the U.S. was not a foregone conclusion. Asian immigrants were restricted to the kinds of work they did, where they lived, whom they married, and whom they could bring to the U.S. They were never going to become American citizens; that privilege in the late 1800s and the early 1900s was only available to people of European/white descent or African Americans. Asians were always considered temporary migrant workers. Pathways to citizenship and the privileges of citizenship were not available to Asians in the 1800s and the early 1900s. According to Juan Gonzales, in his 1986 publication *Asian Indian Immigration Patterns: The Origins of the Sikh Community in California*, “The continuity of racism and anti-Asian immigration sentiments up and down the powers structures in states like California made it possible to enact laws and policies that limited mobility of Sikhs in California” (Gonzales, 1986, p.44); laws such as the 1913 Alien Land Law that prohibited any non-citizens from owning or leasing land in the state of California (Gonzales, 1986). The federal government enacted other laws that barred Asian from obtaining citizenship, from sending for wives and families from home countries, from traveling outside of the U.S., could not work certain jobs, could not produce a second generation of Asian Americans (Gonzales, 1986). All these restrictions imposed on Asians marginalized them, and stigmatized them. They created and maintained the “other” status for Asians. On the other hand European migration was welcomed and was not considered temporary or highly conditional.

Initially, Chinese workers were brought to the U.S. to build the Trans-Continental Railroad. The population of the U.S. was too small and the “booming” pre-Civil War economy of the U.S. left a large demand for a capable workforce. Asian workers were efficient, cheap and highly reliable. This was also the reason why Asian Indians were employed in the lumber mill

industry in the Pacific Northwest and the agricultural industry in California. Like the Chinese and Japanese, Asian Indians were also subject to discriminatory governmental policy that restricted their movement, their ability to obtain citizenship, own land, and bring their family to be reunited with them in the U.S. (Ogden, 2012).

Local governments and politicians in California, Oregon and Washington understood the popularity of Anti-Asian rhetoric amongst their white voting constituency, so anti-Asian platforms were used to garner votes and win elections. The ubiquitous anti-Asian sentiment enabled law-makers in different power strata to enact laws and policies that restricted the geographic and economic mobility of all Asians including Asian Indian migrants (Gonzales Jr., 1986).

In 1913, the California legislature passed the Alien Land Law. This law, although aimed at Japanese immigrant, it also affected Asian Indian farmers in Sacramento, Marysville, Yuba City. Many of the Sikh migrant workers created farming cooperatives. Usually five to ten men pooled their capital to buy land and equipment. The typical holdings in the Sacramento fruit valley region was 40 acres per cooperative group, whereas the holdings for the rice districts in Marysville and Yuba City was more like 500 to 1000 acres per cooperative group (Gonzales Jr., 1986). The Alien Land Law of 1913 stated that aliens who were not eligible for citizenship and they could not own or lease land in California. The Alien Land Law was detrimental to the Asian Indian migrants because their population in California fell from 2000 in 1910 to 82 in 1915 (Gonzales Jr., 1986).

In 1917 the Federal government passed the Asian Immigration Act stating that people from certain regions of Asia, “Pacific Barred Zone”, were not allowed to migrate to the U.S.; This included people from India, Burma, Siam, and other far East Asian countries. The federal

government took further action against the Asian Indian immigrants with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the Thind Case in 1923. Baghat Singh Thind claimed that he was a “white” person thus eligible for citizenship. He claimed that scientifically he was classified as a Caucasian, because Indians were classified as Aryans. The Supreme Court ruled that the law followed a “common sense” definition and not a scientific definition of Caucasian. Caucasian according to the “common sense” definition of the word meant a white person of European origin. Thus the Court ruled that in fact, Asian Indians were not “free people” and were not eligible for citizenship. It further ruled that any Asian Indian who obtained naturalization prior to their ruling were not American citizens because they received their citizenship fraudulently (Gonzales, 1986).

Since the vast majority of the Asian Indian migrant workers were men, who were either single or left their families behind in India, the immigration laws restricted all possibility of them reuniting with their family or even returning to India to marry and start family. The laws prohibited the immigration of families from India and they also stated that once Asian Indian migrant left the U.S. they could not return. The Indian migrant men were in an untenable situation. Some married into the Mexican community; they married poor Mexican women who were much younger than themselves (La Brock, 1988). Many of these marriages occurred through necessity not through choice. There are approximately 300 “formal” recorded marriages between Asian Indian men and Mexican women in Southern California’s Imperial Valley (La Brock, 1988).

The result of these unions was less than ideal. Majority of these unions were “fragile” and many times dysfunctional. The Mexican women came from a female- centered society and this clashed with the traditional patriarchal Punjabi society. The Punjabi men often lived a

separate life from their Mexican wives and their offspring. They did not impart any aspect of their culture or language to their offspring. The reason for this is because most of these men were illiterate and they could not speak English or Spanish with great fluency.

According to Bruce La Brock (1988) in his research, *Evolution of Sikh Families in Rural California*, the children of these unions spoke Spanish and English and they were raised Catholic. Their Asian Indian identity from their fathers was rarely cultivated. Many of the “Hindu-Mexicans” as they call themselves, claim that their fathers were aloof and disengaged. Their fathers were content to let the dominant Mexican culture overshadow their Punjabi culture.

La Brock claims that since these marriages were not out of necessity but were a result of U.S. immigration policy, the Asian Indian men saw them in terms of practicality and usefulness. They saw little practical benefit for their children to learn the Punjabi language, because the dominant society spoke English or Spanish. They also believed that passing on their religion was pointless because the Sikh community was small and scattered. Since the Sikh community was mostly men it never grew into a cohesive Punjabi cultural. The Punjabi identity was overshadowed by the dominant cultures of California and for the Mexican- Hindu children their Punjabi identity was an obscure, foreign, and “the other”.

Culturally and socially for Asian Indians, as well as other Asian immigrants, the discrimination and prejudice aimed at them many times lead to violent outcomes. By the late 1800s there were several anti-Asian or nativist organizations whose main purpose was to use violence as a way to intimidate and destroy Asian communities. These groups grew in popularity as the economy on the West Coast began to “shrink” and employment opportunities dwindled.

The Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL) formed in San Francisco in 1905 was by far one of

the largest groups. They cultivated their presence up and down the West Coast of the U.S. They were highly influential and affected public opinion (Gonzales Jr., 1986). They targeted Asian Indians because Punjabi men were easily identified because of their beards and turbans.

In 1907 riots broke out in Bellingham, Washington because of an economic downturn and increasing racial tension; Two- hundred Asian Indian men were beaten, and their properties were ransacked by the members of the AEL. The result of this riot was the evacuation of all the Asian Indians, Chinese and Japanese workers from the town of Bellingham (Ogden, 2012). All the major newspapers in the American West, as it came to be known, published the news of the “Bellingham Riot”.

On March 24, 1919, three hundred white men attacked Asian Indian mill workers and destroyed their homes and property in the town of St. John, Oregon (Ogden, 2012). The mob then went to the mill and drove out the remaining Sikh labourers still at work. The Sikh workers left for nearby Portland. “The next day, the Sikhs returned with the county District Attorney and identified the perpetrators. The District Attorney issues 190 warrants and charged the mayor and the police chief of dereliction of duty (Ogden, 2012, p. 173). The Sikhs returned to their jobs and to their homes in St. John. The fact that the Multnomah District Attorney backed the Sikhs’ claims and supported the Sikhs was a great “win” for the Sikh population in Oregon” (Ogden, 2012, p. 173).

Newspapers and magazines promoted racist agenda to increase their subscription and circulation. They perpetuated racism and propagated exclusionary rhetoric by using phrases such as “Hindu Invasion” and “The Tide of Turbans” (Gonzales Jr., 1986, p. 44). They also made false claims by stating that “California was the home to 10,000 Hindus in 1910” when in fact only 6, 000 Asian Indians lived in the entire U.S. (Gonzales Jr., 1986, p. 44).

Discrimination of Asian Indians Post 1965 U.S.

The social geography of the U.S. after the Immigration Act of 1965 was complex at best. Supreme Court ruled that long standing power structures that limited the social and physical mobility of non-white people in the U.S. were unconstitutional. The newly adopted Civil Rights Act allowed for the social and geographic mobility of all non-whites living in the U.S. and the immigration of non-whites to the U.S.

