Georgia State University
ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

Gerontology Theses | Gerontology Institute

8-18-2010

"I Miss My Country, but My World is with My Children": Examining the Family and Social Lives of Older Indian Immigrants in the United States

Karuna Sharma
Gerontology Institute

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/gerontology_theses

Recommended Citation
Sharma, Karuna, ""I Miss My Country, but My World is with My Children": Examining the Family and Social Lives of Older Indian Immigrants in the United States." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2010.
http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/gerontology_theses/21

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Gerontology Institute at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gerontology Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

“I MISS MY COUNTRY, BUT MY WORLD IS WITH MY CHILDREN”: EXAMINING THE FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIVES OF OLDER INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

by

KARUNA SHARMA

ABSTRACT

Within the context of ongoing social and demographic transformation, including the trend towards globalization, changing patterns of longevity and increasing ethnic diversity, this thesis examines the lives older Asian-Indian immigrants in the United States. To date, much of what little research exists on this group of elders focuses on acculturation and related stress, but there is limited research on the daily life experiences of these older adults, particularly as they pertain to family life, the practice of filial piety, and informal support exchange within their households, as well as their social lives more generally. Informed by two theoretical approaches, Life Course and Symbolic Interactionism, this research examines older immigrants’ social and family lives. The study employs a qualitative approach and involves in-depth semi-structured interviews with 10 older Asian-Indians living in the Atlanta area. To varying degrees, their lives are family-centered. Traditional Indian practices such as

filial piety are individualized according to the intersection of American and Indian cultures and family (e.g., structure and history) and personal (e.g., personal resources) influences. Similar influences operate to shape their family and social lives more generally. These findings enhance existing understandings of older immigrants' lives and illustrate similarities and differences. In doing so, the research provides valuable information that can promote cultural competence for those working with and designing policies and programs for adults in a rapidly aging and increasingly diverse society.

INDEX WORDS: Social support, Filial piety (*seva)*, Formal services, Community get-together, Ethnic elements, Intergenerational relations, Traditions

“I MISS MY COUNTRY, BUT MY WORLD IS WITH MY CHILDREN”: EXAMINING THE FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIVES OF OLDER INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

by

KARUNA SHARMA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2010

Copyright by
Karuna Sharma
2010

"I MISS MY COUNTRY, BUT MY WORLD IS WITH MY CHILDREN": EXAMINING THE FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIVES OF OLDER INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

by

KARUNA SHARMA

Committee Chair: Candace L. Kemp

Committee: Mary M. Ball
Molly M. Perkins

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
August 2010

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the older adults who participated in my study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer my sincere thanks to my thesis advisor, Dr. Candace L. Kemp for her continuous guidance, support, and patience. It was in her graduate seminar course that I developed my interest in qualitative research methods and life course perspective. I benefited from her expertise on ethnicity and family issues. I would like to thank my thesis committee members, Dr. Mary M. Ball and Dr. Molly M. Perkins, for their enthusiasm and keen interest in my thesis project. Their generous comments and insights were of immense help in the completion of my thesis. My thanks are also due to the other faculty members, Mary Mackinnon, Irma Roefs, Doris Hoenig, and my sister, Poonam Chanana, for providing me with their perspectives on issues related with older adults. I am also grateful to Professor Sarah Lamb for making some of her research articles available to me. I thoroughly enjoyed doing this project and it has been a wonderful and enlightening journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

LIST OF TABLES viii

LIST OF FIGURES ix

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION 1

Statement of the Problem 1

Research Aims 2

Significance 3

2. LITERATURE REVIEW 4

The Context 4

Factors Influencing Older Immigrants' Experiences 12

Summary 13

Research Aims and Questions 14

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN 15

Theoretical Framework 15

Methods 17

Data Collection Method 18

Analysis 19

4. THE PARTICIPANTS 21

Sample Characteristics 21

Case Examples 24

Case Example: The Common Theme 32

5. FILIAL PIETY 34

Dimensions of Filial Piety 35

Individualized Filial Piety 39

Factors Influencing Filial Piety 42

6. ELDERS' EVERYDAY FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIVES 52

Engaging Lifestyles 52

Factors Influencing Everyday Life 62

7. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS 74

Cultural Practices, Continuity and Change 74

Theoretical and Policy Implications 80

Strength, Limitations and Future Directions 82

Conclusion 84

REFERENCES 86

APPENDIX 93

Appendix A INTERVIEW GUIDE 93

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Sample Characteristics 22

Table 2. Individual Participant Characteristics 23

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Individualized Filial Piety Model 41

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Immigration typically occurs among younger age groups and often is associated with the search for employment or the desire to reconnect with family. Recent theorizing by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002:25) introduces the term, "'globalization of biography' in which people's lives [of all ages] increasingly stretch voluntarily and involuntarily across frontiers and national boundaries." They argue that the changing nature of work (i.e., that can stretch across time and space), technological advances (i.e., travel, communication technology), and family life (i.e. increasing longevity) increase the likelihood that more individuals and families will be required to traverse nations and negotiate identities and live in foreign settings than ever before.

Immigration at any time of life is complex, but it can be especially so for older adults. Certain individuals may find continuity between their former home and adopted home. For others, the move may mean growing old in an unfamiliar or completely foreign setting. Others may find that their experiences lie somewhere in between these two extremes. Depending on the degree of difference between the country of origin and the host country, older immigrants may experience acculturative stress, have difficulty conforming to cultural norms in a foreign culture, lose or lack friends, and depend on others, especially their adult children (Berry, 2007). Relocating later in life may introduce difficulties learning a new language and represent the loss of lifelong social contacts in individuals' home country (Gefland, 2003). Older adults' immigration to the U.S., which is typically for family reunification and support needs, highlights the issue of informal support exchange between the generations and raises questions about growing old in a foreign land.

Within the context of ongoing social and demographic transformation, including the trend towards globalization and changing patterns of longevity, this thesis examines the lives of older Asian-Indians (the third largest group of Asians) in the U.S. To date, much of what little research exists on this group of elders has focused on acculturation stress which leads to individuals turning towards their family and the Indian community (Diwan, 2008; Nandan, 2007; Rangaswamy, 2000) and possibly away from the potential supports available in the host society. These are important issues for older immigrants, but there is a limited research on the daily life experiences of the older adults, particularly their family lives, filial piety, and informal support exchanges in their households, as well as their social lives more generally.

Research Aims

The overall goal of my research is to examine older Indian immigrants' experiences in the U.S., including their lifestyles, the structure and function of their support networks, and the nature of support exchanges within the family and the external community. More specifically, my aims are:

1.To examine and understand the nature of older Indian immigrants' family and social experiences as they relocate to, live in and grow older in the U.S.; and

2. To identify (societal, cultural, community, family, individual) factors that influence their experiences.

Significance

Examining the experiences of those who resettle, or go back and forth between their country of origin and country of settlement provides a unique opportunity to study how intergenerational (family based obligations, rituals, solidarity, filial piety) relationships and social ties are negotiated across different nation states and to understand aging as a social process, particularly how it is influenced by culture. By addressing my aims, I hope to advance existing understandings of older immigrants' experiences. My goal is to contribute to the existing literature and provide information that can be used to inform program design and interventions in an increasingly culturally diverse and rapidly aging society as the U.S.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The Context

Similar to other nations around the globe, the U.S. population is aging. Older persons--those 65 and over--are making up a greater percentage of the population (Administration on Aging [AoA], 2008). In 2000, 35 million individuals in the U.S. were age 65 and older. These numbers rose to 37.9 million in 2007, and they are expected to climb to 40 million in 2010 (a 15% increase) and then rise to 55 million in 2020 (a 36% increase for that decade). According to AoA reports, minority populations[1] also are projected to increase, augmenting the racial and ethnic diversity of the older population. In 2000 and 2007, racial and ethnic minority groups represented approximately 16% and 20% of the older adult population, respectively; by 2020, estimates suggest they will represent nearly one-quarter of that population (AoA, 2008).

