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Behind the Curtain: Cultural Cultivation, Immigrant Outsiderness, and Normalized Racism against Indian Families

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Behind the Curtain:

Cultural Cultivation, Immigrant Outsiderness, and Normalized Racism against Indian Families

by

Pangri G. Mehta

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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Dedication

To my mother, father, sister, the participants in this project, and fellow immigrant families.

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Christina Partin: I thank you for our beautiful friendships. And to Jesús Ramírez, thank you for your love, patience, wit, and encouragement. I am blessed to have you in my life.

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Abstract

This qualitative dissertation uses an Indian dance studio based in the suburbs of a mid-sized Florida city as an entry point to examine how racism impacts the local upwardly mobile Asian Indian community. Utilizing two and a half years of ethnographic data collected at the studio as a Bollywood instructor, 24 in-depth interviews with Indian immigrant parents and their children, 12 self-portraits drawn by children during their interviews, and home visits with 13 families, this project examines the strategies of accommodation and resistance that Indian families use to construct a sense of home and belonging. Applying socialization, visual research methods, critical race, and feminist scholarship to the exploration of how the local Indian immigrant community builds a sense of home and belonging within a nation whose success is a product of racial domination, this project makes four innovative and distinctive contributions to sociological research on socialization, U.S. immigration, and contemporary race relations.

In the first data chapter, I coin and develop the term *cultural cultivation* to describe strategic ethno-cultural socialization efforts immigrant parents use to preserve a culture 'left behind' (Ram 2005). Cultural cultivation adds a nuanced dimension to ethno-cultural socialization studies by demonstrating that these efforts are laborious, often regarded as women's work, and effectively operate as an 'added step' to Hochschild and Machung's (2003) work on the "second shift." The second data chapter utilizes an innovative research technique of having children draw self-portraits. While cultural cultivation helps children develop a meaningful attachment to Indian culture, self-portraits and interview data uncovered experiences of being teased and feeling 'left out.' As a result, many children forged what Portes and Rumbaut (2001) call a "reactive ethnicity"

as a way to cope with prejudice and discrimination and construct a sense of identity and belonging. The third data chapter examines the ways families minimized and internalized experiences of prejudice and discrimination. Rather than recognizing them as a part of structural racism, many immigrant parents regarded racial offenses as a deserved response to individual misbehaviors or inadequacies that were to be pointed out and corrected. This internalization prompted several of the interviewees to police their and their children's actions when in the presence of non-Indians in an attempt to preemptively minimize prejudicial statements and discrimination. For the last data chapter, by revealing the enduring hardships related to socialization and assimilation, I argue that high levels of assimilation and acculturation were also commonly accompanied by what I call *immigrant outsiderness*, or the subjective dimensions of the migration experience which are marked by 1. Lack of cultural inclusion, 2. Lack of social inclusion, and 3. Feelings of emotional disconnect. Data demonstrate that in spite of meeting the objective benchmarks typically associated with successful structural integration, acculturation, and assimilation, the immigrant experiences of this "model minority" are bounded and characterized by cultural and social exclusion as well as an emotional disconnect. This dissertation concludes by urging both a critical exploration and integration of how Asian Indians and South Asians fit into the contemporary racial landscape beyond terms like "model minority" and "honorary white" so that we can have a more honest and complex understanding of the role racial domination plays in our everyday lives.

Preface

November 2014

Every fall, over 3,000 Indian immigrant and 2nd generation families from across the state of Florida travel to the Florida State Fairgrounds for India Festival, a regional daylong celebration of the cultures, foods, and dances of India. The event is hosted in two main rooms, both with lively, but distinct atmospheres. Greeting all attendees is the first room which has Bollywood music playing in the background, the aroma of spicy foods and sweets filling the air, and thousands of Indians pouring over the 150 vendors selling boxed sweets and ethnic foods, bright gold and silver jewelry, colorful saris and other Indian party outfits, and international phone plans for talking and video chatting with family "back home" in India. Scattered throughout the rows of vendors are booths advertising local Indian doctors, Patel Brothers and other "nearby" (Orlando) Indian grocery stores, and Indian-owned businesses. Though Islam and Christianity are widely practiced in India, the celebration of Hinduism through pamphlets, posters, and artwork of Hindu deities overshadows any presence of Muslim or Christian pride. The second room houses tables filled with beautiful paintings and sculptures of Hindu deities and Buddha, knickknacks, and shawls that take up a third of the room. The remaining space is reserved for bleachers and a large stage decorated as an Indian village. A podium and the Indian, American, and Florida state flags are placed on both ends of the stage. The stage is meant for one of the highlights of India Festival: a dance competition with over 1,000 school-aged, college, and adult participants from across Florida, all competing in categories that represent ethnic dances of India.

Rather than participating as a regular attendee, this was my third year working closely with Sheila, owner of Naach Indian dance studio, to train six teams which would represent her dance academy at India Fest. As a Bollywood and India Fest dance instructor and choreographer for Naach for almost three years, I've had the opportunity to work with over 200 students and their families. This year Sheila and I spent our weekends training minor (ages 5-10) and junior (ages 10-14) teams to compete in Bhangra, Garba, Raas, Folk, and Fusion categories.

On the day of the event, most of the morning and early afternoon was spent backstage with the kids safety pinning costumes, fixing hair and makeup, and giving reminders about smiling on stage and maintaining proper formations. I was reminded of last week's stage rehearsal with the minor garba (a Gujarati folk dance done in a circle) group. Not keeping formation, I said, "Girls, you have to form a circle when you're doing garba. Otherwise, it's not garba. That's what garba is. Garba is doing a certain set of steps in a circle. So if you're not forming a circle, you're not doing garba and people won't know what you're doing." After that, the girls formed a circle and I assumed this was because I yelled at them. But after practice, a parent thanked me for the explanation and said that she did not know garba was done in a circle. This struck me as India Fest is supposed to be a display of Indian culture, but perhaps this does not necessarily translate into familiarity with the practice or art in which they or their kids are participating. Perhaps for some parents, participating in India Fest is simply a way for them and their children to feel socially connected with the local Indian community. But for many, enrolling children in India Fest,

Bollywood, and other Indian culture-focused classes is meant to expose children to the culture 'left behind.' Probing this thought, what other strategic efforts are made to expose or teach children about a culture 'left behind'? Who takes on the responsibility for such labor and what is the desired outcome for children enrolled activities dedicated to cultivating cultural knowledge?

Prompting additional questions, how are second generation children responding to these efforts of cultural cultivation and how does it influence the ways they negotiate their 'Indian' and/or 'American' identities? For example, at a recent Bollywood class I taught at Naach. Laxmi, a mother of one of my beginner level students, joined me on the edge of the dance floor to chat for a few minutes before the start of class. Wearing an embroidered kurti (Indian top) and cotton tights with her straight black hair pulled back in a low ponytail, she sat with her back against the bright yellow wall while we made small talk about upcoming plans for the weekend. Her daughter, Avani, was a cheerful 8-year-old whose energy on the dance floor was contagious. We overheard Avani as she introduced herself to a new white student as 'Ovnee,' a clear Americanized pronunciation of her name. Surprised, I turned to Laxmi who immediately started laughing and shaking her head as she explained that Avani Americanizes her name to everyone at school, and then pronounces it correctly when speaking with other Indians. At the young age of 8, Avani was already negotiating her bicultural identity through her name. What other aspects of their identities did children feel necessary to resist, accommodate, and negotiate?

As these thoughts crossed my mind, I took advantage of the short break between dance performances and made my way toward the bleachers just in time to hear a 2nd generation Indian comedian. Flown out from California to perform his stand-up routine, his entire repertoire relied on negative stereotypes about Indians including what he saw as one of our defining qualities: our miserly ways. He joked that you will never see Indians buy napkins from an actual store because "they" just steal them from Subway and McDonald's, and ended this bit with a nod to the model minority stereotype by stating, "We're not cheap, we're smart!" He then reverted to the tired racialized images of Indians as gas station, Subway, and Dunkin Donuts owners and proudly concluded with the punchline, "America runs on Dunkin, but Dunkin runs on Indians." Few people laughed and at the end of his routine when he asked if everyone was having a good time, there was little applause from the audience. An older gentleman sitting with his ankles crossed and arms folded even yelled out, "No!" and huffed as he shook his head. At an event meant to celebrate our heritage and community, the comedian reduced the audience to our utility as lowly, obedient, and thrifty minorities whose function is to serve real Americans. The comedian was followed by the president of the Gujarati Samaj (the organization hosting India Fest), whose speech praised Indian immigrants and their families for their courage to build a life in a new culture and community, achievements, and participation in making the 27th annual India Fest a continued success. It was an uplifting speech and stark contrast from the degrading images of Indians presented by the comedian. Competing representations of Indian immigrant families elicited questions about the dimensions of the model minority stereotype, particularly the demeaning images that occurred alongside praises of intelligence and utility. How was the dominant image of Indians as a successful and intelligent minority group reconciled against negative and racialized perceptions of lowliness? If Indian immigrants as a "model minority" were praised for their utility, then what would happen if they did not meet the expectation? How would this affect their sense of worthiness within a society that largely values them on the basis of their utility? And at what emotional expense did these reconciliations come? Extending this to questions about immigrant incorporation, the "model minority" as a stereotype elicits the notion of meeting the objective

measures of assimilation. Yet, with pervasive negative images of a seemingly well-integrated minority group, how does this affect feelings of cultural, social, and emotional belonging? In other words, what are the affective dimensions of their assimilation?

After the speech, it was time to head backstage to get the junior Bhangra group ready. Since working with Sheila, she has made it a point to consistently remind all of her students that "dancing should be fun" and all parents that India Fest is supposed to be "about the kids and for the kids." But the competition and resulting tension and animosity between dance groups seemed to outweigh concern for even the kids' physical health. For example, a student on one of the teams fell ill two weeks before the competition, spent a week in the hospital, and still competed. Rumors were that the dance team leaders wanted him to dance because his absence would ruin the choreography and mothers critiqued the amount of pressure participating in India Fest placed on children.There was another girl who broke her finger during practice. A cast was put on her finger, but it fell off on stage during the performance and she ended up re-breaking it.

India Fest is a symbol and expression of ethnic and cultural pride. On that day, the space at the Florida State Fairgrounds promotes a sense of community and shared identity and provides a connection with the culture 'left behind' through food, music, clothing, and dance. It is meant to portray and celebrate a positive image of Indians and Indian cultures as practiced in the U.S. A closer look at the event, however, revealed the physical and emotional labor it took to present such a front stage performance for the audience. Behind the curtain was tension, animosity, and pain, not unlike the broader experience of Asian Indians in the U.S. who experience cultural and racial tension, animosity for being stereotyped as a "model minority," and emotional pain out of a sense of exclusion or isolation. Much like a curtain, the portrayal of Indians as a hard-working minority group lauded for their success and assumed to be unaffected by inequality or racial domination obscures the labor involved in and struggles associated with building a sense of home and belonging in the U.S. By addressing questions associated with cultivating cultural knowledge, identity negotiation, the consequences of the model minority stereotype, and the affective dimensions of assimilation, I attempt to lift this curtain.

Chapter One:

Introduction

W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) poses a question in the Souls of Black Folk: How does it feel to be a problem? For decades researchers have studied the impact of racism on the black community, but Dubois' inquiry gives rise to a new, unexpected question that nearly a century later Vijay Prashad (2000) poses in his book The Karma of Brown Folk: How does it feel to be a solution? Prashad directs this question toward South Asians, particularly Asian Indians, who are frequently used as a "weapon" against blacks for the "right way" to be a minority. Though the "model minority" (Lee 2015) stereotype and "honorary white" (Bonilla-Silva 2004) label are frequently used uncritically by the general public (even academics) and appear to be positive, they also dismiss the racialized experiences of Asian Indians in the U.S. This dissertation attends to Vijay Prashad's important question by exploring the complex ways that normalized racism shapes the lives of one of the most successful minority groups in the U.S.: Asian Indians.

Why a Florida City Suburb?

Further examining the reach of racial domination and white supremacy, the analysis presented in this dissertation explores how racism affects the Asian Indian community, a group that is often overlooked in discussions on U.S. racism and contemporary race relations (Prashad 2012; Shankar and Srikanth 1998). Using Naach Indian dance studio as a point of entry, I draw upon qualitative data collected with Indian immigrants and their families in the suburbs of a mid-sized Gulf Coast city in southern Florida.

The suburbs of this Gulf Coast city is an ideal location to study how racism affects the upwardly mobile Indian immigrant community because of its growing popularity as an Indian immigrant destination. Over the past few decades, the Indian community in cities throughout Florida have swelled in comparison to other Asian groups. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1980, the total Asian population in the entire state of Florida was 62,512, with just over 4,000 Asian Indians documented. And in the country where this study was conducted, the Indian community was quite small. As one of my interviewees, Kamya, a structural engineer and mother of three from Karnataka who moved to the city in 1988, recalled, there were few Indian immigrants and even fewer Indian businesses. Remembering what the area was like when she first moved here, Kamya said:

> There was nothing here at all. When I came here in '88, not even one restaurant. '91, the year [my son] was born, the Raajasee (Indian restaurant near a local university) came. That was the first Indian restaurant. And two Indian groceries, that's it….from Fort Meyers and New Port Richey, everyone had to come to these two stores. There was nothing. Nothing here.

But our community here quickly grew. By 2010, the Indian population alone in Florida increased to 128,735, and in the local county reached just over 15,000, making Indians the fastest growing Asian group in the state and the county (U.S. Census Bureau). Furthermore, Chakravorty and colleagues' (2017) statistical research demonstrates that Florida is the 6th most popular destination for Indian immigrants, and that suburbs like where this study was conducted are one of the top settlements for high-income Indian immigrants (Chakravorty et al. 2017).

As demonstrated in the following chapters, such a population growth of upwardly mobile Indians in surrounding suburbs did not necessarily facilitate seamless incorporation into the already existing middle and upper middle class community. Instead, the shift in city and suburban neighborhood demographics was met with racialization practices, marking the relatively new

presence of Indian families as a clear distinction from the previous norm. For example, one interviewee, Simran, a mother of two from Dehli who moved to her and her husband's home around 2010, commented about how her "American friends" started referring to her neighborhood subdivision as "Curry Lake." While in her re-telling Simran accepted this in the form of a joke, such racializing instances could easily be interpreted as an offensive epithet and mechanism of racism, ultimately speaking to the notion that despite upward mobility and structural integration among this group of Indian immigrants, they and their families are still perceived as unwelcome outsiders.

Choosing Naach

With the growth of the Indian community in the nearby city and suburbs, organizations such as the Gujarati Samaj (referenced in the Preface) and cultural activities geared toward teaching children of Indian immigrants about the culture 'left behind' have flourished. The Indian community throughout Florida had developed such a strong presence that the city near where this study was conducted was the first U.S. city to be invited to host the International Indian Film Academy Awards, bringing tens of thousands of Bollywood film enthusiasts from across the nation and famous Bollywood film stars from India in April of 2014. An exciting chance for Naach, Sheila (Naach studio owner) organized as many opportunities as she could for her advanced Bollywood and Kuchipudi (classical dance of Andhra Pradesh which is a southern state in India) students to meet Bollywood stars and participate in the nearly weeklong IIFA festivities.

Before this point, however, Naach had developed a strong foothold among the suburban Indian community. I initially encountered Naach during the spring of 2012 when looking for adult classical Indian dance classes in the area. The studio was recommended to me by a local Indian boutique owner who praised Sheila's dedicated involvement with the community. Moreover,

Naach was one of the few Indian dance studios in area with class offerings for both children and adult students. Upon first meeting, Sheila told me how proud she was that the studio was nearing the 50 student mark and was looking forward to Naach expanding even further.

Bollywood and classical dance classes were held five days per week. On weekends, art and yoga classes were taught by two Indian mothers living in neighborhoods close to the office park where Naach was located. Engaging the rest of surrounding community, Sheila regularly entered between five and eight dance teams for India Fest (an annual state-wide Indian festival and dance competition), encouraged students to independently perform Bollywood dance numbers for school events, and networked with community organizations and local universities so that her students could showcase Bollywood and classical dance at multicultural festivals. All of this positioned Naach at the heart of Indian arts among the local blossoming Indian and broader community, making this studio an excellent access point for the research questions explored in this dissertation.

Outline of Chapters

Using Naach as an entry point, this project draws on two and a half years of ethnographic data collected at the studio as a Bollywood instructor, 24 in-depth interviews with Indian immigrant parents and their children, 12 self-portraits drawn by children during their interviews, and home visits with 13 families to examine how racism impacts the local Indian community. More specifically, this project utilizes a ground theory approach (Charmaz 2006) to examine the strategies Indian families use to construct a sense of home and belonging. Each of the four data chapters makes distinctive contributions to sociological research on racial and ethnic minorities, particularly socialization, immigration, and contemporary race relations.

The first substantive data chapter, entitled “Steps to Our Culture: Conceptualizing Cultural Cultivation,” extends and provides a unique contribution to childhood socialization literature by

examining how ethnicity, culture, gender, and class intersect in the transmission of cultural knowledge between Indian immigrant parents and their children. Bridging Annette Lareau's (2003) conceptual framework of concerted cultivation with ethnic and cultural socialization theories (Hughes et al. 2006; John et al. 2012; Quintana et al. 2006), I coin and develop the term *cultural cultivation* to describe strategic ethno-cultural socialization efforts immigrant parents use to preserve a culture 'left behind.' Specifically, I define cultural cultivation as the strategic efforts immigrant parents make through structured activities inside and outside of the home to cultivate cultural knowledge in their children. Cultural cultivation adds an important dimension to ethnic and cultural socialization studies by demonstrating that these efforts are laborious, often regarded as women's work, and effectively operate as an 'added step' to Hochschild and Machung's (2003) work on the "second shift." This chapter also offers a new dimension to research on ethnic and cultural socialization by demonstrating that immigrant parents personally benefit from cultural cultivation. In order to effectively teach their children about Indian culture, concerted cultivation prompted and inspired many parents to become more knowledgeable about history, symbolic meanings, and traditions, ultimately serving to strengthen their religiosity and identity as Indian.

The next data chapter, "'About the Kids and for the Kids': Negotiating Cultural Cultivation, Biculturalism, and Colorism," utilizes ethnographic data and interviews with students enrolled in dance classes at the dance studio along with an innovative research technique of having them draw self-portraits. While cultural cultivation helps children develop a meaningful attachment to Indian culture, ethnographic data uncovered tensions between students in ethnic and cultural identification, and self-portraits and interview data exposed experiences of being teased and feeling 'left out.' As a result, many of the children and teenagers interviewed began forging a "reactive ethnicity" (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) as a way to cope with prejudice and discrimination

and construct a sense of identity and belonging. Interviews combined with visual research (Thomson 2008) also revealed ways in which children's firm identification as 'Indian' occurred alongside their growing understanding of the value of whiteness. This finding reflects a broader trend among the interviewed Asian Indian parents of emphasizing an ethnic or cultural identity over a racialized identity, which can ultimately serve as the foundation for minimizing race-related prejudice and discrimination.

The following data chapter, "'Due to Our Mistakes…': Racial Domination and the Construction of the 'Good Minority,'" engages Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman's (2015) concept of affective capital to further explore the damaging consequences of the "model minority" stereotype by underscoring the ways Indian families minimized and internalized experiences of prejudice and discrimination. Rather than recognizing racially charged incidents as a part of structural racism, many regarded them as deserved responses to individual misbehaviors or inadequacies that were to be pointed out and corrected. This internalization prompted several of the interviewees to police their and their children's actions when in the presence of non-Indians in an attempt to preemptively minimize prejudicial statements and discrimination.

The final data chapter, "'Americans Kind of Stay Away; They Don't Get Too Close': Conceptualizing 'Immigrant Outsiderness' as Affective Dimensions of Integration" examines the enduring hardships related acculturation and assimilation. Motivated by Elizabeth Aranda's (2006) work on "emotional embeddedness," this chapter departs from traditional studies on immigrant assimilation by highlighting the affective dimensions of integration. As suggested above, families involved in this study exhibited high levels of assimilation and acculturation. Yet, interviews, home visits, and ethnographic data revealed that integration was also accompanied by what I call *immigrant outsiderness*. I define immigrant outsiderness as the subjective dimensions of the

migration experience which are marked by 1. Lack of cultural inclusion, 2. Lack of social inclusion, and 3. Feelings of emotional disconnect. This chapter argues that in spite of meeting the objective benchmarks typically associated with successful structural integration, the immigrant experiences of this so-called "model minority" and "honorary white" are bounded and characterized by cultural and social exclusion as well as emotional isolation.

Dominant race and ethnicity scholarship focuses on uncovering the damaging ways that white supremacy impacts the lives and experiences of and interactions between blacks, whites, and Latinos. This project pushes the conversation on race relations forward by integrating the nuanced voices and racialized experiences of Asian Indians. Additionally, in attending to Prashad's provocative question "How does it feel to be a solution?" this study deconstructs the dangers of the dismissive "model minority" myth and "honorary white" label, ultimately providing a more detailed and complex analysis of the upwardly mobile Asian Indian experience in light of dominant racial social systems.

Chapter Two:

Methods

Using a Bollywood and classical Indian dance studio, Naach, as a point of entry, this project draws on two and a half years of ethnographic data collected from April 2014 to October 2016, 24 in-depth interviews with parents and children (ages 8-14) involved with the dance studio, 12 self-portraits hand drawn by the children interviewed, and 13 home visits with immigrant families interviewed. This being one of the only Bollywood dance studios in the area, it has had a strong presence throughout the local Indian and non-Indian community with students participating in annual recitals, training and performing a variety of ethnic Indian dances and dance styles at the annual state-wide dance competitions at India Fest, performing classical or Bollywood dance routines for their middle and high school talent shows, and showcasing Bollywood in dance flash mobs throughout the tri-county area and at cultural events at local universities. The studio could not have such an active role in the community if it were not for strong parental involvement, and the 13 households with which I did home visits and 24 participants with whom I conducted in-depth interviews were some of the most heavily involved parents and children at the dance studio. Fieldnotes were taken of informal conversations and interactions between the students, parents, and myself at the dance studio and during home visits. Moreover, because of Naach's involvement in events across the community, "the field" extended beyond the dance studio and participants' homes to include India Fest and coffee shops where Sheila, the owner of Naach, and I would meet to discuss studio-related business. The dance studio, home visits, and "the extended field" are used to provide context and a "thick description" (Geertz 1973) for this dissertation.

Dance Studio

Though data collection officially began in April of 2014, I started assisting Sheila with kids' Bollywood classes at Naach in May of 2012. About 3 months later, just around the time I was going to start teaching the kids' classes independently, the studio switched locations to a few doors over in the same office park. Sheila told me that she had 60 students, including kids and adults, enrolled in her Bollywood and Kuchipudi (Indian classical dance of Andhra Pradesh) classes and that she needed a larger dance space to accommodate her growing student base.

I remember the first time I walked into the new dance studio vividly. Classes had already been in progress for two weeks before I was finally able to start my regular schedule of teaching 2-3 times per week. The day was bright, sunny, and warm as I walked toward the dance studio front entrance. There was a beautiful bronze plaque, engraved with the studio name and two feet wearing musical anklets in a classical Indian dance pose, placed at eye level to the left of studio's entrance door. Just under the plaque was a dance mom's, Anira, 3 year old son playing on the ground by himself. He had short wavy black hair, wore a blue t-shirt, and was pulling a toy wagon. As he saw me walk closer to the studio, the boy abandoned his wagon, smiled, and started to play hide-and-seek behind the pillar by the front door. I smiled at him and peaked around the pillar as he laughed and hopped toward the other side. I was a bit surprised to see him playing outside by himself, especially because of Anira's tendency to manage and be in as much control of her surroundings as possible. But in that moment, I ascertained that beyond being a place to learn dance, Naach elicited a sense of comfort and safety among families. Not wanting to be late, I turned around and opened the door to the academy, and Anira's son followed, pulling his wagon behind him. I held the door for him as he looked up at me with wide eyes and a cheerful face and walked inside with his wagon. I followed behind him.

The new studio looked amazing. The bold yellow and red color palate Sheila had chosen for the waiting room and the dance area combined with all of the windows had brightened the space. I took in the new aesthetic while slowly removing my sandals. I could hear Sheila who was still on the dance floor finishing up with her Kuchipudi class tapping a wooden stick on her chair to keep beat. To my right was a 4-level shoe rack, and just as in the previous studio, kids' shoes were scattered about the area in front with only one pair on the actual rack itself. The wall behind the shoe rack had posters advertising the upcoming dance recital, a dry erase board for notes and reminders about India Fest dues and dates, a typed list of studio rules (which included removing shoes, remaining quiet while class is in session, and not chewing gum), and framed local newspaper and magazine clippings about Sheila and the dance studio. Within the next two years, a framed article written by the local city newspaper about the studio and my picture would be hanging on the same wall.

The yellow and red rectangular waiting room extended to the left and was lined with alternating black and red chairs. Three dance moms sitting next to each other in front of a large grid window with white, pink, and orange curtains broke from their conversation in Telugu to greet me with smiles and pleasantries before resuming conversation in their native tongue. A glass viewing panel was embedded within the long partial wall separating the narrow waiting room and large dance floor, and framing the panel were two collage portraits of Sheila in graceful seated and standing dance poses wearing red, blue, gold, green, and white Kuchipudi outfits. On the far left was Sheila's black office desk and a red swivel chair. Above her desk hung three rows of shelves filled with India Fest "Best Performance," "Best Choreography," and "Best Costume" plaques and trophies from previous years. Next to her desk was a door-sized entryway leading to the dance floor. I walked to the entryway to examine the new dance space décor as Sheila, who was wearing

a red and blue polka dot kurti (Indian top) with grey skinny jeans, finished up the beginner Kuchipudi class. The partial wall with the glass panel was bright yellow and on the far end sat Sheila on her metal folding chair with four girls and one boy sitting with their legs folded on the floor in front of her with notebooks in their laps reviewing mudras (symbolic hand gestures used in classical Indian dance forms). Just past Sheila against the adjacent fuchsia wall was a large copper sculpture of Nataraja (Shiva, a Hindu god, who is depicted as "Lord of Dance") with a garland of fresh flowers placed on top of a short black stand. Three pictures of Sheila's dance gurus (teachers) from India also hung above Nataraja. The stereo system lay against the same wall in between Nataraja and a line of four block mirrors that filled almost the entire rest of the wall. The wall I was leaning against, opposite the mirrors, was painted bright yellow and had three sets of windows with white blinds and fuchsia-painted molding. Below the windows were framed pieces of beautiful blue and red fabric each with subtly embroidered gold designs, and centered in the middle of the wall was a white and grey hand-painted painting of Nataraja on a rectangular piece of black fabric. Across the way on the other side of the dance floor was a partial red wall with a large cork board filled with hand-written letters from students about how much Naach meant to them hanging above two water fountains. To the right of the water fountains were red curtains separating the dance floor from the storage space and bathroom. The studio's aesthetic had vivid personality, just as all of the families who are represented in this study.

I received permission from Sheila to use the dance studio as a dissertation research site in April of 2014. After readily agreeing to have Naach be part of the study, she announced to each of the Bollywood, and even a few of the Kuchipudi, classes that I was going to be doing research at the studio. Shortly after, I began collecting consent forms from parents and their children to be part of the study.

Much of the ethnographic data was collected at Naach where I spent anywhere from 2-9 hours per week either instructing classes on my own, assisting Sheila with choreography, or getting props ready for dance performances. The atmosphere of the studio was often warm and lively, especially during the busy India Fest training season (from August until late October or early November) and around the time of the annual studio dance recital (April). A valuable access point into the local Indian community, working at Naach helped build rapport and cultivate meaningful friendships and teacher-student relationships with parents and their children at the studio (Emerson 2001). Being so integrated in the field, I was in no way a detached observer (Pollner and Emerson 1988). Instead, interactions and conversations at the dance studio with both students and parents revealed the themes of ethnic and cultural socialization and constructing a sense of home and belonging that were so important to the families portrayed in this project. Fieldnotes of studio visits were taken as a "running log" (Jackson 1990) allowing me to re-visit key incidents and themes while keeping them in context of how the day unfolded.

Interviews, Interviewees, and Home Visits

Interviews

As I spent time with the families involved in the dance studio and learned more about the specific efforts made to "preserve Indian culture," I became intrigued by questions about how Indian immigrant parents and their children created a sense of home and belonging within a nation which continues to see whites and whiteness as normative (Anderson 2015; Mills 1997; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). What did Indian immigrant parents feel was important to pass on to their kids from the culture 'left behind' (Ram 2005) and why, and what efforts did they make to ensure that was done? How were their kids responding to such socialization strategies in light of trying to "fit in" among their friends and at school? How did families negotiate the tension between

preserving Indian culture, however that was interpreted by each of the immigrant parents, and minimizing the expression of it when in the presence of non-Indians? And how was this connected to seemingly positive stereotypes of Indians existing alongside the broader images of (South) Asians as "perpetual foreigners" (Hunyh, Devos and Smalarz 2011)? My role as Bollywood instructor, participant observation, and conversations at the dance studio helped tease out the initial research questions, but a deeper understanding of the multidimensionality of the Indian immigrant experience required more time with families to have such directed and meaningful discussions (Weiss 1994). Therefore, between the summer of 2014 and spring of 2015, I asked 24 parents and children with whom I had a strong rapport to speak with me about their experiences as Indians and Indian Americans in a south Florida suburb.

I discussed the dissertation topic with potential parent and student interviewees at the dance studio after teaching children's Bollywood classes, and parents were excited to participate and share their perspectives on imparting Indian culture to their second generation children and their experience as Indian immigrants. Each of the kids, too, were eager to be part of a project which placed their interests, perspectives, and experiences as Indian-Americans at the center. All who agreed to be interviewed warmly invited me to their homes to conduct the in-depth, semi-structured, and open-ended interviews, and knowing that I lived alone, several insisted that I come around lunch or dinner so that we could share a home-cooked meal together. With working at the dance studio for approximately two years at the time of the first set of interviews, it was clear that the parents, children, and I had established strong rapport with one another, and I was pleasantly surprised by their enthusiasm to participate in this study.

Interviewees: Adults

Though the dance studio did not explicitly market itself toward one gender, most of the students were girls and women. At the time I started data collection, the studio had approximately 60 students enrolled in both the children's and adults' Bollywood and Kuchipudi classes. Less than 10 boys took the kids' classes and no men were enrolled in the adult classes. There was also a high presence of mothers who often stayed in the waiting room watching their children through the window and lively talking amongst themselves during classes, making this very much a women's space. While fathers did drop off and pick up their children, those who stayed for the duration of the class often waited outside of the studio and frequently remained in their cars. Only one father regularly stayed in the waiting area as his two daughters took their Sunday afternoon Bollywood class. Moreover, because of my positionality as a young Indian woman in the field and an "insider" to acceptable cultural gender norms, I was hesitant to ask fathers for interviews without their spouses present as such a request could be construed as forward and inappropriate behavior. The one time I did ask a father, Ajeet, for an interview, he gave me his wife's, Simran, phone number so that I could coordinate a time and date with her. The gendered demographics of the studio as well as my concerted efforts to minimize perceptions of inappropriate conduct with fathers heavily influenced my adult interview sample. Thus, the adult interview sample included ten mothers and two fathers with all but one conducted during home visits. Of the ten, five were stay-at-home mothers and both of the fathers worked outside of the home. All of them lived in affluent neighborhoods at the time of the interviews and had emigrated from India to the U.S. between 1988 and 2002. Adult interviewees had the opportunity to discuss topics including what aspects of Indian culture they wanted to impart onto their children and why, perceptions of similarities and

differences between "Indian" and "American" cultures, relationships with neighbors, friends, and colleagues, and experiences of prejudice and discrimination.