The “Second Wave” Asian Indian immigrants that came to the U.S. from 1965 to 1987 were direct beneficiaries of these two policy changes. The ability to immigrate legally and the ability to have equal access to work, housing, and education made the Second Wave Asian Indian immigrant very different from the Sikh migrant workers of the early 1900s. Despite the Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Immigration Act, the migration of Asian Indians to the U.S. was not without cultural restrictions or discrimination.

First, According to Bill Ong Hing’s book, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 1850 – 1900*, there were only 50, 000 established Asian Indians living in the U.S. in 1965. After the immigration reforms of 1965 Asian Indian immigration increased, but it was limited (Hing, 1993). Most of the “Second Wave” immigration of Asian Indians was through the occupational and investor category of the 1965 Immigration Act. The occupational category stated that those with professional education and skill set in sciences, engineering and medicine were able to immigrate to the U.S. The investor category allowed immigration if an immigrant proposed business created at least ten or more jobs for Americans. Because of this new liberal immigration policy open to Asians, highly educated and elite Asian Indians came to the U.S. for better economic opportunities well into the 1980s (Segal, 2002, p. 92). Since most were proficient in English and Western European philosophy and culture they were able to

integrate more easily than their previous Sikh cohorts of the early 1900s. More importantly the Civil Rights Act that created liberal cultural changes regarding race and mobility that further helped the integration of the Second Wave Asian Indians. They were not restricted to where they could live, work, and where their children went to school.

Because of their high skill sets most Second Wave Asian Indians settled in middle-class American society that was comprised of mostly white individuals. They lived in white neighborhoods, often times being the only non-whites. They worked in hospitals, corporations, and universities with mostly white co-workers. Their children, the second generation Asian Indians went to school with mostly white teachers and students; often times they were the only non-white and the only Asian Indians in the school. Their integration into a white-middle class America was met with social and cultural resistance from the dominant white culture.

In her book *Negotiating Ethnicity* (2005), Bandana Purkayastha studied the many ways second generation Asian Indians negotiated their race in the U.S. She states, “The intersection of institutional and interracial definitions and behaviors and South Indian understanding of themselves as not black, yet “not really Asian American”, position them in a racially liminal position. This ambiguous position and uncertainty of racial belonging has significant consequences...in how South Asian Americans negotiate their ethnicity” (Purkayastha, 2005, p.31).

From 1965 to the mid 1980s (Second Wave) Asian Indians were classified as “Dark Caucasian” by the U.S. Federal government. Their classification, a social identity defined by the dominant culture, included Asian Indians with white population when it came to aggregate data like the census, crime, wages, education achievement, discriminatory or violent incidences. So data specific to Asian Indians was never disseminated from that of the white population. If there

were violent acts perpetrated against Asian Indians by a white person during this period, they would be categorized as white on white crime; If violent acts were perpetrated against Asian Indians by other ethnic groups it would be classified as “black on white crime” or “Hispanic of white crime”, the Asian Indian identity was never acknowledged (Segal, 2002) (Purkayastha, 2005).

This is the “uncertainty of racial belonging” that Purkayastha addressed in her ethnographic study of second generation Asian Indians. The phenotype of Asian Indians is very different from European whites; they have darker skin and distinguishable features and culture. It served no benefit for Asian Indians to be categorized as Caucasians, it in fact hid many social issues facing Asian Indians in the U.S., and these social issues could not be addressed when looking at aggregate data by social scientists.

In the mid 1980s Asian Indians lobbied for their racial categorization to be changed from Caucasian to something else. After 1987 Asian Indians were racially categorized as “Asian” (Purkayastha, 2005). “Asian”, as understood by most Americans, is someone from Far East Asia such as China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, and the Philippines. Again, this classification does not really define them accurately because Asian Indians’ phenotype, history, and culture is very different from the other ethnic groups within the Asian category, but it was better than the classification of ‘Caucasian’, because Asian Indians were recognized as a ethnic group of colour in the U.S. (Segal, 2002).

The historic black-white binary categorization of races in the U.S. is extreme and confounding for ethnic groups who fall somewhere within the binary. Anyone who is not “black” is not necessarily “white” and anyone who is not “white” is not necessarily “black”. The category of “other” is occupied by a wide variety of ethnic groups in America and they are all

trying to create their own unique social identity. The dominant American culture seems ill equipped to correctly identify ethnic groups that fall between the black-white racial paradigm.

Despite the social capital of education and economic upward mobility available to Second Wave Asian Indian immigrants in America, they and their children faced overt and tacit forms of discrimination. Second Wave Asian Indians, like most new immigrants, underreported or failed to report discriminatory acts of violence against them because of fear. They did not want to attract undue attention towards themselves; they did not believe they had the power to stand up to the white perpetrators; or that the authorities would not protect an immigrant over their own kind. Asian Indians were living the “American Dream”. Many Asian Indians believed that they were making a good living and they had opportunities that other groups of colour did not have, so they should just be grateful. They also believed that whatever discrimination they were facing would not be taken very seriously by not only the whites but also by other minority groups of colour. Finally, the Asian Indian immigrant community in the U.S. was very small from 1965 to 1987 and it did not have any power; in 1972 there were only 300,000 Asian Indians in the U.S. and by 1990 the population grew to 815,000 (Hing, 1993). This population was quite dispersed throughout the U.S. and insignificant, both demographically and politically.

Discrimination of Second Generation Asian Indians in the U.S.

A majority of the time discrimination came in the form of oral abuse and harassment (Segal, 2002). This abuse was met with unexpected surprise by the second generation Asian Indians. According to Bandana Purkayastha in her book *Negotiating Ethnicity* (2005), second generation Asian Indian children were raised in “middle-class immigrant households that emphasized the “personal achievement” aspect of the American Dream, they hitherto operated,

often unconsciously, on the assumption that their middle-class status made their racial position irrelevant” (Purkayastha, 2005, p.30). So, when second generation Asian Indians were met with racial prejudice and discrimination it was a very painful and traumatic surprise; each event was an emotional “hit and run”.

Purkayastha, interviewed many second generation Asian Indians for her ethnographic study to assess how they negotiated race. She first addresses the topic of “Racial Boundaries and Ethnic Binds” and its effects on second generation Asian Indians. The concept of race, discrimination, and exclusion applied to second generation Asian Indians must be examined in the context of middle-class America. Second generation Asian Indians grew up in an environment where their white cohorts and their cohorts’ parents were as educated as themselves and their own parents. It is within this educated, upwardly mobile American middle class, second generation Asian Indians experienced racial discrimination and exclusion. The belief that education and opportunity counteract discrimination and bigotry is challenged by the second generation Asian Indians in America.

Discrimination and Exclusion through Racial Labeling

Racial labeling for many of the second generation Asian Indians first occurred in elementary school or middle school and continued throughout their university education. These experiences not only re-enforced their non-white status but also their exclusion from not only white culture but also black culture. In Purkayastha’s study many of the participants’ early racial labeling set them apart from their white middle class cohorts and skin colour was the driving force for the labeling. One participant, Deepa, was born in the U.S. and lived in upstate New York. Both of her parents were physicians and she was the valedictorian of her class. She

recalls how the popular kids (white in particular) would call her “nigger” or “black monkey”, while the other white kids laughed (Purkyayastha, 2012, p. 29).

Many participants claim that because of their dark skin they have been confused and labeled as black, Hispanic, or Native American. If they claimed that they were not any of these ethnicities the follow up question was ultimately “*What are you?*” Skin colour required labeling of second generation Asian Indians by their white peers. It also led to boundary creation that clearly differentiated them from their white peers and led to a sense of exclusion. Even though they were very similar to their white peers (American born, middle class, proficient in colloquial language and culture, lived in the same neighbourhoods, and went to the same schools) they would never be one of them. These experiences of racialization and their “marginalized status” were significant in their childhood and adolescence. Second generation Asian Indians took for granted the idea that “race was irrelevant in their middle class environment and that achievement was important”. When they were racialized and marginalized by their peers and friends, it was a “hard pill to swallow”. Their racialized reality not only meant that they could not fully participate in their white friends’ world but also that their white friends would not fully participate in their own world. It also meant that most of their friendships with their white cohorts were highly conditional and limited.

Many of the second generation Asian Indians participants expressed further frustration with their parents’ inability to understand their racialization and marginalized status at school. Often times the participants never really addressed issues of racialized verbal abuse or harassment to their parents.