U.S. Census Bureau (2008) statistics show that between July 2006 and July 2007, Asians (of all ages) were the second fastest-growing minority group (behind Hispanics). Chinese-Americans were the largest Asian group, followed by: Filipinos, Asian Indians (the focus of this research), Vietnamese, Koreans and Japanese (American Community Survey, 2007a). In the context of the current research, it is important to note that although a small body of research exists that is dedicated to understanding older immigrants' experiences in the U.S., this research often does not distinguish between ethnic groups, particularly Asian groups (e.g. Agbayani-Siewert, 2004; Coon and Kemmelmeier, 2001)**.** Moreover, much of this literature focuses on younger immigrant experiences (Bhatia, 2007; Park, 2009; Purkayashtha, 2005). In what follows below, I will review the relevant literature on immigration and older adults, exploring their life

[1] According to U.S. Census Bureau (2008), minority groups include Hispanics, who are the largest minority group, numbering 45.5 million in 2007, followed by Blacks (40.7 million), Asians (15.2 million), American Indians and Alaska Natives (4.5 million); and Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (1 million).

experiences and establishing what is known about older Indians who immigrate to the U.S. before presenting my specific research questions.

Immigration.

Part of the increase in older ethnic minority populations is related to increases in immigration (Treas & Batalova, 2007). According to the American Community Survey (2007b), in the entire U.S. population, which is approaching 300 million, over 47 million individuals are 65 and over; approximately 4 million of these are foreign born older adults of which 13.2% entered the U.S. between 1990-1999 (American Community Survey, 2007b). Research shows that Asian Indians immigrated to the U.S. in three distinct waves: (1) 1965-1975 in which young adults mostly migrated for higher education and opportunities for professional career; (2) 1976-1985 in which people immigrated with their families to meet demands for highly trained professionals; and (3) 1990-1999 in which after the passing of the Family Reunification Act of 1990, permanent residents and citizens could bring their immediate relatives to the U.S. This Act facilitated the immigration of aging parents of Asian Indian immigrants (Nandan, 2007). Nandan (2007) studied immigrants' experiences in the context of their motivations for immigration, the challenges that they faced, and their cultural values. She found that immigrants experiences differed by wave. The first wave consists of professionals who have English language skills and had been part of the labor force, so they got adapted to the work culture and were comfortable with some American customs. They also do not have strong bonds in their country of origin as either their parents died or their siblings live abroad. The second wave consists of both men and women who immigrated to pursue their professional careers. This means these are dual-income families who became part of mainstream America and the presence of women in the labor force made it faster to adapt to U.S. culture. Some Indians emigrated from other parts of the world,

like South Africa and Guyana to escape persecution or discrimination. This wave families visited Indian often, so have stronger bonds than the first wave immigrants. The final wave of immigrants consists mainly of siblings and aging parents who are financially dependent on their sponsors. This group is lonely and socially alienated due to lack of language skills and driving capabilities. They are also experiencing chronic health problems and often they are not entitled to public programs, like Social Security as they lack a labor history. This is the poor section in the Indian immigrant population. The third wave immigrants are the focus of the current study.

Push and pull Factors.

In a Western context, Longino and Bradley (2006) use a developmental perspective to outline three patterns of migration among older adults: 1) older adults who tend to move upon retirement (amenities move); 2) older adults who move in response to some moderate form of disability (assistance move); and 3) older adults who develop a chronic disability and enter a long-term care facility (institutional move). In the context of international migration, moves may occur for any of these reasons, but most often are made in response to needs for assistance, where both push and pull factors are present. Push factors include retirement, failing health and a lack of available family support in India (Gupta, 2005; Rangaswamy, 2000). Pull factors include helping children in their households and raise grandchildren, and material comforts in the U.S. (Nandan, 2005).

A recent study investigating immigration motives by Kalavar, Kolt, Giles, & Driver (2004) included a sample of 100 community-dwelling older Asian Indians (average age 73 years) living in New Jersey. They found that 63% of the sample emigrated to be with family; 67% said

they moved at their children's insistence, 21% emigrated to pave the way for other family member's immigration to the U.S., and 20% moved to help raise grandchildren.

Acculturation.

Immigration entails many socio-economic, psychological and cultural changes as the immigrant encounters a new environment. Consequently, immigrants are apt to face multiple challenges in their new setting, including difficulties related to the loss of family members and friends, as well as challenges related to acculturation. Berry (2008:1) describes acculturation as occurring "when groups of different cultural backgrounds and their individual members engage each other." Berry suggests that acculturation is a "process" that leads "to cultural and psychological changes in both parties" and involves three phases: (1) contact; (2) conflict; and (3) adaptation. According to Berry (2003), the adaptation phase has four distinct types of acculturation outcomes associated with it: (1) integration where immigrants maintain their ethno-cultural identity but also strive for social interaction at a larger level; (2) assimilation where immigrants do not care for their cultural identity and seek interaction with the larger society; (3) separation where immigrants hold on to their culture and identity, while consciously avoiding the host culture; and (4) marginalization in which immigrants neither wish to hold on to their culture nor have relationships with others in the society.

In context to acculturation, Berry (2003:21) also describes the role of the host society which has to adapt to cultural diversity as well in order to create a favorable environment for immigrants. Berry (2003) defines "acculturative stress" as an immigrant failing to get a favorable response from the host society, which results in "uncertainty, anxiety and depression." In a recent study by Detzner (2004) involving older Vietnamese refugees in the U.S., participants

felt it was necessary for younger generations of immigrants to integrate first and pave the way in order for them to be successful in their host country. In this study, older Vietnamese refugees emphasized the need for attributes, such as ambition and independence when describing their children and grandchildren's integration. This study provides some insight about one group of older Asian immigrants and their experiences. The current study will build on this knowledge base by exploring the immigration experiences of another understudied group of Asian immigrants.

Eastern culture in a Western world.

A key factor that older adults from India encounter in the U.S. is the difference of cultures (Kalavar & Van Willigen, 2005). These differences are often explained by comparing and contrasting Eastern and Western cultures. To begin, relative to Eastern societies, Western ones, such as the U.S., are generally considered more individualistic, valuing independence in old age, and upholding the ideals of autonomy and self-reliance for all individuals (Bengston, Lowenstein, Putney & Gans, 2003). In contrast to these Western values, Eastern cultures, including Indian culture, are considered highly collectivist, upholding interdependence in old age (Lamb, 2009b).According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), each culture treats the concept of the self differently. In an individualist culture individuals identify themselves primarily as individuals, whereas in a collectivist culture people identify themselves more in terms of group membership. In South Asian culture (which includes Bangladesh, India and Pakistan), the "self is positioned within the family system and the power and status are determined hierarchically" (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004:85).

The self-construal is especially relevant to “filial piety,” a concept that is central to Eastern cultures. Filial piety- unconditional support for one’s parents- is “central to Asian philosophical and spiritual values and traditions and is expressed as respect for age and authority in family relationships and it extends beyond the family to include teachers, community, leaders, government officials, and others in position of authority” (Detzner, 2004:24). In the Chinese context, filial piety is a Confucian virtue (*xiao*) which is described as emotional support for parents by their children and contains an element of authority. It includes “support, memorializing, attendance, deference, compliance, respect and love” for older parents (Yeh, 2003:1).