Interviewees: Children and self-portraits

Children's experiences as second generation Indian Americans, particularly their responses to their parents' concerted ethnic and cultural socialization efforts as well as perceptions of prejudice and feelings of belonging, were also critical to this study. Sociological literature has offered strong critiques of doing qualitative research with children. Succinctly, up until the 1990s children were characterized as 'becomings' rather than 'beings' and considered too intellectually fragile to possess and convey meaningful knowledge or perspectives about their lives (Gibson 2012; Holmes 1998; James and Prout 1997). Academics have argued that children are much too vulnerable to include in research, that they can either disrupt and re-direct conversations in ways that are not necessarily useful to the project at hand, that they are unreliable reporters of their experiences, and that they may be inclined to respond according to what they think the interviewer wants to hear (Fernqvist 2010; Gibson 2012; Griffin, Lahman, and Opitz 2016). As a result, research about children often excluded their stated emotions, perspectives, and experiences, and instead relied on adults' reports.

Despite this, a methodological shift has occurred whereby contemporary scholars are acknowledging critical differences between children's perspectives and adults' stated accounts of their experiences, and therefore arguing for the unique value in including children in research (Alanen and Mayall 2001; Balen, Blyth, Calabretto, Fraser, Horrocks, and Marby 2006; Thomson 2008). Alongside this shift has been a recognition that qualitative methods must be adapted in ways that are appropriate for children and adolescents (Einarsdóttir 2007; Fernqvist 2010; Thomson 2008). While 'shoulder-to-shoulder' and 'walk around' interview techniques

(Einarsdóttir 2007; Griffin, Lahman, & Opitz 2016) as well as strategies on how to construct interview questions in more accessible and kid-friendly ways (Fernqvist 2010; Gibson 2012) are becoming more popular, visual research has been lauded as an effective and compelling way to integrate young people's perspectives into qualitative research. In particular, Pat Thomson's (2008) edited book Doing Visual Research with Children and Young People demonstrates that visual research, including drawing, can elicit emotional and intellectual responses from children and offer them an alternative and often enjoyable way to express themselves. Therefore, in addition to semi-structured interviews, I used the innovative method of having the interviewed children draw and color self-portraits as a way to: 1. help facilitate a comfortable and fun environment, and 2. gain an understanding of how they not only perceive themselves, but wish to be perceived. The artistic choices children made when drawing self-portraits reflected their self-perceptions, social mirroring, and cultural and social influences. Of course, the self-portraits, just as any other produced image, can be interpreted in a number of ways. Therefore, interviews and self-portraits were used in conjunction with one another to clarify and strengthen the analysis of children's cultural and social understandings of their own identities.

All of the children interviewed were between 8-14 years old. At times, younger siblings of the interviewed children would join us, often coloring, listening to, and chiming in during the conversation. When relevant, interactions with these children were included, too. In total, twelve children were asked to participate in interviews. Ten of the interviews took place at the children's family homes, one of them was held at the dance studio on a day when there were no classes, and one was held at my apartment. Eleven of the children interviewed were girls and one was a boy. I had taught each of the students for at least six months as either their Bollywood or India Fest instructor at the time of their interviews. Though we all knew one another and each student

enthusiastically agreed to participate in this project, I started each interview with questions meant to establish stronger rapport and a relaxed atmosphere to help minimize the possibility that students would shape their responses according to what they think I would want to hear.

Interviews with youth began with asking them to draw a self-portrait with crayons or markers as we talked about how they would describe themselves and where they and their parents are from. We then moved on to questions about their experiences at Naach and India Fest, their interests and extracurricular activities, friendships with neighbors and at school, and finally concluded with questions about their perceptions of Indian and American cultures and what it means to 'be Indian' or 'be American.' With the exception of one person who took the entire span of the interview to finish her self-portrait, all completed their drawings before questions about Indian and American culture and identity were asked.

Home visits

As mentioned above, the majority of the interviews took place at their homes, although two were conducted at my apartment and one was done at Naach on a day when the studio was closed. Based on the neighborhoods and residences many of them lived in, it appeared that a majority of my participants were middle to upper middle class. All of the interviewees lived in a single family home with the exception of one who lived in a gated apartment complex. Half of them living in gated communities with a security guard checking the driver's license, license plate, and reason for the visit with each non-resident. Most of the participants lived within a few miles of each other in upper middle class complexes and communities and a few lived near the local university in middle class neighborhoods. These class markers were significant because they spoke to each of the families having the financial means to enroll children in extracurricular activities geared toward teaching Indian cultural knowledge.

The home visits I made with the 13 families involved in this study were also valuable as they allowed for a triangulation of ethnographic data collected at Naach, provided an intimate and comfortable setting to discuss personal experiences and attitudes, and offered a glimpse into their daily lives outside of the studio. A more detailed description of the homes visited is provided in the data chapters.

Interviews with parents and children were in-depth and lasted between one and four hours, and with meals and several of the children excited about showing off their rooms to their dance teacher, home visits lasted up to five hours. The semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions was memorized, facilitating a conversational flow (Brinkmann 2013). All interviews were digitally recorded and detailed fieldnotes were typed after each home visit. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and all participants as well as the dance studio were given pseudonyms.

Data Setback

I encountered a major setback toward the end of the data collection process. In December 2015 I lost fieldnotes due to a car break-in. This forced me to reconstruct nearly a year and a half's worth of observations, conversations, and interactions at the studio. In addition to losing the typed data, this incident affected me emotionally as completing the dissertation, let alone in the way I had envisioned, seemed impossible. After a weeklong academic grieving period followed by encouraging meetings with my dissertation committee, I set to work on re-constructing fieldnotes. Unexpectedly, the data disaster ended up having a silver lining. What I had initially regarded as an insurmountable obstacle turned into an opportunity to analytically organize fieldnotes in a way I had not previously done that resulted in a relatively speedy write-up of chapter outlines for the entire dissertation. Having spent so much time at the studio with families, as I re-wrote fieldnotes

key themes floated to the forefront of my memory, allowing for a recognition and organization of sensitizing themes. Of course, memories are not perfect, but my remaining time at Naach combined with interviews, analytic memos, and audio-recordings of observations in the field allowed me to triangulate reconstructed writings. Re-writing fieldnotes also helped determine when I had reached theoretical saturation (Mason 2010), which was particularly useful given the grounded theory (Charmaz 2006) approach taken in this project. Additionally, just as Lareau (2003) explains in her famed book Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life which only uses qualitative data from twelve families to discuss her findings, data not included was still incredibly valuable as it shaped the direction of the arguments presented in the following chapters. Furthermore, the diverse range of participants and rich conversations held during interviews with kids and parents as well as unique visual methods used were well-complemented by ethnographic data. To compensate for the lost data and interview sample size, ethnographic observations are highlighted more than what I had initially intended at the start of the project.

Data Analysis

This dissertation utilized a grounded theory approach to analyzing qualitative data, allowing me to refine interview questions and conceptualize ideas that best explained the interview and ethnographic data (Charmaz 2006). Though I had theoretical leanings (for example toward Lareau's (2003) concept of concerted cultivation and Bonilla-Silva's work on racial social systems (1997)), I did not force data to "fit" already existing concepts and theories. Instead, I focused on reoccurring themes in the data which, as the data chapters reflect, offer new insight into scholarship on socialization, contemporary race relations, and immigration.

Rather than strictly adhering to a fixed number of months at Naach and interviews to conduct, my time in the field was guided by the intention of reaching theoretical saturation (Baker

and Edwards 2012; Mason 2010). Throughout the process of data collection, I wrote several analytic memos to help note frequency, range of responses, organize, and begin analyzing observations and interviews. Several rounds of descriptive, analytic, and focused coding (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995) of fieldnotes, interviews, and analytic memos were done by hand to determine key categories as well as explore emergent themes discussed in this project. Key categories included socialization strategies, children's responses to socialization strategies, social relationships, and experiences of prejudice and discrimination. Emerging themes and subcategories related to each of the broader key categories contributed to conceptualizing terms including *cultural cultivation, bicultural accommodation,* and *immigrant outsiderness* as well as having a better understanding of the tensions associated with 'Indian' and 'American' identities, all of which will be discussed in chapters three through six. With less of a focus on quantity and more on quality, the following data chapter analyses thoughtfully utilize the multiple methods employed in this study to help portray the richness and complexity of each participant.

Positionality

I feel particularly close to this project and the families portrayed in the following chapters specifically because of how much I identified with both the parents and children interviewed. Growing up with immigrant parents trying to get their bearings in a small town in central Pennsylvania, my sister and I were privy to the tensions and difficulties associated with trying to create a sense of home and belonging through practicing the cultural norms of "back home" in the present community. Such tensions informed the broader research questions associated with ethnic and cultural socialization and inquiries about how Asian Indians fit within dominant conversations of contemporary race relations. At the same time, I tried to not let these experiences overshadow and speak for those of my participants. Paying close attention to the stated intentionality of

socialization practices, children's strategies of resistance and accommodation, nuanced perceptions of and responses to racialized stereotypes, and affective dimensions of their immigrant experiences allowed me to utilize my "insider knowledge" while placing participants' lives at the center of this study.

As a second generation daughter of Gujarati immigrants, I did not have to cross major ethnic barriers, and as a Bollywood instructor for Naach, social class and status were not significant impediments during the data collection process either. Language, however, did at times place me as an outsider because Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil were often spoken among families in the waiting room of the dance studio. During Kuchipudi and Bollywood classes and India Fest practices, Sheila would sometimes even speak Telugu to students whose families were from Andhra Pradesh, her home state in India. Instructing in a different language, especially while I was co-teaching, was frustrating and I often asked her to translate immediately afterward. Interestingly, while I felt that a majority of the families at Naach either spoke Telugu or Tamil, she felt that most spoke Gujarati. Given our different perceptions of the demographics of the studio we joked about needing to teach each other Gujarati and Telugu so that we could understand side conversations in the studio.

As I spent more time teaching at the studio, dance moms became increasingly comfortable with me, meaning that they also became increasingly comfortable commenting on my body and appearance. Sheila's and my weight loss and weight gain never escaped their attention. For example, toward the end of one India Fest season, a time of year when Sheila openly talked about losing weight because of the stress and also a time of year when pizza became my go-to dinner, Lalitha, a dance mom, laughed as she said to me, "Sheila lost five pounds, but I think you found it!" Similarly, my skin tone was also subject to scrutiny. Even Sheila had privately recommended that I start wearing sunscreen because the summer sun was making my face "too dark." In order

to not jeopardize approachability (Mayogra-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman 2016), I suppressed my critical feminist responses to such statements and conversations and responded to jokes like Lalitha's with perfunctory laughs and comments like Sheila's with mechanical nods. Body policing is common in the context of dance studios and within families (Hordge-Freeman 2015), and although I encountered and observed this much less in interactions among families at Naach, such comments toward me reflected that body type and colorism were to be joked about publicly and addressed privately. These experiences prompted me to pay specific attention to and through interviews probe the subtle ways that participants policed their own and each other's bodies. Because of my positionality as a woman Bollywood dance instructor and qualitative researcher, I was able to further explore and integrate these themes into both the "About the Kids and for the Kids" and "Americans Kind of Stay Away; They Don't Get Too Close" chapters.

Throughout the data collection process, I strove to maintain approachability and credibility so that (potential) participants would view me as a "safe" and "non-threatening" researcher with whom they could trust to share their stories (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman 2016). At the studio, on home visits, and during interviews with adults, I floated between occupying the positions of a trusted friend or much-needed confidant to an acceptable incompetent (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland 2006), especially with conversations about socialization and perceived similarities and differences between "Indian" and "American" cultures, to an at times prodding conversationalist who asked about the "taboo" topics of race and racism. With youth, I moved between "Aunty," as many of the kids called me at the studio, to an inquisitive but patient listener seeking to better understand their experiences and the ways they perceived them. My goal in this dissertation is to represent the voices portrayed as wholly and honestly as possible. The product of these efforts are shared in the data chapters that follow.

Chapter Three:

Steps to Our Culture: Conceptualizing Cultural Cultivation

October 2014

It was a little after 12pm and the studio had been bustling with students and families since 9am. India Fest practices were in session and Sheila and I had been spending our Saturday mornings and afternoons training teams for the upcoming competition in November. We were running a bit late so I took the opportunity to sit down against the wall next to Sheila's chair to rest for a bit while she answered parents' questions about costumes and payment. The next group, Junior Bhangra, was starting to file in and as usual, the girls crowded together chit-chatting closer to me while the boys grouped together on the other side of the room by the water fountain loudly horsing around with one another.

With excitement on her face, 14 year old Riya came over and crouched down to give me an update about an exam. It was in our interview two weeks ago that she confessed to being stressed out about a test on Hindu mythology and symbolism she had to take the following weekend in order to pass on to the next level at her Hindu Sunday School. A high achiever and beaming with pride while speaking with me at the studio, Riya said that she studied hard for the test and was proud for having done so well. As I gave her a congratulatory hug, I thought about the work that went into holding on to the culture 'left behind' through cultivating Indian cultural knowledge among Indian diaspora. The families involved at Riya's Sunday School and her success on the exam were examples of this, as were Naach and all of the India Fest practices at the studio. Like Riya indicated, this was labor for children, but working at Naach, I knew that this was also a product of both her parents' and the local Indian community's concerted efforts. As I made a mental note of the conversation with Riya, Swapna called to the Junior Bhangra students to get in formation; she wanted us to go around the classroom correcting Bhangra-style technique before moving on to new choreography.

As scholarship on immigration, culture, and ethnic identity suggests (Chacko and Menon 2013; Ram 2005; Wilcox 2011), connecting with the culture 'left behind' (Ram 2005) through activities such as dance classes offered at Naach and Riya's Sunday School or consuming ethnic foods and media can be important to feeling a sense of home and belonging among immigrant families and their children. While ethnic and cultural socialization literature suggests that second generation children learn about their parents' immigrant cultures through daily practices and

routinized behaviors (Hughes, Smith, Stevenson, Rodrigues, Johnson, and Spicer 2006; Quintana, Aboud, Chao, Contreras-Grau, Cross, Jr., Hudley, Hughes, Liben, Gall, and Vietze 2006), the excerpt above demonstrates that teaching about a culture 'left behind' can also be much more deliberate. In this chapter, I use ethnographic data, home visits, and interviews with parents to further nuance childhood socialization research by highlighting immigrant parents' efforts of ethnic and cultural socialization as strategic. Using ethnic and cultural socialization research and Annette Lareau's (2003) work on concerted cultivation to inform one another, I coin the term *cultural cultivation* and define it as the strategic efforts immigrant parents make through structured activities inside and outside of the home to cultivate cultural knowledge in their children. Cultural cultivation is introduced in this chapter as an ethno-cultural socialization process that is deliberate, regarded and taken on principally as women's work, and considered beneficial to parents. Though considered laborious, this chapter demonstrates the value of cultural cultivation to the families involved in this study as it enriches cultural competence, helps build social networks, and encourages a sense of community and belonging among both Indian immigrant parents and their children.

Ethnic and Cultural Socialization

The childhood socialization literature is vast and broadly examines the values and behaviors children learn that help them adapt to their surrounding social environments. A subset of this field focuses on ethnic and cultural socialization among immigrants and minorities; specifically how children learn values, practices, and attitudes associated with an ethnic or cultural group and how they view themselves as part of that group. For immigrant or minority families, ethnic and cultural socialization involves teaching children about their ethnic culture in order to better adapt to their surroundings and is considered to have a positive impact by promoting cultural

knowledge and pride in their ethnic background (Brown et al. 2007; Constantine and Blackmon 2002; Hughes 2003; Hughes et al. 2006; Johnson 2001; Marks et al. 2007; Quintana et al. 2006; Rogers et al. 2012; Stevenson 1997).

Though separated in the literature, the relationship between ethnic and cultural socialization is close. Most ethnic and cultural socialization studies tend to focus on Latino and Asian (primarily Chinese and Japanese) families, cultural retention, and strategies for negotiating identities and pressures of ethnic minority and mainstream cultures (Hughes et al. 2006; John and Montgomery 2012; Marks et al. 2007; Rogers et al. 2012). While ethnic socialization research centers on ethnic cultural knowledge as a key factor to both developing an ethnic identity and promoting a sense of belonging to an ethnic community (Marks et al. 2007; Rogers et al. 2012), cultural socialization refers to the messages about cultural history, heritage, and pride that youth receive (Hughes et al. 2006). Cultural socialization studies focus on the daily practices adults engage inside of the home to teach children about racial and ethnic history, culture, customs and traditions, as well as how they promote ethnic, racial, and cultural pride. Such practices include sharing knowledge about cultural and historical figures, languages, books, music, stories, celebrating cultural holidays, and cooking and eating ethnic foods (Hughes et al. 2006; Suizzo et al. 2008). Both ethnic and cultural socialization scholars argue that among recent immigrants, ethnic and cultural socialization occurs through day-to-day routine practices and lifestyle, but for parents who are generationally further removed, conscious and deliberate efforts are more commonly made in order to promote ethnic identification (Alba 1990; Hughes et al. 2006; Marks et al. 2007; Rogers et al. 2012; Waters 1999). Challenging these assertions, this chapter introduces cultural cultivation as a way to conceptualize the purposeful and time-consuming efforts new wave immigrant parents make to teach their children about their ethnic and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, cultural cultivation demonstrates the underlying social class dimensions by highlighting the role that cultural activities outside of the home play in facilitating knowledge about and attachment to an ethnic identity.

In addition to having a better understanding of how ethnic and cultural identities are cultivated in children, socialization literature also argues that a positive relationship exists between higher levels of ethnic identification and wellbeing. For example, Suizzo et al.'s (2008) research on cultural socialization and parental practices suggests that adhering to culturally valued traditions and group norms facilitates a sense of community and solidarity and often serves as a protective measure against discrimination. Marks et al. (2007) and Quintana et al. (2006) argue that among ethnic minority children and adolescents, higher levels of ethnic pride may help them cope with discrimination in school, and other daily stresses. And still, several other studies suggest that cultural socialization is associated with higher self-esteem in peer groups (Constantine and Blackmon 2002; Kiang et al. 2006), and better cognitive outcomes and anger management (Stevenson 1997). Though the immigrant parents interviewed in this study did not necessarily have these outcomes in mind, the influence of ethnic and cultural socialization on children's sense of wellbeing was clear and will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Socialization research has paved an important path in helping us understand the positive impact of ethnic and cultural socialization on children of immigrants. However, with the exception of a few studies, such as Umaña-Taylor, Alfaro, Bámaca and Guimond (2009) work on the relationship between ethnic and gendered socialization among Mexican-American adolescents, little research offers a close analysis of the gendered aspects of ethnic and cultural socialization processes, let alone how immigrant parents' socialization efforts are gendered. Also, prominent works on gender socialization do not take into account culture and ethnicity (Endendijk et al. 2014;

Thorne 1993), and the few that do address the intersection of race, class, and gender in socialization processes primarily focus on experiences of and managing racial discrimination among black (Collins 2000) and Latino (Garcia 2012) families. Importantly, given different racialized structural constraints and social positions, socialization strategies have different intentions and outcomes across immigrant generations, race, class, gender, and other contextualizing factors. Moreover, few studies explore *why* immigrant parents engage in specific ethnic and cultural socialization practices nor do they discuss the effects that these concerted efforts may have on their lives and sense of ethnic identity. For example, although several studies view immigrant parental practices of ethnic and cultural socialization as inevitable and a regular part of daily life, to what extent and in what ways might parents' and guardians' efforts of ethnic and cultural socialization actually be deliberate? In an effort to remember the culture 'left behind,' what are the specific ethnic and cultural socialization goals immigrant parents have? As childrearing is still primarily regarded and taken on as women's work, in what ways might parents' efforts of ethnic and cultural socialization also be gendered? And have immigrant parents' specific efforts to foster ethnic cultural knowledge in their children shaped their own identities and the ways they practice Indian culture in the U.S.? This chapter extends our understanding of ethnic and cultural socialization by attending to these specific questions.

From Concerted Cultivation to Cultural Cultivation

To examine ethnic and cultural socialization as strategic and deliberate efforts rather than simply a process which occurs only through daily lifestyle and routine practices, I use Annette Lareau's (2003) work on concerted cultivation as a jumping off point. Lareau's ethnography on 12 black and white families examines the relationship between parenting practices, socialization, social class, and race. Arguing that she found more differences between social classes than race,

Lareau develops the term 'concerted cultivation' as a way to describe parental practices of the dominant middle class. Cultural cultivation includes enrolling children in organized activities, discussions in which parents solicited their children's ideas and opinions, and reasoning the *hows* and *whys* to children. Lareau argues that through concerted cultivation children develop forms of dominant middle class American cultural capital that are considered valuable and competitive in professional settings and learn how to voice themselves and negotiate their wants with parents and adults. Because of this, the boundary between adult and child was often blurred as children gained a sense of entitlement and learned to address and question adults as equal to them.

Bridging ethnic and cultural socialization research and Lareau's work with my own questions centering on the specific goals the interviewed Indian immigrant parents have regarding their efforts to teach their children about the culture 'left behind' as well as the ways that this socialization process is gendered, I coin and develop the term *cultural cultivation*. Further connecting cultural socialization, which refers to the messages youth receive about their cultural heritage, with ethnic socialization, which promotes feelings of belonging to an ethnic community, I specify cultural cultivation as an ethno-cultural socialization process and define it as the fostering of ethnic cultural knowledge in children through structured activities that take place inside and outside of the home. For the families involved in this study, most structured cultural activities revolved around learning about arts, religions, and languages of India. Because afterschool activities for children can be quite expensive, cultural cultivation as practiced by the families presented here required a level of financial stability and privilege.

In order to develop and outline the three main dimensions of the concept of cultural cultivation, the following data analysis is divided into three sections. The first section discusses three key aspects of Indian culture that each of the immigrant parents mentioned as being important

to pass on to their second generation children, particularly with regard to religion, language, and foods, as well as why parents see this as so important. The second section examines cultural cultivation as gendered labor, and specifically as an 'added step' to Hochschild and Machung's concept of the "second shift" (2003). Finally, the third section elaborates on parents' perspectives about how they personally benefit from strategic processes of ethno-cultural socialization. This chapter ultimately uses the concept of cultural cultivation to demonstrate the intentionality of ethnic and cultural socialization among middle to upper middle class families. Though laborious, I argue that cultural cultivation is important to the Indian families portrayed here because it enhances cultural competence, social networks, and promotes a strong sense of home and belonging.

Findings

Min(d)ing culture

Religion. Just as ethnic and cultural socialization literature suggested, immigrant parents described facilitating the production of ethnic cultural knowledge in their children through everyday practices and routines such as setting aside time to pray together in the morning, code-switching between their mother-tongues and English (and at times making more concerted efforts in the home to teach their children how to speak, read, and write in their ethnic language), and cooking Indian foods. Moreover, in addition to the Bollywood or classical dance classes, other academic, and non-Indian related after-school activities, interviewed parents had enrolled their children in anywhere from one to four classes geared toward cultivating Indian cultural knowledge. These activities kept both children and their parents weekdays and weekends packed. Typical weekdays for several of the children included a full day of school, Kumon, dance, and finally a non-Indian related activity (like swimming, karate, or piano) before heading home for

the evening to have dinner and finish up their homework. Weekends were kept busy, too, with Hinduism, Indian art, Indian language (most commonly Gujarati and Telugu), Bollywood, and classical Indian dance classes. Despite their hectic schedules, parents regarded these activities as valuable exposure to Indian culture and crucial to teaching their children about the culture 'left behind' in a 'proper way.'

Anira spoke to this point most explicitly. Immigrating to the U.S. with her husband in 1999 from Andhra Pradesh, Anira is a spirited mother of three, including Riya mentioned in the vignette above, who is known for her 'do it right or don't it at all' attitude at the dance studio. Her high expectations permeated her daughter's Kuchipudi classes, as she has been known to lecture all classical dance students in the waiting room after class if she saw any lackadaisical dancers. Anira's outlook propelled her to do as much as possible to teacher her kids about Indian culture. This resulted in enrolling her two older children, Riya, age 14, and Radha, age 8, in an intensive religious class. The class met every Sunday for two hours and children would learn about Hindu philosophy and mythology, slokas, their state language (Telugu) in written and spoken form, and yoga. Anira described the rationale behind her intense focus on cultural cultivation during my visit to her home as we sat in her living room which had views of both the yellow foyer that housed a keyboard, and the vibrant blue family room. The living room was cozy and had two green couches, end and coffee tables, a wooden chair, and a desk with a hutch. From one of the bright green-yellow walls hung an enlarged framed picture of Anira and her husband, Anand, as a 10^{th} wedding anniversary present. Anira sat in the single wooden chair facing the framed portrait and wore a lavender salwar kameez (long top with lose-fitting trousers) with bright gold earrings. I sat next to her at a wooden desk with a hutch which showcased several Riya's first, second, and third place trophies for academics and dance. As her younger daughter, still wearing a black and pink unitard

from her gymnastics class earlier in the afternoon, colored on the floor in the space between our feet and her two-year-old son crawled from couch to couch, Anira described the value of sending her children to these weekly classes:

> Yeah, because we never learned this in school, right? We just knew them (religious practices and myths) generally. But now they are being taught in a proper way, like who is who and who is what, what and which, how they are related—when the question comes, we're like, "Really?! I didn't know that!" So at least they are learning. At least they'll have some background, right? I don't want them completely confused. As they get older, if they lose or they don't know—see, we're all Hindus. So if they don't know what Hinduism or what their background is, what will they teach their kids?

Like many of the parents I spoke to during interviews and in the dance studio, growing up in a community where religious and cultural traditions were so firmly intertwined with one another and engrained in daily life contributed to their general knowledge about Hinduism and routinized rituals. However, since Anira was not formally taught about Hindu philosophy or the symbolism that is so heavily entrenched within myths and rituals, she, among other parents, saw the opportunity of enrolling her children in a directed and intensive religion class as essential to providing a solid knowledge based about their ethnic heritage that they could pass on to future generations. More than offering "some background" so that her kids were not "completely confused" about Hinduism, cultural cultivation demonstrates the deliberate efforts made to share a more detailed, nuanced, and "proper" understanding of Indian cultural history and religions than Anira and her husband could provide alone.

Esha, too, felt that cultural cultivation, specifically through structured activities *outside* of the home, was critical to teaching her two daughters, Khushi who was 10 and Anya who was 8, about Jainism and Gujarati. Though initially reserved during our interview at her home, Esha shared her story about her upbringing and attempts at teaching her daughters about the Indian culture she grew up with. Born in Mumbai (formerly called Bombay), Esha first moved with her family to California, traveled to Texas for optometry school, and then married a second generation

Gujarati man with whom she started a family. They moved into their gated-community home a few years prior. Their freshly painted white walls were sparsely decorated with two professional portraits of Khushi and Anya hanging in the kitchen and living room. The den, where Esha and I held our interview, had an L-shaped office desk with a hutch and only a single clock hanging on the wall. Located at the front of the house, it was tucked away from the kitchen, living room, the girls' bedrooms, and most of the activity. Both Anya and Khushi were doing homework on their iPads at the kitchen table, and to not disturb them, Esha spoke in hushed tones as she described the efforts made to teach her children about Indian culture. In the name of cultural cultivation, Esha relied on Indian-focused structured activities outside of the home, including enrolling her daughters in Bollywood dance, Gujarati language, Jainism, and Indian voice lessons. While at the dance studio, Esha frequently sat on the edge of the dance floor to observe the classes that her girls were taking. She remained watchful over her energetic and playful daughters, calling to them to settle down when she noticed them getting rowdy in their Bollywood dance classes. Invested in what her children were learning at the studio, she was the only parent in my two and a half years of teaching to ever ask me to translate the Hindi song lyrics to the students so that the kids knew what they were dancing to.

Yet, our conversations about what aspects of Indian culture Esha wanted to pass along to her daughters and how she did so weighed heavily on her and I suspect this is why she was so reserved. Speaking in a measured and soft tone in the den with the door ajar, she described wanting to teach her children about Jainism (religion) and Gujarati (the language she grew up speaking), and her desire to cultivate in them a love for Indian pop culture and Bollywood. Though she took it as a triumphant success when she found her daughters choreographing their own moves to Bollywood songs over the previous summer, Esha was unsatisfied, and even disappointed, that she

was not able to teach her daughters Gujarati and that the girls were emotionally disconnected from the religion with which she was raised. Taking this with a heavy heart, she referred to herself as a variation of "A. B. C. D.," a well-known acronym within the South Asian community short for American-born-confused-Desi (Desi referring to South Asian diaspora). Having been born in India, Esha did not fit the first two criteria, but nonetheless described feeling confused and frustrated that she did not practice, let alone convey Indian culture to her children, in the way she saw fit. In the context of religion and spirituality, Esha expressed her struggle and the efforts she made through outside activities in an attempt at resolution:

> I have an image or idea of what I feel God is, but I don't know how to convey that to my kids. I just grew up with it, but we don't practice the bhajans (religious devotional songs) and the morning prayers that I grew up with. So I don't know how to convey that same feeling to my kids…they don't have that attachment….We tried to do a form of religious school at the Jain Temple and that didn't work out. And we tried [a different religious school]. It didn't work out with our schedules. But maybe [we'll] try the Sunday school at the Jain Temple again.

Esha discussed how she did not practice the same traditions she grew up doing at home with her daughters. Though she did not expand upon why, it was clear that she felt a growing sense of regret, loss, and missed opportunity. To help convey both cultural knowledge and an internal emotional connection with Jainism, Esha sought out religious schools throughout the local Indian community and took her daughters to the Jain Temple as often as their busy schedules would allow. Though the first two times did not work out, Esha had a continued desire to involve Khushi and Anya in these religious and cultural activities. Esha's case demonstrated that the routinized practices of ethnic and cultural socialization were not nearly enough to teach children about a culture 'left behind.' Therefore, as an immigrant, her deliberate efforts of cultural cultivation were viewed as necessary.

Language. Like religion and spirituality, almost all of the parents expressed how important it was for their children to learn their native language. Each of the interviewed children, and most

kids at the dance studio in general, seemed to be able to comfortably understand their parents' mother-tongue. In fact, based on observations at the studio, several were able to communicate back to their parents in their ethnic language. However, as English became more commonly used in their daily lives, parents expressed how they not only wanted, but *needed* to make more concerted efforts to teach children how to communicate in their native language. Anira, below, speaks to this. She and her husband, Anand, were committed to making sure that their three children could speak their native language, Telugu. Yet, when discussing Riya's language ability, Anira hesitantly said, "Uh, she's okay with it," and continued on in an animated, yet concerned tone:

> I keep telling Riya and Radha, if you don't continue to speak in Telugu, what will you teach your kids? They'll become all English speaking! You've lost a language. Our language will die at some point because everybody is spreading out everywhere. So, you know, you have to make an effort in some things. …[But now] for us, English comes so freely—even me. I'm at fault, too. I keep speaking to them in English sometimes.