Incidences of racialization were not isolated to the context of school. Several of the participants shared their experiences with the police and being pulled over in their own white

middle class neighbourhoods when they were driving by themselves; When they were accompanied by their white friends they never got pulled over by the police. Other participants claimed that socializing with their white friend had its limits. They were able to have them as friends but they could never date their white friends. While their white friends experienced dating and other facets of teenage social interaction, second generation Asian Indians were excluded from dating their white cohorts. This exclusion not only came from the white parents it also came from their own parents. Some of these racialized incidence experienced by second generation Asian Indians, such as racial ambiguity, not only separate them from their white cohorts but it also separates them from other Asian Americans. One aspect of their identity that they share with their Asian American cohorts is the presumption of their “foreignness”. Despite the fact that most second generation Asian Indians are American born they are assumed to be new immigrants; this is an experience shared by many Asian American cohorts. The imagined American is either white or black, people of Asian descent are assumed to be foreign born.

Racial Ambiguity of Second Generation Asian Indians Portrayed in Popular American Culture

Experiences of racial ambiguity and assumption of “foreignness” are playing out in popular culture. The television show *Parks and Recreation* portrays the day- to -day life at Pawnee, Indiana’s Department of Parks and Recreation. One of the city employees is Tom Hereford (Aziz Ansari- second generation Asian Indian Actor), a South Asian American whose parents are from India but he was born and raised in South Carolina. In Season 2, Episode: “Stakeout”; Tom is asked by his co-worker Leslie “Now...Where are you from...Libya?” He replies, “No...From South Carolina.” She follows up with, “ But you moved to South Carolina

from?” The dialogue continues with Tom explaining to her that his parents are from India and he was born in South Carolina. She then asks, “So why is your name Tom Hareford? He replies, “ Well my real name is Darwas Sabir Ishmaelghani. Brown guys with funny sounding Muslim names do not make it far in American politics...” Throughout this show Tom’s ethnic ambiguity and being mistaken for other ethnic groups is played out with regularity in many episodes, thus reflecting the real life experiences of second generation Asian Indians in the U.S. The character also appropriates hip-hop culture, American pop culture, American fashion, yet *he* never identifies his Asian Indian identity. Many second generation Asian Indians are used to expressing their ethnic identity in the private sphere.

Aziz Ansari the actor who plays Tom Hareford developed his own show “*Masters of None*.” It is a documentary styled show depicting his life as a second generation Asian Indian actor and a stand up comedian. He addresses issues of being stereotyped as a terrorist, convenience store worker, IT worker, doctor, cab driver, and constantly being required to talk with an Indian accent; despite the fact that he insists that there are a lot of Asian Indians with American accents. In his show he also illustrates his relationship with his immigrant parents. His father is portrayed in a child-like manner when it comes to navigating mainstream American culture. Like most second-generation Asian Indians, Azziz Ansari edits his life prior to disclosing personal information to his parents, because there is a cultural chasm between second-generation Asian Indians and their immigrant parents.

Transnational Racial Identity

The parents of many second generation Asian Indians, like many immigrants in general, tended to be pragmatic, achievement and education driven. They were able to immigrate to the

U.S. because of their scientific, technical, or medical skills. They were able to provide a middle class life -style for their children because of those skill sets. Most of the parents (Second Wave) of the second generation Asian Indians were very cosmopolitan. They were well aware of race and what racialization meant to non-white immigrants, because Asian Indians have a very complex migration history and many different form of racialization. In England Asian Indians are described as “black” or “Asian”. In many African countries, like Tanzania, Asian Indians are referred to as “banyani” or other labels identifying non-black marginalized people. Asian Indian immigrants, the parents of second generation Asian Indians, understand their complicated positioning in the transnational space. They found that identifying and “emphasizing their subcontinent origins seemed to be their chosen way of situating themselves across these multiple structural contexts” (Purkayastha, 2012, p. 49). Labeling themselves as “Asian Indian” or “South Asian” is a self imposed identification and there is agency within this label. According to Purkayastha, the self identification of Asian Indian or South Asian labels “acknowledge their transnational affiliation thus avoid “being black” if they emphasized their non-U.S. roots and network” (Purkayastha, 2012, p. 49). If in fact this is the case then there is obviously a tension regarding assimilation and identity between second generation Asian Indians and their parents. It could be stated that the Second Wave immigrant parents are content to be identified as “foreigners from South Asia” and they are happy to have their children identified as such, because in the end it is better than being identified as “black” in America. The history of discrimination against blacks in America is brutal, extremely violent, and inhumane. Mary Waters in her 1994 article, *Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second-Generation Black Immigrants in New York City* claims a similar sentiment is uttered by second generation black immigrants from the West Indies. They want to be identified as West Indian so they could avoid

being identified as “black” in America (Water, 1994). I argue that second-generation Asian Indians do not want to be identified or affiliated as an immigrant at all; that identity belongs to their parents. Second generation Asian Indians consider themselves American, but at the same time I believe that many second generation Asian Indians feel the same way as the second-generation black immigrants feel in Mary Water’s article. Regardless, whether they are being labeled as immigrants, Asian Indian immigrants, or as Black Americans it all results in some form of discrimination.

Systemic Discrimination in the Workforce- Economic Assimilation

Experience of discrimination for second generation Asian Indians was not confined to schools - it was also present in the workplace. Many were aware of the frustrations their parents faced in the workplace because of their accents and the cultural gap, but they believed that because they were “American” they would be treated similar to their white cohorts. According to the research done by Raaj Tiagi in his 2012 article, *Economic Assimilation of Asian Indians in the U.S.: Evidence from the 1990s*, second generation Asian Indians also faced wage discrimination in the workforce.

Tiagi asserts, though evidence, that Second Wave Asian Indian immigrants do encounter wage discrimination. Despite being the fastest growing immigrant group in the U.S., there are very few studies done on Asian Indians and their economic assimilation. Second Wave Asian Indian immigrants are a relatively small demographic group as compared to other minority groups of colour. In the 1960s and 1970s there were just a few hundred thousand (Tiagi, 2012). Tiagi argues that economic assimilation is an important variable with regards to immigrant populations. Economic assimilation studies “view the labor market performance of immigrants

in the host country as a measure of the immigrant contribution to the economy's skill endowments and productivity" (Tiagi, 2012, p. 515). If the economic assimilation of a certain immigrant group is slow then the government can provide needed skill set enhancement such as improvement of language skills, economic or other support services.

Results from Tiagi's research show that in fact newly immigrated Asian Indian do earn less than their native-born, white (non-Hispanic) cohorts. In fact the average newly immigrated Asian Indians make \$0.72 for every dollar made by their white, native born, non-Hispanic cohort. His studies show that even after 15 to 20 years of working, Asian Indian immigrants never close the wage gap between them and their white counterparts. His studies do show that the wage gap tightens but it never closes. Tiagi's studies further indicate that second generation Asian Indians also see a wage disparity compared to their white cohorts. Since most second generation Asian Indians are born and raised in the U.S., fluent in the English language, assimilated to American culture and values, there seems to be no reasonable explanation for this wage disparity. Tiagi likens this disparity to the existing gender disparity in the U.S. workforce. Tiagi further noted that other members within the Asian ethnic group category actually fare far worse than Asian Indians with regards to earnings disparity.

Wage disparity is not the only discrimination Asian Indians face in the workplace or in universities. The label of "Model Minority" meant as a positive social identity, morphs into an obstacle. In the workplace and in academic setting it creates a " 'halo effect' a perception that all Asians are competent and aspiring. They are afforded opportunities based on the expectations that they will perform with greater diligence than non-Asians" (Segal, 2002, p. 158). The halo effect occurs within the context of wage disparity in the workforce that Tiagi's research reveals. The halo effect is more prominent in Silicon Valley where Asians in general and Asian Indians

in particular are seen as assets because of the history of Asian Indian entrepreneurship in this area (Segal, 2002).

Equal opportunity efforts do not extend to Asian Indians because they are not seen as an oppressed minority group in the U.S. The perception that *all* Asian Indians are successful belies the reality of many Asian Indians in the U.S. In the book *Desi Land* Shalini Shankar (2008) discusses the lives of Desi teens from lower income Asian Indian families. The parents of these teens are janitors, taxi drivers, cooks, and factory workers. Their wages are low and they live in high crime neighborhoods and attend low performing schools. Many of the Desi teens from these families are failing at school and are viewed as “at risk” by school authorities (Shankar, 2008). Since these teens are Asian Indian they are not perceived as oppressed, even though their lives are similar to their cohorts from other ethnic groups of colour who are considered as “disadvantaged” by American society.