In the Indian context, filial piety is a concept that invokes service to and respect for the aged, and is referred to as *seva* (Lamb, 2002a). *Seva* refers to “relationships in long term bonds of intergenerational reciprocity and affection, in which juniors provide care for their senior parents in old age and after death, as ancestors in return for all of the effort, expense and love their parents expended to producing raise them in infancy and childhood” (304). Filial piety promotes social interactions and intergenerational relationships, as well as interdependence between different age groups. Ideally, elder family members depend on their younger generation to meet their material and instrumental needs. Meanwhile, the younger generation relies on their elders for wisdom, which is associated with age.

Regarding older parents’ filial expectations of their adult children in the U.S., Nandan (2007) found that Indian older adult immigrants who maintain a more traditional ethnic identity, and who are somewhat separated from the host society because of language skill deficits and a lack of education tend to have higher needs and are more dependent, requiring, for example, assistance with translation and transportation in addition to primary care. Some researchers have

examined household arrangements among Asian-Indians in the U.S. to investigate the collectivist nature of Indian culture (Gupta & Pillai, 2000). In their study of 118 Indian/Pakistani families in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, they found that most Indian families in the U.S. (as in India), maintain three generational households. Their findings showed that because older parents shared residence with their children, they were more likely to be cared for by their family as opposed to formal support sources.

Support for older parents.

In traditional Indian culture, sons are expected to care for older parents, but in reality it is typically the daughter-in-law who has the responsibility for their day-to-day care (Lamb, 2009a). As found by Gupta (2005), sons bring their parents to the U.S. in order to care for them in old age, but often the sons' spouses are the ones who are expected to transport elders to temple, doctor visits, etc. In a qualitative study, Rangaswamy (2000) found that although Indian sons expressed a desire to follow norms of filial piety and traditional gender roles, support and care for their parents often fell to their wives. Similarly, in a British study of a South Asian communities (from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan), care (particularly physical care) for parents was often the responsibility of daughters-in-law, unmarried daughters, and occasionally granddaughters (Katbamna, Ahmad, Bhakta, Baker & Parker, 2004). In this study, male caregivers reported receiving support from their family's female members, mostly their wives and daughters-in-law.

Support for older family members can range from emotional support to assistance in activities of daily living to more intimate care such as bathing, helping with toileting. The nature of day-to-day, physical, practical, and emotional support points towards older parents having

rather intense relationships/interactions with the female members of their households Caregiving responsibilities can be stressful and research shows that female caregivers often complain about a lack of emotional support and for not being recognized for their care work by other relatives, especially mothers-in-law (Nandan, 2007; Gupta, 2005). Gupta (2005) found that daughters-in-law often sacrificed their jobs and other personal needs to provide care for in-laws who did not appreciate them. Nandan (2007) also found that older adults often expected their married adult children to disrupt their family and work lives in order to care for them.

Exchange of support between generations.

In the literature on older Indian adults in the U.S., most findings show that financial support flows from adult children to their older parents (Kalavar & Van Willigen, 2005, Rangaswamy, 2000). In exchange for such support, as Nandan (2005) found in her qualitative study of older Indian immigrants, many elders reciprocated by helping to pass along Indian traditions and values to younger family members. In this regard, older parents may be viewed as an asset Kalavar & Van Willigen's (2005) study supports these findings, showing that older immigrant parents often help retain many cultural traditions in the household, such as maintaining a traditional kitchen and practicing customary Indian dietary habits.

Residence in a multigenerational household often provides grandparents with opportunities to share child-rearing responsibilities with their adult children. This caregiving role leads to more contact between older grandparents and their grandchildren, whom typically are more acculturated than they (Kalavar & Van Willigen, 2005). In her research Rangaswamy (2000: 208) found ties between older immigrant parents and their grandchildren "strong and loving." In grandparents' perception, as their grandchildren grow older and more independent,

they come under an influence of the local culture in, such as in their behaviors as it relates to respecting the elders. Ultimately, however, the literature suggests a number of factors influence older immigrants' experiences.

Factors Influencing Older Immigrants' Experiences

The literature on immigrant older adults in the U.S. identifies several factors that influence older immigrants' experiences, adapting to a different culture and new environment. Language skills, for example, often are limited among many of the major ethnic minority groups in the U.S. Such skills are important as they influence adjustment and can open or close the door to mainstream society (Detzner, 2004). Diwan, Jonnadlanda, & Gupta (2004) compared two groups of older Indian immigrants, including 226 participants who spoke English and 114 who did not. Findings showed that immigrants who could not manage the language often encountered acculturation stress, which left them with depressive symptoms and poor self-rated health. More recently, Diwan (2008) found that non-English speaking older immigrants often relied on their adult children and organizations within their ethnic communities when communicating with the outside world, which increased their dependence on family.

Other research has addressed challenges related to transportation, which has an important influence on immigrants' ability to move about outside of the home (Diwan, 2008; Kalavar & Van Willgen, 2005). Though access to transportation and the ability to communicate significantly impact older immigrants' ability to adapt, immigrants' role within the household, such as their contribution to childcare, also is a key factor that shapes their experiences. Immigrants' role and experiences within the household are a focus of the current research.

Summary

Undeniably, as the literature shows, older immigrant parents may play an important role in their adult children's and grandchildren's lives (and vice versa). This literature review highlights many important factors that affect older Indian immigrants and the relationships they have with their families, including filial norms and levels of acculturation. Existing research depicts older Indian parents as vanguards of Indian values and traditions. Many times members of younger generations also find themselves caught between two different cultures and research reviewed here shows that older parents presence in multigenerational households may help the second and third generation maintain their Indian identity in the U.S.

Another underlying theme in these studies has been filial piety, which is essential in Eastern cultures such as India. Based on my review of studies, the relationship between children and parents is often depicted as a burdened one, in which the older generation stubbornly clings to old world customs and norms. Lamb's (2009b) recent work raises questions about the fulfilment of traditional filial norms in modern India as well as the practice of filial norms in Indian families in the U.S. Lamb suggests that older people can be agents of social change. According to Lamb, older people are constantly revising their own ideas and expectations related with intergenerational reciprocity in reaction to socio-cultural changes through a process she labels "the remaking of aging." Thus, there is a need to look into how socio-economic changes in India are influencing older parents' expectation of their children in the context of intergenerational reciprocity once they relocate to the U.S. Based on Lamb's thesis, it is possible that filial norms, which are characteristic of intergenerational supports in the Indian families, are fluid in their nature. The potential malleability of these norms may need to be taken into account when designing interventions or making recommendations for public policy.

Research Aims and Questions

The overall goal of this project is to examine older Indian immigrants' experiences in the U.S., particularly their lifestyles, attitudes, practice of filial piety, and support exchanges within the family and the Indian community.

Specifically, this study addresses the following aims and questions:

Aim 1: To examine and understand older Indian immigrants' experiences relocating to, living in, and growing older in the U.S. in context to their family life and social networks within the Indian community.

- What does their family life and social lives consist of and, within these contexts, who do they interact with on a regular basis, under what circumstances and with what results?
- How does their family life and social life differ from that they experienced in India?
- How far do their social lives and support networks extend beyond family?

Aim 2: To identify and explain the factors that influence older Indian immigrants' experiences relocating to, living in, and growing older in the U.S.