Extending beyond her immediate family, Anira revealed her deep concern about the loss of language on a much broader scale, and in turn, implied that part of why she felt it so important to teach children the language of their immigrant parents was so that these ethnic languages did not die out among diaspora. She perceived the loss of her mother tongue as a potential but dire consequence to building a life in a new land. Feeling as though she was at fault, too, because "English comes so freely," Anira took responsibility for her children not being as proficient in Telugu as she would like. Thus, more than relying on daily routine, she felt specific efforts had to be made inside the home and outside of the home through Telegu classes in order to protect the language as well as her and her children's sense of identity as Indian.

While Anira was concerned with the survival of ethnic language across borders, others emphasized bilingualism as essential for maintaining relationships with family in India across relationships across generations. Parents I spoke to at Naach mentioned having little family, outside of their spouse and children, in the county and even Florida. Extended families were most

commonly spread out across the U.S. or "back home" in India, and for many, their children's bilingualism was key to developing and preserving meaningful relationships with their family abroad. Simran, a warm and vivacious Punjabi mother of two, expanded on this during my visit to her home. I first met Simran at the dance studio because her 6 year old daughter, Suki, was in my Sunday afternoon class. Suki was a sweet, smiley, and talkative girl who upon stepping onto the dance floor would glide toward me, wrap her arms around my neck for a tight hug, and show off either her jewelry or t-shirt before skipping off to join her friends on the dance floor. A few months after seeing her daughter's first dance recital, Simran said that seeing Suki's love for Bollywood music and dance blossom encouraged her to enroll in classes herself as a way to "get back to dance," something which she had not done since college, and share a hobby with her daughter. Simran had just started with our Sunday adult Bollywood class, and like Suki, her bubbly personality was embraced at the studio.

Simran and her husband, Ajeet, invited me to their home on a sunny and cool fall Sunday morning. It was still early by the time I arrived at their two-story gated-community residence. Strewn about their front entrance were tennis shoes, roller blades, and two blue and pink children's bicycles. Simran opened the door wearing jeans and a light color top, warmly greeted me with a hug, and offered me a cup of chai as we sat on a compact light pink Indian Victorian sofa set just past their foyer. We chatted about Suki's India Fest performance, Simran's new Bollywood class, and their older 13 year old son's hobbies until Ajeet came downstairs to join the conversation. Knowing about my dissertation research topic, Simran eagerly shared her thoughts on what aspects of Indian culture they aimed to pass on to their children. With her and her husband having been raised in Dehli, both spoke Hindi and focused on cultivating their children's Hindi speaking skills at home. She said:

> We try to teach [our son and daughter] Hindi because our parents are most comfortable in Hindi. So if [the kids] don't know *the basic* language of our family, we are just two of us here. The *whole* family is back in India. If they don't know Hindi, there will be no alliance between them. They will be in a room with no conversation or just some very patched communication through signals or whatever. See, at home, we try to tell them to [speak] Hindi. But when they go out there, they are likely to use whatever conversation they are having with their friends....But at home, we do try to tell them [to] learn the language with us.

More than recognizing Hindi as the language with which she felt most comfortable speaking or that helped her feel a sense of connection to the surrounding Indian community, Simran here emphasized the importance of Hindi to building an "alliance" or relationships between her children and her extended family in India. She made clear that teaching her children Hindi was essential to cultivating meaningful connections beyond "some very patched communication" with family abroad. Her frequent usage of phrases including "we try to teach….at home" or "we try to tell them to speak Hindi" highlighted not that their children learn the language through everyday routinized ethnic and cultural socialization, but rather the purpose-driven efforts she and her husband made at home.

Food. In addition to religion and language, interviewed parents collectively regarded cooking Indian foods as essential cultural knowledge to pass on to their children because, as one interviewee, Lalitha, succinctly mentioned, "Food is very important. That shows our culture." True to this statement, Lalitha had cooked a homemade meal to welcome me to her home for the first time. Arriving around 4pm on a weekday afternoon, Anoja, Lalitha's shy and bright-eyed 10 year old daughter peaked her head out from behind the door as she opened it for me and quickly sashayed to the kitchen where her mother was preparing cooked mixed vegetables and puri (deep-fried Indian bread). Though her kids had already had their afterschool snack, Lalitha's warmth in preparing a traditional Indian meal for us to share made me feel at home and allowed us to further bond over shared culture.

Like Lalitha, Divya, mother of 8 year old Dipika and 6 year old Aisha, from Tamil Nadu saw food as essential to preserving Indian culture in the U.S. Warm and welcoming, Divya, too, had been preparing vegetable biriyani (mixed rice dish) when I arrived at their home on a Thursday evening late in the summer. Dipika's ear-to-ear smile and a delicious aroma of spices, vegetables, and rice greeted me at the door and I followed her as she skipped to the kitchen, gave her mom, who was standing over the stove, a quick hug, and scampered off to the leather couches in the adjacent room. Divya and I hugged hello and she asked me to take a seat at their dining table as she placed lids on pots and pans before joining me. Still in her professional work attire of black slacks and a black and white blouse, Divya looked like she had had a long day but was still in good spirits. She was nervous about being recorded for an interview and started off by speaking quickly, but soon forgot about the recorder and shared her life story, hopes for her children, and concerns about parenting with candor. When the subject of food arose, Divya reminisced about the way her family used to cook with fresh spices in Tamil Nadu, the south Indian state in which she was raised. She linked culture with science by discussing the "scientific value" of culturally engrained practices such as how cooking with fresh spices specific to South Indian cuisine is beneficial for digestion. And while she intended to pass along or even simply share these homemade foods to her kids, she felt as if this tradition was slipping away. Below she explained:

> I try my best to cook at home. I try my best. And I use all the traditional—and even my friends, I see them all using ginger garlic paste bought from the store. But I don't do that. I always grind them fresh every day. I try and use herbs in my cooking as much as possible…I still really wanted to cook old traditional snacks. Now I'm trying a little bit. So snacks and all, there are some traditional ones that take a long time to do. It's more tedious work to do, but they are healthy and tasty. I'm trying. In my heart I want to do those things. I don't want to forget them. At least introduce to my kids saying that, 'Okay, these are all the things that [we] had in India.'

More than what much of the ethnic and cultural socialization literature suggests, Divya, as well as the immigrant parents above, articulated the specific efforts they felt they needed to make

with religion, language, and foods in order to preserve and pass along Indian culture to their children. Though "in [her] heart" Divya does not "want to forget them," she, among others, found it difficult to make time for cultural cultivation, a point which will be expanded upon below.

Gendered labor

Divya and other immigrant mothers discussed how difficult it was to make time for cultural cultivation. This was due in large part to childrearing, and therefore cultural cultivation, being perceived and taken on as women's work, regardless of whether they already had fulltime jobs outside of the home. At the dance studio, mothers were both more involved than fathers and even occupied the space. Whereas mothers often remained in the waiting area during their children's dance classes catching up with each other about their families, upcoming cultural festivals, weekend plans and busy schedules, or the next studio event, rarely did fathers stay, and those who did often waited outside of the studio on the sidewalk or by themselves in their cars. One could easily argue their absence is because the dance studio is seen as women's space and this no doubt was reflected in the sample interviewed for this study. Still, throughout almost all interviews and several informal conversations at the studio, and despite being seen as important to both mothers and fathers, mothers described taking on a bulk of the responsibility when it came to cultural cultivation and teaching their children about the culture 'left behind.' As Divya, a fulltime software engineer who spoke of frequently working overtime, stated matter-of-factly, "I'm doing both duties, job and home duty." She went on to describe the efforts she, and she alone, made with trying to teach her daughters Tamil and the guilt she felt for not having enough time. With unmistakable exhaustion and guilt, Divya said:

> I started teaching [Dipika and Aisha] reading. Like, I had all Tamil books from India. I taught them and had them practice the letters and the alphabets and everything. They started writing and they started recognizing. And by seeing the picture, they could tell in Tamil stuff, like pre-k-ish things. But now they lost most of it. And it's me and my husband's

> fault. We didn't enforce that much. If we would have, they would have learned. But I don't have any time. That's what I hate now. Like, I feel like I should be a housewife. I am very serious. I am missing a lot. At this age, they won't get it back, right? So, I always think I should stay home for these kind of reasons. Sometimes, I *literally* don't have any time between class (extracurricular activities) and homework and to cook and clean. And my office is so crazy. Yesterday I was working 11pm to 12am. Morning I went to work at 8am. Came home at 5:30pm. Then again I logged in at 11pm to 12:15am. …So it's been like that for the last one month. …I'm tired and I have to finish all important things first. Like food. That's first priority, right? So after one month if I try to reinforce (reading and writing lessons in Tamil), it will be very hard. Very tough. So, lot of things. One thing was learning Tamil. That fell off like this (snaps her fingers).

Asking if she took on more of the role of teaching Indian culture to the girls and Divya responded:

> Yup. Mm hm. Mostly me. But [my husband] was really trying to find Tamil [teachers]. But still, gents they are like that, right? They won't keep talking much about it, no.

Sitting next to each other at the head of the dining table while Dipika and Aisha played and did somersaults on the couch, Divya expressed how important it was to her that both of her daughters knew how to read and write in Tamil. Married for nearly 13 years at the time of our interview, Divya felt like she not only took on the majority of the parenting role at home with transporting her daughters to and from their extracurricular activities (which includes Bollywood, Bharatanatyam at another classical dance studio, Kumon, and swimming), helping them with their homework, cooking, and cleaning, but was also the primary purveyor of cultural cultivation. With the exception of looking for Tamil teachers, Divya's efforts of cultural cultivation, specifically teaching her daughters Tamil, Hindu prayers and rituals, and making foods that reflect the culture she grew up with, rested primarily on her because as she stated throughout our interview, "Dad doesn't like that department" and "…gents are like that, right?" Thus, Divya felt largely alone in both childrearing and teaching Dipika and Aisha about their culture and language. Not having enough time between her job, cooking and cleaning, and helping her two daughters with their homework, Divya expressed feeling drained and stretched for time, and as a result, had to forego of some cultural cultivation practices that she valued, like teaching her daughters written Tamil

and making many traditional Tamilian foods for them. Feeling guilty for not engaging in cultural cultivation in the way she would like ultimately led Divya to question whether she should leave her job or stay at the expense of sacrificing valuable time with her daughters. For fulltime working mothers in Divya's position, cultural cultivation was a clear 'added step' to their "second shift" (Hochschild and Machung 2003) at home.

Like Divya, Esha expressed taking on the primary responsibilities of cultural cultivation. Holding a degree in Optometry, Esha decided to stop practicing after her daughters were born so that her husband could get his medical practice up and running. After a few years, the two collectively decided "that it worked out better this way" and she continued to take on the primary role of raising their kids at home while he remained working fulltime as a physician. As a homemaker, Esha described wanting to teach and share with her kids many of the same aspects of Indian culture that Divya and other mothers had mentioned above including religion, language, and ethnic foods. Yet much of this responsibility laid primarily upon Esha not just because she spent more time with the kids, but also because between her and her husband, she felt she held more of the Gujarati cultural knowledge. And since she held the brunt of the day-to-day responsibilities of taking care of their daughters as well as the cultural knowledge, she felt unable to convey cultural knowledge, especially the language of Gujarati, to her children in the way she wanted on her own. Describing the difficulties she encountered in trying to teach her children Gujarati, she said:

> The language and the music is such a big part of our culture and I want them to be familiar with it….The language, we tried to teach….We did the Gujarati lessons. I would like to re-visit them on my own. Because I can speak, I can actually probably teach a little bit of grammar…Whether or not I know the rules behind it, I don't know…It's just that my husband's not fluent in it, so we don't all speak to each other in Gujarati. We might communicate to each other in half-Gujarati half-English. That's why [Khushi and Anaya] never learned….[and] I think of how hard we all try to have rotli (flatbread), daal (lentil soup), bhaath (cooked rice), shaak (vegetables) twice a week or um, make sure we have

> our Diwali (festival of lights) function. I *try* to make time for those things that are Indian, while still trying to run their daily life and make time for whatever extended family thing that's going on, along with taking kids to this, that, and the other. It's trying to get the cultural part in there too with the everyday life.

Esha, too, demonstrated how in her household cultural cultivation functioned for her as an 'added step' to child-rearing in their household. Though she used the collective language of "we all try," in practice Esha revealed how she took on most of the work associated with cultural cultivation including transporting the girls to their Bollywood, Indian voice, Gujarati language, and Jain religion classes, cooking traditional Gujarati meals twice a week, celebrating Hindu holidays, and even contemplating teaching them Gujarati on her own. Despite her exhaustive efforts, there was a sense in which she felt unable to adequately engage in ethnic and cultural socialization on her own. Language was a salient issue for Esha. She had previously enrolled her daughters in Gujarati lessons, but later on said that these classes did not work out because of the instructor's focus on teaching written script rather than conversational Gujarati. Moreover, her daughters' inability to understand Gujarati affected their interest in other outside cultural cultivation activities, such as Indian voice lessons. Esha stated that her daughters "found the Indian voice very difficult because they don't understand." Feeling this as a significant lack, she went on to say, "And I'm sure in many other families the kids understand, but mine don't." Still, this did not stop Esha from wanting to teach her children Gujarati or from more broadly "[*trying*] to make time for those things that are Indian, while still trying to run their daily life." Esha saw cultural cultivation as a difficult 'added step,' especially since she took on much of this responsibility single-handedly. And despite a larger collective desire to teach children about the culture 'left behind,' Divya's and Esha's experiences of taking on the bulk of the cultural cultivation responsibilities, regardless of whether they had fulltime jobs outside of the home or not, rang true and were reflective of several of the families interviewed.

Parental rewards

While cultural cultivation was a deliberate, and at times exhausting, 'added step' to childrearing practices, especially for mothers, several of the families described the benefits of it extending beyond their children. Mothers and fathers discussed how their migration to the U.S. encouraged their cultural cultivation efforts and, in doing so, forced them to explore and learn about aspects of Indian culture and symbolic meanings of which they previously had little knowledge. Anand, Anira's husband, spoke about this explicitly. Anand was a jovial father from Andhra Pradesh who shared Anira's desire and vision of cultivating Indian cultural knowledge and pride in their children. He had arrived home from his job as a computer analyst after the start of the interview with Anira and though I did not initially ask him to be part of the study, since I generally only saw Anira at the studio, Anand hung around curiously, peering from behind his wife in the living room, before finally taking a seat on the couch closest to us to join in our conversation. He was intrigued by our discussion and affably shared his views on practicing Indian culture in the U.S. Offering an impetus for why they wanted to begin the more concerted efforts of cultural cultivation, Anand and Anira shared a story about a University of Florida event which occurred a few years ago:

> Anand*:* …they called people from different religions, one from Christianity, one from Islam and one from every other religion to come forward and talk something about your culture or explain what your religion is. So many Indians go to University of Florida. UF is full of them, but there was not a single person that could explain what Hinduism is. So. That was a big news. Like, what is happening to this generation that they cannot even explain what—even in a few short sentences can't explain what their culture is.
>
> Anira: ...So we were trying to discuss, *why* is that happening? …I was like, "Oh no, come on." Someone should have gotten up and explained just a little bit what it is. So many Indian kids there, everyone was looking at each other's faces, but nobody got up. So I want them to at least be able to explain who they are or what their background is.

Disappointed and shocked by the unfamiliarity about Hinduism, Anand, Anira, and their close friends saw this university event as one of the driving reasons for making explicit efforts to

teach their children about Hinduism and Indian culture. But for Anand and Anira, cultural cultivation did not just contribute to their children's body of knowledge about Indian culture. While Anira was at times surprised by the detailed information her children were learning in their Sunday school classes, Anand felt that he became more knowledgeable about the symbolic meaning behind Hindu religious and Indian cultural traditions after immigrating to the U.S. With an air of pride because of the knowledge he has gained, he said:

> See, you learn [Indian] culture after coming here. That's the big difference. When you are there (in India), you're part of it. You don't know the value of it or meaning or importance of it. Once you come out, you know why we do that; after you listen. That is the reason. Certain things you just do from habit.

Like Esha's concern with cultivating a strong connection with religion because in contrast to her daughters, she "just grew up with it," Anand acknowledged that being surrounded by traditional customs in India facilitated a comfortable habituation, which did not translate into a firm grasp of the symbolic meanings behind myths, rituals, and traditions. In the pursuit of teaching their children aspects of the culture 'left behind,' Anand felt that being removed from the everyday culture necessitated that he look beyond the mere ritual to explore the deeper meaning behind religious and cultural traditions. Extending beyond his children, Anand found that cultural cultivation both incentivized and required him to engage with culture and religion in meaningful ways that he had not previously explored while growing up in India.

Neha, a stay-at-home Gujarati mother of two, also asserted that having a deeper knowledge-base about religious and cultural practices of India while living in the U.S. was critical to cultural cultivation. She had just recently enrolled her 5 year old daughter, Ami, and 8 year old son, Neal, in my Sunday and Wednesday afternoon Bollywood dance classes when I asked her to be part of this project. Waiting on a hot Wednesday afternoon during the summer for other students to arrive, we stood in the small space between the waiting room and the brightly painted dance

area. While Neal slouched on a chair staring at a chunky silver watch that looked enormous on his skinny wrist and Ami quietly fidgeted on the next chair over, Neha made cheerful and light-hearted conversation about her kids, her excitement about enrolling them in Bollywood classes, what I studied, and where we both are from. Realizing that she and my family are from Gujarat created an instant connection between us and she was effusive about my dissertation research "on Indians." I took the opportunity to ask her to be part of the study and with enthusiasm invited me over to her home for the following Friday morning.

Neha's two-story home was located in a middle class community just south of the nearby university and walking up to her door brought warm and nostalgic feelings. At the front door entrance hung an orange and red toran (a decorative garland often placed at the entrance of a home) made of silk marigolds. It felt familiar, as my parents have one in their house, and I instantly felt more comfortable, as if I was coming home to family. Neha opened the door with a big smile and hug and was wearing a fuchsia top embroidered with gems. Ami, closely followed by Neal, ran to the door and shyly said hello before scurrying off to the foot of a staircase down the hall. Upon entering their home, one of the first things I noticed was how little furniture and how much open space they had. Off to the left was a long room with white walls lined with couches which were covered by white sheets and a wooden jhoola (indoor swing). Neha's mother-in-law, who was wearing a brown and tan sari with her hair in a low bun, met me down the hallway with a smile. We both greeted each other and exchange pleasantries in Gujarati before heading back to the room with the long line of couches to sit next to her husband who smiled, but remained quiet as he watched our interaction. Neha and I walked past her kids curiously gazing at us over the banister of the stairwell and convened in the living room on the single brown leather loveseat, the only seating in the room. There was a long wooden coffee table placed between us and a large television.

A Hindu calendar marking auspicious days and religious holidays and clock shared a wall with a sliding glass door which led to the backyard. This room, too, had white walls, but upon sitting down, I immediately noticed several black and grey scuff marks. Neha chuckled as she explained that the walls are marked up because the kids played cricket, a popular sport in India, in the house and Ami and Neal who were still peering over at us from behind the banister bashfully shrunk their heads.

The kids moved back and forth between playing together on at the foot of the steps, crawling on the small space of couch behind Neha, and sitting next to each other on the floor on the other side of the coffee table to listen to our conversation. Neha was positive, open, and laughed a lot. When I asked why she decided to enroll Neal and Ami in Bollywood, she told me how excited she was that her two kids were finally old enough to start becoming involved in cultural activities. She mentioned wanting her kids to "not just be into studies" and "thought that if they do Indian dance…they can make Indian friends… [and] know more about Indian culture, too." She described how necessary it was for her to have a more detailed and complex understanding of Indian cultural and Hindu religious practices so that she could pass knowledge and traditions on to her kids. To this end, in addition to Bollywood classes, she had enrolled her children in Swadyaya, which meets every Sunday for 1-2 hours as a devotional group to interpret Hindu texts for the purpose of self-discovery, self-development, and broader social awareness. Neha also took on the primary role of making sure that her kids prayed in the morning, before dinner, and at the end of the day. Referring to Swadyaya and praying at home three times a day, she declared that "from this, they understand why they don't lie to their elders." But beyond the ritualistic practices, Neha expressed how important it was for her herself to be more knowledgeable about Hinduism and the traditions she was trying to impart on to her children. Rather than simply repetition to the point of habituation,

she acknowledged that she needed to be better informed so that she could provide a justification for religious and cultural practices as well as teach about Indian culture within and relative to the context of American society. She said:

> Frankly speaking, I feel like you know more about Indian culture when you are in America. Because you are practicing. Another thing is, your kids don't know anything about the culture and you are teaching them….I feel like as a child, kids learn here about the culture. If you follow, your kids are going to follow you…but you have to let them know in their way. If the generation is changing a little bit, you have to change, too…Because kids now are smarter than what we were. They're not going to learn if they don't know the reason behind it. If our mom would tell us, 'This is bad,' we would say, 'Yes, this is bad.' Now, our kids say, 'Why is it bad?' So we should know *why*. Before you teach your child, you should know why. What is the reason behind learning that.

Neha recognized that in a country where it is not part of the cultural or societal norm, she needed to actively practice Indian culture and religion (Hinduism). Moreover, seeing a distinct difference between her and her children's generation, she felt a need to offer explanations of statements and practices to her children. Much like how Anand and Divya suggested above, cultural cultivation often propels immigrant parents to seek out for themselves a greater understanding behind cultural and religious traditions, norms, and practices so that they could confidently pass this along to their children.

In addition to learning the symbolic meanings behind cultural and religious practices so that they could teach their children, many parents also mentioned engaging in cultural cultivation as a way to feel more connected to the culture 'left behind.' From speaking in their ethnic language to getting a chance to enjoy Bollywood music and dance together to sharing foods from their childhood to celebrating cultural and religious holidays together as a family or community, parents described cultural cultivation as a strategy of translocal place-making (Aranda, Hughes, & Sabogal 2014). More than this, families discussed how in practicing Indian culture transnationally they even sought after and performed traditions that they had never engaged in while growing up in India. Anira demonstrated this as she described a religious festival practiced in South India

associated with changing seasons. Whereas in India she and her cousins would celebrate by visiting a Hindu temple and then gathering at someone's house to share a meal, after immigrating, starting a family of her own in the U.S., and actively engaging in cultural cultivation, Anira started planning a more elaborate celebration of the festival. Anira described the festival as stemming from a religious myth, part of which involved cooking and sharing a meal in the forest. In order to re-create the ancient myth, Anira along with a close group of Telugu friends rented out a pavilion at Hillsborough State Park, brought cookware and utensils, and cooked a meal from scratch. Using large banana leaves as their plates, they sat next to each other on the benches and enjoyed their lunch. After telling me about this event, which had occurred only a few weekends before our interview, I asked Anira if she celebrated these festivals and traditions in the same way as she did when she lived in India. Indicating a difference, she said:

> Not this many. We did one or two, but not as many. And most of these festivals, we used to stop by our neighborhood temple (laughs), which was quicker or we used to just do it at home…Diwali and all, we used to do it together…but other than that, we didn't used to do this large scale. So now I tell my mom about this and she says, 'You seem to be doing a lot more than we ever did!'

Moreover, when asked why she thought she celebrated religious festivals and rituals more elaborately in the U.S. than she did in India, Anira replied, "Maybe because we miss India and we are thinking that if we don't do it, we'll forget it." Just as carrying out the festival was meant to help cultivate cultural knowledge in their children, Anira and her friends' re-creation of a religious myth, along with others' concerted efforts to teach their children ethnic languages and about religious and cultural traditions, spoke to the desire to hold onto or develop a stronger connection to India and Indian culture. In effect, cultural cultivation for the families interviewed, including children as we will see in the following chapter, was a time-consuming, tough, and exhausting way of cultivating Indian cultural knowledge, yet highly valued as it often fostered a sense of ethnic

and cultural identity, a way to connect with and engage a community identity, and ultimately build a sense of home and belonging.

Discussion

In this chapter, I coined, conceptualized, and discussed the dimensions of cultural cultivation. Distinct from much of the research on ethnic and cultural socialization which often regards the passing of ethnic and cultural knowledge as a somewhat automatic process which occurs intergenerationally between parents or guardians and children, cultural cultivation offers a unique contribution to the field by integrating the intentionality behind Lareau's concerted cultivation and acknowledging that teaching children about a culture 'left behind' can require conscious and specific efforts. As discussed above, immigrant parents felt it was important to pass along cultural knowledge and values associated principally with religions, languages, and foods of India, and engaged in deliberate practices inside of the home and targeted classes outside of the home (such as Bollywood or classical Indian, religion, voice, and language classes) to foster cultural competence.

Ethnographic and interview data also demonstrated cultural cultivation as a gendered socialization strategy. From the exhausting efforts of transporting their children to (cultural) afterschool activities to teaching them about Hinduism, Sikhism, or Jainism to structuring their time so that their children can formally learn their ethnic language to making Indian foods at home, mothers overwhelmingly were the ones who engaged in cultural cultivation. Despite whether they worked fulltime outside of the home, the notion of woman as mother and therefore primary caregiver remained salient, resulting in mothers taking on almost exclusively all of the responsibility in teaching their children about Indian culture. While mothers often used the collective "we try" or "we teach," details of the interviews demonstrated that they alone took on a

majority of this responsibility. There is no doubt that cultural cultivation was a highly valued ethno-cultural socialization strategy among immigrant parents, and though it is not surprising that cultural transmission was gendered labor, what the concept of cultural cultivation offers is an emphasis on how these efforts operate as an 'added step' to Hochschild and Machung's (2003) work on women's "second shift" at home.

In addition to cultural cultivation as a primary technique for fostering cultural competence among their children, this chapter highlighted the ways in which parents benefited from this socialization strategy. Socialization literature focuses on how ethnic and cultural socialization enhances children's sense of well-being and fosters a sense of positive self and ethnic group identity. Data collected with immigrant parents demonstrated how they, too, personally gained from the structured activities of cultural cultivation. Cultural cultivation brought families together out of both shared interests and goals of wanting to preserve aspects of their cultural heritage. This ethno-cultural socialization strategy helped build social networks and encouraged a sense of community among parents and kids alike. Moreover, while many parents attended their children's cultural extracurricular activities, several of them also made an active effort to learn the historical and symbolic meanings associated with religious and cultural practices, using this knowledge to re-create rituals as well as explain and justify traditions to their children. Among parents who engaged strategies of cultural cultivation, many of them regard it as time-consuming and laborious, but also incredibly valuable to their identities as Indians living in the U.S.

Chapter Four:

"About the Kids and for the Kids":

Negotiating Cultural Cultivation, Biculturalism, and Colorism

April 2014

Exhilaration filled the dance studio as the 15th annual International Indian Film Awards, IIFA, was coming to the city in a few weeks. Sheila had pulled some strings with the local committee coordinating the film stars' arrival at the nearby international airport and managed to have our teen students dance to Bollywood hits as actors and actresses arrived on the airport's rooftop to get to their private cars. With Naach moving into the local spotlight, the local newspaper contacted Sheila about visiting the studio, interviewing her and a few students, and snapping candid photographs. Sheila looked forward to Naach's exposure to city as a cultural staple of the Indian community who is at the forefront of such exciting opportunities. To highlight and display our cultural authenticity, Sheila requested that all students dress in Indian clothes, and not the commonly worn cotton tights and t-shirts, for when the journalists and camera crew came to visit. Everyone complied and arrived at the studio wearing brightly colored kurtis and churidars.

After finishing interviews with Sheila and the students and snapping photographs of us as we practiced our routines, the news crew left. The students, Sheila, and I then huddled together on the dance floor to decide upon which songs we should dance to as the stars arrive. Side conversations among the girls about favorite actresses, movies, and songs quickly began, while Sheila, Maya (a second generation bubbly Kuchipudi student who is always in-the-know about the latest Bollywood songs and movies), Amy (also a second generation Kuchipudi student who is sharply witty), and I focused on choosing Bollywood songs for the dances. Advocating for one of her favorite songs from the action film 'Dhoom 3,' Maya said, "It's a really famous song. Even American people will know it." Amy snickered as she responded, "You do know that we are American, right?" Embarrassed and confused, Maya's jaw slightly dropped as she looked side-to-side and there was an awkward pause in the conversation. Recognizing the growing discomfort, Sheila tried to lighten the mood by re-focusing on music and the girls resumed their excitement about getting ready for IIFA.

As an important site of cultural cultivation for the local Indian community, Naach has prided itself on encouraging and creating opportunities for students to use dance as a way to publicly display Indian culture at local community events. And while the hosting of IIFA gives the appearance of a seamless, comfortable, and even welcomed multiculturalism and diversity within

the city, the conversations at Naach suggested not only deliberate efforts to project an image of cultural authenticity, but also contestations of "who" was 'Indian' and 'American' and how to appropriately perform Indianness within the broader context of American society. Moreover, the exchange between Maya and Amy demonstrated the varied ways that children of immigrants understood and negotiated what it meant to "be Indian" and "be American." In the following chapter, interview, self-portrait, and ethnographic data with youth taking classes at Naach is highlighted to examine the ways that children of Indian immigrants negotiate their (bi)cultural identities. Having the opportunity to speak with children and adolescents about school, extracurricular activities, interpretations of the similarities and tensions between Indian and American cultures, and their friends paved the way for conversations about how cultural cultivation influenced their sense of cultural pride and solidarity. Qualitative interviews with children and their self-portraits also revealed how prejudice, discrimination, and feelings of exclusion shaped the ways that they resisted, accommodated, and negotiated their identities as Indian and American.

Children and Identity Formation

Empirical studies on children of immigration argue that a child's sense of self is informed by others' perceptions mirrored back to them, regardless of whether these perceptions are accurate or not (Suárez-Orozco 2005; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001; Takaki 1989). Carola Suárez-Orozco (2005) builds upon this idea by developing the term "social mirroring" to examine how positive and negative mirroring influences identity formation among immigrant children. If a child encounters positive perceptions from friends, family, schoolmates, and even the media, s/he will be more likely to see herself/himself as worthwhile and competent. If the images reflected and perceived are negatively distorted, it is much more difficult for the child to preserve a positive

sense of self (Marks et al. 2007; Quintana et al. 2006; Suárez-Orozco 2005; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001).

Immigrant children and children of immigrants can encounter an array of both positive and negative perceptions from their social networks and media representations. For example, while Asian youth may experience being stereotyped "positively" because of the pervasive model minority myth, they frequently also encounter situations in which they are rendered 'foreigner' and thus unwelcome by dominant culture and other minority groups (Shankar 2008; Takaki 1989; Wu 2014). As a result, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) argue that positive affirmations from parents do not necessarily offset the daily negative mirroring done by teachers, peers, and other community members. Exploring this in the context of children of Indian immigrants, the following chapter utilizes interviews with children and their self-portraits to examine how they understand their Indian-American identities and consciously work through asserting and negotiating cultural and racial boundaries, especially when confronted with instances of prejudice, discrimination, and being 'othered' by their non-Indian peers.