According to Uma Anand Segal, in her 2002 publication *Framework for Immigration: Asians in the Workplace*, “Asians are counted as minority members in an organization’s personnel count to meet some expectation of minority representation. They do not fill any quota requirements nor are they able to fill positions reserved for minority candidates” (Segal, 2002, p.158). She argues that, “to compete for positions that are open to whites, Asians must outperform white candidates because they must compensate for their ethnicity that does not fill legislative quotas’ (Segal, 2002, p. 158).

Discrimination of Asian Indians post 9/11

Ethnic ambiguity, misidentification, and misembodiment are unique to ethnic groups that exist somewhere in the “brown spectrum” within the binary black-white racial paradigm that

dominates American society. African Americans are rarely mistaken for Whites and vice versa, but people within the brown spectrum are often misidentified and mislabeled. Asian Indians are often mistaken for Black, Hispanic/ Latino, and Middle-Eastern. After 9/11 there have been many cases of non- Muslim Asian Indians being mistaken for Muslim, Arab, or Middle-Eastern with violent or deadly consequences.

The space occupied by non-Muslim Asian Indians within American society is unclear within the dominant culture. They are simply seen as foreign and excluded from mainstream America. As an ethnic group of colour within a dominant white, European society, Asian Indians have to contend with the concept of “double consciousness”. This concept is somewhat “twisted” when it comes to non-Muslim Asian Indians.

Double consciousness is a concept coined by W.E.B. Dubois in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*. He states that within the African American personhood is the majestic spirit and identity that stems from his / her African roots; an origin that draws from the ancient African civilizations and histories. Despite this internal identity of a proud African personhood, the African American is plagued by how he sees himself through the eyes of a white, European society that considers him nothing more than chattel (Richardson, 2015).

Asian Indians know the origins of their identity. Many are recent immigrants to the U.S. or second generation and they still have ties to their homeland. The identity struggle most non-Muslim Asian Indians are confronted with is how they see themselves through the eyes of a dominant, white, mainstream American culture. In February of 2017, fatal and near fatal attacks and arson in Kansas City (February 2017), Washington State, and Florida were aimed specifically at non- Muslim Asian Indians. In all of these attacks the non- Muslim Asian Indians were considered Muslims and were seen as an existential “Muslim” threat to mainstream,

American society. The imagined concept of a “Muslim”, as seen through the eyes of mainstream America includes non-Muslim, Asian Indians and they are considered a threat to the “imagined” concept of America that many hold so dear. The non-Muslim, Asian Indian, who has nothing to do with terrorism associated with the Islamic State, Taliban, Al- Qaeda, or other terror groups does not exist because he / she bears a physical resemblance to the American imagined concept of what a Middle-Easterner or a Muslim looks like. So when non-Muslim Asian Indians see themselves through the eyes of white, mainstream American society they do not see themselves, rather they see a caricature of an Islamic terrorist, who is an existential threat to American society.

Since 9/11 and subsequent increased terrorist activities resulted in many non- Muslim, Asian Indians being confused for Middle-Eastern Muslims. Verbal abuse (being called “terrorists” or “sand-nigger”) and other related acts of symbolic violence against Asian Indians, such as vandalism of their places of worship, have also increased. The Sikh community has been targeted the most of all within the Asian Indian communities. Because Sikhs men wear a turban and have beards, they are misidentified and mislabeled as “Muslim”; thus paying a heavy price. Since the 9/11 Trade Center attacks there have been 645 reported “bias attacks” on Sikh immigrants in the U.S. and Canada (Mahalingham, 2012, p.301).

A well -publicized violent attack against the Sikh community occurred on August 2012 in Oak Creek (suburb of Milwaukee), Wisconsin. A white man walked into a Sikh temple and killed six worshippers and wounded three. He believed that they were Muslims. Many in the Sikh community believe that the media often portrays Sikhs as Muslims and blame this misrepresentation for the targeted violence. This misidentification and misrepresentation has taken a toll on the Sikh community and researchers are studying the physical and psychological

effects of this misrepresentation and misidentification. Ramaswami Mahalingham's article *Misidentification, Misembodiment and the Paradox being a Model Minority*, claims that the "Sikh community is a successful minority, immigrant community that has positively contributed to the American society, despite enduring historic discrimination and exclusion" (Mahalingham, 2012, 301). He claims that the misidentification and misrepresentation of the Sikh community was created by the dominant white culture. The leadership in the Sikh community believes that they have to reach out to the mainstream American culture and introduce their religion and culture: they believe that they need to create their own social identity (Mahalingham, 2012).

Another attack reported by the *Los Angeles Times* occurred on April 2011 in South Sacramento, California. Two elderly Sikh men were out taking their customary stroll when they were shot to death. The police have not ruled it out as a hate crime. The police claimed, "Since 9/11 Sikhs have been mistaken for Muslim and have been randomly attacked" (Romney, L.A. Times, 2011).

Finally, on October 15, 2016 two Texas men were charged with felony assault and hate crime for beating a Sikh man at a stoplight in Richmond (Bay Area), California. The men beat the Sikh gentleman about the face and cut off his hair. These are but a few reported physical acts of violence endured by Sikh men. Other members of the Asian Indian community have also endured verbal abuse and physical abuse. Many times these attacks are unreported, because the community or the family is too afraid.

Since 9/11 vandalism to Hindu and Sikh Temples has also increased. The vandalism is in the form of graffiti of swastikas or reference to Islam, Muslim, or ISIS; also phrases such as "GET OUT" are written. On February 2015 a Hindu Temple was vandalized in Bothell, Washington (*India –West*, 2015). The police claimed that vandalism of Hindu temples has

increased throughout the U.S. since 9/11, because they are mistaken for Muslim places of worship. A Sikh temple was vandalized in Orange, County California and it featured the word Islam, which was misspelled “Islahm” (*The Independent*, 2015).

These are just a few examples of violence endured by the Asian Indian community in contemporary post 9/11 American society. Misrepresentation and misembodiment of Asian Indians has evolved to not just include Native American, Hispanic, Black; it now includes Muslim or Arab. Despite increased access to information regarding different cultures and people by way of the YouTube, Netflix, Facebook, and other social media sites, it is confounding how misrepresentation and misembodiment can occur with such tragic consequences. Be it ethnic ambiguity, misrepresentation or misembodiment, it all results in discrimination, marginalization, and stigmatization. Asian Indians must take matter of social identity into their own hands and create their distinct ethnic identity for the sake of placement, security, and perceived discrimination. I argue that re-ethnicization is precisely the venue for Asian Indians to create their own distinct social identity in contemporary American society.

Different Pathways of Re-ethnicization to Create an Ethnic Identity

Desi Culture

Second generation Asian Indians in the U.S. have always lived in a transnational globalized society. As stated earlier Asian Indians, under British rule migrated to different outposts of the British Empire for generations. Asian Indians settled in the United Kingdom, Africa, Australia, Canada, Caribbean, and other parts of Asia. Many of the second generation Asian Indians not only have parents who lived in other countries prior to settling in the U.S., but they have extended family members in other countries and cultures beyond the Indian

Subcontinent. These transnational family bonds are very important to most South Asian families. Family ties transcend geographic location.

Many second generation Asian Indians ventured further into American society by entering university and often times moving away from home. Upon entering university, they began to meet other second generation Asian Indians. The university setting was promising for Asian Indian youth, who felt singular and alone in high school to bond with others who looked like them and had similar and shared experiences. Within these group encounters second-generation Indians discovered ethnic, religious, and regional differences that are present in Asian Indian communities. These differences did not trump their shared experiences as second generation Asian Indians in the U.S. They reinforced their “Pan Asian” identity as simply “South Asian” or “Desi”.

The “South Asian” or “Desi” label differentiated them from other Asians within the Asian American category. This was very important to the second generation Asians from the Indian subcontinent. In her book *Negotiating Ethnicity*, Bandana Purkayastha claims that for many of the second -generation participants the “South Asian” distinction was important. In some universities there were Asian cultural societies. When some of these second generation participants attended these societies they were surprised to find that most of the attendees were from Far-East Asian countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Philippines, etc. descent; Few Asian Indians or South Asians were present. They believed that even though it was a good experience participating in the Asian cultural society, they really did not “fit in”, even though there are many shared experiences amongst people within the Asian American category (Purkayastha, 2005).