- How do individual factors (e.g., gender, age, health status, language skills, expectations, etc.) shape their experiences?
- How do family factors (e.g., size, expectations, relationship history, etc.) shape their experiences?
- How do community (e.g. transportation, community program, etc.) factors influence their experiences?
- How do cultural (e.g., filial piety) factors influence their experiences?

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Framework, Research Method and Design

Theoretical Framework

As demographic changes have brought the older population to the center of research, similarly there has been a call for theory to explain the social context of aging. A theory "answers the question why, as distinct from empirical descriptions" (Jamieson, 2002:10). Two distinct, yet complementary conceptual frameworks, a symbolic interactionist approach and a life course perspective inform this research.

Symbolic Interactionism.

Herbert Blumer was instrumental in developing the ideas associated with Symbolic Interactionism. This perspective has three premises: "human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them; the meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows; and these meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters" (Blumer, 1969:2). Thus as an approach, it focuses on the actions and interactions of the participants with the outside world, and what social meaning people associate with their world. This perspective emphasizes that "the person and the world cannot be understood in isolation because the 'self' is being continually developed through interaction with other human beings" (Jeon, 2004: 250). This makes human beings active in the construction of their own biography.

In this study, I use the symbolic interactionist model to explore the myriad of experiences that older immigrants encounter and the meanings that they attach to their immigration to the U.S. A study of their experiences will help illustrate their interaction and adjustment in the new

environment at societal level. As part of the social interaction, while Indian immigrants are influenced by self-concept, values and symbols of their family and their Indian traditions, what is far more interesting is how norms and values of society in which they live influence them. How do they make sense of the new environment; how do they negotiate these two different cultural systems? Answers to such questions have shown their everyday interaction with the U.S. culture.

Life-course Perspective.

The second perspective informing this work is life-course[2] theory. This approach has four underlying principles (Giele & Elder, 1998). First, temporality means that human lives unfold over a period of time and that earlier experiences have long lasting impact on the course of human life. Life trajectories or pathways are different for each individual. Next, the intersection of personal biography and social change means that major historical events influence individual lives which have lasting effect on the life course. This principle reflects how social structure and social change can influence individual's lives. The third principle rests on the notion of "linked lives" which emphasizes that individuals are linked to others in complex ways, which would impact individual's biography as well. Finally, the principle of human agency suggests that individuals make their own decisions and exert influence on their lives. Ultimately, as Settersten (2006) suggests, a life course perspective takes dynamic view of individuals and their environment, and the reciprocal relationships between the two.

In this study, I use this perspective to understand older Indians day-to-day life, specifically in terms of family relations. Particularly the principle of linked lives connects the migration and the developmental phase of the older parents. For example, their immigration is

[2] George (2007) points out there is not one unified life course perspective and that any of the four principles can qualify as life course research, although temporality is a universal characteristic of life course research, and for my research on experiences of older Indian immigrants both human agency and the opportunities and constraints imposed by social structure will work in tandem with linked lives.

sponsored by their adult children, in which the strategies and decisions of both older parents and their sponsors occupy an important place (Jasso, 2004). Jasso sees this as part of human development which is characterized by various aspects related with the migration process.

Methods

Guided by my theoretical frameworks, I use a qualitative approach to study the experiences of older Indian immigrants in the U.S. A qualitative approach means that I rely on the "analysis of narrative data to create an interpretation of the meaning of participants' behavior from the perspective of participants themselves, within their own social context" (Cobb & Forbes, 2002: M197). Guided by my theoretical frameworks and research questions, my aim is to capture participants' lived reality, perspectives and experiences– a goal well-suited to a qualitative approach.

Participants and recruitment.

Participants include older Indian adults who migrated to the U.S. from 1990 onwards, which is the start of the third wave of immigration (Nandan, 2007). Participants were required to be 65 years of age or older. In order to participate, individuals had to be living in a multigenerational household or have done so at some point during their lives in America. Through my role as a regular volunteer at a local program for Asian Indian elders, I was able to establish contact with older adults who met the sampling criteria and who expressed interest in the project and willingness to participate. In two cases a snowball method was used; participants helped identify other suitable and consenting candidates. I attempted to vary the sample by age, gender, length of stay in the U.S., income, and marital status. Such demographic factors change over time and play a role in influencing choices available to individuals (Rangaswamy, 2000).As

will be seen, this strategy yielded somewhat diverse sample. The study was approved by Georgia State University's Institutional Review Board [IRB].

Data Collection Method.

I use qualitative interviews which "focus on the meanings that life experiences hold for the individuals being interviewed" (Warren & Karner, 2005:115) to collect my data. Interviews are helpful in understanding research participants' biography and the accounts of their lives in their own words. I used a semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix A) to collect my data. Informed by my literature review and research aims, I identified a set of topics that I wanted to ask each participant. The interview guide helps make use of time properly and is a systematic way of generating data; use of an interview guide "keeps interactions focused but allows individual perspectives and experiences to emerge" (Patton, 1990: 283). However, each interview took its own course and in an effort to make the interview like a conversation, questions were not always asked in the order they appear on the guide.

All interviews were digitally recorded, and subsequently transcribed. Prior to the interview, I attempted to ascertain participants' language skills. Though it is hard to measure language skills, I asked participants about their ability and comfort level speaking with others in a language other than their own. Regardless of their response, I conducted interviews in whichever language - English or Hindi- participants' felt most comfortable using. Nine interviews were conducted in Hindi, in which two participants sometimes talked in English too; and one interview was held in English. I translated all the Hindi language interviews into English. Translations run the risk of losing the original data collected through the interview, and Strauss and Corbin (1998, 285:86) too acknowledge the difficulty of translating interviews but as each language is different it is difficult to have any standard translation measures. Based on her

effort to translate the data [from Urdu to English] collected through interviews, Halai (2007: 351) offers three basic requirements "of making sense, of conveying the spirit and manner of the original, and have a natural and easy form of expression." With the limitation that comes with translation in which the "richness, meaning, and a cultural flavor may be lost" (353). With these observations and limitations in mind, I try to be as precise as possible in capturing the experiences and nuances of my participants' feelings.

With IRB approval and participants' informed consent, I conducted interviews at a time and place of participants' choosing. Of the 10 interviews, 8 took place in the participant's home, and 2 interviews were conducted in public libraries. In each case I asked each participant to read and sign a consent form that was prepared both in English and Hindi. They were welcome to take the consent forms in both the languages for their records or in case they wanted to show to their children. Interviews generally went uninterrupted and lasted from fifty-minutes to an hour and fifty minutes. Those held in the participant's home ended with tea and evening snacks, and conversations about general things related to my studies and future goals. That was also the time when they will give me a house tour, showing me the prayer room in particular, and I will get a snapshot of their lives in their houses. With participants' permission, I followed up by contacting them on the phone for purposes of clarifying information obtained during the interview. In order to protect participants' identity pseudonyms are used throughout.

Analysis

As indicated above, all interviews were transcribed. I read and reread each interview and made notes and identified key themes and patterns in the data. My analysis is informed by Grounded Theory Method. This approach is inductive and "theories are derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:12).