Visual Research with Children

Sociologists have been critical about and reluctant to do qualitative research with children. Characterizing them as 'becomings' rather than 'beings,' academics have argued that children are 'too vulnerable' of a population to include in research and that they are disruptive, unreliable reporters of their experiences (Fernqvist 2010; Gibson 2012; Griffin, Lahman, and Opitz 2016). As a result, rather than relying on their own shared accounts, research about children has frequently depended on the word of adults.

Since the 1990s, however, sociologists and interdisciplinary scholars have started placing more stock in the critical differences between children's perspectives and adults' stated accounts

of their experiences, and therefore have argued for the unique value in including children in research (Alanen and Mayall 2001; Balen, Blyth, Calabretto, Fraser, Horrocks, and Marby 2006; Thomson 2008). Additionally, scholars in this camp recommend adapting qualitative methods so that they are appropriate for children and adolescents (Einarsdóttir 2007; Fernqvist 2010; Thomson 2008). While 'shoulder-to-shoulder' and 'walk around' interview techniques (Einarsdóttir 2007; Griffin, Lahman, & Opitz 2016) as well as participant observation with children for the purpose of crafting linguistically accessible interview guides (Fernqvist 2010; Gibson 2012) are becoming more popular, visual research has been lauded as an effective and compelling way to integrate young people's perspectives into qualitative research. Pat Thomson (2008), in particular, demonstrates that visual research, including drawing, can both intellectually and emotionally engage children and offer them an alternative and creative way to express themselves. Therefore, in addition to ethnographic observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews, I use the innovative method of having the interviewed children draw and color self-portraits as a way to: 1. help facilitate a comfortable and fun environment, and 2. gain an understanding of how they not only perceive themselves, but wish to be perceived. The artistic choices children make when drawing self-portraits reflect their self-perceptions, social mirroring, and cultural and social influences. Of course, hand drawn self-portraits, just as any other produced image, can be interpreted in a number of ways. Therefore, observations, interviews, and self-portraits were used in conjunction with one another to clarify and strengthen the analysis of children's cultural and social understandings of their own identities.

The following data analysis is divided into two parts. The first section reveals different responses to cultural cultivation as well as varied attitudes about and ways of identifying as 'American' or 'Indian.' The second section focuses on how experiences of prejudice and

discrimination intersected with colorism to influence children's perceptions of themselves, their feelings of belonging, and how they learned to police their self-expression.

Findings

Negotiating cultural identities

Overall, cultural cultivation contributed to a strong sense of identification as Indian among the children interviewed. For example, Aisha who is 6 years old, felt more of a cultural connection with 'being Indian' than she did with 'being American.' As described in the previous chapter, her mother, Divya, taught her and her older sister, Dipika, written and spoken Tamil and religious slokas in Tamil and Sanskrit at home. The girls were also enrolled in Bollywood and Bharatanatyam dance lessons, attended Hinduism classes, and participated in India Fest. Though I formally interviewed Dipika and not Aisha, Aisha sat alongside her older sister coloring her own self-portrait as we conducted the interview on the floor of the dance studio on a bright Sunday morning. Aisha was very shy in her Bollywood class and in front of people she did not know well. In fact, she often stood in the back corner separated from the rest of the class during Bollywood class unless the choreography called for a specific formation on the dance floor. However, throughout the interview, she opened up and energetically chimed in on questions. Sitting up with her legs folded under her and wearing a yellow, black, and silver outfit from the previous weekend's Naach recital, Aisha interjected below speaking out about identification:

> Pangri: (to Dipika) I want you to finish this sentence: Being American means…
>
> Aisha: Hard? Tough? (Definitively) Not my kind.
>
> Pangri: What?
>
> Aisha: Not *my* (original emphasis) kind.
>
> Pangri: Not your kind? What do you mean?
>
> Aisha: Yeah. Because we're *Indian* (original emphasis). Not American.
>
> Pangri: …Finish this sentence then: Being Indian means…

Aisha: (excitedly) My kind!

Pangri: Your kind?

Aisha: Yeah.

Dipika: Well yeah.

Born and raised in Florida, Aisha strongly identified as Indian, and perhaps more importantly, dis-identified as American. Because most of her after-school activities centered on cultural cultivation, it is likely that her social networks outside of school largely consisted of other children of Indian immigrants, contributing to her connection with Indian culture and as Indian. Moreover, though she does not expound upon this here, Aisha's statements of feeling like it is "hard" and "tough" to 'be American' reflected perceptions of being out of place or 'othered,' a point which will be further explored in the following interviews.

Cultural cultivation influenced Dipika's proud claims to her identity as Indian, too. Unlike Aisha, however, Dipika stated that she also identified with 'being American.' Wearing a white and pink outfit with a colorful beaded necklace, 8-year-old Dipika was bright and remained alert during our conversation, quickly but carefully considering each question. When asked to finish the statements "Being Indian/American means…," she explained:

> Dipika: I'm in the middle. I'm really in the middle. Because sometimes I do American stuff and sometimes I do Indian stuff…American stuff is well, talking English instead of whatever language I speak. That's something… [But] I don't do any American culture learning stuff unless it has to do with school. And I don't learn in school anything that's Indian. Sooo. And I don't do American dances. I only do Indian dances.
>
> Pangri: Is it sometimes hard to 'be Indian'?
>
> Dipika: Yes. Well, it's not hard to be American that much, but it's hard to be Indian because sometimes they'll say, 'Why don't you talk Tamil instead of English' and that's when I start getting a little shy. And like not knowing words. 'Cause I only know a few words. I don't know that much words.

Dipika's language abilities played a pivotal role in how she identified. Despite her mother's efforts of cultural cultivation, speaking Tamil served as a barrier to 'being Indian' and in turn

Dipika became self-conscious whenever she was asked to speak the language. Following the same logic, her connection with American culture and 'being American' is linked to her feeling more comfort with speaking English. As a result, she regards her fluency in English and low proficiency in Tamil to be significant to identifying as American.

Unlike Dipika and Aisha, cultural cultivation did not always foster such a strong feeling of attachment to Indian culture among children. For example, in an effort to teach and share Indian culture with her children, Esha enrolled her two daughters, Khushi and Anya, in classes over the past couple of years including Bollywood, Indian voice, Jainism, and Gujarati lessons, and the girls regularly competed at India Fest in the Bhangra category. Despite this cultural cultivation, 10 year old Khushi who was born and raised in Florida, at times felt disconnected with Indian culture, and Jainism specifically, and guilty for not wanting to be more involved in religious practices. She spoke candidly about her mixed feelings as the two of us sat in her pristine room which had white walls, a white dresser, and white armoire covered with Indian voice and India Fest trophies on top, and a lime green bedspread. Khushi, a thoughtful and energetic 5th grader, explained her dilemma:

> Khushi: 'Cause sometimes we'll see Indian people, right, at the temple. And I see kids going to a learning school every Sunday for like an hour. It's so important to them. And I'm like, 'Wow. I wish I was like them. So determined and just inspired by this culture.'…sometimes at the temple when all the kids are up that go to that [religious] school…Sometimes I don't feel like I belong because I don't feel that inspired. I see so many kids standing up in front and then so many kids sitting down in the back, including me and Anya. And I sort of feel ashamed almost. It's not like—I feel so happy for them because everybody is proud of them. My mom really wants me to do that school now, now that's she's heard of 'em.
>
> Pangri: Do you want to do that school?
>
> Khushi: Sort of. I want to feel proud of myself for this.

In the previous chapter, Esha described her difficulties in trying to cultivate in her daughters a connection with Jainism, stating "I have an image or idea of what I feel God is, but I don't know how to convey that to my kids." As a result, Esha had enrolled Khushi and Anya in

several religious schools and took them to the temple regularly. Her desire and efforts to foster a genuine connection with Jainism were not lost on Khushi. Khushi felt pressured to exhibit more interest and initiative by involving herself in Jain ceremonies, but her lack of "inspiration" to participate at the local temple left her feeling guilty and ashamed. Yet this did not deter her from wanting to attend religious classes. Instead, she saw the religious classes as a way to make herself and her mother proud as well as strengthen her attachment to Indian culture and Jainism.

Khushi was one of the few students who expressed *wanting* to feel connected to both Indian and American cultures. But, when asked about if she considered herself Indian and/or American Khushi responded:

> Khushi: Indian. That's what my mom says. We're Indian, not *American* (original emphasis). Like, when I was little, I thought we were American because we lived in America. So I thought we were American. And I didn't really know about India back then. And then I learned more about being Indian or desi Indian…but I do like that some people consider me American because then I feel not left out.

Living in the U.S. and being recognized as 'American' helps develop a sense of belonging, especially when one feels disconnected to an ethnic, cultural, or religious identity to which they are commonly ascribed. More so than Dipika, Khushi embraced the label of 'American' alongside 'Indian,' even though Esha discouraged her children from calling themselves 'American.' Given the efforts she made to preserve a culture 'left behind,' Esha likely saw verbal identification as Indian and "not American" as a strategy to help retain their ethnic and cultural identity, especially with her uncertainty about how cultural cultivation was affecting her daughters. Moreover, as childhood socialization literature suggests, developing a strong identification both as Indian and with Indian culture could help minimize feelings of not belonging and serve as a protective measure against discrimination by cultivating a sense of solidarity and ethno-cultural pride (Marks et al. 2007; Rogers et al. 2012; Suizzo et al, 2008). In a society that largely recognizes Americans

as white and whites as American, perhaps Esha recognized that her children would encounter instances which would designate them as foreigners.

Identification as 'Indian' and attachment with Indian culture were captured in the children's self-portraits, such as Avani's. Avani was the 8 year old student mentioned in the preface who pronounced her name with either a Hindi or American accent, depending on with whom she was talking, even though she was born and raised in Florida and saw herself as strictly Indian and "not American." Having a mellow but cheerful personality, Avani's self-reported hobbies included riding her bike, Bollywood and Indian classical dancing, and drawing the Indian flag. She was enrolled in Bollywood classes, switched back and forth between the classical dance forms of Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, and Odissi, and participated in India Fest. Fluent in spoken Hindi, her mother, Laxmi, proudly told me that she was teaching Avani how to read and write in the language. Sitting on their living room floor together as she added the finishing touches on her self-portrait while her mother was in the next room making chai, I asked her:

Pangri: Do you consider yourself American?
Avani: I consider myself not American.
Pangri: Not American. What do you consider yourself?
Avani: Indian. Always Indian.

And the figure below is Avani's self-portrait:

Figure 1. Avani's self-portrait.

Cultural cultivation through dance and language immersed Avani within Indian culture as practiced in the U.S. Her clear and concise emphasis of considering herself "Not American…Indian. Always Indian" revealed not only a strong identification as Indian but a social distancing from considering herself American. Moreover, her self-portrait which shows her wearing a bindi, an important marker of Indian and Hindu identity, reflected her attachment to Hinduism and Indian culture. This, combined with the large pink heart drawn in the center of her shirt and her wide smile indicate that cultural cultivation has helped instill in Avani ethnic and cultural pride. At the same time, her code-switching suggested that she was starting to make determinations about when and with whom she could fully express her ethnic identity, which included a proper pronunciation of her name.

Riya, a 9th grader born in New York and raised in Florida, exhibited a similar sense of ethnic and cultural pride. As described in the previous chapter, Riya's parents, Anira and Anand, made concerted efforts to transmit Indian cultural knowledge to their children through structured activities and visiting India once every two to three years over the summer. Outgoing, outspoken, and a self-described perfectionist who loved music and dance, Riya was enrolled in Kuchipudi and

Hinduism classes and participated annually in India Fest. She wore a bindi daily and spoke with a slight Telugu accent when conversing with Indian adults. She even code-switched with me while training for India Fest and IIFA performances at the dance studio. We sat together in her family's brightly painted living room, with her at the wooden desk lined with India Fest and academic trophies she had won and me in the adjacent chair. Unlike how I know her at the dance studio, Riya was shy and concise at the front end of the interview. But as she became more comfortable, our conversation revealed schisms between knowledge about and connectedness to Indian and American cultures. Having grown up in the U.S., she had a hard time describing American culture. Cultural cultivation, however, allowed her to describe Indian culture with much more ease.

> Pangri: Okay, if one of your friends asked you, 'Tell me about Indian culture,' what would you say?
>
> Riya: I would say that it is so diverse and so many reasons to be proud of it and reasons why we celebrate different things. Like, it's not just that we throw colored powder at people (referring to Holi, the Hindu festival of colors). There are actually stories (referring to the symbolism tied to religious stories and explanations) behind what we do.
>
> Pangri: Do you ever share these stories or history behind Indian festivals with your non-Indian friends?
>
> Riya: If they inquire, but I've never encountered that. The only thing I've had to explain is that I wear a (points to her forehead) [bindi] to school and people are like (with a tone of skepticism), 'What is that?' And I'll be like, 'It's a bindi,' and they'll ask, 'Do you paint that on or is it a sticker?' and I'm like, 'Naaah, it's a sticker' (laughs)… I put it on for pujas (prayer rituals) and then I don't take it off and sometimes it lasts until the next puja… It's just kind of a part of me and like it protects—like my mom kind of covered it and we learn about it in [Hinduism class], like this is one of the places that your soul can exit your body when you die, so you kind of cover that.
>
> Pangri: If someone who just moved here asked you about American culture, what would you say?
>
> Riya: I don't know what I would say… It's just a whole mixture of things. I mean, there is some stereotypes that go along with it like, 'Oh, you eat fast food all the time,' and 'you go to Starbucks.'…I can define Indian culture and I cannot define American culture (laughs)… I just know more about Indian culture than American culture.
>
> Below is Riya's self-portrait:

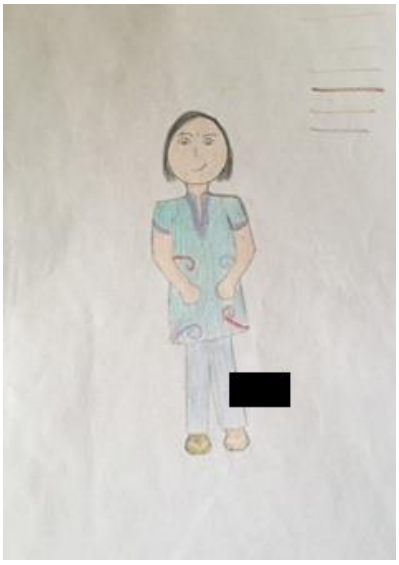

Figure 2. Riya's self-portrait.

Riya's short but meaningful discussion of Indian culture recognized and appreciated the symbolic meaning behind festivals, stories, and wearing a bindi, and offered basic stereotypes and a minimalistic description of American culture. The comfort she felt in displaying Indian culture as taught to her by cultural cultivation was also reflected in her self-portrait which shows her smiling from one side of her mouth, and with a bindi on her forehead and wearing a kurti (a traditional Indian top). Wearing a bindi to school every day visibly marked her has Indian and Hindu. Yet, beyond the visual difference, her non-Indian peers did not inquire about Indian culture, an aspect of Riya's cultural identity that she displays and holds dearly. Beyond this, earlier in her interview, Riya mentioned that she had transferred to her current school three months prior and had not made close friends yet. Combined, this suggested a cultural difference for Riya which may have affected the social distance she felt with her new classmates.

In contrast to many of the girls mentioned above, a few children comfortably and confidently identified as both 'Indian' and 'American.' For example, Saanvi, an incredibly intelligent and thoughtful 8 year old, considered herself both "American and Indian." She was born and raised in southern Florida, took piano lessons, and was enrolled in my Bollywood class. She

learned spoken Telugu from her mother, but said that she did not know the language that well. Below is her self-portrait. Distinct from the above drawings, she did not depict herself as culturally Indian, nor did she utilize as much of the drawing space as the previously discussed portraits. Instead, Saanvi's drawing is positioned at the bottom third of the page. Additionally, she depicts herself with a black mouth and does not appear to be smiling. Also note-worthy is that she colors herself darker than her actual skin tone, a point which will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

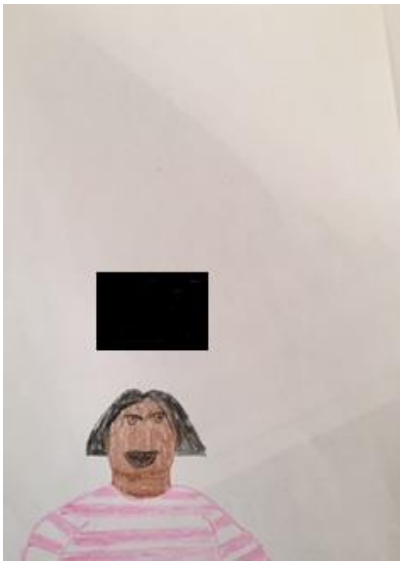

Figure 3. Saanvi's self-portrait.

At the time of the interview, Saanvi's room was filled with books and drawings she made of dinosaurs and birds taped to her walls. An inquisitive child, she loved to read. After the interview, her mother even laughed about how Saanvi would make her late to social engagements because she would sneak back into her room to read. When I visited their apartment, Saanvi was captivated by Egyptian culture. Her bedroom door had a large poster depicting ancient Egyptian civilization. She was most proud of a pyramid she had drawn with pencil and a message she had written in English and translated into her own hieroglyphic language. Though her focus of interest

centered on ancient Egypt, she was intrigued by cultures and histories of the world, and expressed appreciation and connection with Indian and American cultures. Yet, similar to the children mentioned above, she recognized Indian culture and identity as distinct from, not part of, 'being American.' She described the tension she felt navigating between different cultural norms inside and outside of the home. Saanvi felt that at school, religion and food consistently marked her as 'other.' While discussing what it means to 'be Indian,' she said:

> Saanvi: Being Indian means having a lot of other foods around you which might be spicy for other people, but it's very nice and being Indian also means that you might have a few different things than with people at school—like Jesus. …I've heard a few of my friends talk about it. And I try to avoid the conversation.
>
> Pangri: When they talk about religion?
>
> Saanvi: Not in class. But sometimes—like one time someone asked, 'Why is a rainbow colorful?' and someone said, 'God made it colorful' and my teacher explained the scientific reason which I really liked. …sometimes, when people talk about Jesus, I wish they would stop.
>
> Pangri: Stop talking about Jesus?
>
> Saanvi: Yeah. But I can't say anything.
>
> Pangri: Why do you wish they would stop?
>
> Saanvi: It makes me feel kind of—well, I guess that's how they would feel if I kept talking about all these [Hindu] fables in front of them. They would want me to stop because they would think it's weird and that's why I want them to stop. And I don't want to say anything because that might be rude. I don't want to be rude.

For Saanvi, 'being Indian' involved eating spicy foods and practicing a non-Judeo-Christian religion, both of which marked her as different from some of her classmates at school. Valuing science and scientific reason, she disliked when her classmates used religion to explain natural phenomena. Talk about religion made her uncomfortable, perhaps because it was in part what marked her as 'other.' Above, Saanvi described negotiating feelings of "being different" against how to manage this difference. To manage religious difference between her and her classmates, 2nd grader Saanvi engaged in a strategy that suggests a high level of self-reflexivity:

she effectively limited what she shared with her friends about Hinduism so as to not make them feel as they made her feel.

Saanvi also understood food as a marker of difference. As we sat in her room at a small wooden desk lined with storybooks, she described an incident where she was teased at school which shaped her critical consciousness and what she shared with her non-Indian classmates. Below, I ask her:

> Pangri: So tell me a little more about this being different part.
>
> Saanvi: Well, different as in different foods which might taste a little better than spaghetti and meatballs. First thing, I do not like spaghetti. And I'm vegetarian, so I can't eat meatballs. I get grossed out. Of course I know all Indians aren't like that…[so] when my friends talk about it, I try to get a different subject. I say, 'Yeah, yeah, it's not that.' …So being Indian means that you could be different and have different foods than everybody else. Sometimes my friends ask, 'Why do you like rice so much?' and I say, 'It's 'cause it's my favorite food.' And I can't explain to them that my actual favorite food is lemon rice and we put lemon in rice and mix it up in a bunch of things. I can't tell them, so I simply say rice, which I eat every day, so they might think that I'd be a little *bored* (original emphasis) of it. So that's what being different is about. Not being the same as everybody else. But it is actually a lot more—it's better than being the same.
>
> Pangri: Why do you think that you can't tell them that lemon rice is your favorite?
>
> Saanvi: I'm afraid they might laugh at me if I tell them. They'll laugh. Once in first grade—they give pickles sometimes and when I chopped it up and put it in my rice, they laughed that I had pickles in my rice. And I was telling them to stop and they kept laughing at me, so I had to tell my teacher. So that's why I'm afraid to talk about lemon rice because some of them or one of them might laugh at me again. So I'm not really a fan of that.

Saanvi indicated a level of cultural illiteracy among some of her classmates at school to the point where sharing information about something as basic as her favorite food became uncomfortable and a potential topic for teasing. Being teased about food marked Saanvi as different and she internalized this, leaving an emotional wound which prompted her to manage her bicultural identity and cultural difference by keeping discussions about Indian food and religion to herself when she was around schoolmates. Additionally, these excerpts allowed for a more

insightful analysis of Saanvi's self-portrait. Her face is depicted as angrier than the other portraits, suggesting a level of emotional angst, and likely mirrors how she felt others perceived her. Her drawing, which only took up a third of the page and is located at the very bottom, may also reflect her stated feelings of marginalization. Saanvi's understanding of cultural difference, however, is not unidimensional. She takes pride in cultural differences. She claims the value in her uniqueness by genuinely stating that "it's very nice" and that "it's better than being the same." While she described difference as something that marked her as 'other' and did not often share aspects of her cultural identity with classmates for fear of being teased or making others feel uncomfortable, she also recognized it as something that makes her special.

Like Avani and Riya, other children strongly identified as 'Indian' and with Indian culture and dis-identified as 'American' and with American culture. Yet similar to Saanvi, they did not necessarily integrate markers of cultural or ethnic identity into their self-portraits. This was demonstrated in Nita's self-portrait, featured below, and interview.

Figure 4. Nita's self-portrait.

Nita was a soft-spoken 12 year old. Shy at the dance studio, her mother, Lalitha, described her as incredibly lively when at home. While around her mother, I caught glimpses of Nita's energetic personality; she was more at ease when her mother was present. Lalitha often stood where the waiting room and dance floor met to give me company before and after her daughter's Bollywood and India Fest classes. During one of our conversations with Nita leaning against her, Lalitha mentioned initially wanting to enroll her daughter in dance classes to encourage her to become more outgoing and expressive in public. She specifically chose Bollywood and Kuchipudi so that Nita could gain knowledge and expertise in art forms tied to the 'culture left behind.' In addition to Bollywood, Kuchipudi, and India Fest, Lalitha enrolled Nita in weekly Hinduism and art classes. Nita's interview demonstrated how cultural cultivation both inside and outside of the home shaped how she ethnically, culturally, and nationally identified herself. She concisely alluded to this as we sat on the floor of her room next to a desk which had framed drawing of peacocks from her Indian art class. Though she was born in Wisconsin and raised in the local city suburbs, she saw herself as only 'Indian' and "from India."

> Pangri: If someone asks you, 'Where are you from?' what do you say?
>
> Nita: Well, I say that my parents are from India, so I'm Indian. Sometimes I just say I'm from India because I don't really feel like explaining. A lot of people ask me.
>
> Pangri: So you say you're from India even though you were born in Wisconsin and raised in Florida?
>
> Nita: Yeah.

When asked if she considered herself American, she went further to state "Not really. I'm not American. I'm Indian…My parents tell me a lot of Indian traditions and culture, like the gods and goddesses and stuff and the festivals we celebrate." Nita's interview even suggested that cultural cultivation, specifically Hindu-based activities, contributed to the dominant image of Indians as Hindus who are not and cannot 'be American.' This was exemplified in her statement

later on in the interview that "Americans are Christian." Nita's dis-identification as American went to the extent that she consistently referred to Americans as "they" throughout her interview. She also stated that she *corrects* people who refer to her as 'American.' When asked how she corrected people, Nita said, "I just tell them that I was born and raised here, but my parents are from India. And I would just tell them that I'm not American, I'm Indian." For Nita, who lives in a society that predominantly sees Americans as white, stating that she is from India appeared to be easier than explaining how she can be brown-skinned, celebrate different festivals, *and* be from the U.S. Effectively, her statements reinforced the notion that to 'be American' is to be white and Christian, and to be white and Christian is to 'be American.'

Though Nita saw herself as culturally Indian and often told others that she is from India, her drawing did not consist of any markers uniquely Indian. What is noteworthy, however, is her process of drawing the self-portrait. While Avani and Riya's drawings clearly exhibited strong ethnic and cultural identification, children's portraits, including Nita's and Saanvi's, also reflected notions of 'race' and colorism. The ways in which children's self-portraits reflected colorism and the negotiation of race will be discussed in the following section.

Interpreting colorism

Colorism, the preference for and privileging of lighter skin tones and hair color (Herring, Keith, and Horton 2004), was present in several of the children's self-portraits. There is no doubt that whiteness and lightness is considered a strong form of privilege in the U.S. (Anderson 2015; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Collins 1990; Du Bois 1903; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983). There is also a substantial amount of research that examines the desirability of light skin in India, including its roots and strong legacy which stem from colonization (Glenn 2008; Nadeem 2014; Parameswaran and Kavitha, 2009). Messages about a person's worth being tied to their skin color are ever present

in contemporary Indian culture and consumer culture as a whole. Images linking light skin to an individual's power, attractiveness, happiness, and success are circulated through advertisements of skin-lightening creams, commercials with famous celebrities endorsing these products, and Bollywood movies which commonly portray lighter skinned characters as heroes and heroines. This has helped perpetuate an oppressive internalization of colorism within Indian culture. Colorism places light skin alongside the privileges of success, happiness, innocence, and attractiveness, and dark skin alongside images of failure, sadness, corruption, and undesirability. With colorism having such a stronghold over Indian culture, children of Indian immigrants may very well receive implicit and explicit message from their parents and the Indian media they consume in which light skin is favored. Furthermore, interviews with children suggested that they learned the value of whiteness through experiences of race- and culture-based prejudice and discrimination outside of the home. In the following section, I assert that children's depictions of themselves as having lighter skin and hair is not the product of either simply a "white is right" mentality in the U.S. or the colonial legacy of lightness being linked to power, success, and desirability in India. Instead, I argue that children receive a combination of messages about both the desirability of lightness which is conveyed through their families and the value of whiteness as experienced in their daily lives in the U.S., both of which are reflected in several of their interviews and self-portraits.

Avani and Riya, whose self-portraits are shown in the previous section, exhibited a subtle, yet significant preference for light skin. Displaying cultural and ethnic pride, both identified as 'Indian.' Throughout their interviews each discussed enjoying Bollywood movies and music videos, feeling connected to Indian culture and Hinduism as practiced by their parents and the surrounding Indian community, and actively dis-identified as American. Their drawings reflected

this attachment to Indian culture; both of their portraits showed them wearing a bindi and Riya drew herself wearing a traditional Indian-style top. Their illustrations also clearly demonstrated an internalization of colorism through their preference for peach-color crayons over light brown for their skin tones. Avani has light brown skin and black hair, yet she presented herself in her drawing as having peach skin and brown hair. During Riya's interview, she simultaneously held and drew a line with six crayons ranging from peach to dark brown on the top right corner of the portrait to determine which color to use for her skin tone. Though her skin is light brown, in the end, she, too, chose peach. Avani did not allude to experiencing prejudice or discrimination in school or among her non-Indian peers, however Riya's interview suggested social and cultural boundaries between her and her classmates. Avani's and Riya's portraits and interviews indicated a recognition of the value and desirability of whiteness, and Riya's interview suggests that this value of whiteness may also be informed by feeling 'othered' at school.

Nita's *process* of drawing her self-portrait demonstrated a stronger and more overt negotiation of colorism. Nita's self-portrait was one of the more detailed drawings. Taking more time than the scheduled interview, she spent nearly an hour and a half perfecting the shape of her eyes, flow of hair, colorful shirt, and headband. Soon after completing the formal interview, Lalitha came into Nita's room and sat down on the floor next to us as Nita finished her piece. A few minutes later, Nita proudly handed her self-portrait to me. Though she began her drawing with a dark brown outline for her face and arms, I immediately noticed that she had not colored herself in, leaving her skin white. I was struck by this because Nita has dark brown skin and previously described having a strong sense of pride as Indian and in her Indian cultural heritage. I asked her if she wanted to "leave [her] skin white." Lalitha quickly followed up with, "Why wouldn't you color it in? You have brown skin." Nita reluctantly took her self-portrait back and looked for

shades of brown in the coloring box. She found an orange crayon and started coloring in her face and arms, but quickly decided that she did not like the color. She chose a brown crayon only slightly darker than the orange to lightly shade in the rest of her skin. Her final product depicts her with having a much lighter shade of brown skin than her actual skin tone. Nita's process of drawing the self-portrait illustrated her reluctance to depict herself as having brown, let alone dark brown skin. Her process of deciding to portray herself as having white/light skin also suggested that while she identified as Indian and had pride in her connection to Indian culture, she simultaneously learned from interactions with her peers and/or family and started to internalize that lightness is favored over darkness.

Children's self-portraits also reflected a relationship between experiences of discrimination and how lightly they drew themselves. Tara, for example, was a 12 year old with long black wavy hair and dark brown skin who wore black thick-rimmed glasses. Enrolled in the teen Bollywood class, she was mild-mannered and described herself as a bubbly, smart girl who loved dance and soccer. She was the newest member of the teen Bollywood group and was quiet at the studio, but very friendly. As a Catholic, she stated feeling more strongly connected with Indian culture than American culture, specifically describing her enthusiasm for celebrating Indian cultural festivals with her local church and taking Bollywood and Bharatanatyam dance classes. She also discussed having closer friendships with other Catholic Indians she met through her church. While sitting at her family's dining room table munching on chevda (traditional Indian snack mix), Tara described an incident in which she and her other Indian friend were teased at her predominantly white private Catholic school:

> The year that I started at [a private catholic school], I used to get made fun of for being Indian. They used to call me and my friend who plays soccer 'curry girls.' They used to make fun of us for being Indian because I think that they weren't used to Indians being around them, so they used to make fun of us for being Indian…it got out of hand and once

> we had to go and tell the principal that it's not right. One time this guy…said that [my friend] smelled like curry which is not true 'cause she just didn't. And they used to make up fake rumors like that about us being Indian…That hurts because they made fun of us for being Indian and that's not right…We went and told the principal…It stopped after that because I think [the kids] realized that it actually hurt our feelings. Because most people make fun of us because they think it's a joke. They think it doesn't hurt other people's feelings…

This is likely not the first time Tara or her family have encountered criticisms about "smelling like curry." Toward the end of my visit at their home, Tara's mother, Ramya, eagerly invited me to look at the new garden she planted in their backyard. She showed me the vibrant palm trees, fresh herbs, and sweet-smelling flowers which blossomed along the back fence. But I was more surprised and intrigued by the kitchen (including a stove and table for cutting fruits and vegetables) they had set up under the covered portion of their backyard. As we stood outside, Ramya explained with a slight smile on her face and her arms crossed in front of her body that they had a stove constructed outside so that their house did not smell like Indian spices. Taken with Tara's experiences of being teased and other interviews in which Indian food is regarded as a negative marker of cultural difference, the kitchen outside revealed acquiescence and self-policing of behaviors inside the home to preemptively minimize criticisms, a point which will be further developed in the next chapter.