“South Asian” and “Desi” labels describe second generation individuals from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka; The coming together of these second generation

individuals in not unusual or uncommon. While growing up in the U.S. most second generation Asian Indians and their parents became good friends with a wide variety of ethnic groups from India. The Indian communities throughout the U.S. were generally quite small and a pan-ethnic definition of Indian was observed. The South Asian and Desi identity observes a pan-ethnic identity that is inclusive of many ethnic cultures within the South Asian society.

The Desi identity not only acknowledges the pan-South Asian identity it also acknowledges the transnational South Asian identity. The Desi identity has created a shared experience that transcends the local and encompasses the global. The positioning of second-generation individuals from the Indian subcontinent is complicated no matter where their families have migrated. The shared experience of the “Desi culture” is quite unique to second-generation individuals from the Indian subcontinent. “The second generation is structurally positioned differently from their parents in the U.S. and other countries, and they encounter a series of other structural constraints that act as additional ethnic binds. In other words, transnational spaces are not neutral contexts; South Asian Americans have to contend with social structures in all the countries which make up their transnational horizons” (Purkayastha, 2012, p. 58).

It is in this non – neutral transnational space that the Desi identity emerged. It is a way to create a self -identity that is unique to the experience and positionality of the second generation South Asian. It is also an attempt to create a unique self-identity where misrepresentation and misidentification, because of perceived ethnic ambiguity, are eliminated. The Desi identity is depended on mobility, globalization and technology. A popular Desi “personality” on Youtube is Jus Reign. He is a Canadian born son of Punjabi immigrants. He is a comedian, actor and a social commentator. He regularly uploads Youtube episodes about experiences of Desis (second

generation South Asians). These skits are about family, South Asian community, discrimination, misidentification, and other experiences of Desis in White society. Although he is distinctly Canadian -Punjabi, his experiences resonate with all of the South Asian communities residing outside the Indian Subcontinent. He is extremely popular with the Desi community. His Youtube episodes promote his upcoming appearances and concert tours. He is a regular in the Desi communities of Los Angeles, New York, England, Australia. He is also quite popular in Punjab, India. His mobility, his ability to use technology, and his transnational identity and positionality helps him to connect with diverse groups of individuals that make up the “Desi” identity.

Music is another part of the Desi identity. Desi music is an amalgam of Indian music, Western (American and European popular) music, and Bollywood. One such style of music from Desi identity is the “Banga” music. It is mostly dance music that evolved from traditional Punjabi and Gujarati music (often played at South Asian weddings) and it is fused with hip-hip and other western style music. The music is created by South Asian D.J.’s who collaborate with artists from other genres to create a festive, inclusive and distinctively South Asian music. Discos throughout the U.S., England, Australia, and Canada promote “Banga” nights because of its popularity. This type of music is but another aspect of the Desi identity.

Shalini Shankar’s (2008) book *Desi Land: Teen Culture, Class, and Success in Silicon Valley* is an ethnographic study of second-generation South Asian Desi culture. Shankar claims that Desi self-identity for the teens was based on positionality of race and ethnicity of second-generation middle-class and upper-middle class South Asians in Silicon Valley. The model minority status in the U.S. had a huge factor in how the Desi group was able to express itself within the Silicon Valley high school culture. The Desi identity was used to form social cliques.

In one high school, the Desi group was seen as wealthy and in tune with fashion trends not only in the U.S. but also internationally. Since many of the Desi participants had family members residing in different parts of the world, they projected a sense of international sophistication not present in their white and other non-white cohorts and a distinct “Desi” identity. Shankar’s study reveals that the projection of wealth, success and attainment of the “Amrikan Dream” was not just important to the second generation South Asians teens, it was also important to their parents. Success, for some of the Desi participants, was conveyed through “hyper-consumption”, often portrayed in opulent Bollywood movies and fashion.

Shankar did not address how the Desi self -identity affected their relationship with other minorities groups within their schools. Several reviewers criticized Shankar’s book for not exploring the interaction of the Desi group with other non-white minority groups who are also present in their high school culture. I believe that Shankar’s book illustrated that the “Desi” identity was created by the second generation youth as way to “carve” a “social space” for themselves in a diverse multi-ethnic culture of Silicon Valley. It gives them a distinct ethnic identity that is transnational. Technology, social capital, mobility and agency were used together to create this specific ethnic identity.

Technology and its Influence on the Re-ethnicization Process of Second Generation

Asian Indians

Technological Advances in Communication

Anthony Giddons (1990) in his book, *Consequences of Modernity*, claims that in pre-modern societies human bonds were created and sustained through “embeddedness”. People rarely ventured out of their villages or tribes and this created strong interpersonal bonds because

people knew each other, and their extended families, from “cradle to grave”. Friendships and alliances were multi-generational because of geographic proximity and physical contact. Modernity and globalization brought with it disembeddedness. People traveled to far off places and their bonds with family members, friends, native environment and culture were broken or strained. Recent advancements in communication technology reduced the effects of disembeddedness and allowed people to reconnect with distant family members, friends, community and culture.

Advancement in technology is pivotal in the re-ethnicization process of second-generation Asian Indians. The development of the Internet, Skype, mobile phones, computers, Netflix, and cable and satellite television are important tools for their re-ethnicization process. For the older demographic group within the second-generation Asian Indians, technology changed the way they connected not only with their extended family in India and other parts of the world, but it also changed the way they defined themselves.

In the late 1960s through to the 1990s communication with extended family outside the U.S. was expensive, slow and intermittent; letter writing was the main form of communication during this time period. It took letters nearly a month to reach their destination to and from India and the U.S. By the time the letter reached the intended party their contents were no longer pertinent or timely. Communication by way of telephone was unreliable and extremely expensive especially when calling India.

The only meaningful way to connect with family was by travel and it was very expensive, infrequent, and hectic. For second-generation Asian Indians, because most were born and raised in the U.S., these family visits were a worldwind of “catch up” with numerous relatives whom were essentially “strangers” with awkward and stilted conversations where everyone was trying

to connect with each other after long periods of separation (Joshi, 2006). During these trips many second generation Asian Indians felt “different” from their Indian cousins and felt left out because they did not share in family experiences because they lived in the U.S. The older relatives living in India treated them differently because they were “American”. These infrequent modes of communication only left second generation Asian Indians “out of place”, disconnected, and alone. These people were their family but they were also “strangers”. Their American life was very different from their extended family’s Indian life (Joshi, 2006).

Mobile phones, Internet, Skype, Netflix, and Facebook have eliminated many physical and cultural barriers for second generation Asian Indians. Mobile phones enabled families to reconnect more frequently and inexpensively. Now, most Asian Indian families speak to relatives abroad on a weekly basis, if not on a daily basis. So families, regardless of geographic location are “in synch” with family “dramas” and events. Through their parents, many second generation Asian Indians whether actively or tacitly are drawn back into the family fold and are reconnected with their extended families abroad, especially with their cousins (peers).

Second generation Asian Indians have used Facebook, and Youtube to connect with their contemporaries within their extended families, but also with the Pan-Asian community. They share experiences, ideas, music, cinemas, as well as cultural and political ideas. Through these interaction aided by technology, they are more connected to their “Indian-ness”. With the use of Netflix and Youtube they are able to experience Indian movies and other Indians popular cultural phenomenon, thus further connecting with family members or with other members from the South Asian community. Movies and books like *The Namesake*, “Bend it Like Beckham” and “Monsoon Wedding” conveyed the unique struggles of second generation South Asian experiences to the Pan-Asian community. They conveyed the struggles of traversing two

different cultures, trying to “fit in” no matter what space they occupied and always trying to please their families and themselves at the same time.

Websites such as hindiguru.org and Zabaan.com are set up by famous language schools in India and they offer online language schools via Skype or other platforms “Our online classroom software is especially designed for online teaching and collaboration over the internet” (hindiguru.org, 2017) so honing one’s language skills is easy and convenient. Many second generation Asian Indians, although quite fluent in their parents’ first language, take these courses to become more proficient in their family’s language or other languages of India, thus allowing them to better communicate with their relatives in India and to better understand Indian television and movies. The older segment of second generation Asian Indians are also using websites such as these to introduce Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Bengali, and other languages of India to their own children. Many second-generation Asian Indians and their children use additional websites that offer classical Indian singing and dancing lessons via Skype. All of these opportunities to re-ethnicize or to re-engage with their ethnic culture are available to Asian Indians no matter where they live in the world. As such, technology is highly instrumental in the re-ethnicization process of second-generation Asian Indians.