The grounded theory approach involves three different types of coding: initial, axial and selective. My textual analysis began with initial coding where I read my data line-by-line to break my data into concepts and then identified broad categories. A few examples of categories were: family history with practice of filial norms, influence of socio-cultural changes in India, impact of the American culture, changed expectations, peace keeping and kin keeping, and local ties. The next step is axial coding which is a process of relating codes to each other. This helps building relationships between the categories and to see causal and intervening conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). With this type of coding, I discovered, for example: gender and marital status influenced the composition and activity of participants' social networks: financial independence was associated with feeling respected; family size and relationship history influenced the practice of filial piety; and language skills and education and one's attitude influence the negotiation of relationships with family, friends and others. Throughout the analysis process I wrote memos about my insights, and interpretations of the data. These memos assisted me in making connections across categories and subcategories and helped me to identify recurring patterns and themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I made charts which allowed me to examine the data by considering participants' experiences, identifying the key factors, how they work and their outcomes. In this process I was able to identify socio-cultural, community, family and personal factors that influenced the participants' experiences. I also made diagrams, which facilitated making connection between categories. Finally, the analysis of filial piety and their family and social lives yielded the category "individualized filial piety."

CHAPTER 4

The Participants

This chapter introduces my participants and describes their characteristics. I begin by describe their aggregate and individual characteristics. Then I present four case examples, which provide an in-depth look at each participant's family and social life.

Sample Characteristics

Participants' aggregate sample characteristics are presented in Table 4.1. As can be seen, five men and five women participated in the study. Seven are married, the remaining participants are widowed. All but one participant - a married woman -live with their children. Their education levels vary as do their immigration date to the U.S., their English skills, and their access to transportation. Four participants were sponsored by their daughters, five by their sons, and one by her brother. Three participants immigrated for family reunification and then sponsored additional children from India. Six participants immigrated in order to care for their grandchildren. In terms of employment status and income sources, only one participant is in the labor force and contributing towards his Social Security [SS] fund. Three participants are entitled to and receive Supplemental Security Income [SSI]. Two receive food stamps, and one woman receives both food stamps and disability income. Three participants have no personal income and rely either on their spouse's income or their children. Table 4.2 identifies participant pseudonyms and select individual characteristics.

Table 4.1 Sample Characteristics

Characteristic	Men (n=5)	Women (n=5)	Total (n=10)
Age Range (years)			
65- 70	--	3	3
71-75	3	2	5
76-80	2	--	2
Mean Age (years)	70.5	69.6	72.3
Marital Status			
Married	4	3	7
Widowed	1	2	3
Educational Level			
Elementary	3	4	7
College/University	2	1	3
Number of Children			
Range	1-4	3-4	1-4
Mean	3.0	3.4	3.2
Arrival Date in U.S.			
1990-1995	1	1	2
1996-2000	4	4	8
Proficiency in English	3	1	4
Transport			
Drive	3	--	3
Public transport	--	1	1
Depend on family	2	4	6

Table 4.2 Pseudonyms and Individual Participant Characteristics

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Reason for migration	Children	Formal Material Support	Living arrangement
Rani	75	Female	Married	Sponsor other children	2 sons 2 daughters (Atlanta)	SSI	With daughter
Raja	80	Male	Married	Family reunification	2 sons 2 daughters (Atlanta)	None (i.e., children)	With daughter
Kumari	75	Female	Widow	Sponsor other children	1 son, 2 daughters (Atlanta) 1 daughter (India)	SSI	With daughter
Nikki	68	Female	Widow	Family reunification	2 sons 1 daughter (Atlanta)	Food stamps & SSI	With son
Kish	72	Male	Widower	Family reunification	3 sons 1 daughter (Atlanta)	SSI	With son
Tina	65	Female	Married	Childcare	2 sons (Atlanta) 1 son (India)	Food stamps	With son
Tinu	76	Male	Married	Childcare	2 sons (Atlanta) 1 son (India)	None (i.e., children)	With son
Krish	72	Male	Married	Childcare	2 sons 1 daughter (Atlanta)	Job	With son
Krishna	65	Female	Married	Childcare	1 son (Atlanta) 2 daughters (Texas and New Jersey) 1 daughter (India)	Food stamps	Initially with son, now independent
Babu	75	Male	Married	Help son-in-law with his business	1 daughter (Atlanta)	None (i.e., children)	With daughter

Case Examples

In addition to providing select individual characteristics above, I present detailed information about 4 of the 10 participants: Kumari, Tinu, Krish, and Krishna. These cases were selected to illustrate a range of experiences with family and social life, and to highlight similarities and differences with regard to daily lives and the factors influencing their experiences in America.

Case Example 1: Kumari

Kumari is a 76-year old widow with two daughters and one son living in Atlanta and one daughter in India; one son, who remained in India, is deceased. Sponsored by her eldest daughter, Kumari arrived in the U.S. in 1995. In turn, she helped facilitate the immigration of another daughter and two sons. Kumari says, “I am ready to be with the child who is ready to take care of me and who needs [my] comfort.” Deviating from a fundamental Indian tradition of residing with a son and daughter-in-law and receiving support from them, Kumari presently lives with her youngest daughter. Kumari rationalizes this arrangement saying, “Times have changed now and I do not think only the son has the responsibility.” She offers additional justification, “She [daughter] needs help. She has three daughters and she works so hard and so much. If I am not here who will take care of her daughters and her house.” The daughter with whom she lives is a divorced, working mother of three. Owing to this situation, Kumari “started taking care of her [daughter] and her [daughter’s] daughters.” She also has responsibilities around the household including food preparation: “[I] see to it that when [her daughter] comes back, [I] have food prepared so that she can eat, and rest, and sleep.” Kumari feels that her daughter needs

her, as daughter usually works night shifts, so Kumari takes care of her co-resident granddaughters, who are in their late 20s.

Kumari does not speak English and she does not drive. Consequently, she spends most of her time at home and with her local family. She enjoys watching TV, often with her granddaughters and less frequently, her daughter. Her daughter's work schedule limits their time together, but the two women share religious and spiritual interests. Kumari's daily schedule involves an hour of meditation, as well as praying and reading religious books. With the help of her children, she gets out of the house for social gatherings with other Indians. She belongs to a group of 12-15 women who meet regularly to discuss books and hold spiritual sessions in which they gather in each other's house and chant hymns and sing devotional songs to the accompaniment of instruments. Occasionally Kumari attends other social gatherings including the local program (where she was recruited as a participant in this study), but says, "I am more into spiritual and religious groups." Her children who live locally are all spiritual, and they usually transport and accompany her on such outings.

Kumari is in good health and at present she does not need her children to provide ADL support. As suggested above, she is not wedded to all Indian traditions associated with filial piety. In the event that she needed such support, based on past experience, she believes it would fall to whoever is able to help. As Kumari explains:

> When I had knee therapy all my children worked as team, but mainly this daughter with whom I stay used to take me, as she works in the hospital. And it is not that I prefer daughter-in-law to take care of me. I do not think such stuff. Who so ever loves me, I love that person. Nothing has changed in me.

Like many older immigrants, Kumari receives support from the government in the form of Supplementary Social Income [SSI]. This is yet another divergence from Indian tradition in

which parents are supported financially by their adult children, especially their sons. Yet, this deviation promotes financial independence, which Kumari views in a positive light.

Kumari believes that elders should be aware that their own behaviors influence relationships with children. According to her, making unjust demands, for example "expecting the children to follow whatever they [older parents] have to say," may mean that "children do not like what they say. So, parents in a way should be calm and quiet…I do that." In terms of her granddaughters, Kumari does not always agree with their behaviors, like "they coming late at night, drinking." Yet, because of the American norms of independence and freedom, she prefers to speak with her daughter and allow her to handle it. In her words, "I am their grandmother, but still you know the environment here [is different and] that is why I tell my daughter softly." Kumari also says, "I listen to everybody and that is how I make friends. I love people, so they love me too." Kumari has no plans to return to India, as she says, "I like to be with my daughter; she would be alone if I go. Well this is all me and I think this. I do not discuss this with her or anybody." She is happy to be staying with her children in the U.S. She ends by saying, "My children keep me happy and even my relatives. So I have no grudges."