And below is Tara's self-portrait:

Figure 5. Tara's self-portrait.

In contrast to Saanvi and Nita, religion is not what marked Tara as 'other,' but rather her cultural and racialized background. Tara described her school as having very little racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, stating that out of a total population of 200 students "…there are barely any African Americans. There's only 5 Indians in my school." Within the majority-white setting, it was Tara's cultural heritage, made hyper-visible because of her dark brown skin, which was mocked. In combination with her experience of being teased, Tara's self-portrait, which shows her with significantly lighter skin and medium brown hair and eyes, reflected her recognition that whiteness as both normalized and desirable.

Similar to Nita and Tara, Dipika's self-portrait demonstrated a reluctance to visually represent herself as having dark skin. As mentioned above, Dipika's cultural cultivation included Bollywood, Bharatanatyam, India Fest, and Hinduism classes, and learning Tamil from her mother at home. She was an intelligent, outspoken, and playful 8 year old, and described herself as "creative," "smart," and "stylish." She had short thick black hair and dark brown skin. Yet, she deliberately chose not to illustrate herself as a brown-skinned girl. The following is an exchange

Dipika, Aisha, and I had while sitting on the dance studio floor at the start of the interview about Dipika's self-portrait:

> Pangri: So first thing, I'd like you to draw a picture of yourself.
>
> Dipika: Should I draw it the same skin color, or can I draw it any skin color?
>
> Pangri: Whatever you want. Whatever you'd like to do.
>
> Dipika: (scans the crayon box) Is there a peach? (She quickly spots the peach crayon and grabs it)
>
> Pangri: Why did you pick peach?
>
> Dipika: Because if I do brown, when I do it, it colors dark, so you can't really see the eyes and the mouth.
>
> Aisha: (pointing to her arm) I'm a little light. See? I'm a little lighter than her?
>
> Dipika: Yeah, I'm a little darker than her. 'Cause my mom is a little light.
>
> Aisha: She's like, peach.
>
> Dipika: Yeah, she's peach. Not all the way peach, but.

And below is Dipika's self-portrait:

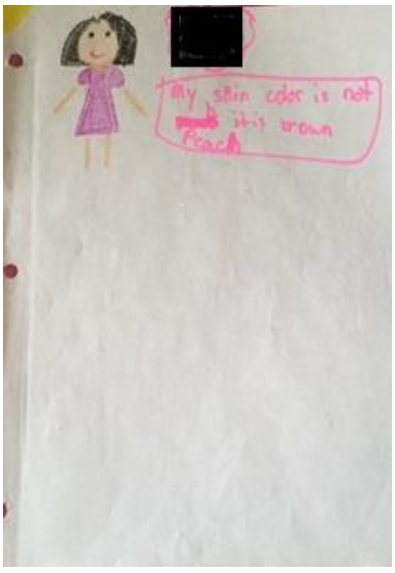

Figure 6. Dipika's self-portrait.

It is also important to discuss a verbal exchange I had with Dipika and Aisha's father, Vijay, after the interview because it provides additional context to this self-portrait for analysis.

As the girls waited for their father to pick them up, Aisha stayed on the dance floor area to practice the new Bollywood moves I had taught her earlier in the week while Dipika sat on a swivel chair spinning and dangling her feet in the common area near the studio entrance. When the girls' father arrived, he paused behind the glass partition to watch Aisha finish her song. After gazing lovingly at Aisha practicing, he asked how Dipika was performing in class. He said that he assumed she would have a hard time with the steps "because of her body," implying that she was overweight and would not be able to pick up choreography. Upon hearing her father, Dipika's entire body shrunk into the chair and she sat still. In an attempt to offset what her father had said, I told Vijay that Dipika picked up new movements quite nicely, remembered all of the steps, and danced beautifully in class, but it was clear that Dipika was hurt and embarrassed by her father's remarks on her body. In addition to this, during her interview one week later, Divya, the girls' mother, described specific measures she wanted to take to lighten Dipika's skin, including restricting her from playing outside during high sun and applying an Ayurvedic mixture of ground turmeric and water which she claimed would "freshen" Dipika's skin. The exchange with the girls at the start of the interview, Vijay's comments after the interview, and Divya's desire to lighten her daughter's skin provided insight into Dipika's self-portrait. During the interview, Dipika drew her facial features first and then lightly shaded in her face with the peach crayon. She also drew her arms and legs as sticks. Her self-portrait takes up less than ¼ of the page and is positioned at the top left corner, occupying very little space. Moreover, she added a caveat to her self-portrait which stated, "My skin color is not peach it is brown." Dipika likely writes this because she feels that she must explain why she has chosen such a drastically different color to represent herself. Statements about Aisha and Divya having lighter or "peach" skin also signify a valuing of lighter skin tones over darker ones. Dipika received messages from her family which negatively critiqued her body and

skin color. Taken together, her self-portrait appears to represent an idealized version of how she either wants to or thinks she should look.

Dipika and Aisha mentioned skin color as an important marker of difference throughout the interview. Aisha consistently made comments about having lighter skin than her sister. Yet both regarded having brown skin as a major aspect of 'being Indian.' For example, below the girls explain what they and their friends share in common:

> Pangri: So what are some things you have in common with your friends?
>
> Dipika: Indian friends—
>
> Aisha: Indian friends have a lot of brown on them.
>
> Dipika: Yeah, like some of us, we're kind of dark. Dark-skinned, not light-skinned. Not reeeaally light-skinned. Like, most of us are dark-skinned.
>
> Aisha: Yeah, but I'm not.

For these two girls, brown skin is an important marker of 'being Indian' and indicates a sense of shared identity and experiences. However, Aisha distanced herself from being recognized as having dark skin by stating several times that she had light skin and often contrasted her own, which is only a shade or two lighter, with Dipika's. In the previous section, Aisha identified as Indian and dis-identified as American. Yet her emphasis on having light skin suggested that she was also learning and internalizing values from her family which place an importance of light skin over darker skin.

Dipika and Aisha received messages about colorism, but not only from their family. Messages which problematized dark skin and prized light skin, or at the very least regarded light skin as hegemonic, were reinforced through prejudicial and discriminatory interactions at school. For example, when asked about what she likes about 'being American' Dipika's first response was:

> Well, something I don't like about being American is that sometimes there are mean girls at school. They're really mean. And you can't figure out what to do. Sometimes they do—you know the face that they do that's really mean? Sometimes they do that. It's frustrating. Sometimes I get a little angry about it. I just run away and go somewhere else…

And below is an excerpt from Divya's interview which described an instance in which Dipika was bullied at school for her skin color:

> Pangri: Have the kids ever experienced any kind of prejudice or discrimination?
>
> Divya: Uh, maybe one time. I think sometime someone told Dipika, 'Are you African? I don't think you are Indian. You look like an African.' And they told her, 'Don't sit with us. You go play somewhere else.' So we escalated that to the teacher and she talked to her parents. As adults we can manage, but they are very, very small, right? They may not know how to behave or how to take all this. And other kids also, they don't know how to talk. So it's challenging. I would say it's hard for our kids…They have to play with other kids and we don't know how they behave and what mentality they have about our kids. It's tough for them. They have lot of American friends. But this was one incident she had in first grade.

Dipika has learned from her family and classmates that dark skin is undesirable and designates her as 'other.' She has experienced being racialized as "African" and has been on the receiving end of overt racial prejudice and discrimination. Dipika felt that girls at school were mean to her and did not know why, and Divya acknowledges that her children may not know how to interpret or deal with such blatant racial prejudice and discrimination. Yet at the same time, in saying that her children "may not know how to behave," Divya implies that some type of impression management is necessary in order to anticipate and reduce such instances of racialized tension. Perhaps, in part, Divya sees lightening Dipika's skin as a protective measure she can engage to minimize the prejudice and discrimination her daughter experiences at school. Through interactions with her family and experiences of prejudice and discrimination at school, Dipika has come to learn that whiteness is the accepted norm and lightness is valued. Her efforts to manage her dark brown skin within a family and society that favor light skin and whiteness is reflected in her self-portrait which depicts her as white and a written statement confessing her actual skin color.

In contrast to Dipika, Tara, Nita, and several others interviewed, not all of the children who exhibited strong cultural and ethnic pride illustrated themselves as having much lighter skin and hair. Sahira's and Saanvi's self-portraits are clear examples of this. Saanvi's self-portrait, pictured in the previous section, depicted her as having significantly darker skin than her actual tone, which is light brown. Sahira's self-portrait, which is featured below, offered a more accurate representation of her actual skin tone:

Figure 7. Sahira's self-portrait.

Like the children mentioned above, Saanvi's and Sahira's parents practiced cultural cultivation and both girls exhibited pride in their ethnic and cultural identities. Through Bollywood classes and learning about Hinduism from her mother, Saanvi developed an interest in Bollywood dance, Hindu fables, and enjoyed eating spicy Indian cuisine. Similarly, 12-year old Sahira, self-described as confident, bubbly, and very social, was enrolled in Bollywood, Kuchipudi, and Bharatanatyam dance classes and participated in India Fest. She also volunteered with a group of mostly children of Indian immigrants who organized opportunities to feed the tri-county homeless population. Participation in these activities helped Sahira develop a strong Indian social network

and an affinity for classical and contemporary Indian dance forms and Hindu festivals. Though cultural cultivation helped children develop knowledge about Indian culture and pride in their cultural identity, it did not encourage them to represent their skin tones or hair accurately. Of the twelve children interviewed, Saanvi is the only one to portray herself as having skin darker than her actual tone and Sahira is the only one to have accurately represented her skin color.

Additionally, others who mentioned or alluded to experiencing prejudice or discrimination based on their cultural background, which was highlighted because of their brown skin, deliberately depicted themselves as having significantly lighter skin and hair. Saanvi and Sahira have each experienced culture- and race-based tensions at school. As mentioned above, Saanvi experienced feeling culturally 'othered,' especially in terms of food and religion. Sahira had a different experience. Joining her mother and me on the living room couch during a conversation about racism against Indians, Sahira adamantly expressed discontent about the "model minority" stereotype being placed on her by classmates. Below she said:

> Like, they have a stereotype at school, 'If you're Indian or you're Asian, then you're smart.' So if you get a B or less than an A on your thing, they're like, 'Oh my god! Sahira, you got a B?! Oh, I'm going to fail it!' like that…That hurts my feelings. I don't like people thinking that I'm the best or feeling like, when people say, 'Oh, you failed it? Then I'm going to fail it too' 'cause I don't like too much high hopes…Because you're Indian, and then if you don't follow something, they're like, 'Oh my god, you're Indian! You're supposed to follow the rules. You're not supposed to break them!'

Sahira had high expectations placed on her by peers regarding achieving good grades and being obedient. Such stated expectations are prejudicial and demonstrate a constraining consequence of the "model minority" stereotype because they effectively limit what constitutes acceptable behavior for people based on a cultural or racialized background. Yet, despite messages which suggest more available behavioral variability for non-Indians, Sahira still regards herself as "both Indian and American" and confidently represents herself with medium-dark brown skin in

her self-portrait. Collectively, interviews with Saanvi and Sahira demonstrated that they have developed a sense of acceptance and likely pride as brown-skinned children. Perhaps they visually depict themselves as brown also because that is, in part, what marks them as different and they recognize that they cannot, nor do they want to, minimize this aspect of their personal identity.

Throughout this section, I have demonstrated that children of Indian immigrants are receiving messages from their families and interactions with the outside community, particularly their peers at school, that lightness is preferred and whiteness is hegemonic. For many, there was a correlation between feeling culturally 'othered' or being teased and how they visually represented themselves. Several children who described such experiences reflected varying degrees of colorism. They visually depicted themselves as having significantly lighter skin, likely suggesting an internalization and reflection of how they either want or think they should look. Two of the girls, however, drew themselves as having dark brown skin. Though a majority of their extracurricular activities were geared toward cultural cultivation and they experienced prejudice and teasing, just as many of the other children, their self-portraits suggested a rejection of colorism and acceptance and pride in their identity as brown-skinned children.

Discussion

This chapter makes a valuable methodological contribution to socialization literature by triangulating observations at the studio, interviews with children, and their self-portraits to better understand the complex ways that children make sense of the world around them and negotiate their (bi)cultural identities, rather than relying on adults' accounts, which is much more common in sociological research. Cultural cultivation certainly fostered a strong sense of identity as Indian among most of the children interviewed. This was reflected as children integrated markers of Indian or Hindu identity into their self-portraits, such as wearing a kurta (a traditional Indian top)

or depicting themselves with a bindi. Moreover, many children spoke of feeling comfortable with and knowledgeable about Indian culture as their families practiced it in the U.S. They described having a solid understanding of "what Indian culture is," which largely referred to knowledge of the symbolism behind the cultural and religious festivals they celebrated with their families. Efforts that their parents made to cultivate cultural knowledge resulted in a great attachment to Indian culture.

At the same time, interviews suggested that this ethno-cultural socialization process simultaneously worked as a cultural and social boundary-making practice by implicitly and explicitly emphasizing a distinction between immigrants and their children as Indian from other non-Indians who they more commonly regarded as American. In other words, the development of such a strong connection with Indian culture through cultural cultivation was often accompanied with a recognition and an internalization of the assumption that to 'be American' means to also be white and Christian. Therefore, children often viewed 'being Indian' and 'being American' as distinct identities, only one of which they could claim, and Indian and American cultures were regarded as separate. Accordingly, children's identification as Indian and with Indian culture frequently occurred alongside a strong dis-identification as American and with American culture.

Additionally, children described several experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and feeling culturally 'othered.' Many had interactions with their peers in which they were perceived as different and that they do not quite belong because of the religion they practiced, foods they consumed, and/or skin color. I argue that many of the interviewed children responded to this by beginning to forge what Portes and Rumbaut (2001) call a "reactive ethnicity." Reactive ethnicity refers to connecting with and fortifying ties to one's ethnic heritage in the face of perceived prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion. This chapter demonstrates that these children are

reinforcing cultural and social boundaries between themselves as an Indian ethno-cultural group and non-Indians who they largely perceived as American. Findings contribute to literatures on racial and ethnic minorities and socialization by emphasizing that although Asian Indians are often stereotyped as being part of the "model minority," children of Indian immigrants are often treated as though they do not belong. In response, several of the interviewed kids learned at a young age to (re)assert their identity as Indian in an attempt to create a sense of belonging and shared identity.

It is important to highlight that cultural cultivation did not always lead to a strong rejection of identifying as American for all children. Instead, children such as Dipika, Saanvi, and Sahira regarded themselves as both Indian and American. Additionally, while cultural cultivation commonly fostered a strong sense of ethnic and cultural pride and sense of solidarity among the Indian community, not all children, like Khushi, developed such deep attachments to Indian culture, their identity as Indian, or solidarity with the surrounding Indian community. In contrast to the consistent narrative that ethnic and cultural socialization unquestioningly facilitates positive wellbeing, my data calls attention to how such processes have the capacity to elicit feelings of guilt and shame among children who do not feel a strong connection to an ethnic culture or who feel that they did not meet their parents' expectations. Interviews like Khushi's highlight a tension between expectations and feeling that one is not meeting them that has yet to be explored in socialization literature.

Interviews and self-portrait data also revealed the complex ways children negotiated their identity and sense of self within the dominant racio-ethnic hierarchy. Data illustrated that children received messages which privilege light/white skin over dark skin from both their families and instances of prejudice and discrimination in school. Hence, children started to learn and internalize at a young age that light skin is preferable and whiteness is the acceptable norm. Additionally, it

is important to recognize the consumption of Indian media as a component of cultural cultivation. Indian media, which consistently favors light skin, likely plays a significant role in reinforcing the notion that lighter skin is associated with goodness, happiness, and purity. These together have resulted in a common theme of children depicting themselves with significantly lighter skin. Furthermore, data demonstrated a strong correlation between children's experiences of prejudice or exclusion and portraying themselves as having lighter skin. Within a heavily racialized society that is influenced by colorism and racial hierarchies, these illustrations likely reflect how the interviewed children either want to or think they should look.

The children described in this chapter are responding to the multi-faceted gazes placed upon them, informing how they construct a sense of identity and belonging. For many, cultural cultivation helped forge a strong connection to Indian culture and their identity as Indian. While children emphasized their identity as Indian through displaying cultural markers and cultural knowledge, their brown skin often rendered them as 'other' and/or 'not American.' Some children internalized and reinforced this distinction by engaging in boundary-making strategies through which they verbally identified as Indian and dis-identified as American. Children also mentioned being culturally 'othered,' which was likely made hyper-visible because of their brown skin. Correspondingly, their identification as 'Indian' occurred alongside their growing understanding of the value of whiteness and colorism, suggesting that they are learning to emphasize a cultural identity over a racialized identity. This reflects a broader trend among the interviewed Asian Indian parents of highlighting an ethnic or cultural identity over a racialized identity, which can ultimately serve as the foundation for minimizing race-related prejudice and discrimination.

Finally, the preoccupation and commitment with fitting South Asians, including Asian Indians, squarely into the "honorary white" (Bonilla-Silva 2009) category within the racial

hierarchy has consequences. Several of the children involved in this study faced degrees of prejudice, discrimination, colorism, and being 'othered' that will affect their psychological well-being. Labels such as "model minority" or "honorary white" minimize the painful experiences of prejudice and discrimination of these children and will continue to obscure the pervasive effects of racial domination, a theme which will be expanded upon in the context of adult participants in the next chapter.

Chapter Five:

"Due to Our Mistakes…":

Racial Domination and the Construction of the 'Good Minority'

March 2015

It was after my interview with 8 year old Avani that her mother, Laxmi, and I had an illuminating conversation about racism within the workplace. Like Avani, Laxmi was easygoing and made light-hearted conversation at Naach. However, in the privacy of her living room which had a leather couch and a picture of an intricately woven Taj Mahal on navy blue velvet as the room's centerpiece, Laxmi candidly described her frustration about racial (micro)aggressions at her research analyst position at a nearby medical research institute. With keen awareness of how racism pushes people away from jobs in which they would otherwise excel, Laxmi explained that the environment was so racially hostile that not only had all of her black and Latino co-workers sought out positions elsewhere, but she and another Indian woman were the only two people of color left in her office. Laxmi even likened her white co-workers' make-up to wearing masks saying that their "painted on smiling faces" were a superficial attempt to conceal the upsetting statements they made, and stated that she and her Indian colleague regularly felt "uncomfortable" working in the office. She looked forward to completing her online M.A. nursing program in hopes that she could move on to a different position. Yet, when asked about individual experiences of "prejudice" and "discrimination," Laxmi said that she had none because she worked quietly and diligently. Taken back by this, I regrettably did not push this further during our brief discussion. Still, I wondered why she did not make connections between the office environment, regularly feeling "uncomfortable" by co-workers' statements, and instances of prejudice and discrimination. My hunch was that this was somehow related to the perception of Asian Indians as a compliant "model minority." I needed to interrogate this further.

My conversation with Laxmi was unique specifically because of how frank she was about prejudice and discrimination permeating her work environment. Laxmi did not shy away from the topic of racism, unlike several of the other families involved in this study. Yet, our discussion highlighted important limitations to Laxmi's perceptions of how she was affected by "prejudice" and "discrimination." As reflected above as well as in each of the other in-depth interviews, Indian immigrant parents frequently minimized their own individual experiences of prejudice and

discrimination. Treating racism as a taboo subject, most were reluctant to discuss how prejudice and discrimination affected their lives. Taking it a step further than Laxmi, many even interpreted instances of prejudice and discrimination as external efforts to correct their own inadequacies. Analyzing this theme from a critical perspective, the following chapter explores Indian families' perceptions of being a diligent and obedient minority to draw out a lesser discussed, but distinctively important implication of the model minority stereotype. I argue that self-perceptions of being a model minority can stifle the willingness and/or ability to recognize how structural racism impacts participants' daily lives and frequently contributes to a reluctance in discussing race and racism. Moreover, as exhibited in the following in-depth interviews, the families involved in this study discounted structural racism in exchange for individualistic explanations of inequality that emphasized personal inadequacies. Focusing on qualitative data collected with adults, this chapter explores how an individualistic frame manifests itself and discusses the affective considerations that shape their ideological positions. Ultimately, I argue that Asian Indians' investment in individualistic explanations of structural racism is both the product and reproducer of racial domination and white supremacy.

Critiquing the "Model Minority" Myth

The model minority stereotype originally arose out of and persists because of its utility in discounting the relevance of racism. By promoting an idealized example of a minority group that has been successful, their trajectories are frequently used to suggest that laziness, and not racism, is responsible for enduring racial inequality (Prashad 2000; Wu 2014). People who subscribe to the model minority myth (D'Souza 1995; Sullivan 2017) often overlook persistent and high levels of economic and educational inequalities present within and between groups racially classified as "Asian" (Lee 2015). They also neglect to take into consideration two key historical facts: 1. How

the U.S. quest for world leadership post-WWII necessitated a national revamping of how Asians are perceived to demonstrate the *success* of its democratic ideals (Wu 2014), and 2. The role that immigration policies have played in socially engineering the Asian demographic in the U.S. (Prashad 2012). While Asian exclusionary acts passed in the late 1800s and early 1900s either severely limited or excluded emigration from Asian countries (Takaki 1993), the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the Immigration Act of 1990 gave strong preference to new immigrants with high levels of education and professional skills, demographically shaping the socioeconomic status and education levels of non-refugee Asians allowed to enter the U.S. (Kibria 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Prashad 1998; Wu 2014). The selective immigration of highly educated Asians helped reinforce the illusion that not only have Asians "risen above" historical structural discrimination to become a high achieving minority group, but that racism is a systemic inequality that can be overcome with hard work.

Despite efforts to configure the (South) Asian demographic, prejudice and discrimination still persists contributing to inequality and physical and symbolic violence. For example, Vijay Prashad (1998, 2000) describes how South Asian immigrants have often been excluded from jobs which match their professional skillset, placing many in high-risk occupations (e.g. taxi drivers, liquor and convenience store workers). Anju Kaduvettoor-Davidson and Arpana Inman's (2013) research highlights that the stress associated with prejudice, discrimination, and racial stereotypes is resulting in an increase in depression and anxiety among South Asians. And Deepa Iyer's (2015) work emphasizes the need to recognize and address post-9/11 backlash and the increasing violence and workplace discrimination against (those perceived to be) South Asians, Arabs, Muslims, and Sikhs. This scholarship draws attention to the ways in which the model minority stereotype and the myth of "overcoming racism" grossly obscures lived inequalities. Moreover, racialized

stereotypes of the model minority often attribute socioeconomic mobility and educational attainment to "[insert Asian ethnic group] cultural values," further pitting Asians against other racialized groups. This effectively limits one's ability to recognize similarities in the struggle against racial prejudices and discrimination as well as our understanding of the reach of racial domination and white supremacy.

Critical race and ethnicity scholarship has argued that the ostensibly straightforward and positive model minority myth has damaging consequences (Bow 2012; Dhingra 2016; Lee 2009; Wu 2014). Collectively, this literature offers six main critiques about and implications of the model minority stereotype: 1. It is confining and limits what constitutes *acceptable behavior* (Lee 2009); 2. It overlooks prejudice and discrimination, and conceals persistent inequalities (Espiritu 2004; Lee 2015); 3. Positive perceptions of Asians as intelligent, ambitious, and hardworking are also commonly met with prejudices about the racialized group as cunning, selfish, self-isolating, and lacking social warmth or kindness (Maddux, Galinsky, Cuddy, and Polifroni 2008); 4. Coexisting alongside the stereotype is the threat of 'yellow peril' and the belief that Asians are "taking over," especially when recognized as successful in an industry (Okihiro 1994); 5. The perception of "Asian success" is often used as a tool to justify the inaccurate argument that Asians are "proof" that systemic and structural racism no longer serve as barriers to educational and socioeconomic success (Park, Martinez, Cobb, Park, and Wong 2015); and 6. The stress associated with accommodating or resisting stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination is manifesting itself in increased levels of depression and anxiety (Kaduvettoor-Davidson & Inman 2013; Dhingra 2016). These studies demonstrate the importance of critically analyzing seemingly positive racial stereotypes because they are evidence of racism rather than evidence of racial progress.

In this chapter, I outline an additional dimension of the model minority myth. I argue that because of dominant perceptions that Asians have "overcome racial barriers," the internalization of the model minority stereotype and perceptions of being a "good minority" can lead (South) Asians to minimize or entirely dismiss the importance, hurtfulness, and/or impact of racially offensive encounters. The minimization or dismissal of such encounters can further elicit and reinforce the notion, both within and outside of this minority community, that South Asians cannot possibly experience race- or ethnicity-based prejudice or discrimination because they are a well-regarded minority. The myth of the model minority is so pervasive that rather than recognizing prejudice and discrimination as a product of systemic and structural racism, such offenses are regarded as products of individual inadequacies. While the Indian families involved in this study feel as though they benefit from "positive" attributions of being a "model minority," categorization into this group required that they minimize race and racism. This reluctance to identify race and acknowledge race-based offenses as products of racism combined with the belief that prejudice and discrimination are a result of individual inadequacies further maintains the widespread invisibility of Asian Indians' experiences and ultimately helps perpetuate white supremacy.

To demonstrate interviewed Indian families' self-perceptions of being a model minority or a "good minority" and highlight the consequences of this internalization, I divide the following data analysis into three sections. The first section discusses the "positive" stereotypes that Indian interviewees perceive about their racialized group. The second section examines how racial offenses are minimized and highlights how race-based offenses are interpreted not structural, but rather as a product of individual inadequacies and mistakes. Finally, the third section outlines how interpreting racial offences as a response to their individual mistakes and inadequacies led

immigrant parents to self-police their and their children's actions in an attempt to preemptively minimize these occurrences.

Findings

"Positive" stereotypes as affective capital

Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman (2015) introduces the concept of *affective capital* in her work on racial socialization among Brazilian families and defines it as "the emotional and psychological resources that a person gains from being positively evaluated and supported" (5). She uses this term to demonstrate how experiences of positive affect distributed differently across race and phenotype can contribute to and reproduce interpersonal relationships, which ultimately help sustain a racial social system. Among the families she interviewed, Hordge-Freeman found that darker skin and facial features and hair recognized as African were commonly regarded as undesirable and something to be "corrected" whereas lighter skin, facial features recognized as European, and straighter hair were more closely linked with instances of positive affirmation which in turn contributed to increased self-esteem and constructive relationships with people. This affirming treatment was also more likely to help develop "personal resources linked to greater creativity, resilience, and emotional well-being" (5). Similar to the affective capital from which her lighter skinned participants benefitted, qualitative findings demonstrated that Indian families recognized that the support and positive affirmations of themselves and their children were connected to stereotypes of Asians, Asian Indians, and the model minority. Whereas racialized groups are commonly stigmatized, interviewed parents, such as Simran below, described feeling that Indians were a well-regarded minority from which they derived a high level of affective capital. We sat next to each other with Ajeet on the other seated at the head of their pink-

tableclothed dining table as Simran spoke with buoyancy about the positive perceptions of Indians. The jovial mother of two, Suki and Aman, stated:

> I think in fact the prejudice is changing toward our favor. So they feel that we are Asian, that we are very educationally gifted. Even if my son would be a (laughs) duh, or my child would be a duh. But just being Indian is turning out to be a good brand label, rather than having a bad bias. So it's something to be proud of these days, I feel….Intelligent. Indians is being synonymous with intelligent. Which is very—you feel pride.

Simran acknowledges that while Asians and Asian Indians may have previously encountered prejudice and discrimination, there is a recognizable shift in how they are currently perceived. She feels that perceptions of Indians as intelligent are becoming increasingly pervasive, regardless of whether the assumption is accurate or not, and therefore feels a strong sense of pride in her identity as Indian. She sees her racial and ethnic "brand label" as overwhelmingly positive and does not acknowledge any negative attitudes or "bad bias" held toward Indians. Simran views the model minority stereotype as it relates to Indians as a form of affective capital. Moreover, Simran does not discuss how the myth can also be confining when she, her children, or others that she knows do not meet these expectations of high intelligence.

Divya, a software engineer who mentioned in a previous chapter feeling tired and overworked with her responsibilities of the "second shift" and cultural cultivation, elaborated upon positive affirmations of Indians. But this came after she described in hushed tones, as her kids were playing on the nearby couch, an incident where her eldest daughter, Dipika, was told by classmates that she could not play with them because she looked "African." When asked if she had ever experienced prejudice or discrimination, Divya quickly moved on to emphasize the affective capital she and other Indians received as a result of their racial designation. She responded to the question by saying:

> Oh no, I don't think so. If we go outside, they really admire us and appreciate us a lot and give us lot of respect. Because if you see, they don't see any negatives on us. …crime-

> wise, we are not a threat, no. They all believe that we are very well-talented, so they give that respect to us I can tell you that 100% for sure. They believe that we are very smart and they all ask me, 'How you learned in your childhood?' 'How you are so hardworking and smart?' So they are appreciative and give us lot of respect.

Divya's description of the affective capital that she received included being "admired," "appreciated," and "respected" because of her status as Indian. Like Simran's attitudes above, Divya stated that as a well-regarded minority, there were no negative perceptions of Indians. Instead, she felt that she and the Indian community in general were praised for being "well-talented," "hardworking," and intelligent. Divya appreciated, accepted, and internalized these positive affirmations of Indians as intelligent and having a good work ethic. For Divya and Simran, these perceptions and the resulting affective capital appeared to overshadow any recognition of race-based ill-treatment. This is particularly noteworthy for Divya as she described encountering negative stereotypes of Indians in the workplace, a point which will be expanded upon in the third section. Additionally, the questions posed at the end of her quote about how she learned to be "so hardworking and smart" suggested that she was confronted with the assumption that she is successful because of her cultural upbringing. Here, Divya accepted and internalized this praise as being a product of fixed "Indian cultural values" rather than the financial, social, and cultural capital she had and developed both growing up in India and after moving to the U.S. or the immigration policies which gave preference to immigrants with high levels of education and "priority workers" with an expertise in Information Technology (The Immigration Act of 1990).