Hi-Tech Boom and the Increase of Asian Indian Immigration to the U.S.

Breakthroughs in the Hi-Tech sector not only changed the way second generation Asian Indians communicated with their family and connected with their ethnic culture, they also changed Asian Indian immigration policy to the U.S. Tremendous growth in the hi-tech sector demanded a large number of skilled IT workforce in the U.S. Asian Indian population grew from 800,000 in the 1980s to approximately 3.1 million in 2016 (Pewresearch.org, 2016), Hing,

1993). According to americanprogress.org 70% of all H1 Visas are given to Asian Indian in 2014. Most of these visas go to IT workers who are young, college educated, tech savvy and extremely cosmopolitan Asian Indians. The evolution of a global economy has allowed not only Asian Indians to immigrate to the U.S., it has allowed for Asian culture to be imported into the U.S.

Peggy Levitt (1998), a sociologist, coined the term “social remittance” when discussing the effects of international migration due to globalization. She claims that global migration allows for new ideas and concepts to flow from sending countries to receiving countries. She asserts that “ social remittances merit attention for several reasons. First they play an important, understudied role in transnational collectivity formation. Second, they bring social impacts of migration to the fore. And third, they are a potential community development aid. Because they travel through identifiable pathways, and planners can channel certain kinds of information to particular groups with positive results” (Levitt, 1998, p. 929). Levitt’s argument basically states that new immigrants can affect the re-ethnicization process of second-generation Asian Indians. They cannot only influence pathways of re-ethnicization but they can also make them far clearer. They can also carve-out new pathways that may be appealing to second-generation Asian Indians.

Increase in Asian Indian Specific Stores and Restaurants

The average household earning for Asian Indians is \$80,000 per annum as compared to the \$40,000 average household income of a white American (Pew Research.org, 2016). Accordingly, the *Selig Center at the University of Georgia’s Terry School of Business* estimates that the cumulative buying power of Asian Indians in the U.S. is \$195 billion in 2013

(americanprogress.org, 2017). This means that the average Asian Indian has disposable income to spend on restaurants, movies, music, and other items. Since the Asian Indian communities are a mixture of Second Wave, second-generation and newly immigrated individuals the need for South Asian grocery stores, Indian clothing stores, jewelry stores, movies, and restaurants has increased throughout the U.S. In the 1970s and the 1980s Indian grocery stores and Indian restaurants were few and far between. One came across them in very large cities such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Now, they can be found in many mid-size cities and in most university towns. The increase in Indian grocery stores in mid-size cities also attests to the increase in Asian Indian population and the demand for ethnic specific food items.

For second generation Asian Indians this means that Indian food that was mostly cooked by their mothers and eaten at home or during Indian parties is readily available to them outside the home. It also meant that they could connect with other Asian Indians in the public sphere and enjoy, and take pride in, the food of their ethnic origins. For second generation Asian Indians who lived in white dominated American suburbia during the 1970s and the 1980s Indian food was mocked and ridiculed by most of their white peers because of the curry smell and taste. Many second generation Asian Indians deliberately avoided talking about and eating Indian food in front of their white peers. They could not share in their culture with their American friends by way of food. Food is often used to introduce individuals to new cultures and is used to connect with people from different countries was not an options for many second-generation Asian Indians. This further stigmatized them and marginalized them. So, the increase in the Asian Indian population due to the Hi-Tech sector and a global economy resulted in the increase of Indian specific shops, restaurants, businesses, organizations, and temples.

Temples and the Asian Indian Community

Organizations that involve Hindu temples are a “tour de force” when it comes to organization and inclusiveness. Norris Palmer’s 2016 article *Negotiating Hindu Identity in an American Landscape*, studied the importance of the Vishnu Temple and its construction in Livermore, California, for the community and to the community’s identity. The Asian Indian temple association in the Bay Area of San Francisco, like all Asian Indian associations, is volunteer run and requires tremendous commitment from individuals (Palmer, 2016).

Volunteers spend many hours per week attending meetings and making phone calls. Many of the volunteers in these associations are doctors or have other demanding professions. This commitment and devotion is not lost on the second generation Asian Indians. As Joshi’s research in, *New Roots in America’s Sacred Ground* reveals, second generation Asian Indians are active in the Hindu temple organizations. They understand the importance of religion and the temple space in defining their ethnic identity and creating social capital.

Houses of worship are the materialization of religious identity and ethnic identity. What they look like, how many there are, and where they are located defines the people who built them. “Religion has been frequently used as an ethnic symbol by immigrants, expatriates, or diasporic communities in the American context, and for that matter worldwide” (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1998, p.127). Houses of worship built by Asian Indians living in the U.S. are a reflection of the Asian Indian ethnic identity. The physical structures, their architecture and their configuration are unique to the South Asian culture and they are distinctly non-western. The physical or geographic space occupied by Hindu temples in America is a material manifestation of the embeddedness of South Asian culture in contemporary American culture.

In 1912 the first Sikh Gurdwara was built in Stockton, California, because the majority of

the Asian Indian immigrants in the U.S. were of the Sikh religion. The gurdwara served as a place of worship and as a place of community for the small Sikh population in California. The gurdwara defined their ethnic identity and it was a physical manifestation of the Sikh presence in the U.S. and their desire to make their presence known.

The first Hindu temple in the U.S. was built in 1976 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The construction cost was approximately \$1 million and most of the money came from donations made by first generation immigrant Hindus (Second Wave Asian Indians). As of 2016 there are nearly 375 Hindu temples in the U.S. (hindumandir.us, 2017). They are as diverse as the communities they serve. The large increase in Hindu temples in the U.S. reflects the increase in Hindu populations and “an articulation of the future goals of Hindus in the U.S. They are a symbol of embeddedness of the Hindu culture in the U.S.” (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1998, p.129).

In order for these temples to be built there has to be a cohesive Hindu community with a strong desire to create a place of worship but also to create a place of community. Hindu temples do define the Hindu community. Hindu temples in India are very specific to deities and specific to regions. Hindu temple in North India tend to be strictly for worship, while Hindu temples in South India are a place of worship but also a social hub for the locals (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1998).

Many second generation Asian Indians, especially those who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s never visited temples in America. Religion associated with Hindu temples was, according to Kyathi Joshi in her book *New Roots in America's Sacred Ground*, a transnational experience. In her study of forty-one second generation Asian Indian participants who came of age during 1980s and 1990s, thirty- nine of them visited India at least once during their K-12 years. More than half of the participants claimed they visited India every three years during their k-12 years.

The only time they would visit Hindu temples was on their trips back to India (Joshi, 2006). Indian temples are ancient, crowded, chaotic, and require those familiar with Hindu religious rituals to make sense of the cacophony of voices, bell ringing, and chanting. Amidst all this, are the smells of incense, camphor, and jasmine and the feel of the cold stone and marble floors against one's bare-feet. The rhythm of the ancient Hindu temples are known to those who frequent them whether for worship, pilgrimage, or for social gatherings. For many second-generation Asian Indians the temples were mere tourist attractions where they were mere tourists just going through the motions their parents and the priests instructed them to do whilst in the temple. They were strangers and tourists amidst a religion and rituals that define them.

According to Kayati Joshi's research, many of the second-generation Asian Indian participants who experienced religion as a transnational experience and felt a disconnect to their religious heritage, went back to India after university to "reconnect" with their religious heritage. They visited temples and "recharged their religious batteries" (Joshi, 2006, p. 70). Several of the participants claimed that they felt "more Indian" when they reconnected with their religious heritage when in India. For many of these second-generation Asian Indian participants it was their first time to feel a sense of belonging in a public space. In the U.S. their religious identity and their cultural identity was defined in the private sphere, because there were just not enough Asian Indian immigrants in the mostly white American suburbs.

The religious and ethnic affiliation many second-generation Asian Indians felt on their trips back to India as adults has framed how they view and interact with the Hindu temples in their communities in the U.S. Joshi's study revealed that most second-generation Asian Indians view Hindu temples or Sikh gurdwara as more of a social gathering place that defines their ethnic and religious identity, but they do not feel "religious" (Joshi, 2006, p. 76). They are not

proficient with religious rituals that come second nature to their parents. They are happy to be observers and passive participants but they are not fully engaged. The social aspect of Hindu temples is where second generation Asian Indians feel most engaged. Since Hindu temples in the U.S. also serve as a community center, this is where many marriages, birthdays, anniversaries and religious holidays are celebrated. It also serves as a meeting place for the community to discuss its goals and vision for the future. One participant in Joshi's research recalls that she "studied religion and Hindi language at the Hindu temple near Pittsburg" (Joshi, 2006, p. 77). Religious studies offered in Hindu temples for second generation Asian Indians were more than just learning about Hinduism. It was where cultural values and social cues were learned and enforced. It was another way for second generation Asian Indians to develop their ethnic identity.