Case Example 2: Tinu

Tinu is 76-years old and married with three sons. Sponsored by his eldest son, both Tinu and his wife arrived in the U.S. in 1998 after he retired in India. As he explains, "My son brought with him two young children, so we [Tinu and his wife] came to help raise our grandchildren." As two of his sons live in Atlanta, he divides his time moving between them. Tinu and his wife visit India, once every two years, and stay with their youngest son and his family, so in that way Tinu is living a transnational life.

Tinu's daily schedule involves praying, yogic exercises and a walk in the neighborhood. During the day, he often plays cards with his wife and surfs the internet. In the evenings, he enjoys watching television with his wife and his children. He explains, "We all love to watch TV serials and we do that as a family." Tinu does not get as much of his son's time (a dimension indentified important to filial piety) as he would prefer. Tinu explains and understands this lack of time in the light of work-related stress in America. He also occupies himself with socialization and education of his grandchildren into Indian values, traditions, and language. Tinu says, "[I have] interaction with them [grandchildren] as we do not go out, and we do not meet many people. Unlike their parents, we have lot of time on our hand and we can better focus on them. We can show them what to eat, our language, our customs." Tinu is educated and worked as an engineer in India. Consequently, he is able to help his grandchildren with their studies. He speaks of time spent with his grandchildren and he says, "As I have spent long time with my grandchildren… as we [his wife included] raised them so they have lots of love for me."

Unlike, Kumari, Tinu is among the few participants with proficiency in the English language and the ability to drive. Among his activities, he takes his wife out grocery shopping and for social outings to meet with their friends. He has five to six "very close friends" who all meet at each other's places every two weeks. He tells me, "We visit each other. As I said, I can drive so that is not a problem." Yet, Tinu is not entirely independent and he longs to return to India. Having worked his entire career in India, Tinu is retired and totally dependent on his son for financial support, which he does not like, particularly given the value of the American dollar. He says:

> I am retired person. But I do not earn so that is what I do not like. I am dependent here. That is why I want to go back to India. There my [other] son keeps me in good way. I get even money from him. See here it is dollar, so they do not give you so easily. One hundred dollars is a great sum here. They will think many

> times before giving that; simple my son there [in India] earns more so he will keep me in better way than my son here who earns less.

Although filial piety traditionally involves children, especially son's supporting older parents financially, Tinu feels dependent. He has two sons in the U.S. and he divides his time moving between their homes, but his dependence on his sons is triggering a desire for him to return to India. From his perspective this repatriation would mean living with his third son, whom he feels would be more supportive. This attitude stems both from the present day economic crunch, and his own sense of role loss. As he says, "I [can] help my son in his business [in India]." Tinu acknowledges not taking much interest in his son's business in Atlanta, which he attributes to a lack of knowledge about the work involved.

In addition, although Tinu has friends in Atlanta and the ability to move about, he wants to return to India because, in his words, "There are limited options here. In India I have more friends, relatives, and I would be free to roam around in rickshaw, or buses." He misses his larger network of friends but also does not like dependence on automobiles in the U.S. He greatly misses his relatives and neighbors too, who: "In India are very important and they really keep a good check on you. Like if you need something, or you have lot of interaction with your neighbors." He feels he cannot look to his neighbors for any sort of assistance or even interaction. Likewise, Tinu is disappointed with his extended family members, who he thinks have changed under American cultural privacy and independence norms. He says, "They just follow the tradition of local culture. Friends of mine are happy that we just go without calling. But there are some people [his relatives] in older lot who would chide you for being still an Indian if I go without prior information." He comments on how the extended family members of his age do not like when he visits them unannounced, as they expect him to seek an appointment before he visits.

Case Example 3: Krish

Krish is 75-year old married man. He has one son with whom he lives in Atlanta. Sponsored by this son, Tinu and his wife came to the U.S. in 1996 for the primary purpose of caring for their granddaughter. Another son and a daughter still live in India. Presently Krish is helping his son facilitate his other children's immigration. Krish explains, "[We have] chalked out the plan and divided the work between myself and my son. We both drive, so we thought what he will do for them [the newcomers] and what I will do. We will do that." Krish does not expect all his children to live under the same roof, which is a deviation from the traditional practice of maintaining large multigenerational households in India and a practice in Krish's own family of origin.

Similar to Tinu, Krish has both proficiency in the English language and the ability to drive. He works at a local supermarket, and he finds himself active with doing things required at his job, like moving and packing things. On his off-days, Krish does yard work; he cleans, runs errands, or takes his granddaughter to community events, including dancing and language classes. Because of his driving ability he is able to get out into the community, and he attends a local senior program for older Indians. He explains, "I meet people and make friends with them. You know I drive so I can easily go."

Besides being active, what he loves about his job is the financial gain. He poses the question, "When I am healthy, why should I not work?" Although his later-life employment is non-traditional, Krish and his family maintain many other traditions associated with filial piety. For instance, he only wants to live with his sons and expects them (rather than his daughter) to take care of him in every way. He speaks about the time before he was employed saying his son, "paid for everything." However, unlike Tinu, he does not need financial support. In addition to

his employment income, he is entitled to Social Security. Because he has the financial resources to do so, he is thinking of going back to India - yet another deviation from the tradition of not living with the children/son in the later years. He views this potential move in a positive light and says that it will allow him "to have time with my other family members, neighbors, and friends." He states: "There are neighbors; [his son's] friends can check on me, we can have servants. At least it will be my decision."

Krish counts upon his job for financial support and active lifestyle, and for his wife he says, if she is not there "I will live up to 84-to-85 years but my body will be diseased. I will have no one to talk to. I will be lonely. I share with her all issues." Krish believes: that "If you are emotionally unsatisfied then better go to India. Those who have good bank balance they may go back." Regarding his emotional experiences with his son, Krish described an incident where his son did not pay heed to his experience, resulting in his own physical injury:

> He [son] asked me to help him move dining table from 1st floor to basement.... so I suggested that it is too heavy. See, a 35 year old boy will be stronger than me who is 74, so I told him, "We cannot do this so call some Mexicans." He did not pay attention to me, and while moving I got my thumb hurt. That is, I have experience, but he thinks he knows better.

Krish perceives this lack of respect as being in line with negative social trends in which children do not listen to their parents.

Case Example 4: Krishna

Krishna is a 65-year old woman with four children, of whom two daughters and one son live in the U.S. and one daughter lives in India. Sponsored by her son, she arrived in the U.S. in 1997 with her husband. The purpose of their relocation was to help her daughter-in-law after the birth of her first child. Initially, the visit was intended to be brief, as Krishna's husband was still working. Due to the new baby's unexpected health problems, the couple extended their visas.

Krishna's husband resigned his job and they began living in their son's house in Atlanta. During that time, Krishna was responsible for the all domestic chores, including cooking, cleaning, laundering, and taking care of the infant baby. She explains, "When I lived there, I was doing all the household work, she [daughter-in-law] did not do anything."

After six years of living in her son's house, Krishna and her husband moved out to live in a subsidized residential community for seniors, which included only two other Indian families. This move represents considerable deviation from a key Indian tradition associated with filial piety- that of living with and being supported and cared for by children in later years. Krishna believes that her son and daughter-in-law are influenced by nuclear American family norms, which include a value for physical distance and privacy. She explains, "They see [living with] older parents-in-law [as interfering with] their privacy."