Similar to Divya and Simran, Nisha, an IT consultant and mother of Sahira, viewed the model minority stereotypes about Indians as positive. Like Simran, in exchange for this affective capital, Nisha underestimated how expectations of high academic achievement and obedience limited what was considered to be acceptable behavior for her daughter. Moreover, Nisha had

considered how racialized stereotypes about intelligence and ability "[denied] people their sense of being seen as individuals above and beyond their group membership" (Czopp, Kay, & Cheryan, 2015: 455). Nisha, who had been subdued because of her exhaustion from the day, was jolted when Sahira, her bubbly and outspoken 12 year old daughter, pointed out how confined she felt by the model minority stereotype. Sahira was in the kitchen doing homework when I asked Nisha if her daughter had ever experienced prejudice or discrimination. Upon hearing her name, Sahira quickly joined us in the living room. She sat on the empty adjacent brown leather loveseat to hear her mother's response before chiming in. Below is our conversation:

> Pangri: (to Nisha) To your knowledge, has Sahira ever experienced prejudice or discrimination?
>
> Sahira: (runs from the kitchen and sits down)
>
> Nisha: I haven't asked because—(turns to her daughter and whispers) Have you ever experienced something that is racist or discrimination?
>
> Sahira: (quietly asks her mom) Can I say it?
>
> Nisha: (eyes widen with concern) Yeah.
>
> Sahira: Like, they have a stereotype at school, 'If you're Indian or you're Asian, that you're smart.' So if you get a B or less than an A on your thing, they're like, 'Oh my god! Sahira, you got a B?! Oh, I'm going to fail it!' like that.
>
> Nisha: (frustrated and abrupt) Girl! But that's good, Sahira. (Gently) Did you experience something that hurt your feelings?
>
> Sahira: Yeah! That hurt my feelings!
>
> Nisha: (perplexed) Why?
>
> Sahira: I don't like thinking that I'm the best or feeling like, when people say, 'Oh, you failed it? Then I'm going to fail it, too' 'cause I don't like too much high hopes…Because you're Indian and then if you don't follow something, they say 'Oh my god, you're Indian! You're supposed to follow the rules. You're not supposed to break them!'
>
> Nisha: (continues to look puzzled as Sahira explains)

Prior to Sahira's explanation, Nisha had not recognized the negative impact of the model minority stereotype. Even as her daughter explained feeling pressure because her friends expected

her to always do well on tests and be obedient at school, Nisha appeared to have a hard time understanding why these racialized high expectations were an added stressor for Sahira. In fact, Nisha's singularly positive interpretation of the model minority stereotype prevented her from seeing it as anything but affective capital. As a result, the seemingly positive affirmations overshadowed her recognition of not only how confining these stereotypical expectations are for Sahira, but also how it can result in feelings of envious prejudice, meaning respect alongside resentment, among her peers. Moreover, the fact that Nisha asked whether her daughter has experienced prejudice or discrimination in hushed tones, despite the three of us being alone in her living room during the home visit, reflected a hesitation and reluctance to talk about discrimination, a theme further discussed in the following section. This exchange between Nisha and Sahira suggested that discussions about prejudice and discrimination are shied away from. It is likely that the kind of racial socialization taking place within their family is a strategy of silence which can result in Sahira feeling uneasy, but still unsure of how to deal with racism. This strategy of silence alongside viewing benevolent prejudice as affective capital can perpetuate the cycle of not recognizing or ignoring racial stereotypes as forms of racial prejudice and structural discrimination.

Don't take it to heart: Minimizing the impact of (micro)aggressions

Singularly positive interpretations of the model minority stereotype as affective capital were also met with Indian parents often minimizing the impact of racial offenses they experienced. Stated differently, because it feels good to be admired, their investment in these positive feelings led them to trivialize their experiences of racism. Anira, an insurance agent and financial planner who works from home, expressed this idea most succinctly when asked about whether she experiences prejudice and discrimination. Though typically impeccable in action and word, in a humorously dismissive way, she responded, "I guess it will be there. We just don't care!"

Anira's husband, Anand, a light-hearted and good-humored computer analyst, shared her perspective. Sitting on the edge of the couch leaning toward me, he explained:

> You can feel for everything, but you have to take it easy (laughs). If you take it easy or you are easy-going person, you will not take it that bad...Even in the office. I am an American citizen, too, but they say, 'You Indians are coming.' That kind of thing I hear… Yeah, that type of comments they speak. But they might be saying it for fun. I don't know what is in their mind. I don't care. As long as I don't let that type of small comments—you know, sometimes I even support and say, 'Yeah, you know we are smarter than you. That's why we do that.' I say that too sometimes.

For Anand, responding in an "easy-going" way and not expending energy thinking about and responding to racial offenses were key to emotionally withstanding prejudicial statements. He suggested this strategy of minimization as a coping mechanism and implied that people whose feelings are hurt by prejudicial or discriminatory statements, or "feel for everything," were too sensitive. This does not mean that such comments did not bother Anand. Rather, he was still miffed by the assumption that he was a foreigner who did not belong here, despite being a U.S. citizen, and that for his co-workers, he engendered the threat of 'yellow peril,' as illustrated by the comment "You Indians are coming." Though it was important for him to "take it easy" when confronted with prejudice, Anand did not simply ignore it. His response, "sometimes I even support and say 'Yeah, you know we are smarter than you. That's why we do that,'" reflected resistance through mocking the stereotype. For people like Anand, inverting prejudicial comments related to envious prejudice was a powerful response strategy and coping mechanism.

Whereas Anand emphasized "not caring," while simultaneously demonstrating his annoyance at prejudicial statements he encountered at his job through a tongue-in-cheek response, Nisha's minimization took a different tone. She became visibly tense when the conversation shifted to prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Circumventing a question in which I asked her to

share a specific example of prejudice or discrimination that she had experienced in the workplace, Nisha dismissively said:

> I mean, even if I do, I shake it off. I don't care. I'm like, you know, I have better things to do with life. If one person acts like that, I mean, it's normal. … I accept that. You are in a country away from your country and they are looking at immigrants coming from different parts of the world and if they don't think it's right, I just try to leave them alone and don't interfere. I mean, I would feel it for a second, but I wouldn't take it to heart.

When explicitly asked, Nisha avoided specific examples of prejudice or discrimination at work and stated that instead of giving weight to it, she just "[shook] it off." Yet, there was a sense in which she was convincing herself to have this response when in fact she appeared to feel exhausted from doing so. Like Anand, she said that to be concerned with prejudice and discrimination meant to be concerned with what she, on the surface, considered insignificant and inconsequential. Nisha initially talked about "[shaking] it off" as if she is easily able to ignore the prejudicial statements or discrimination she encountered. She later admitted to being hurt by remarks made at her job, but she still minimized the affect they had on her by stating that she "would feel it for a second, but [she] wouldn't take it to heart." Additionally, this and her statement "If one person acts like that" signaled that she subscribed to individualistic interpretations of prejudice and discrimination, rather than understanding this as a reflection of broader stereotypes, prejudices, and structural discrimination. Moreover, Nisha projected a feeling of resignation and rationalized prejudice as almost deserved when she said, "I accept that. You are in a country away from your country and they are looking at immigrants coming from different parts of the world…" Instead of outwardly defending herself with co-workers, as Anand did, she took the more passive approach of "[leaving] them alone." A common stereotype of (South) Asians is that they are self-isolating and only seek out and maintain strong social networks with other Asians. Nisha's approach of "leave them alone and don't interfere" suggested that staying away from those who made prejudicial remarks was a strategy she used to deal with and minimize future encounters.

People who use a similar response strategy as Nisha could be interpreted as "lacking social warmth," especially to folks who hold the attitude that (South) Asians or other minority groups are unsociable. However, Nisha's efforts to "leave them alone and don't interfere" were part of a coping mechanism necessary to sustain her emotional well-being.

Vena also recognized, but verbally minimized the effect prejudice and discrimination had on her. An occupational therapist, Vena had a cheerful and optimistic disposition, often making light-hearted small talk and avoiding gossip at the dance studio. While sitting together on her bright red sofa in her black and white modern-decorated living room, she shared a racially-charged encounter with a patient soon after she earned a promotion. Though it occurred years before she moved to Florida and claimed to be unaffected by it, the interaction has been seared into her memory:

> I don't know if it was—maybe it was a just a matter of color for that person. I remember this very clearly. I was working in downtown Chicago and I was working as the Director of Therapy and there was this family member from some political background and her mom was being admitted and I was going to treat her mom. I tried introducing myself and she wouldn't take my hand. And I was thinking in my mind, 'Do you even realize that I'm going to be treating your mom? I'm going to be touching her, picking her up, holding her, treating her?' So. It didn't bother me one bit. I've never let it bother me…. I've been blessed to have more friendliness…. I've had more good experiences than even to remember the prejudices….but I just thought it was silly because, 'You don't want to touch me, but I'm going to be touching your mom. I'm going to be treating her. I'm going to be healing her.' It just doesn't make sense. It just shows the ignorance of the person.

As Vena recalled what happened, the pain and anger she felt at the time of the incident began to resurface. Though she spoke calmly, Vena's voice and facial expressions exhibited a combination of indignation, frustration, and confusion. Her uncertainty about whether the patient's daughter's behavior was a reaction to her brown skin or perceived race reflected the added emotional burden she still carried with her because of not knowing the exact reason behind the discrimination. Vena was unable to understand why the patient's daughter refused to take her hand,

especially given that she would be physically working with and healing her mother. Despite being the Director of Therapy, she recognized that in the patient's daughter's eyes, race or "matter of color" eclipsed Vena's job title, skillset, and a professional responsibility to treat her patient. Yet, while she vividly recalled the incident which occurred more than 5 years ago, similar to Nisha, Anand, and Anira, Vena quickly minimized the incident's effect on her. Indeed, like Nisha, Vena did not want to hold on to the negativity that particular memory elicited and therefore tried to downplay how much it bothered her when sharing the story. However, the fact that immediately afterward she offset the negative experiences with her patient's daughter by reminding herself and, in a way, assuring me that she has been "blessed to have more friendliness…[and] more good experiences than even to remember the prejudices" may have also been a way to maintain a positive self-image both for herself and to me.

What racism?: Refusing to recognize racism

While Vena, Nisha, Anand, and Anira identified, yet minimized, racially offensive interactions as either prejudice or discrimination, others refused to even acknowledge interactions as racially-charged. Speaking with Ajeet was one of the first clear examples of this. When I asked Ajeet and Simran if they had ever experienced prejudice or discrimination, they said:

> Ajeet: No, not me.
>
> Simran: No… [But] our son. One time. He said that he was being picked on for being—from one of the teachers that he found was very racist.
>
> Ajeet: That wasn't our son.
>
> Simran: (firmly to Ajeet) He was racist toward Indians. (Turning to me) There was some incident in school, like 3 or 4 children got into an argument. Two of them were minority, the third was American (re: white) and the fourth was our son. And the Vice Principal called them all and asked for an explanation. And he let all three go, but he picked on our son and he gave him a warning. And our son came home and—at least, that was his version of the story, and we have to *trust* our children. He says, 'Mom, I was not to be blamed. The other two kids are minority and he's minority and the principal didn't lift a finger to put on them.' …So he said, 'That was completely a racist action and trust me. I can vouch that I

did not do it.' And of course, we trust his word. We've had one or two instances where he has had a little bit to pay for.

In contrast to the other interviewees mentioned above and below, Ajeet remained the most tight-lipped about whether he's experienced prejudice or discrimination and responded to the question with a curt, "No, not me." What's more is that he initially tries to dismiss what Simran clearly sees as a racialized incident at her son, Aman's, school. Perhaps Aman felt his only defense for getting in trouble at school was to convince his parents that his Vice Principal was "racist toward Indians." Internalized affective capital as a result of the model minority stereotype, which assumes that (South) Asians are obedient, hardworking, and intelligent, can elicit the self-held assumption that one cannot possibly be getting into trouble because of behavior or disrespect, and as a result, any kind of "warning" is interpreted as a "racist action." On the other hand, maybe Aman truly felt that he was given a warning because of prejudicial attitudes held toward him and other South Asians or Asian Indians. As Maddux et al (2008) argue, positive perceptions of Asians as intelligent and hardworking are also often accompanied with negative perceptions of them as cunning and selfish, and that these perceptions are held not just by whites, but other racialized groups as well. Moreover, Simran was reluctant to identify race and, therefore, used coded language. For example, according to her recounting, the Vice Principal and two of the students were "minority," likely meaning either black or Latino, since Aman was not included in this group, and the third student was "American," likely meaning white. Also important to highlight are the different perspectives Ajeet and Simran have regarding acknowledging and discussing racism, discrimination, and prejudice. Despite Simran's reluctance to specifically identify race and her perception that Aman had only ever been affected by it "one time," she appeared to be more open to recognizing that Asian Indians do experience prejudice and discrimination. Conversely, Ajeet, was unwilling to acknowledge any impact that racial prejudice or discrimination had on himself

and his son to the point where he refused to admit that his son felt discriminated against. For Ajeet, the subject was considered too taboo to discuss publicly or perhaps he did not believe that he and his family were affected by racism. This dismissal, however, can leave children like Aman unsure of how to deal with prejudice and discrimination, and likely reinforce the erroneous belief that (South) Asians, and here specifically Asian Indians, cannot and do not feel the damaging effects of racial domination.

Anand described his response to the 'yellow peril' type comments from his co-workers in the previous section while speaking to Anira's point of downplaying its effect, but he replied quite differently when explicitly asked shortly after about whether he has experienced prejudice or discrimination. Answering more similarly to Ajeet, Anand said, "I didn't face anything yet…No. Myself, personally, I'm very good with people." Here, Anand revealed his perception that experiences of prejudice and discrimination are a product of not interacting well with others. He implied that if people are discriminated against, it is because they bring it upon themselves and that one can avoid prejudice and discrimination if they learn how to "mix well" with others. Anand, and others who held a similar view, demonstrated a "blame the victim" mentality, engaged Bonilla-Silva's (2009) minimization frame, and reinforced the individualistic fallacy of racism (Desmond and Emirbayer 2009)—that racism is not systemic or structural, but rather occurs in pockets among certain individuals. Anand's statements reflected a way in which he both positioned himself as an apolitical "good minority" who could get along with anyone and socially distanced himself from his perceptions of a "problem minority," or one who acknowledges and vocalizes criticisms about racial discrimination and inequalities.

Lalitha, a homemaker and mother of Nita and Anoja (the younger daughter) took a similar position and did not register the ways she had been marginalized as prejudice or discrimination.

As the four of us sat on the floor of Nita's room with Nita intensely paying attention while Anoja leaned on her mother's lap and distractedly playing with her thick curly black hair, Lalitha and I transitioned into a conversation about prejudice and discrimination. She said:

> I haven't experienced that. I could say Lakeland people weren't as friendly. It's not very diverse. There was not a friendly face who would say 'Hi' or anything. Maybe now it's changed, but 10 years back when I lived there, they were not very friendly in Polk County.

Lalitha, just as some of the parents mentioned above, likely conceptualized "prejudice and discrimination" as either overt statements and acts or only happening to other racial minorities. Despite recognizing how the lack of diversity contributed to her feeling unwelcome because "there was not a friendly face who would say 'Hi' or anything," Lalitha did not consider this prejudice. She felt the sting of marginalization when living in Lakeland, and her interview highlighted that just because one does not register such incidents as race- or ethnicity-based marginalization does not mean that they did not actually experience them or suffer the isolation as a result of it. The fact that Lalitha, Anand, Ajeet, and others either did not or were reluctant to identify racialized offenses against them as prejudice or discrimination demonstrates the limits of the black/white binary and tri-racial social systems because they implicitly and explicitly reinforce the idea, and in this case to (South) Asians themselves, that race-based prejudices and discrimination are largely only issues for black and Latino communities. This effectively obscures the reach of white supremacy and limits the discursive space available for people like Lalitha and Anand to recognize their experiences as a product of systemic racism.

Nisha echoed this theme when asked to discuss the kind of racial injustices she encountered. Though she initially tried to sidestep the conversation again, she soon ended up sharing her perceptions of how she was affected by racism at her IT firm, perhaps because Sahira had opened the conversation further before heading back to the kitchen to finish her homework. In response to a question about whether she had experienced prejudice or discrimination, she said:

> Nisha: I don't remember—I, I don't see it. That's what I'm saying. It can be because even at work you can see that people don't support you as much as they support the American group. You will see it in terms of promotion. Half the time I'm thinking that there must be something that I need to provide more. That's what I think. It's just my assumption.
>
> Pangri: Do you think any other racial or ethnic groups experience discrimination?
>
> Nisha: I've heard people complain and they say, 'Hey, this is racist' and they go to HR and complain. Yeah, I have seen that at work as well. But I don't keep touch with those much because people's opinions are theirs and nobody can change it.

Nisha stated that the prejudice or discrimination was not as evident and that she "[didn't] see it," perhaps because it operated in a more subtle or colorblind way at her work. Nisha suggested that the colorblind racism she encountered at her job was so subtle, and perhaps so exhausting, that she even had a hard time remembering it. Yet still, she recognized how "the American group" at work were offered more support and promotions. She acknowledged stereotypes of (South) Asians, as illustrated in the previous section in the exchange with Sahira, but Nisha still felt that her professional advancement was being suppressed by a glass ceiling, and that this was chiefly because she was not recognized as American. Rather than seeing this as a product of racial domination, she internally questioned what more she needed to do to earn a promotion and reduced any kind of critique she had about institutionalized racism at her job as merely her assumption. At the same time, even though Nisha recognized that "the American group" was "supported" more at her job, she still felt that reporting prejudice and discrimination to HR was too disruptive. In stating, "I've heard people…go to HR and complain….But I don't keep in touch with those much…," Nisha implied that those who filed complaints with HR were rabble-rousers and she socially distanced herself from co-workers who drew attention to racial discrimination at the workplace. Additionally, by stating that "people's opinions are theirs and nobody can change it," Nisha implied that those who pointed out discrimination were either overreacting or that their complaints fell on deaf ears. Rather than acknowledging that that race-based offenses were broader

inequalities embedded within ideology, discourse, and institutions, Nisha saw them as principally an issue of feeling and opinion. Moreover, these combined with a strategy of silence that was illustrated in the exchange between Nisha and Sahira, and even Ajeet and Simran, can prevent families like theirs from recognizing similarities in less than obvious forms of prejudice and discrimination among people of color and further divide minorities as they see their own experiences as distinct.

"Due to our mistakes": Self-policing as a response to discrimination

The affective capital derived from affirmations and positive interpretations of the model minority stereotype alongside the reluctance to identify racial slights as 'prejudice' or 'discrimination' and the minimization of the effects of racism paved the way to an internalization of prejudice and discrimination. Rather than recognizing race-based affronts as a broader societal problem which is a product of white supremacy, several of the families I spoke to had interpreted these statements as simply a response to what they perceived as their own inadequacies and mistakes. Divya, for example, was confronted with insulting assumptions about Indians regarding their lack of qualifications, cleanliness, and right to work at their jobs. Though these stereotypes about Indians were hurtful, she still found a way to qualify and internalize them. As we sat alone at the end of the dining table while her husband worked overtime from home in the den nearby and Dipika and Aisha played dress-up in their room, Divya said, in an at times a pleading tone:

> I've heard people saying that we (Indians) use fake résumés to get jobs….And still I see lot of comments on websites and lot of places saying that we use fake résumés. Which may be true. A lot of people come from India and say they have 6 years' experience when they haven't even worked 6 months. People do that, I agree. But…they shouldn't think everyone is like that, right? …But Indians, even if they do that, once they go into work, they work really hard. Even my boss. He says, 'I don't care if he has a fake résumé. If he can do the job, I'm okay.' Lot of Americans think like that. Another thing is that they think that we are not very clean (laughs), cleanliness-wise. Which is true lots of times…like in apartments, when you finish the lease, they will say, 'Oh my god! Indians trash the carpets and they make the home trash' kind of comments. Not for me, but people told me. Could

> be true, right? I have seen that places can be really nasty. I've seen it. So I agree with that…. when there was the recession, I think they kind of felt like Indian people took IT jobs. There was lot of lay-offs. That time they felt like, 'Oh these guys took all our jobs.' That time, there was a feeling like that. But we can't blame them. This is their country and if they are out of jobs, obviously they will feel, 'This is my country and I'm being let go.' Obviously it could be because of performance, but still if we were not let in, they would not have entered in this situation. So recession time, I think they had this kind of feeling. …I would say 90% we are treated well. But due to our mistakes, they are pointing it out, which I cannot say is discrimination.

Divya explicitly denied experiencing prejudice and discrimination in the first section, but above listed being confronted with three key stereotypes about Indians which include: 1. Using fake résumés and being unqualified for positions they apply to and are hired for; 2. Uncleanliness; and 3. Usurping jobs that are meant for Americans. By making statements like, "People do that, I agree…," "Could be true, right...I have seen it. So I agree with that…," and "But we can't blame them. This is their country…," Divya accepted, acquiesced to, and internalized these negative perceptions about Indians as cunning, unclean, and undeserving. Her question "They shouldn't think everyone is like that, right?" also showed that she was hurt by these images of Indian immigrants and their families, and particularly those which presume that she and other Indians lied to get their jobs. In an attempt to somewhat quell this negative perception, Divya responded with, "…But Indians, even if they do that, once they go into work, they work really hard." Drawing on affirmations of Indians as intelligent and hardworking, she used positive stereotypes as a way to excuse and justify instances when Indians are accused of embellishing their résumés. Additionally, the stereotypes Divya mentioned and internalized above, specifically the two pertaining to cleanliness and threatening the job security of Americans, demonstrated the longevity of the belief that Indians are the unclean, often undeserving, inferior descendants of Aryans (Prashad 1998). Moreover, her statement "I think they kind of felt Indian people took IT jobs….But we can't blame them. This is their country….if we were not let in, they would have not entered in this situation," revealed Divya's self-perceptions of embodying the threat of 'yellow peril.' This, compounded

with the feeling that that she was an outsider despite her job qualifications, living in the U.S. for over 15 years, and immigration policies which have given preference to people with a similar education background, made Divya feel as if she was taking up a spot that was supposed to be reserved for a 'real American.' Finally, as indicated in her statement "…due to our mistakes, they are pointing it out, which I cannot say is discrimination," Divya believed that each of these prejudicial stereotypes she encountered were simply a response to the errors and slip-ups of her and other Indians. Even though she clearly described common negative perceptions of Indians, she did not register them as prejudicial, discriminatory, or racist, and certainly did not consider racial offenses against Indians as a product of structural racial inequality or an ideology of racial domination. The only way for Divya to both protect her affective capital while maintaining the perspective that she did not experience prejudice and discrimination was by internalizing complaints about Indians and interpreting them as mistakes that needed to be pointed out and corrected.

While Divya internalized prejudice and discrimination as "mistakes" in need of correction, Anand and Anira, both parents who emphasized ethnic and cultural knowledge and pride through cultural cultivation, took this a step further and described how they policed the way they carried themselves when around other non-Indians. Anand sat forward on the with his elbows resting on his knees and gesturing as he spoke while Anira sat back in the chair next to me with her legs crossed. They explained:

> Anand: See, if somebody is—the problem is the other way. If you are in an elevator, you should not speak in your own language. There are Americans there, a couple of other languages like Spanish are there. And you start talking in Gujarati or Telugu, they don't understand what you are talking about. Even if you are talking your personal thing, you should not talk when you are on the elevator. It doesn't make any sense. You could be upsetting somebody or they might be feeling bad.

> Anira: Or they might be thinking that you are commenting about them in your language. Usually you have to be aware of your surroundings. I try to tell the kids, too.

In asserting, "[s]ee…the problem is the other way around," Anand stayed true to his perspective that people invited prejudice and discrimination by behaving in ways that could be construed as inconsiderate and inappropriate. He did not blame himself so much as he pointed out that it was the fault of those who did not speak English when in the presence of primarily English speakers, effectively reinforcing the crude position, "This is America, so speak English." By stating, "There are Americans there, a couple of other languages like Spanish are there. And you start talking in Gujarati or Telugu, they don't understand what you are talking about," Anand understood that speaking Spanish was not only more accepted, but tolerated than Indo-European or Dravidian languages such as Gujarati or his mother-tongue, Telugu. Furthermore, his emphasis on speaking English as a way to protect others' feelings implied an important lesson he has learned: that as an Indian immigrant, and in order to be recognized as a 'good minority,' he and his intentions should always be transparent so as to not upset others. Echoing Anand's perspective, Anira tried to instill in their children self-awareness and speaking English as a way of being courteous. Despite her keen efforts to teach their three children Telugu, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, Anira was also conscious about encouraging their children "to be aware of [their] surroundings," or in other words, not speak Telugu when in the presence of non-Indians. To preemptively reduce prejudicial and discriminatory encounters, Anira taught her children to police themselves in a way which ultimately meant hiding from others a component of Indian culture that she worked so hard to cultivate in her children, further insulating and emphasizing the cultural boundaries between themselves and non-Indians.

Whereas Anand and Anira curbed their use of Telegu when in public, parents like Simran did the same with food. With food as an important marker of difference and potential topic for

teasing, as discussed in the previous chapter, Simran used the "There is a time and a place for everything" type of logic to justify something as seemingly mundane as choosing what to pack for Suki and Aman's lunches. She said:

> You know, some of my friends would insist that [their kids] take roti (flatbread) and sabzi (cooked vegetables). The kids feel sometimes uncomfortable eating that lunch in front of their friends....Most of the time we give Aman and Suki a sandwich or something they don't have to feel very compelled to have to explain or feel out of place. And so when you come home, have the Indian stuff with us so there is no explaining to do.

Earlier, Simran exhibited Indian pride when it came to model minority stereotypes of intelligence. However, she recognized limiting cultural expressions of Indian identity, including Indian foods in non-Indian spaces, as a way to prevent negative perceptions of them as "too different." Just as Saanvi and Tara so honestly discussed in the previous chapter, food was a marker of difference and a source of teasing. Though Simran discussed in the chapter on cultural cultivation how integral Indian foods were to preserving a sense of cultural identity and though she felt that prejudice and discrimination only had a marginal effect on her and her family's life, Simran admitted that Indian food provoked questions and conversations which made her children "feel out of place" at school. Rather than placing Suki and Aman in a position where they would "feel compelled to have to explain" roti, sabzi, and other staples of north Indian cuisine or perhaps even encouraging her children to share Indian cultural knowledge, including foods, with their friends at school, Simran restricted what she packed for their lunch to mostly sandwiches as a way to minimize food-related insults and being 'othered.' In doing this, and in contrast to the children who displayed reactive ethnicity, parents like Simran, Anira, and Anand subscribed to and reinforced the idea that Indian culture is something that can and should be comfortably displayed and practiced at home and among other fellow Indian families, and minimized in public settings where it can elicit guilt, shame, discomfort, or blame.

Of everyone I spoke to, Lalitha was most raw in expressing the thought process and emotional toll leading up to why it is important for Indian immigrants and their children to police their behaviors. While we sat on the floor of Nita's room, Nita stared at her mother with wide eyes as Lalitha said:

> (Staccato) You-are-representing-your-Indian—you're from India. They're looking at you like you're from another country, right? So don't put yourself low and act like you are dumb. And don't make them feel like you are from somewhere—like I said, like you are so dumb or so stupid. Just stay quiet and calm and show that and come back. If you know some topic, talk about it. If not, just be a listener and come back. Don't put your nose in and show up too much because that's going to reflect on Indians.

While Lalitha did not identify her marginalization as 'prejudice' or 'discrimination,' she still felt like an outsider who did not belong. Moreover, in the context of discussing her two pre-teen daughters who were born and raised in the U.S., her statement, "You-are-representing-your-Indian—you're from India. They're looking at you like you're from another country, right?" signaled that she not only considered her children as a representation of an entire racialized group, but also understood that skin color and cultural difference would consistently mark them as Indian, foreign, and not socially American. Additionally, Lalitha was forceful when asserting that descendants of Indian immigrants should not "put yourself low and act like you are dumb," but rather "Just stay quiet and calm and show that and come back." She made apparent the pressure she placed on her children to maintain their affective capital through individually promoting positive images of Indians as agreeable and intelligent. Moreover, as pervasive as the model minority stereotype is, Lalitha recognized that this did not protect her kids or other Indians from easily being cast as the ignorant foreigner. For immigrant parents like Lalitha, it was extremely important for Indian diaspora to police their actions and words while in the presence of non-Indians because she recognized that people who looked like herself and her children would always be looked upon as "perpetual foreigners" (Huynh, Devos, & Smalarz 2011; Wu 2002) who do not

fully belong. Her expectation of and efforts to promote a positive images represent a deep-seated unsettling fear that any behaviors perceived as unsavory would reflect poorly on the individual, family, and even the entire Indian diasporic community. As a result, she, Simran, Anand, and several others actively policed their and their children's actions and expressions of Indian culture as a strategy to minimize prejudice and discrimination and protect their affective capital.

Discussion

The goal of this chapter has been to outline an additional dimension of the model minority myth and its related consequences. I have argued that among the Indian families interviewed, the affective capital derived and internalized from the model minority stereotype required minimizing the extent to which they and their children were affected by racism. Moreover, many did not consider racial slights as "prejudice" or "discrimination," likely in part due to dominant racial discourse in the U.S. which often excludes (South) Asians and does not see the racialized group as being affected by racial domination as well as the widespread belief that (South) Asians have "overcome racism." This has limited the discursive space available for people like the interviewed immigrants to recognize prejudice and discrimination as such. Instead, several of the Indian parents held singularly positive interpretations of model minority stereotypes which not only allowed them to protect their affective capital, but also resulted in an internalization of racism. Thus, racial offenses were interpreted as a deserved response to individual misbehaviors and inadequacies, or mistakes that were to be pointed out and corrected. This internalization prompted families to take special measures to police their and their children's actions when in the presence of non-Indians in an attempt to preemptively minimize prejudicial statements and discrimination.

There are three major implications to this way of interpreting and responding to racism. First, there is no doubt that minimizing the emotional and psychological harm of racism can be

used as a coping strategy, and in this chapter, a way to protect affective capital. However, this minimization along with the internalization of prejudice and discrimination as just mistakes in need of correction elicits an immense amount of stress, self-doubt, and emotional labor which, as Kaduvettoorr-Davidson and Inman (2013) suggest, is a growing concern among South Asians since it is manifesting itself in increased depression and anxiety.

Second, with the exception of scholarship which focuses explicitly on Asian America (Espiritu 2004; Lee 2015; Prashad 2000, 2012; Takaki; Wu 2014), issues of race and racism have commonly been framed according to biracial and tri-racial hierarchies (Anderson 2015; Bonilla-Silva 2009, 2004; Feagin 2006; Lee & Bean 2007), often excluding a nuanced analysis of how Asian, and even more so South Asian, immigrants and their children are affected by racism. This exclusion combined with the erroneous yet widespread assumption that Asians have "risen above" systemic and structural discrimination has contributed to a discursive space which has made it difficult for people like the families portrayed in this study to identify racial affronts as "prejudice," "discrimination," or products of systemic and structural racism. Minimization of how they are impacted by racism perpetuates this pattern that largely renders (South) Asians experiences as invisible. Moreover, if a racialized group has been commonly excluded from conversations of prejudice, discrimination, and racism, our understandings of the reach of white supremacy will always be limited. We will continue to have an incomplete picture of how racial domination operates and is reproduced systemically, institutionally, through interaction, and internally.