The second -generation participants in Joshi's research who have children of their own, the Hindu temple has continued to be a public place where they and their children can fully express their ethnic and religious identity. Several of the participants are actively involved in the Hindu temples of their community. They created a curriculum where religious stories, prayers and several regional languages are taught; these classes are held at temples and also at private homes (Joshi, 2006). For second-generation Asian Indians in the U.S. the Hindu temple is not only a place to reconnect with their "Indian-ness" but it is also a place of religious and ethnic expression in the public sphere. Furthermore, it has become a place where they can teach their children what it means to be a Hindu and an Indian in the U.S. It is a place where social and personal identities are shaped.

Over the years many the second-generation Asian Indians have witnessed their parents and many other members of the Asian Indian community coming together to build these temples.

They understand the time, money, and the commitment their parents and other elder members of their community dedicated to building their community temple.

Building Hindu temples in the U.S. is no small feat. It takes significant capital, commitment, and time. Bhardwaj and Rao, in their article *The Temple as a Symbol of the Hindu Identity in America?* Discuss the importance of the Hindu temple in not only affirming ethnic identity but it has far reaching significance. The temple represents a community's tie to their Indian past but it also represents their commitment of the Hindu, Indian identity in the U.S. Bhardwaj and Rao claim that "vigorous temple building" in the U.S. has actually created a renaissance in temple architecture in India. The architecture of Hindu temples reflects their South Asian origins and traditions. American architectural firms consulted Indian architects so that the temples are built according to Hindu religious guidelines, local building codes, but also according to the needs of the local Hindu community. So, Indian architects had to compromise century-old rigid religious guidelines, that were regional and deity specific, so that one temple space can satisfy the needs of a diverse Hindu population.

The cost of building a Hindu temple is extremely high and this large capital investment is necessary. Large capital investment in a Hindu temple in the U.S. means a large and diverse Hindu base, thus the temple must meet the needs of all Hindus in the immediate community and surrounding communities. A large Hindu base also means that Hindu temples in the U.S. are situated proximal to large populations of Asian Indians in the U.S. Temples in the Bay Area serve from 9,000 to 15,000 Hindus on a regular basis (Palmer, 2006). The S.V. Temple in Pennsylvania gets visitors in the hundreds of thousands on an annual basis (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1998).

***Asian Indian Community Association as a pathway for Re-ethnicization of Second –
Generation Asian Indians***

The large Hindu base required to build temples in the U.S. is the result of a cohesive organization of Asian Indians. Most Indian communities regardless of size have an “India Association” or “South Asian Association”. According to Caroline Brettell’s, in her article *Voluntary Organizations, Social Capital, and the Social Incorporation of Asian Indians in the Dallas- Fort Worth Metroplex*, social capital is what drives ethnic groups to form social, cultural, ethnic, and religious associations. “Brettell’s concept of social capital refers to the development of relationships that permit the pursuit of shared goals” (Brettell, 2005, p. 854). Brettell’s study looks at Robert Putnam’s theory of community building as a form of social capital. She claims that ethnic associations cultural, religious, and professional are a form of community building that has aided Asian Indians to build social capital in the Dallas – Fort Worth area.

Central to Putnam’s community building theory is how individuals of a particular ethnic or racial “group work toward effecting the continued existence of the community; as a place making processes in a de-territorialized world of movement” (Brettell, 2006, p. 854). Another aspect of Putnam’s theory that is of importance is how well “the community is related to social networks and identity politics; these organizations are essential to communities. Institutionalized organizations are believed to be the underpinnings of group identity because they locate ethnicity and serve as a vessel for husbanding capital” (Brettell, 2006, p. 854).

The question Brettell posed was why the rapidly growing Asian Indian community in the Dallas- Fort Worth area has less political clout than the Hispanic population? The Asian Indians in the U.S. have the highest median income of any group in the U.S., they arrive to the

U.S. with solid English skills, they are cosmopolitan, familiar with the working of a democracy, and as a group they are highly educated. Her conclusion was that Asian Indians identity is not well defined. Asian Indians are a highly diverse group separated by class, religion, language, regions, and histories. Brettell's research also revealed that Asian Indian associations are multi-layered and serve multi-purposes. Each organization also has specific social capital goals. They do not have demographically large Pan-Asian Indian group that can garner political clout, like the Hispanic population. The Asian Indian population is one tenth of the Hispanic population in the U.S. Perhaps when the demographics of Asian Indians increase they can increase their social/ political capital.

Regional Asian Indian Organization and Re-ethnicization of Second Generation

Asian Indians.

Regional organizations that emphasize certain regions of India or ethnic groups of India; such as Punjabi Cultural Society, Telugu Association, or Kerala Association. These organization help parents "to foster the transnational ties for children who may not otherwise have a connection to the culture of their homeland" (Brettell, 2006, p.). Regional associations are powerful mechanisms for maintaining individual attachment to their place origin, language, and regional culture. They also help to form close friendships, almost a substitution for far away extended family, with other individuals who have share many aspects of their culture, experiences, and regional history. The documentary film "*Meet the Patels*" actually chronicles the regional organization that is particular to Asian Indians who are named Patel. It documents a second- generation Asian Indian actor Ravi Patel and his parents who are trying to set up an arranged marriage for him with a woman from the Patel clan from the state of Gujarat. The Patel

clan formed a Gujarati Regional Association, where Gujarati Patels from all over the U.S. meet and exchange C.V.s of their children so that arranged marriages can be made. The second-generation Gujaratis accompanied their parents to this national meeting. The prospective brides and grooms meet, exchange C.V.s, socialize and make business, professional and marital connections. The association is an avenue for second generation Asian Indian Gujaratis to feel a sense of ethnic belonging and closeness. Many of the second generation Gujarati knew of each other from previous encounter through the Gujarati Association. There is a sense of ethnic identity, social cohesion, and community support and membership, created by this organization for the second generation Asian Indians. In the film, even after the national meeting Ravi kept in touch with many of his Gujarati -Patel connections. When watching the interaction of all the second generation Gujarati- Patels there is a sense of familiarity that can only come from a shared ethnic experience or identity.

Professional Associations and Social Capital Second Generation Asian Indians

She also observed Asian Indian professional associations that emphasize social capital with regards to commerce and business networks. These associations tend to be profession specific such as physicians, academics, engineers or small business owners. These associations are far more inclusive because Asian Indians from all over the Asian subcontinent are welcome to participate. These organizations are large and they also interact with the main -stream American society; local councilmen and politicians are often welcomed to these meeting to discuss business concerns of the Asian Indian community. The professional associations act as a Pan-Asian association. Many second-generation Asian Indians are part of these associations. They often times have positions of power and influence and they also serve as consultants.

Second generation Asian Indians are far more adroit in traversing both the Indian culture and the American culture. They provide skill sets that older immigrant and new immigrants do not have when it come to cultural and structural aspects of American society and commerce. They also provide as interpreters in certain cases when members of the association are not proficient in English or when Americans cannot understand accented English.

Professional associations allow second generation Asian Indians to feel part of a community and to feel as an asset for the community. Many times second generation Asian Indians are looked upon as “different” or “too American” by their Indian born cohorts. Asian Indian professional organizations are not just active in the U.S. but they are also active with their cohorts in India. Organizations such as the Asian Indian Physicians Association conducts annual conferences in India to present papers and discuss issues in the field of medicine in both the U.S. and India. Many second- generation Asian Indian physicians participate in this organization. It is an excellent opportunity for them to reconnect with their Indian cohorts at yet a different level and create an even greater connection to their ethnic identity.

Pan Asian Organizations and Second Generation Asian Indians

Brettell’s research addresses the Pan- Asian associations such as the India Association of Dallas – Forth Worth, and claims that pan-Asian associations are the best way to gain political social capital. India Association of Dallas- Fort Worth includes all Indians regardless of religion, region, class or caste. It is the oldest and the largest of all association in the region. All over the U.S. there are many India Associations that represent a city or a region and the membership is large. I agree with Brettell that pan- Asian Indian associations are the best way to gain social/ political capital because political capital is “all about the number of votes”.