Similar to Kumari, Krishna does not speak English and she does not drive. She spends most of the time at home and with her husband. She passes her time watching television, reading books, praying, and going for walk in the neighborhood. She prefers to cook a hot meal every day, but because of her health problem (knee trouble) she is not able to do so. On the days, she does not feel like cooking she takes recourse to the leftovers and her husband heats the food up and they both eat together. Krishna receives just food stamps and has no other source of financial income, (except her husband who receives SSI). Her son does not support her financially, which is a divergence from Indian tradition, but in keeping with the tradition of spending time with parents, he does spend time taking her out to go shopping. Ideally, she would prefer her son to spend more time with her and her husband. According to Krishna, "I do not expect my son to financially support me, but I like when he gives me time and I would like that to happen more often." Krishna said that she decided not to return to India, because she wanted to remain close

to her son, despite not seeing him as much as she would like Rather than depend exclusively on her son, Krishna relies on a network of friends in Atlanta and community resources to meet her transport needs. She says: “If someone invites us, they come and pick us up and bring us back. But there are only two to four people like that [whom I can rely on]. To go out anywhere, we need [transportation] for going to temple or any social visit.” Krishna often uses public transportation for trips to the doctor or to visit friends. Her housing community provides residents with transportation every Monday to go grocery shopping. These trips also provide her the opportunity to mingle with her neighbors. She says, “We joke, talk in the bus and we take care that we are all together. So that way it is good.” Although she lacks language skills, she seems to enjoy the social interaction. On Fridays, she gets to “go somewhere to roam around, like any park, shopping district,” with other residents in her community in the transport arranged by the onsite staff of the community. Although Krishna has regular interactions with her neighbors, she does not view her neighbors as being overly friendly. When she visits with them in their homes, she said, “They don’t welcome [me] to take a seat.” When she was ill, she received get-well cards on her door step, but said that she would prefer to have received these wishes directly from the well-wishers. Overall, Krishna associates the move to the senior community with being more independent, compared to living with her son. While living with her son, she remembers being mostly home-bound, always depending on her son.

Case Examples: The Common Theme

The four case examples presented here provide the reader with a profile of each participant’s daily activities and family and social life. These profiles illustrate differences between and similarities among participants’ experiences and provide context for the analysis that follows. A predominant theme in the case examples and in other participants’

accounts is the institution of filial piety. Although highly variable, filial piety is a key dimension of participants' daily activities, as well as a factor influencing their family and social lives.

CHAPTER 5

Filial Piety

The virtue of filial piety in Eastern culture is associated with the moral ideal of intergenerational reciprocity and cultural norms regarding parent care. The traditional/idealized concept of filial piety entails service to and respect for elders practiced by maintaining multi-generational households with adult children, particularly the son and his wife, who support the son's parents materially and otherwise.

In this study, study participants were asked to describe the nature of parent-child relationships and to provide information about the types of support exchanged between different generations. They were asked how they exchanged support with their parents in India and also what types of support were exchanged between family members in the U.S. Without exception, all participants recalled having maintained multi-generational households with their own parents, where they provided their parents with daily support, love, affection, and respect. As indicated in the case examples above, their own experiences as older parents are somewhat different. The data show some variation in how participants define filial piety and also in their expectations regarding support and the reality of their lives. There is no uniform way of experiencing filial piety, and older parents modify their belief patterns (voluntarily and involuntarily) in response to contemporary American culture. This value shift occurs in response to numerous factors, including societal norms, family dynamics, and personal resources. Participants and their families construct their own individualized forms of filial piety that are tailored to their individual needs, resources, and specific situations. I define this process as "individualized filial piety." In what follows, I explore the dimensions of filial piety as experienced by participants and examine the factors that individualize its practice.

Dimensions of Filial Piety

Daily provisions. Receiving daily provisions, like food and water, when needed from other family members is among ways that older parents experience fulfillment of filial piety. Raja expects and is getting his children's support in this area, which to him includes receiving the necessities of daily life such as "food, shelter and clothes." As Rani says, "They buy me clothes, shoes, etc whatever we need. We are happy. What else [do] I need?" Similarly, Tina indicates that she expects her children to provide her with, "enough food [and], water" because "that is what you need in old age." Kumari, Nikki and Krishna also report receiving food and water "in time", which means they receive daily meals at their preferred time. According to Krishna, this care corresponds with her earlier practice of filial piety. Recalling her care of an elderly family member, she said, "[I gave] full attention to her (grand mother-in-law) and it was never like we [would] eat and forget to give her [food]. She was always given that priority." The findings also show that in many cases these practices have been modified in the U.S. In addition to being served by younger family members, Kumari, Nikki, Tina, and even Krishna, who at one time lived with her son, cook for themselves and other family members as well.

Rani's and Krishna's expectations regarding filial support includes having children take them to medical appointments. Referring to Rani, Krishna said, "[He] go[es] out for medical visit with my children." Krishna explains, "Parents want their children's love. If we . . . are sick or we want to go somewhere they should be with us, care for us." Her son does not provide the expected transportation to the doctor.

Financial support. Financial support from adult children, especially sons, was another dimension of filial piety consistently reported by participants. As previously indicated in his case profile above, Krish works and contributes to Social Security funds, but when he did not, he

expected and received support from his son. He explained, “That [support] is [expected in] Indian culture.” Six other participants report having some material support (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). Tinu, Babu and Raja, are financially dependent on their children. This makes Tinu unhappy because he does not like being financially dependent on his son.

As illustrated in Krish’s and Kumari’s case examples (Chapter 4), government support provides some participants with a degree of financial independence. Some participants who have financial resources contribute to the household and help their children out financially – a reversal of the traditional upward flow of support. For example, Nikki says, “I also contribute in my sons’ house, as when I go I can take some groceries, I call them, and ask what can I buy?” Nikki receives SSI, which she uses to reciprocate for care. She states: “Wherever I stay I shall pay one-hundred dollars.” Although Babu has no steady personal income, he and his wife try to provide their daughter with some financial support:

> We contribute financially. My wife works and I have some savings. We help each other out if there is a major expense. I will say I will like to help you with money. My daughter does not want us to do that but we insist.

Time. Time (i.e., children spending time with parents) is another dimension of filial piety that is important to participants. Tinu, Tina, Babu, Krishna, Nikki and Kumari mention in their interviews that they do not get enough time to sit and chat with their children. As Tina complains, “It is the time that they [children] do not have.” As an elder Tina hopes that “people come talk to you.” This perspective resonates with other participants as well, who mostly do not want to bother their children by asking too much of their time. As her case example testifies, Krishna’s son invests some time with her, albeit usually on holidays when she wants to shop around. Krishna no longer shares a household with her son but still likes to spend some time with him. She sums up her expectations of him saying, “Just if he could give some of his time that

would be sufficient." Weekends and holidays are typically the days when children have more time to spend with their parents.

Love and respect. Love and respect are the other two dimensions of filial piety that older parents expect of their adult children. Kish emphasizes respect in his relationship with his children, and he expects his children to seek his advice and follow that advice; and the following quote shows how his expectation is being met by his children:

> My children love me respect me and we have lived in joint family so my kids have seen what a joint family is. Both my son and his wife consider my advice. I am very good with lighting and all that. So like now when they are in India, I am taking care of the lighting and decoration for Christmas in the …… Restaurant (the family business). So I do a lot. And if my son has some issues he asks me and then I can tell okay do that or this. Sometimes I do go to gas station if he wants me to come and help with something.