Third, in internalizing racism, prejudice, and discrimination as a deserved response to individual mistakes, parents took a "blame the victim" position which they not only explicitly applied to themselves and their children, but implicitly extended to other minorities. The added emphasis on self-policing their bodies and actions as a way to protect their affective capital also

functioned to socially distance themselves from those who they perceived to be rabble-rousers or 'problem minorities.' Such individualistic interpretations of how and why racial inequality persists as well as the widespread invisibility of how (South) Asians' life experiences are shaped by racism has severe consequences for the shared struggle against racial domination. Rather than being able to see the similarities in how they are stereotyped and discriminated against, such individualistic interpretations leave minorities blaming themselves and each other for racialized mistreatment. Therefore, instead of being a sign of racial progress among (South) Asians, this dimension of the model minority stereotype ultimately demonstrates how individualistic explanations of systemic and structural racism are both a product and reproducer of racial domination and white supremacy.

Chapter Six:

"Americans Kind of Stay Away; They Don't Get too Close":

Immigrant Outsiderness and the Affective Dimensions of Assimilation

October 2016

For the past year, Sheila, the owner of Naach, had talked about needing to move from her Wesley Chapel home. It was a short drive from the dance studio, but her husband, Jay, was pushing the idea because he had an hour and a half commute every day to his IT job in Brandon. Sheila joked about how she was dragging her feet in looking for a new place to live—she loved the way she and Jay decorated their two-story home, their view of the lake and the vegetable and herb garden they had planted in their backyard, and the proximity to the local blossoming Indian community.

Sheila's love for her home and desire to remain living in their middle class subdivision, however, had done a 180°. She explained why one afternoon when we met at a Dunkin Donuts to discuss scheduling and new dance styles to experiment with in the Bollywood classes. She had brought her two sons, Akhil, a bright, loving, and hyperactive seven year old, and Nikhil, a happy and quietly playful two year old. As we discussed studio business, the boys sat next to us eating the orange icing off of their pumpkin-shaped donuts, with Akhil periodically interrupting to tell me about his new superhero Halloween costume. As boredom started to take over, Akhil got up to look at the ice cream flavors showcased in the dipping cabinet a few feet away. With Akhil out of hearing distance and his attention captivated by the ice cream, Sheila took this as an opportunity to tell me that she and Jay were going to start seriously looking for a new home. I asked her what had changed. Withdrawing, she lowered her voice, her gaze floating from me to the window just behind, and said, "It seems that some of the kids in the neighborhood are racist." After probing further, she explained that she had recently started allowing Akhil to go play at their neighbor's house and that the neighborhood kids were bullying him there "because he is Indian." Before we could discuss what had happened any further, Akhil skipped back, nestled his skinny body tightly against Sheila's and with wide eyes asked for a vanilla ice cream cone. She left to get Akhil another sweet treat, and that was the last time she brought it up.

What happened to Sheila's family captures an important affective dimension of the upwardly mobile Indian immigrant experience. Meeting the key benchmarks of structural integration, Sheila, Jay, and their kids were objectively well on the path to acculturation and assimilation. Yet, whatever sense of home and belonging they felt was uprooted when Akhil's neighborhood bullies reminded them that their presence was unwelcome. Such experiences are in

part why places like Naach or spaces like India Fest and other similar cultural events hold so much value to the Indian community. More than just recognition of shared cultures 'left behind,' they can provide solace from a common feeling of exclusion in the U.S.

In this chapter, I argue that despite structural integration, the process of immigration and settlement still leaves many Indians feeling as though they are displaced outsiders, especially among those considered to be core members of society. While a few studies have examined the affective dimensions of immigration (for examples, see: Aranda 2007, 2006; Matt 2011; Prashad 2012; Smith 2006), the majority of this research focuses on assessing patterns of acculturation or assimilation according to measurable outcomes associated with structural integration (examples mentioned below). The little research which includes Indians has focused narrowly on indicators of assimilation that measure structural integration (Iceland, Weinberg, and Hughes 2014; Jadhav, Kapur, and Chakravorty 2015; Lee and Kye 2016). Distinct from this approach to studying acculturation and assimilation among Indian immigrants and their families, I argue that there are affective dimensions, or what I call *immigrant outsiderness*, that reveal the pernicious ways that Indians are simultaneously integrated and excluded. Specifically, I explore dimensions of *immigrant outsiderness* and challenge the assumption that apparent assimilation necessarily leads to a sense of belonging among structurally integrated immigrants. Using home visits and interviews with Indian families and ethnographic data from the field, this chapter humanizes an emotion-laden experience which is so often reduced to whether a group has met objective benchmarks associated with socioeconomic status and residential integration or has adhered to the social rituals of a host society.

Measuring Acculturation and Assimilation

The research on acculturation and assimilation is vast, and experts in the field have defined (Gordon 1964), clarified (Alba and Nee 1997; Rumbaut 2015; Waters and Jiménez 2005), critiqued (Lacy 2007; Treitler 2015), outlined theoretical ambiguities and debates (Barkan et al. 2008; Gans 2007; Glick 2010), and theorized both more nuanced (Lacy 2007; Nee and Sanders 2001; Purkayastha 2005; Waters 1999) and comprehensive (Barkan et al. 2008; Winders 2012) ways of measuring how immigrants and minorities become integrated into segments of American society. Collectively, scholars define acculturation as a one-way and inevitable process of adopting the "'cultural patterns' of the host society" (Alba and Nee 1997: 829). Studies commonly assess immigrant acculturation in the U.S. by English language acquisition and following the social rituals of the mainstream, and typically view acculturation as the first step toward assimilation (Gans 2007; Piedra and Engstrom 2009; Rumbaut 2015). Similarly, assimilation is defined as the attenuation of ethnic and cultural distinction from those of the dominant mainstream (Alba and Nee 2003. Though largely agreed upon as a process which takes place among second and subsequent generations (Alba and Nee 2003; Rumbaut 2015; Vermeulen 2010), scholars do acknowledge that assimilation can and does occur with the immigrant generation (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). And so, studies continue to not only measure assimilation among immigrants, but (and perhaps at times inappropriately) gauge this loss of ethnic distinction by various combinations of the following indicators: 1. Residential integration (Hall 2013); 2. Integration into specialized occupations and income (Chiswick and Miller 2011; Nee and Sanders 2001); 3. Social mobility, which itself is often assessed according to education, occupation, and income (Chen, 2008; Neckerman, Carter, and Lee 1999); 4. English language proficiency or fluency (Xi 2013); and 5. Intermarriage (Chi 2015). For these scholars, several of the aforementioned measures of

assimilation are also indicators of structural integration, meaning that structural integration is often taken as a sign of assimilation.

Whiteness Embedded Within

As Gans (2007) and Alba and Nee (2003) argue, however, social mobility can occur without the relinquishing of ethnic culture. Moreover, Treitler's (2015) and Romero's (2008) work demonstrates how many assimilation theories are built upon white supremacist ideologies which ignore and devalue non-whites through the assumption that immigrants and minorities, including blacks, who do not meet their "objective" standards of integrating into the culture of whiteness are either not assimilated or unassimilable. In support of Treitler's (2015) and Romero's (2008) critiques, there appears to be an inherent assumption in measuring assimilation by some of these benchmarks that to be educated, have the skills to work in specialized occupations, be upwardly mobile, and be fluent in English means to necessarily be subscribing to and accepted by whites and whiteness only. Furthermore, in continuity with the long history of dehumanizing non-whites by stripping them of emotion, little attention has been paid to the subjective experiences of immigrants of color during their processes of integration. While scholars acknowledge that the immigrant experience is marked by feelings of alienation (Alba and Nee 1997; Rumbaut 2015), the exploration of this aspect of the immigration experience does not often enough go beyond the statement of it. Instead, immigration and assimilation research is largely quantitative and uses "objective" measures and analytically sterile language to describe or explain incredibly emotion-filled processes of uprooting and resettling; as if separation from home, close and meaningful relationships, and the culture one grew up with is an impassive process.

Migration, Emotions, and Conceptualizing 'Immigrant Outsiderness'

A few notable scholars, however, have brought much-needed attention to immigrants' subjective experiences and the emotions associated with migration (Aranda 2007, 2006; Matt 2011; Nicklett and Burgard 2009; Shibutani and Kwan 1965). Additionally, recognizing the definitional discrepancies, theoretical ambiguities, and limitations of the ways 'assimilation' is often used, several experts in the field have begun to popularize the term 'incorporation' to explore immigrant integration (Aranda, Hughes, and Sabogal 2014; Barkan 2008; Faist 2009; Smith 2006). For example, Elizabeth Aranda's scholarship (2007, 2006) uses interviews with middle class Puerto Rican migrants to explore their subjective experiences of incorporation. Her analysis illustrates the emotional consequences of disrupted social relationships and sense of place as well as the strategies used to manage feelings of longing and loss. She coins the term 'emotional embeddedness' and uses it to describe how the emotional support derived from close relationships and companionship results in feeling connected to a group or community, which in turn elicits a sense of belonging. Aranda demonstrates how emotional embeddedness fosters well-being, personal satisfaction, and positive emotions, and that without it immigrants are often left to cope with feelings of isolation alone.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the immigrant families I interviewed immigrated to the U.S. with the educational attainment and professional skills comparable to what, according to the assimilation literature, was expected to be achieved by the third generation. In line with this, they exhibited high levels of structural integration (characterized by living in either diverse or mostly white middle to upper middle class neighborhoods, having bachelors or graduate degrees, upward mobility, and being (or their spouses being) professionals in the IT, medical, or insurance fields). Despite meeting these indicators of structural assimilation, they also described feeling a

lack of "emotional embeddedness" from the surrounding non-Indian community. Continuing with the spirit of Aranda's work, this chapter uses home visits, ethnographic data, and interviews with Indian immigrants, all of who at the time of data collection had lived in the U.S. for a minimum of 12 years, to discuss an overall concept which I call *immigrant outsiderness*. Distinct from emotional embeddedness which focuses on the close relationships that produce a feeling of belonging, I conceptualize immigrant outsiderness as the subjective dimensions of the migration experience which are marked by 1. Lack of cultural inclusion, 2. Lack of social inclusion, and/or 3. Feelings of emotional disconnect from the surrounding community.

The following data sections parse out and offer more nuanced analyses of the three aforementioned characteristics of immigrant outsiderness. The first data section discusses the facets of what I call *cultural outsiderness*. Here, I describe the multiple ways, such as through holidays, religion, food, bodies, and cultural norms, that the structurally integrated immigrants feel culturally distinct and excluded. This section is where I also introduce the concept of *bicultural accommodation*. Conceptually distinct from selective acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) which "leads to upward assimilation and biculturalism" and refers to "gradually learn[ing] American ways while being embedded, at least in some way, in the ethnic community" (Waters, Tran, Kasinitz, Mollenkopf 2010: 1169-1170)) bicultural accommodation highlights the strategic negotiations immigrants engage in their pursuit of building a sense of home and belonging. The second data section elaborates on what I call *social outsiderness*, or the subjective perceptions of being placed at a social distance from the surrounding non-Indian community. The final data section discusses *emotional outsiderness*, which I conceptualize as including feelings of disconnect from Americans and American culture, emotional isolation, and the overall feeling that the U.S. is not really their home. Taken together, this chapter argues that in spite of meeting the

objective benchmarks typically associated with successful structural integration, acculturation, and assimilation, the immigrant experience of this "model minority" is bounded and characterized by a lack of cultural and social inclusion as well as an emotional disconnect from the surrounding dominant community. With each of the data sections, I demonstrate how these subjective experiences of immigrant outsiderness among Indians, the group deemed the most successful and structurally advantaged, exposes the pernicious influence that white supremacy wields in the lives of immigrants, ultimately serving as barriers to feeling a sense of home and belonging in the U.S.

Findings

Cultural outsiderness: "No matter what you pretend or try to change, you cannot be an American"

As illustrated the first data chapter, the Indian families interviewed engaged in cultural cultivation both inside and outside of the home to teach their children about a culture 'left behind.' At the same time, they also made clear efforts to acculturate, blend in, and enjoy American culture by adapting to the social rituals of the mainstream. While some parents like, Nisha, Ajeet, and Simran affirmed that "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," they also described how meaningful it was for them to "not lose sight" of their cultural heritage. Taken together, they engaged in what I call *bicultural accommodation*, or the strategically negotiated efforts immigrants make to acculturate and preserve ethnic cultural traditions with the ultimate intention of cultural inclusion. Simran and Ajeet, both U.S. citizens who immigrated in 1999 from New Dehli, most explicitly described the importance of not only acculturation (adopting mainstream cultural and social practices), but also bicultural accommodation. As we started off our lively conversation around their dining table about the ways immigrant families try to preserve aspects of Indian culture in the U.S., they explained:

Ajeet: See, the thing is, we have decided to move here. So when we are in Rome, you have to adapt to the Roman way of doing things.
Simran: But we Indians have done a pretty good job of trying to maintain—not completely lose sight of who we are and where we came from. And at the same time, enjoy what the Americans do. So, like I told you, we celebrate Diwali *and* Christmas.
Ajeet: And Halloween. And Thanksgiving. And July 4th.
Simran: So, we have the best of both worlds.

As the ideal example of bicultural accommodation, Simran and Ajeet expressed the importance of preserving Indian culture "And at the same time, enjoy what the Americans do." This juxtaposition illustrated that the two acutely recognized that legal citizenship did not necessarily translate into cultural or social belonging. Therefore, they both made efforts through holiday celebrations, as mentioned above (and also foods, as discussed in previous chapters) in an attempt to feel culturally included within this society.

While Simran and Ajeet's conversation above, among other parents interviewed, described their efforts of acculturation and bicultural accommodation through holidays and celebrations, others were expressive about doing so through religion. Kamya, a structural engineer and U.S. citizen who immigrated in 1988, shared such an example about her son. Kamya's interview was conducted at my apartment. Her family was getting their home ready for a pooja (religious ceremony) the following weekend and felt that it would be more comfortable to talk at my place. Kamya was kind, energetic, and enthusiastic about having the opportunity to talk about "Indian culture." Throughout her interview, her religiosity and the value she placed on cultivating Hindu cultural knowledge and practices in her children were topics to which we continually returned. She described an incident in which her son, Vishal, was teased at school in the boys' locker room for wearing a Yajnopavita, or a thin sacred thread (worn by Hindu boys of the Brahman caste to symbolize a rite of passage into a religious and the recognition that all things are interconnected) around his body and nearly invisible to most as it is worn under clothes. Kamya did not recall the

details of what happened. But in spite of the teasing and being made to feel like a cultural outsider, high school-aged Vishal made the decision to maintain the Hindu cultural practice.

The rest of Kamya's interview shed more light on how she and her son made conscious efforts of bicultural accommodation. Food, as indicated in previous chapters by both parents and their children, was another marker of cultural difference which called for strategic bicultural accommodation. Kamya shared such an example when she told me about recently preparing for her son's birthday party. She said:

> Kamya: So I ask my kid—he had a birthday party, so I asked him, 'How many Indians do we have so I can cook?' because there are 30 kids and he looked at me and said, 'It is no Indians, it's all Americans.' I said, 'Okay' (laughs). Because he's born here, he says he's American….And I said, 'I mean Indian origin kids are coming?'(Laughing) ….So then he answers me that, (rigidly) 'They still eat pizza, so you don't have to cook Indian.'
>
> Pangri: Did you end up cooking Indian food anyway?
>
> Kamya: Yeah, I did. Because I know his friends. Even American friends love Indian food like chole (chick peas) and chapati (flat bread) and all that and white rice. So I made all that. I still ordered from Olive Garden, so I had both kinds of food.

In stating that the friends he was inviting to his party were "…not Indian kids, it's all American," Kamya not only conveyed her son's annoyance with her labeling of second-generation as Indian, but also shared how he sought to expand conceptions of who is and can be American. Moreover, incidents such as how Vishal was teased at school may help explain why he was so insistent on recognizing U.S. born children of immigrants as "American" rather than "Indian." For Vishal, identifying and being recognized as "American" was a way to disrupt the presumption that a brown-skinned devout Hindu was a cultural outsider to the U.S. And while her son insisted on inclusion through the use of labels, Kamya made efforts to do the same using food. Even though according to Kamya's retelling her son sternly declared that everyone would eat pizza and was insistent that she not make Indian food for his birthday party, she sought to oblige and appease "Indian" and "American" guests in her home by making the concerted decision to have both

cultural food preferences. The above excerpt demonstrated how through spending time, labor, and money, immigrant parents like Kamya used food as an important means toward cultural inclusion and bicultural accommodation.

Not all interviewed families shared such positive experiences of food-related cultural inclusion. Instead, Indian food was more commonly mentioned by parents and their children as a marker of cultural difference and outsiderness that was not always welcome, which ended up shaping the diverse strategies of bicultural accommodation. Lalitha shared how non-Indians' reactions to Indian food made her feel like a cultural outsider. While sitting on the floor of Nita's room as we focused our discussion on culture and with both of her daughters huddled next to her going back and forth between coloring and playing with the end of a red scarf dangling from her shoulder, Lalitha poignantly expressed:

> When you think of food, some people think they want to try it, try the food. Americans want to try our food. Some want to try it. Some don't want to try it. Some say, (with disgust) 'Oh no, what's that?' But I would honestly say some of their food smells, too. But we will not show it out. We will just stay quiet. We will just stay quiet because we know it's going to hurt them. But they openly tell it out. You know what? With friends, it's different. But this is a cultural thing where you have to diplomatically take it a nice way. You cannot just say, 'Oh wow, this is something—what, you come from a different planet with a different kind of food?' …You can just say you didn't want it or you didn't like it or it's not tasting good for you or something else, rather than giving some expression as if it is yuck. That's a cultural thing that they do.… They have done it. Another one of my American friends. Not in a rude way, but that's her mannerism. That's just her way of talking. I don't even think she would know that that hurts. And it's their culture. That's how it is. Because they're not going to think that it's going to hurt me. It's not that they are going to intentionally hurt. They just tell it out like that. …I think maybe they think they have the rights to express it? I don't know. I don't know. It's something, though.

Integral to an analysis of what it means to be an immigrant outsider and experience cultural outsiderness is a recognition of the different understandings of who the "American" is. As reflected throughout this dissertation, the term "American" held different meanings. While for many families, "Americans" referred to whites and Christians, this was not the case for all, including Lalitha. Lalitha was hesitant to state racial or religious designations, at one point even asking to

turn off the recorder to verify whether she could say "black," "Hispanic," and "Muslim" to describe her multiethnic neighborhood. After describing her community, however, she started using the term "American" as a catch-all to describe anyone who was of non-Indian origin. For Lalitha, Indians were not American, and Americans were not Indian. Moreover, as an Indian immigrant who came to the U.S. in 2000, Lalitha expressed the emotional consequences of when "Americans" gave the illusion of having a genuine interest in learning about different cultures, and in this case, foods. Even though her American friends did not necessarily intend to be rude or even register that their words and actions were hurtful, they were nevertheless forthcoming about when they felt Indian food was off-putting. When not to their liking, Lalitha felt that they quickly regarded it with disgust, which she saw as a distinctly American cultural response. Such reactions reinforced the feeling that people like Lalitha, including the interviewed children, were culturally different and reminded them that they and their ethnic cultural practices were rightfully foreign. When confronted with these reactions from residents of the "host society" (as commonly regarded in assimilation literature, which also further reinforces the view of immigrant as outsider), Lalitha was consistently reminded that she was a foreigner in a country which she had lived in for over 16 years. This was compounded by the fact that she felt that unlike her, Americans "ha[d] the rights" or legitimate authority to critique that which they see as culturally un-American, which for Lalitha included her, her food, and much of her lifestyle.

Cultural outsiderness was reflected in Lalitha's interactions with American friends and acquaintances about Indian food, and it was very much present when discussing beauty as an embodied practice. As initially demonstrated in the chapter on children, phenotype and appearance, namely skin tone and hair, marked them as culturally, racially, and ethnically 'other.' Appearance as a marker of difference and a motive for exclusion was central to cultural

outsiderness. Divya, for example, expanded on her efforts to minimize being visually perceived as culturally different. As we sat around her dining table with Dipika playing on the nearby couch and Aisha running back and forth between us and her room to model new outfits and her older Bollywood costumes, Divya described the changes she made to her beauty regimens so that she would feel less culturally distinct and move toward fitting with dominant American beauty ideals. She continued to wear a bindi every day to work, but recognized differences in how she wore her hair and eventually made changes to the way she cared for it. She explained:

> …hair oil—here they don't apply the oil. But from my childhood I apply oil every day and then I would wash my hair every day. But here, uh—(laughs) I used to do that up until a few years back. But then I felt like I looked, 'Weird. Okay, yuck.' So, others may think that I was odd because my face and all was different. But then I started applying shampoo and conditioner and I felt like my hair is fluffy and I feel like, 'Wow, that looks great,' kind of compliments I started getting and I thought, 'Okay, I shouldn't be applying oil every day when I go to the office.'

For Divya, more than her bindi, which is quickly recognized as a marker of cultural difference for Hindu women, it was her hair and appearance that made her feel culturally distinct, uncomfortable, and unattractive. As a software engineer living in an upper middle class neighborhood, structural integration set the stage for Divya to shun aspects of her culture and cultural upbringing, which is particularly noteworthy given the exhausting efforts she described making in the third chapter to instill in her daughters cultural knowledge and pride. Together, this reflected the all too common struggle among immigrants and their families of continuously trying to figure out how to navigate between cultural cultivation and preserving the culture 'left behind,' which is precisely the tension between bicultural accommodation, acculturation, and dealing with cultural outsiderness in daily life.

Most of Divya's insecurities about her appearance were either amplified by or a result of looking physically different than the dominant group in this country. Her efforts to change her appearance reflected acculturation. However, Divya also demonstrated how acculturation can be

a dangerous process because it can result in an internalization of white supremacist ideology. Using the words "weird" and "yuck" to describe the way she used to do her hair spoke to bell hooks' (1989) work on black women and hair, particularly when she argues that "an imitation of the dominant white group's appearance…often indicates internalized racism, self-hatred, and/or low self-esteem" (2). Moreover, the measures Divya took to lighten her daughter, Dipika's skin (as discussed in Chapter 4) signaled that she felt her dark brown skin and facial features were what marked her "face and all" as "odd." This internalization of racism, as indicated through changing her appearance and regarding her previous way of haircare with such disdain, was reinforced once she started receiving compliments from co-workers, also reflecting hooks' (1989) position that "positive feedback might be a direct response to her own projection of a higher level of self-satisfaction" (4). Regardless of why she felt vested in continuing, our conversations made plain the destructive consequences of acculturation to individuals and negative perceptions of ethnic cultural practices. Still, for people like Divya, and particularly women who make these embodied shifts, following the "cultural patterns" of white supremacist standards of beauty are pathways to feeling a sense of cultural inclusion.

As described above, interviewed immigrants made explicit and strategic efforts to biculturally accommodate or acculturate to dominant American culture through holidays, religious practices, foods, and appearance. And yet, as also described above, despite their efforts, many still expressed feeling at the very least a tinge of being put at a cultural distance from their surrounding non-Indian community. Despite their best concerted efforts, the sense cultural difference was so palpable for some that there was no way they could ever see themselves or their children as "American," regardless of their legal citizenship. Lalitha spoke most passionately about this. In

the context of a discussion about Americanization and with Nita's wide-eyed attention moved to her, she sharply said of her daughters:

> (Staccato) You-don't-need-to-be-an-American, you're an Indian. No matter what you pretend or try to change, you cannot be an American. How many of our generations go out—maybe 5 to 6 generations there will be changes. But right now, I'm the first generation here. [The girls] will be the second. They are born here. They have the citizenship and everything, but they cannot be an American. They cannot be an American. They cannot fit in there. They have been raised by me. They have been raised by an Indian mom. How is it that they can fit there? Their culture? Their behavior? Their way of eating? Their way of putting on things—like, it differs a lot. They can pretend to fit in there. When they go in that crowd, they pretend and then come back. Because at home they won't be like that.

Lalitha did not expand here upon the specifics of what it means to "be an American," but knew that she and her daughters were not it. Just as Simran pointed out, by stating "They have the citizenship and everything, but they cannot be an American," Lalitha, too, distinguished between legal and social citizenship. She vehemently contended that although her children had citizenship, "[t]hey cannot be American" because "[t]hey cannot fit in there." Even using the word "there" reflected distance, as though Americans and American culture, are outside of or separate from her home and family. Additionally, as a stay-at-home mom, Lalitha's social networks were in large part shaped by those of her daughters through their classmates, school and neighborhood friends, and the kids involved in Naach, Kumon, and other extracurricular activities. Therefore, she had special insight into the friends and families with whom her daughters spent time and based off of these interactions had little faith that cultural distinctions could be overcome in her children's and even grandchildren's generations. These distinctions, which Lalitha previously described as at times being done in a disrespectful and hurtful manner, were felt as rejection and thus reified the boundaries between the culture and community by which she felt she had been rebuffed. Moreover, just as Nita, her 12 year old daughter, described in the fourth chapter, she and Lalitha came to determine that to "be Indian" meant to necessarily not "be American" because the cultures, and as Lalitha put it, "ways of eating," behaviors, and "[ways] of putting on things" were irreconcilably

different. Lalitha took this further when she suggested that her children were merely performing Americanness ("they can pretend to fit in there. When they go in that crowd, they pretend and then come back"), implying that these cultural differences have kept her daughters from developing meaningful social relationships with those outside of their cultural community, a point which will be further discussed in the next section.

Social outsiderness: "Americans kind of stay away; they don't get too close."

According to assimilation research, occupational and spatial integration are key in leading to diversified social networks. The families interviewed described meeting these objective standards of assimilation by exposure to alternate social networks through their occupations and/or by living in what many of them described as "diverse" and "multiracial" middle to upper-middle class neighborhoods. This integration, however, did not necessarily bring about a sense of social inclusion. Just as Mayorga-Gallo's (2014) ethnography on multiethnic neighborhoods argues, spatial diversity does not speak to the quantity much less the quality of actual interracial interactions and social relationships. Echoing her findings, the interviewed families described how their close friendships were cultivated mostly within the Indian community and not necessarily through their jobs or neighborhoods.

Social outsiderness, which is characterized by the lack of social inclusion or limited social networks with members of the 'core society,' was a non-issue for some families as they developed close and meaningful relationships and felt a sense of emotional embeddedness (Aranda 2006) among their co-ethnic peers. For example, as we sat in her brightly painted living room filled with stylized religious wall hangings while her two daughters played on a piano keyboard in the next room, Anira said:

> Anira: It's been more than 10 years now in this area…Um, I do have some friends from here, but they're not *thaaaat* close or anything…. I have *very* good set of friends after

> moving here, we met them here through various programs….a few are from Tamil Nadu. They speak Tamil. But majority of them are from Andhra Pradesh and I met them here in the community. And we are all kind of like-minded….
>
> Pangri: What do you mean "like-minded"?
>
> Anira: ….it's more like what you are looking for exactly for your kids. What is of importance. You know, sometimes it's pretty different what you want to do. We have different families here also from India and everything. But for them, they want to go around and travel, just go have fun or just put their kids in these activities. For us, we want to teach them the culture. See, the group that we have formed, everyone is of the opinion that the kids need to know what background we came from and they need to understand why we do specific poojas and what is the story behind all of this. So we are a family where all of the parents are that kind of people who want the kids to learn those things.

Anira described strategically shaping her social networks according to how she and her husband wished to raise their three children. Whereas Lalitha felt that cultural difference kept her and her children from developing close relationships with people outside of their cultural community, Anira purposefully developed friendships with families who shared similar cultural cultivation goals. The social distance she maintained from non-Indians and other Indian families who did not share the same vision of cultivating cultural knowledge was a deliberate decision aimed at preserving cultural history and religious traditions. In this way, Anira's co-ethnic friendships were used to construct a sense of social belonging and define incorporation into dominant mainstream society on her terms.

Yet, rather than choosing social networks in the way Anira described, most felt a sense of social outsiderness and as though they were placed at a social distance by other Americans. Divya spoke to this in her initial response to a question about whether most of her friends are from the Indian community:

> Americans kind of stay away; they don't get too close. They will with their close friends, but still I feel like they keep some distance…here I feel like they keep their distance. The strong bondingness is missing. But still, we move well with our neighbors. The ones in the opposite home. They have twins, 3 ½ years old. They play with the kids like *anything*. The husband is a doctor. They are very nice people. They always ask us mostly about studying. They always ask, 'How are Dipika and Aisha are studying this well? How do you teach

> them? How have you made them this smart?' (laughs). Those kinds of things they ask us. And I told them that I send them to Kumon and so now they want to start for their kids. Even if we go out of town, I tell them and ask them to watch over our house. But we don't go to each other's' home or anything to that extent.

As part of a structurally integrated immigrant family, Divya had a friendly relationship with her neighbor, but recognized that she was kept at a social distance, reinforcing her feeling that in many ways she was seen as *different*. Earlier in her interview, Divya mentioned that her family was one of the first to move into their subdivision. Yet, she still felt detached from her neighbors. This combined with the strong differences she perceived between her and "American" aesthetics or beauty ideals as well as Indian and American culture (as discussed here and in previous chapters) spoke to her feeling like a perpetual foreigner (Huynh, Devos, & Smalarz 2011). For Divya, and others like her, this social outsiderness rested at the forefront of her thoughts when the topic of friendships arose. Asking primarily about studying and commenting on the exceptional intelligence of her children reinforced notions of the "model minority." Moreover, the affective capital derived from the model minority myth, as discussed in the previous chapter, became a defining characteristic of the conversations between Divya and her neighbors. Hence, they bonded over 'positive' stereotypes of Indians, yet their relationship did not extend beyond these superficial comments and interactions.

While Divya described being kept at a social distance from her non-Indian peers, for others, social outsiderness was also reflected through perceptions of being ignored. In her den and away from Khushi and Anya who were both doing homework on their iPads at the dinner table, Esha said in a soft, but serious tone:

> You go to certain parts of the country and it's almost like they don't see you standing there. Like when you're standing in line and you're next and they don't see you, maybe because you're short. I don't know. But then there is another person standing next to you and they acknowledge that person. And you have to say, (slaps hand on desk with every syllable) 'Hey, I'm here, too.' Or if I'm with my mom or my mother-in-law and they speak or they are doing whatever interaction they are doing and they speak with a strong accent, I think

> people put up a wall and they don't want to try to understand what you are saying. They're like, 'Oh. What?' And it's like, 'Just listen. You might figure it out.' You know? I think a lot of people don't try.

Esha's immigrant experience and feelings of social outsiderness was marked by a sense of invisibility. Yet, because dominant narratives of who is affected by racism typically do not include Indian immigrants, Esha was reluctant to say that these interactions were because she and her family were viewed as unwelcome foreigners. Still, she was critical of the barrier that accents played in her and her family's lives. Rather than internalizing this as something to be minimized or corrected (a common response to interpersonal prejudice and discrimination discussed in the previous chapter), Esha was frustrated by the impatience and intolerance of those who made no effort to communicate with her and her family. Ignoring the presence of individuals and treating accents as bothersome or even insurmountable barriers to communication, especially during social interactions related to the exchange of goods, services, or knowledge, are routine behaviors people engage in to show when one is not welcome. Esha's experiences were classic examples of how immigrants who are commonly perceived as social outsiders who do not belong are treated.