Pan- Asian organizations are best suited for second generation Asian Indians because they grew up with an Indian community that is Pan Asian. Their closest Asian Indian friends come from all different religions, regions and cultures within India. Pan- Asian ethnic identity is an identity that second generation Asian Indians embrace as an aggregate group. The re-ethnicization process for second generation Asian Indians takes place at the regional, professional, or at a religious level. This process is more on an individual level but the benefits social capital occur at the aggregate level. The Asian Indian re-ethnicization process can be beneficial at both a personal and at a group level. The success of individual Asian Indians reflects on the group. Dominant culture does not distinguish individual behavior from group behavior, whether it is good or bad behavior when it comes to small minority populations.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the different forms of discrimination experienced by Asian Indians in the U.S. They range from overt violence and verbal abuse to perceived discrimination of marginalization and exclusion. My findings also reveal that Asian Indians experience discrimination in the workplace, despite their “highly priced” skill sets and working in prestigious fields. These findings are similar to Skrobanek’s findings with second generation Turkish youth. It should be noted that the employment discrimination experienced by the Turkish youth occurs at a different level, but I would guess that highly skilled Turkish professional experience employment discrimination at the middle-class and upper middle-class levels also. My findings differ from Skrobanek because they reveal that Asian Indians have other reasons to re-ethnicize; not just perceived discrimination. These other reasons are misidentification, misembodiment or ethnicity ambiguity and they all lead to discrimination or

perceived discrimination. On their own, these reasons would not lead to re-ethnicization, because they result in discrimination they lead to re-ethnicization. So, they may not be a direct cause for re-ethnicization, rather they are a pathway for the manifestation of discrimination or perceived discrimination.

Asian Indians experience ethnic ambiguity. They are not white but they are not black either. Matter of fact they do not really fit into the Asian American category. Their positionality in mainstream American society is unknown that is because they are always assumed to be foreign. Mainstream American society is most comfortable with the “othering” of Asian Indians. Asian Indians’ ethnic ambiguity also leads to misidentification. Many times Asian Indians are mistaken for Native Americans, Hispanic/ Latino, Black, Middle Eastern or Muslim. This misidentification has lead to further discrimination, vandalism, and acts of violence, especially after 9/11. Re-ethnicization allows Asian Indians to establish clear distinction between them and other ethnic groups in the U.S. It allows them the agency to create their own distinct positive social identity. It also allows them the agency to distinguish the important and positive contribution they make to American society.

My research revealed that Asian Indians, despite being a small ethnic minority in the U.S., have many possible pathways to help second-generation Asian Indians to re-ethnicize. These pathways exist only in a multicultural society that is highly globalized. Socio-economic mobility also increases the number of pathways available for re-ethnicization.

There are several areas of large vibrant communities of Asian Indians in the U.S. Silicon Valley is home to one such community. The diverse Asian Indian community allows second generation Asian Indians to create a distinct ethnic identity that not only encompasses their caste, socio-economic, regional, religious and their American identity simultaneously. The young

second -generation Asian Indians in “Desi Land” are able to traverse many identities at the same time. This ethnic identity created by the second- generation in Desi Land has a look and sound distinctly their own. They even have their own vocabulary.

Re-ethnicization pathway can also occur through temples and gurdwaras. Second generation Asian Indians now have a way to express their religion in a public sphere with other Asian Indians. There are over 375 temples in the U.S. and they accommodate the Asian Indian communities near them. The temples are not only a place of worship but they are also a place for community gatherings. Second generation Asian Indians can use the temples as a way to religiously and socially connect with their Asian Indian community.

There are also many community organizations in many cities that range from a Pan Indian to specific regional organizations. These smaller regional organizations stress specific language and cultures of India. They are close- knit associations that are more like family or kin. These organizations are used to bring second-generation Asian Indians into their “ancestral fold” and help them to network with other second-generation Asian Indians in the same region-ethnic community. The documentary *Meet the Patels* illustrates how effective regional associations are in re-ethnicizing second-generation Asian Indians.

Professional Asian Indian organizations are also an effective pathway for second-generation Asian Indians to re-ethnicization. Second-generation Asian Indians can serve as “go-betweens” or “bridges” between the immigrant Asian Indian businessmen and professional and mainstream America. Since they are able to adroitly navigate both societies, they can serve both communities by carving out a specific place for themselves within both communities,

Technology and other facets of globalization also provide second-generation Asian Indians pathways to re-ethnicization. Online language, music, and dancing schools allow

second-generation Asian Indians to connect directly with teachers in India. They can enroll in these schools and connect with an Indian teacher via Skype. Technology allows second-generation Asian Indians to connect with family members by way of Skype and Facebook. Technology allows a pathway for second-generation Asian Indians to directly interface with people in India and develop relationships and rekindle relationships with Indian friends and family.

Since there are more Indians in the U.S. than ever before there are also more Indian restaurants, stores, and access to Bollywood movies and music. Second generation Asian Indians are able to immerse themselves in all aspects of Indian culture at a local level: by way of Indian movie and music festivals, Indian cultural and food festivals, and religious festivals. The pathways for re-ethnicization are many for second-generation Asian Indians. Globalization and multiculturalism are but a few factors that allow for these many pathways for re-ethnicization.

Chapter 5

Conclusion:

Theory of Re-ethnicization of Second Generation Asian Indians

Re-ethnicization needs certain conditions in order to occur. First there must be some social capital within the individual or the collective group; such as social, economic, and physical mobility. There must also be social or cultural policy where assimilation is not forced but multiculturalism is encouraged and finally globalization plays a large factor in re-ethnicization. Certain forces or factors that comprise globalization must be present in order for multitude pathways for re-ethnicization to take place.

Re-ethnicization is an option for ethnic groups that perceive discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion. Under the right circumstances re-ethnicization allows for positive social identity and it can be used to reduce a sense of exclusion, frustration, and a sense of “aloneness” amongst second-generation immigrants. Different pathways for re-ethnicization could be used to assist “at risk” second-generation immigrant youths to find a sense of belonging and a sense of ethnic pride. Used in the most benevolent way, re-ethnicization can create a place for second-generation immigrant youth in their parents’ adopted home. They can serve as a bridge between their communities and the mainstream society. This gives them a sense of “usefulness”, purpose and a sense of pride for their unique position of adroitly traversing two cultures at the same time,

Possible Future Research

The scope of my research is limited because I used only secondary sources. I need to conduct primary research to determine if in fact perceived discrimination is the reason for re-ethnization of Asian Indians. I want to conduct interviews and survey questionnaires on designated second-generation Asian Indians participants in the U.S. to determine who is re-ethnicizing and their reasons for re-ethnicising.

I want to further investigate what types of discrimination Asian Indians are experiencing and if discrimination decreases in the upper socioeconomic strata. Often times, discrimination takes on different forms in different socio-economic strata, thus it may become subtler. Does this phenomenon apply to the Asian Indian community? Are the experiences of marginalization and exclusion the same regardless of their socio-economic status?

Skrobanek's research revealed that less educated and lower socio-economic Turkish youth re-ethnicized. I need to investigate if this hypothesis also holds true for second-generation Asian Indians in the U.S. Are Asian Indians in the lower socioeconomic strata re-ethnicizing more than other Asian Indians? I need to follow up this line of inquiry by observing if there is a different degree or intensity of re-ethnicizing within the lower economic strata of the Asian Indian community and what factors determine the degree and intensity of re-ethnicization. I want to know if there are some Asian Indians re-ethnicizing through complete immersion into the Asian Indian community.

Further research needs to investigate the most frequently and the most successful pathways to re-ethnicization. Do these pathways differ when socio-economics are taken into account? Are certain pathways easier to enter and exit depending on the needs of the individuals seeking a sense of ethnic identity? Are certain pathways more rigid and require tremendous

commitment on an individual level?

Finally, a comparative study of re-ethnicization of second generation Asian Indians in the U.S. and in the U.K. would be quite interesting. Different immigration histories, different domestic policies for integration and the U.K.'s colonial past with India would make for an interesting comparative study. Do Asian Indians in the UK perceive discrimination differently than their cohorts in the U.S.? Are they using different pathways for re-ethnicizing than Asian Indians in the U.S.?

Comparative studies with other ethnic diaspora within the U.S. are also a possibility. The Iranian, Japanese, and African American diaspora in the U.S. are very similar to the Asian Indian population. Are they re-ethnicizing to create a distinct ethnic identity as a result of perceived discrimination?

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