Despite structural integration, the interviewed parents said that most of their intimate friendships were developed with other Indian families who shared similar life and immigrant experiences and even a common mother-tongue. For example, at a Diwali (Hindu festival of lights) party at Sheila's house one evening, Lalitha made small-talk about the busy upcoming weekend filled with Diwali plans with the Tamil community, none of which Sheila (who speaks Telugu) or I were invited to. Most of Anira's "like-minded" friends spoke Telugu. And even at the dance studio, families who spoke the same ethnic languages tended to group together and talk in the waiting room. Yet for many who had spent over a decade living in the U.S. and still felt a strong sense of cultural and social alienation, friendships that extended beyond acquaintance were

hard to come by, even within the Indian community. Close and lasting relationships were something to be treasured. Lalitha spoke to this point below:

> I have a wonderful neighbor. I have to talk about her, too. She's from Andhra Pradesh. She's like kind of part of my family. I can say, kind of second mom to my kids. She's like another hand for me to take care of my kids and it's vice versa that she can rely on me for her kids. 'Cause all the way we've come from India and we have nobody here. We don't have any relations. Yeah, my brother is here, but he is far away. We left our country. People can say, 'Oh, you can go back to India.' But when you start living a life here, you cannot reverse it. It's kind of a dilemma what to do. We just stay here for the kids. So we leave the country, we leave the soil. It's our place. We can't express it. And we come here and we find someone who is caring to us. It's like a blessing. It's a blessing.

Lalitha conveyed a common struggle immigrants experience when trying to reconcile between leaving the country they grew up in, their "soil," and starting a life in a new land. Lalitha expressed a deep love for her birth country and even had two clocks in her home showing what time it is in her hometown as a way to help keep her connected to India. Yet, returning to India was not an option, so much so that she and her children had not visited since first moving to the U.S. in 2000. Her longing for India, the life she left, and perhaps her romantization of what could have been if she still lived there, was likely compounded by the geographical distance between her and her brother and her feelings of cultural and social outsiderness. The negative affective dimensions of immigrant outsiderness were overwhelming. And so, developing a platonic relationship so close to where Lalitha trusted her friend as an extension of herself and caretaker to her two daughters was a connection for which she was incredibly grateful.

Emotional outsiderness: "I belong here or I don't belong here. I don't know."

Despite meeting several of the benchmarks associated with assimilation and structural integration into the "core society," families described experiencing striking levels of immigrant outsiderness culturally and socially. In this section, I turn to the emotional toll of their exclusion, which resulted in feelings of detachment from Americans and American culture, emotional isolation, and an overall feeling that the U.S. is not really their home.

Nisha, for example, an American citizen who emigrated to the U.S. in 1997 and lived in a gated community explained how she was an outsider to "American culture" and felt detached from her professional IT colleagues and neighbors. While sitting on her couch together, she explained the disconnect:

> I'm not really exposed to American culture, you know? The most I see here about American culture is what you see in the movies or at work. So. I have neighbors and friends, and because I live in a neighborhood where they preserve family values, I see that they have the same family values as us. Caring parents. …I see my friends at work. They respect a lot your mind, your space. If they can help, they try to help. Or they just stay away, you know? They don't cause any harm, you know? They don't interfere or get into your business or tell you what to do.

Like Lalitha, Nisha did not explain what she meant by "American culture" and felt so far removed from it, despite being a U.S. citizen and living in the U.S. for nearly 20 years, that she was remarkably unable to describe it outside of what she saw in movies and observed at work. Among the parents interviewed, one of the most commonly discussed markers of "Indian culture" or what it meant to "be Indian" was "family values," which was characterized as the maintenance of a close-knit, caring family unit both in the home and transnationally. Appearing to take a spectator approach, Nisha saw the "[preservation] of family values" as a similarity between her and her neighbors, but perceived this to be specific to her neighborhood rather than an aspect of "American culture." Taking an indifferent tone, she also mentioned exposure to American culture through her friends at work, but immediately segued into how these same friends "respect [her] mind, [her] space," "stay away," "don't cause any harm," and "don't interfere or get into [her] business." There is no doubt that Nisha used the word "friends" loosely here. In respecting her mind and space, Nisha's friends at work maintained a superficial relationship that elicited only the conditional inclusion of someone who was perceived to fit the model minority stereotype. As co-workers, and as would be suggested by assimilation literature, there was an opportunity to develop relationships that extended beyond the functional use of Nisha as a worker. Yet, even with her

high level of structural integration and her seeming achievement of the 'American Dream,' she remained on the margins of what it meant to "be American."

Likewise, Divya, described feeling an emotional disconnect, but was more emotive about how this affected her. Below she shared:

> I have a green card now, but still, roots are from India. That's still in my head. I'm still from India. I don't know if that's going to change eventually. It has not in the past 12 years. But still, we have to adapt here, so I've changed a lot for that. Still, my Indian heart says I'm Indian. That has not changed yet at least.

With just recently receiving her green card, Divya was on the path to citizenship. She took an immense amount of pride in her Indian roots, but had made significant efforts to change her lifestyle, including her appearance, in an attempt to fit in with the surrounding dominant culture and her professional and non-Indian communities. Yet, despite her efforts of bicultural accommodation, acculturation, and her high level of structural integration, she felt like neither time nor her legal residential status translated into emotional attachment. Divya described the facets of cultural and social outsiderness she felt during her, at the time of the interview, 12 years in the U.S. She had come to understand that her culture, body, and "Indian heart" would always keep her feeling a constant level of immigrant outsiderness and maintain the perception among others that she is a perpetual foreigner. Providing further evidence of the harm that being continuously regarded as an outsider posed, the perpetual foreigner stereotype had consequences for mental health and emotional well-being. As Hunyh, Devos, and Smalarz (2011) found in their multi-race study, Asian Americans in particular who were confronted with the perpetual foreigner stereotype experienced a significantly lowered sense of hope and life satisfaction. Divya's interview and the intensity of immigrant outsiderness she described throughout this and previous chapters, too, reflected a lowered sense of life satisfaction. Taken together, the degree of immigrant outsiderness that Divya expressed as a seemingly well-integrated minority had consequences for her personal

well-being, which ultimately left her frequently feeling culturally and socially inadequate and emotionally incomplete.

Social outsiderness and a lack of close bonds had emotional consequences for Neha as well. Neha moved to the U.S. in 2000 with her husband, quickly settled in a middle class neighborhood nearby the major university, earned a Masters of Biophysics from this same university, started a family, worked as a Quality Analyst at a medical research center, and just recently let her job go so that she could spend more time with her two children, Neal and Ami. Even with her sunny disposition and statements of gratitude for living in such a safe and diverse community with neighbors with whom she can trust her kids to be around, Neha expressed having an intensified sense of sorrow and depression due to the lack of close and meaningful bonds. She said:

> Like in India, we don't have that much money. When we came here, that's when we started making it, right? But we still lived happily over there because everyone lives together. And when you are—every human being has good and bad times. But when you have bad times, you always have at least someone near to you. But here, when you have bad times, you get more depression it feels like because everyone is just by themselves.

For Neha, and many others, structural integration had not paved a way to develop deep and meaningful relationships. Earlier in her interview, Neha discussed how she maintained frequent communication with relatives both in India and abroad, invited her and her husband's parents to stay with them for a few months at a time, and used cultural cultivation and the social networks she developed from these efforts to establish a sense of community, home, and belonging for herself and her children. Still, Neha's strategies of co-presence (Aranda et al. 2014), or translocal place-making to create a sense of home, were not enough for her to feel a deep, and perhaps wholly honest, connection with family and the friends she grew up with. As an immigrant who came to the U.S. in search of a more prosperous life, and within the context of being perceived as a privileged minority, perhaps Neha did not feel comfortable sharing the emotional anguish she

experienced with the family and friends she left behind. Moreover, she stated having friendships with people from all over the world who she has met both in her neighborhood and through her graduate program. The stressful and arduous process of going through a graduate program can often produce a unique bonding experience for students sharing similar experiences. Still, there was a level of social distance between Neha and her friends to the point where she did not feel close enough with them to share when she went through hard times. Deep, meaningful, and honest connections were lacking here. This lack of close bonds was what intensified her feelings of loneliness and depression during hardships.

Lalitha also experienced intense emotional deprivation. Throughout her interview, she expressed gratefulness by repeatedly stating, "I have a beautiful life" to describe her relationship with her husband, two daughters, and her middle class lifestyle. Yet, this gratitude was always met with earnest declarations of the cultural, social, and emotional outsiderness she encountered as an Indian woman and immigrant mother. This demonstrated her struggle to reconcile her middle class privileges with the heartache of feeling emotionally abandoned or disconnected from Americans and the U.S. Comparing what she felt was missing between her life in India versus her life in the U.S., she shared:

> What I'm missing from there, to compare here and there, is the connections. What I have here is that I'm just all by myself. I cannot express my happiness or I cannot express my sorrows or I cannot express my—I have to come open the door and I have to smile. No matter what, I have to smile. I have to show like, 'Wow, I'm superb.' I have to be faking it. That's not needed in India. I can say that when I grew up, I could express myself. …it was a free life there. Here it's more restricted.

Loneliness and the inability to express her full range of emotions, even with her husband, left Lalitha feeling as though she was silenced and living a stifled existence. Uncomfortable with expressing sadness, frustrations, or genuine happiness, Lalitha internalized the expectation that she must always maintain a cheerful façade— nothing more and nothing less. She revealed the pressure

she felt to both always appear as though she had everything under control (also a burdensome consequence of the model minority stereotype) and be a positive representation of Indians as a racialized ethnic group. The depths of immigrant outsiderness she described throughout this chapter as well as feeling unable to voice her true thoughts and emotions led Lalitha to question whether or not she belonged here. And so, perceiving the acute limitations of immigrant outsiderness, Lalitha candidly articulated the internal struggle that so many of the participants conveyed during their interviews:

> I live in America. Actually, I belong here or I don't belong here, I don't know. I come from a different place. I started living here. My marriage. I had my kids here, they were born here. They *do* belong here because they were born, raised, everything. They are watching only this culture around. For me, I kind of learned everything from my childhood *and then* came here after marriage. So I am taking one step forward where I have to be a little mature to understand things for my family. For them, they are seeing a culture over here. They are born and raised here. …so this is how their culture is. I have no rights to comment on it.

Compared to the depths of immigrant outsiderness that Lalitha felt, her words demonstrated her fortitude and stoicism. Like many others interviewed, Lalitha grew up and got married in India, and then moved to the U.S. during her adulthood to settle. More than feeling it as the disorientation of culture shock, Lalitha's interview illustrated an incredible amount of cultural, social, and emotional outsiderness from her surrounding culture and community. Exemplifying an ultimate sign of immigrant outsiderness, Lalitha held on to the feeling that she had "no rights" to comment on the culture by which she was surrounded.

Discussion

In this chapter, I outlined and illustrated dimensions of what I call immigrant outsiderness (defined as the subjective dimensions of the migration experience that are marked by 1. Lack of cultural inclusion, 2. Lack of social inclusion, and/or 3. Feelings of emotional disconnect) among Asian Indians, a seemingly well-integrated immigrant group. Though traditionally used

quantitative measures (such as those related to English language fluency, the adoption of cultural patterns and social rituals of the host society, residential integration, integration into specialized occupations, and social mobility) would regard each of the interviewees as acculturated and well-assimilated into middle-class American society, interview data explicitly demonstrated that structural integration did not promote feelings of inclusion or a sense of belonging. Thus, inspired by Elizabeth Aranda's (2006) concept of emotional embeddedness among migrants and Susan Matt's (2011) work on homesickness among European migrants, this chapter highlighted the distinct limits of both structural integration and the commonly used objective measures of acculturation and assimilation as it brings to the forefront the affective dimensions of the immigrant experience.

Additionally, as the data indicated, several of the families described intense levels of cultural, social, and/or emotional outsiderness. Immigrant outsiderness, to varying degrees, played a role in parents' efforts of and reasons behind enrolling their children in Naach and other cultural cultivation activities. For immigrant parents portrayed in this study who felt culturally and socially excluded and emotionally isolated, such activities and the social networks developed from participation may have served as a coping strategy to immigrant outsiderness, specifically through place-making and constructing a sense of belonging.

Finally, just as colorism was significant to the children's identity and identification, it also corresponded with the interviewed parents' sense of inclusion within American society. Of the parents interviewed, there appeared to be a general color divide between feeling a lack of social and cultural inclusion and the ensuing feelings of emotional isolation. Those who were lighter skinned, like Simran, Ajeet, and Kamya, described feeling a level of inclusion within American culture and acceptance by their non-Indian social networks. They were also more likely to share

positive experiences of bicultural accommodation and its reception by their non-Indian friends. In stark contrast, the parents, including Lalitha, Divya, and Anira, who stated feeling that they and their families were too culturally distinct to (1) fit in with their perceptions of what American culture is, and (2) feel a sense of social inclusion from the dominant community around them overwhelmingly had medium to dark brown skin tones. This disparity further reflects the importance of examining the subjective feelings of incorporation by lifting the curtain on how such a seemingly well-integrated minority group, like Asian Indians, could still feel like immigrant outsiders in a racialized society.

Ultimately, by focusing on the structural and affective dimensions of Indians' experiences, I conclude that the "honorary white" status which is often applied to Asians and Asian Indians in the U.S. obscures the subjective experiences as immigrants and minorities and the reach of racial domination. As Elijah Anderson (2015) writes in his piece "The White Space," minorities, especially those deemed as structurally integrated, must frequently navigate through "the white space," whereas whites can often avoid interactions with people of color. As Anderson (2015) argues, people of color are frequently reminded when their presence, length of stay, or actions are unwelcome or 'out of place' within the protected white space. The umbrella concept of immigrant outsiderness that I discuss in this chapter adds further empirical evidence to demonstrate that while the Indian immigrants interviewed may be structurally integrated, their level of inclusion remains superficial. By including the experiences of Asian Indians into the broader conversation about white supremacy beyond their role as "honorary whites" and "model minorities," sociologists move closer to understanding the complex mechanisms and characteristics of white supremacy.

Chapter Seven:

Conclusion

By placing the families involved with Naach center stage, "Behind the Curtain: Cultural Cultivation, Immigrant Outsiderness, and Normalized Racism against Indian Families" helps unveil how racism affects our local Indian community. Specifically, this dissertation has examined how Indian immigrants and their families living in an upwardly mobile southern Florida city suburb negotiate culture and racialization processes as they strive to create a sense of home and belonging within a society which continues to see whites as preferred and whiteness as hegemonic (Mills 1997; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). In doing so, this multimethod qualitative study pushes scholarship on childhood socialization, immigration, and contemporary race relations in important new directions by: 1. Examining the effects of ethnic and cultural socialization beyond it promoting emotional well-being in children, and 2. Further complicating how we view Asian Indians in light of dominant racial social systems.

In "Steps to Our Culture: Conceptualizing Cultural Cultivation," ethnographic observations in the field and in-depth interviews challenged traditional childhood socialization findings that portray the transmission of ethnic culture as simply a product of routinized practices and daily lifestyles. Instead, data exposed the deliberate efforts immigrant parents made to teach children about the culture 'left behind' through structured activities inside and outside of the home. I call this form of ethno-cultural socialization *cultural cultivation*. While it is not surprising that it is a gendered socialization strategy, cultural cultivation highlighted that cultural transmission

effectively operated as an 'added step' to Hochschild and Machung's (2003) work on women's "second shift" in the home. This chapter also emphasized how parents personally gained from cultural cultivation as it encouraged them to re-connect with and learn about ethnic and religious practices in more meaningful ways, strengthened their identity as "Indian," and helped build a sense of community amongst fellow Indian families. The parental benefits of ethnic and cultural socialization is a unique finding within this field of study and the dimensions of the effects of such socialization efforts on parents deserves further attention. And though cultural cultivation was conceptualized within the context of upwardly mobile Indian families at Naach who had the financial means to pay for classes geared toward teaching about the dances, languages, and religions of India, what of immigrant families with less financial flexibility to send their children to culture-based activities? How are the strategies of cultural cultivation shaped by socioeconomic status? Additionally, the concept of cultural cultivation can be useful in examining ethnic and cultural socialization across immigrant and minority communities. In what ways does cultural cultivation operate differently amongst immigrant and/or minority communities, especially in the context of ethnic enclaves, cities with larger immigrant populations, and towns with fewer families from similar ethnic or cultural backgrounds? Building upon this, how do socialization strategies across ethnic and racialized groups compare with one another? This study demonstrated that among the participating upwardly mobile Indian families, ethno-cultural socialization was emphasized over racial socialization, or the cultivation of racial consciousness for emotional and physical survival, which is more common among black families. What's more is that Indian families frequently minimized incidents of racism, even though their and their children's personal lives, just like black and Latino families, were affected by cultural and beauty norms of whiteness that consistently rendered them as 'other' or unwelcome. Such instances highlight the importance

of studying "privileged" groups, including their socialization practices, especially in light of broader assumptions that Asians do not experience racism. Moreover, integrating research on socialization among "privileged" racialized groups, including whites, allows us to better understand how racial domination is taught, contested, and perpetuated through daily interaction.

The chapter titled "'About the Kids and for the Kids': Negotiating Cultural Cultivation, Biculturalism, and Colorism" offered a more complex understanding of the effects of ethnic and cultural socialization on children beyond the traditional argument of promoting a sense of well-being. Offering a robust methodological contribution to work on childhood socialization, this chapter analyzed observations, interviews, and self-portrait data in conjunction with one another and took an important step in integrating how children perceive themselves and make sense of the world around them, rather than relying on adults' reports of their experiences, which is much more common in sociological scholarship. Ethnographic data, interviews, and self-portraits also demonstrated cultural cultivation as a powerful mechanism in fortifying children's sense of Indian identity and promoting positive well-being. Highlighting an important gap in the literature, however, data demonstrated that children who did not develop a strong attachment through cultural cultivation described feeling ashamed and guilty for not connecting to "Indian culture" in the way they were taught and felt they should. Additionally, interview and self-portrait data revealed experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and colorism, a problem that few sociologists have studied within the context of second generation Indian children (Purkayastha 2005). Through teasing and feeling left out at school and color prejudice within the family, children reflected an understanding that lightness is valued and whiteness is hegemonic. As a result, some children became increasingly aware that there was a time and a place to express or share aspects of Indian culture as they knew it while others re-asserted their ethnic and cultural identities, forging what

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) call a "reactive ethnicity," in an attempt to create a sense of belonging and shared identity.

This chapter utilized an innovative visual method of having children draw self-portraits as we conducted interviews together, yielding rich data on their school and home lives. To understand the ways racism impacts children, it is critical that scholars both integrate them into research as knowledgeable beings and utilize multiple methods (such as observations, interviews with parents or teachers, and visual methods) to triangulate their responses. Continuing to rely on solely adults' accounts of children's experiences because of the perception that it is too difficult to include youth as co-researchers will only contribute to a partial picture of how they understand and experience the world around them. Moreover, immigration and race scholars have detailed the unique histories and distinctive racialization processes among immigrant and minority groups (Aranda, Hughes, and Sabogal 2014; Lee 2015; Waters 1999), and have demonstrated how racism manifests itself differently across social class (Anderson 2015; Lacy 2007). This study focused on how the narrow sample of second generation Indian children from upwardly mobile structurally integrated families experienced prejudice, discrimination, and bicultural identities. Building upon the questions addressed in this chapter, how do Indian American children's experiences of identity negotiation, prejudice, and discrimination differ across socioeconomic status? And with the goal of better recognizing how racism plays out, what can a triangulation of visual and ethnographic methods reveal about how racial, class, and color hierarchies manifest themselves in children across immigrant groups? Utilizing multiple research techniques including visual methods will open avenues for a deeper understanding of how children of immigrants both perceive themselves and their families as well as negotiate their identities in the context of racial hegemony and dominant hierarchies.

"'Due to Our Mistakes': Racial Domination and the Construction of the 'Good Minority'" outlined an important consequence of the model minority myth. Focusing on home visits and interviews, this chapter argued that seemingly positive stereotypes about Indians elicited the perception that they could not possibly experience the effects of racism because of their standing as a "good minority." Thus, real instances of prejudice and discrimination were minimized to the point of non-recognition, and racial affronts were internalized and re-interpreted as mistakes in need of correction. Moreover, this chapter demonstrated the reluctance families had in discussing race and racism despite the fact that they experienced and navigated racial tensions in their daily lives. It also demonstrated the longevity of racialized images of Asian Indians which have historically positioned them as 'less than,' undeserving, or inferior beings (Shankar and Srikanth 1998).

As discussed in the chapter's literature review, Ellen Wu's (2014) work on the rise of the model minority stereotype explains how quickly and effectively political motives controlled perceptions of Asians living in the U.S. by putting forth an image of them as hardworking, obedient, and therefore valued minorities. Upward mobility and structural integration further reinforced the stereotype that the families portrayed in this study were "model minorities." However, if the value of so-called model minorities lie in their utility, what of families who do not meet the proper criteria for the stereotype, especially in the context of anti-immigrant sentiments and perceptions of Asians as forever foreign? And in what ways will dominant images of Asian Indians as model minorities and honorary whites be further challenged with the increasing awareness that they are the fastest growing undocumented Asian group in the U.S. (Passel and Cohn 2014)? This chapter provides only a glimpse into the consequences of the model minority stereotype on middle to upper middle class Indian families. Examining how the stereotype is

internalized, accommodated, or resisted across families with working class backgrounds or among families who do not meet "model minority" expectations will help scholars and activists better understand and articulate the consequences of racial myths.

Finally, the chapter, "'Americans Kind of Stay Away; They Don't Get Too Close': Immigrant Outsiderness and the Affective Dimensions of Assimilation," built upon the work of Susan Matt (2011) and Elizabeth Aranda (2006) to emphasize the importance of striving to understand immigrant incorporation beyond objective measures of assimilation. Interview and ethnographic data revealed that structural integration did not promote feelings of inclusion or a sense of belonging. Instead, families described feeling what I call *immigrant outsiderness*, characterized by feelings of a lack of cultural and social inclusion and emotional disconnect. To mediate these feelings of outsiderness from the surrounding dominant community, families to varying degrees engaged cultural cultivation as a way to build social networks and construct a sense of community and belonging. Additionally, although unfortunately not fully explored in this dissertation, data revealed a strong correlation between darker skin and increased feelings of immigrant outsiderness. As research on colorism has argued, color prejudice has an enormous impact on the quality of relationships and life chances (Hordge-Freeman 2015, Glenn 2009). Therefore, future research would benefit from not only utilizing the concept and dimensions of immigrant outsiderness to examine how immigrant groups are culturally, socially, and emotionally placed at a distance across contexts, but analyze the relationship between immigrant outsiderness and colorism so that we can better understand and ultimately work toward dismantling white supremacist power structures.

"How does it feel to be a Solution?"

Re-visiting Vijay Prashad's (2000) provocative question posed in the Introduction and following the footsteps of his critical race scholarship, the upwardly mobile Asian Indian families represented here revealed the problematic assumptions and tensions embedded within perceptions of being a "solution." From connecting to the culture 'left behind' through cultural cultivation to children's negotiation of their Indian and American identities in the midst of teasing and feeling left out to the damaging consequences of internalizing the model minority stereotype to the cultural, social, and emotional dimensions of immigrant outsiderness that each of the families exhibited, this dissertation brings to the fore just a few of the ways that racism impacts our local Asian Indian community. Though objective measures would classify each of the families as financially privileged and structurally integrated, being positioned as a "solution," "model minority," or "honorary white" was a gross oversimplification of their lives as immigrants and minorities as it concealed the physical and psychological labor involved in trying to construct a sense of home and belonging within a racialized society that consistently rendered them as 'other.' Moreover, such labels situate Asian Indians, regardless of their social location, as a wedge between whites and other minority groups. As Prashad's scholarship and this dissertation demonstrates, utilizing Asian Indians as a 'weapon' against blacks and Latinos for the 'right way' to be a minority precludes a recognition of shared struggles against racism.

Furthermore, while the model minority stereotype continues to be well-used in the media and among the general public (Ramasubramanian 2011; Sullivan 2017), scholars have deconstructed it as a flawed and misleading image of Asian Americans (Lee 2015; Wu 2014). Now it is time to do the same with terms such as "honorary white" (Bonilla-Silva 2002, 2004) that gloss over inequalities and disparities among Asian Indians, racialization practices which cast them as

'other' or "perpetual foreigners" (Huynh, Devos, & Smalarz 2011), and everyday prejudice and discrimination.

Using Naach as an access point, this dissertation has focused on how Indian families respond to day-to-day racism as they build their lives in their local communities. Deepa Iyers' (2015) activist-scholarship documents the physical and symbolic violence against South Asians across the U.S. in our post-9/11 era. And between November 15, 2015 and November 15, 2016 alone South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT), a national non-profit dedicated to organizing around issues affecting the South Asian community, recorded 207 incidents of hate violence and politically-driven xenophobic rhetoric against the South Asian and Middle Eastern community (Sridaran, Raghunathan, and Trivedi 2017), all of who are constituents of the "honorary white" category (Bonilla-Silva 2002). The 2012 massacre of six people at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, the "Dotbusters," a gang who between 1987 and 1993 brutally attacked Indian men and women and vandalized Indian-owned businesses to drive them out of Jersey City, New Jersey, the murder of Kansas resident Srinivas Kuchibhotla on February 22, 2017, and the fire set to a Florida mosque (just miles away from where all of the families involved in this study lived) on February 24, 2017 remind our community that seemingly positive labels do not make us immune to racially motivated physical, symbolic, and emotional violence. Thus, it is imperative that we reconsider our commitment to the model minority stereotype in public discourse and "honorary white" category in academic scholarship. The preceding analyses as well as the studies and incidents listed above provide evidence and an impetus for proponents of racial justice and mainstream scholars of race and ethnicity to regard Asian Indians, and South Asians in general, as a legitimate racialized group affected by racism. By doing this, we better understand the ways that racial domination unfolds and is reproduced in everyday life.

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Appendix A:

USF Institutional Review Board Study Approval Letter

USF
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
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6/19/2014

Pangri Mehta
USF Department of Sociology
4202 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**
IRB#: Pro00015977
Title: 'Steps to Our Culture': Interpretations and Expressions of Asian Indian Bicultural Identity

Study Approval Period: 6/19/2014 to 6/19/2015

Dear Ms. Mehta:

On 6/19/2014, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
IRB Protocol Guidelines

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Interviews Consent and Assent Form.pdf
Participant Observation Consent and Assent Form.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Appendix B:

Adults' Interview Guide

Background Information

1.) Tell me a little bit about yourself.

a. Where are you from?

i. If immigrated, when?

ii. Why did you immigrate?

b. What do you do? (occupation)

c. Tell me about your educational background.

d. How many children do you have?

e. How would you identify yourself?

f. Can you describe the backgrounds of your friends?

g. Could you describe this neighborhood?

i. I'm curious about the diversity of your neighborhood. Do you live with mostly other whites, is your neighborhood racially diverse? Are there a lot of Indian families in your neighborhood?

h. What does your ideal neighborhood look like?

Dance and Dance Studio

2.) How did you learn about the dance studio?

3.) How many of your children are involved in either Bollywood or classical Indian dance classes?

4.) How did you make your decision about what classes to enroll your children in?

5.) What do you hope to gain from enrolling your son/daughter in Bollywood/classical dance classes?

6.) Has [student] ever been asked to be a 'boy'/'girl' in any of these dances?

a. How did [student] feel about it?

b. Did [student] mind? How come?

7.) Is your child enrolled in IndiaFest?

a. Which dance?

b. How did you decide which dance your child would do?

c. What do you think about IndiaFest?

i. Any things in particular that you like/dislike about it?

8.) Did you go to the IIFA awards?

a. What did you think about the awards show?

Culture

9.) What are your thoughts on being Indian in an American culture?

10.) If someone asked you to describe 'Indian culture,' what would you say?

11.) What are some things you would like your children to know about Indian culture?

a. In what ways do you preserve and share Indian culture with your children?

12.) Aside from bringing [student(s)] to dance class, do your children participate in any other extracurricular activities related to Indian culture?

a. For example, language, Hindi, art, music, other dance classes?

b. Do all of your children (sons/daughters) participate in these same activities?

i. If not, how come?

13.) If someone asked you to describe 'American culture,' what would you tell them?

a. What are some similarities and differences between Indian and American culture?

14.) When you hear the phrase "Indian culture in America," what do you think of?

15.) What are your thoughts on integrating Indian culture with American culture?

a. In what ways do you feel you integrate or combine Indian and American cultures?

b. Do you find this challenging?

16.) I'm interested in how gender roles may differ between Indian and American cultures.

a. Are there different gender role expectations for men and women?

ii. If so, what are they?

iii. Do you hold these same expectations?

b. What are the expectations of Indian women?

c. What are the expectations of Indian men?

d. Do you feel you meet these expectations?

e. Do you agree with these expectations?

f. Do you hold your children to these expectations?

17.) There is a common idea that 'being too Western' means 'not being Indian enough.' What do you think about that?

18.) Have you ever experienced any type of discrimination?

19.) To your knowledge, have your children faced prejudice or discrimination?

a. If yes, how did they deal with or react to it?

b. Did you help them cope with it?

c. Do you prepare your children for possible discrimination in their lives?

d. If so, how?

20.) Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Appendix C:

Children's Interview Guide

Background Information

1.) Can you draw a picture of yourself? (Offer the children paper and crayons and ask them to draw a picture of themselves as the following interview questions are asked).

2.) If you could describe yourself in 3 words, what would they be?

3.) Tell me a little bit about yourself.

- a. How old are you?
- b. Where are you from?
- c. Where are your mom and dad from?
    - i. Try to get a sense of what language they speak at home.

Dance and Dance Studio

4.) When/Why did you start taking [Bollywood/Kuchipudi] dance class?

- a. Did you get to choose which class you are in, or did your mom/dad?
- b. Why did you choose Bollywood/Kuchipudi?

5.) What do you like about dance class?

- a. What do you not like about dance class?

6.) Do you feel like there are 'girls' and 'boys' movements?

- a. Have you ever had to do 'boys'/'girls' movements? (*Only for Bollywood/IndiaFest students)
- b. What are some differences between 'boy' and 'girl' movements?

i. How do you know?

c. What do you think about having to do 'really boyish' or 'really girly' movements?

i. How did you feel?

ii. Did you mind? How come?

7.) Have you ever done IndiaFest before? Are you doing it this year?

a. Did you like it?

i. What did you like/dislike about it?

b. How did you decide what dance to do for IndiaFest?

8.) How would you describe IndiaFest?

Interests and Goals

9.) What are some of your favorite subjects in school? Activities?

10.) What things do you have in common with your friends?

a. Are there any differences between you?

11.) Tell me some of the things you like to do.

12.) What do you want to be when you grow up?

Culture

13.) Finish this sentence: "Being Indian means…."

14.) Finish this sentence: "Being American means…"

15.) If one of your friends said, "Tell me about Indian culture," what would you say?

16.) If someone who just moved here said, "Tell me about American culture," what would you say?

17.) What are some differences between Indian and American culture?

a. What are some similarities between Indian and American culture?

18.) What do you like about ‘being Indian’?

a. Is it sometimes hard to ‘be Indian’?

b. How do people know you are Indian?

19.) What do you like about ‘being American’?

a. Is it sometimes hard to ‘be American’?

20.) If you could tell me anything else about yourself, what would it be?