Neither Kish nor Rani prefer their children listen to and not argue with them. . Speaking of her son, Rani explains his behavior saying, "He just listens, never argues, and keeps quiet." But as Krish explains, he could not occupy the room of his choice (which was given to the grandchild) in his son's house. According to him, such a thing "would not have happened in India because in India there is no room for any argument." In contrast, Tina is "considerate to what my children have to say," and she tries to listen to them as does Nikki, who believes that her "children have more knowledge" as they go out and have more interaction with the mainstream culture than she.

Participants also talk about receiving love and respect from their grandchildren. Babu mentions his granddaughter whom he describes by saying "loves everyone. She is very sweet, obedient, respectful." Tinu's case example shows older grandparents desirous of their grandchildren's love. Despite their grandchildren's affection, which all participants receive, some are hesitant to speak their minds. Kumari says, "Even though I am their grandmother I do not want to handle that [granddaughters coming late at night or drinking]." Kumari speculates on

negative outcomes saying, “[What] if they say something to me or do not like my saying to them?” Instead Kumari tells her daughter, who then handles such issues. Like Kumari, Nikki also tries to avoid household conflict. In her case, although she missed out on Indian television, she did not tell her son about her daughter-in-law’s actions related to discontinuation of the cable connection which relayed Indian channels. Nikki is confident that her son would have immediately got it resumed had she told him, but speculated: “[It might cause] friction between the two then. I do not want that. So I just try to read more. That is all.” Such incidents are reflective of the participants’ decision to maintain peace in the household above their own interests. As seen in Krishna’s case example, she moved out of her son’s house to provide her son and daughter-in-law the privacy they desired. Krishna chose to modify her expectations, thereby giving her children what they wanted and avoiding tension. These altered expectations represent a shift in traditional thinking and behavior and reflect elders’ perspective on their place, role, and status in the family and household.

A son’s duty and multigenerational households. In the practice of filial piety as per Indian traditions older parents maintain joint households with their children, particularly their sons. Those living with their sons are following this traditional practice. As Krish’s case example attests, he is very traditional when it comes to the son’s responsibility in the care and housing of older parents. Rani explains the tradition saying:

> In our culture it is son we should live with. It is son’s “farz” (duty), although daughters should also do [for parents]. However we prefer son. In American culture, they do not differentiate between son and daughter but in India it is mainly the son. And it is a nice feeling too to live with son. You know once the daughter is married off, and it is called “kanyadan” (gift of girls to the family of the bridegroom), then how can we eat in her house? This means that once my daughter is married off to another house, it is not in our tradition to go stay with her or even eat with her. This is the age-old tradition.

Kumari's case example reflects a non-traditional mindset in which she does not consider the son to be solely responsible for taking care of older parents. She lives with her daughter in the U.S. and is happy that all her three children love her. For those who have sons and daughters, bringing daughters into their support system enlarges their networks. In an environment where they perceive their children's time as being very constrained, enlarging support networks to include daughters can create more parent-adult child time, redistribute responsibility, and reduce dependence on sons.

For all participants maintaining multi-generational households is important. Yet, Nikki and Babu report that if their children were unable to provide hands-on care in the future, as needed, they are open to living in an assisted living facility or a nursing home. Their openness to formal long-term care as an option is very non-traditional.

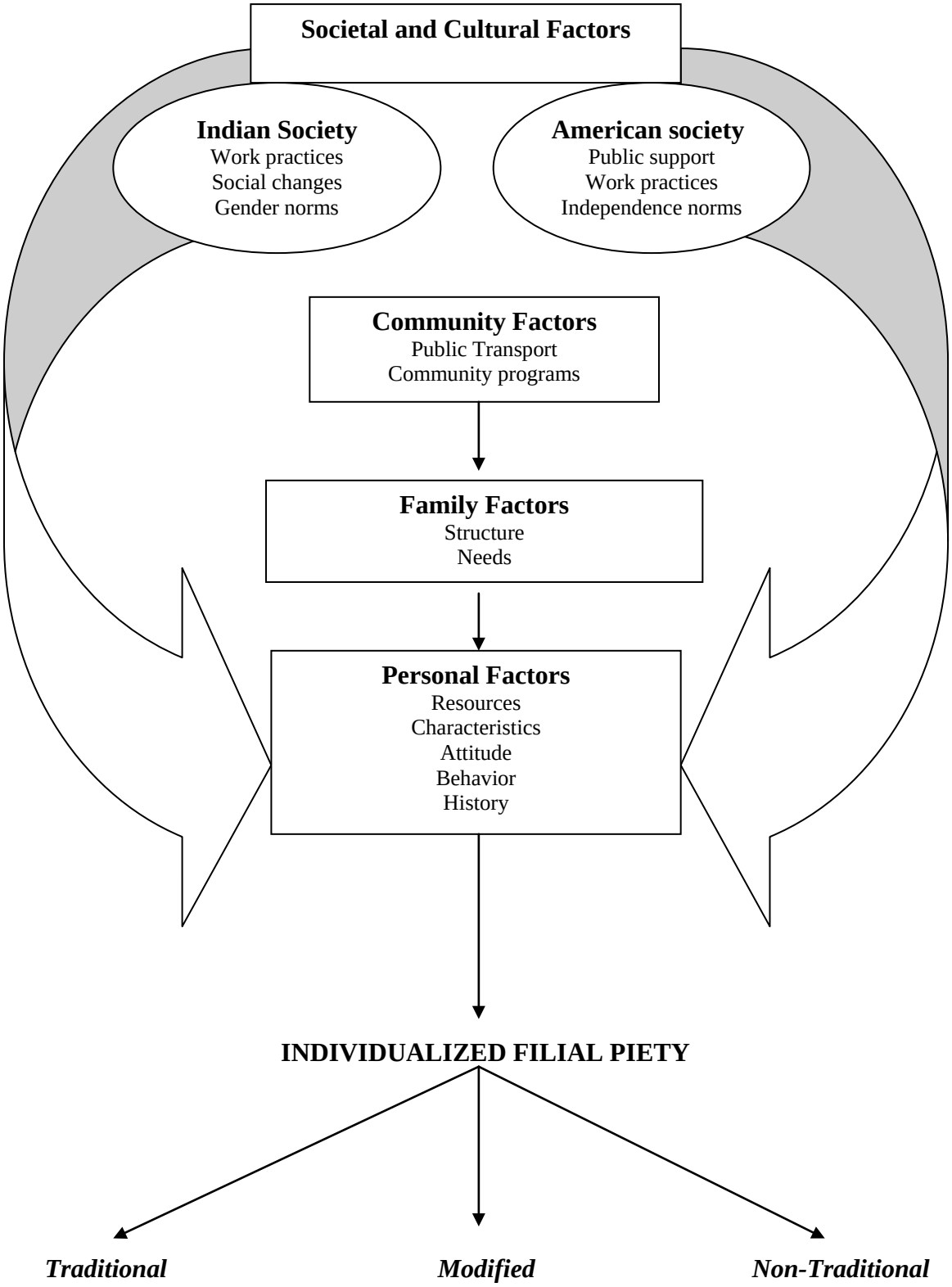
Individualized Filial Piety

In defining filial piety and identifying how they wish to be treated by their children and grandchildren, participants refer to traditional practices. Yet, in the actual, ongoing practice of filial piety in their families, participants deviated-to varying degrees-from their established conceptions and historical understanding of filial piety. Consequently, each participant had an individualized way of practicing filial piety.

The concept of individualized filial piety and the factors that influence its practice are illustrated in Figure 5.1. As can be seen, participant's experiences with filial piety indicate a continuum between traditional, modified, and non-traditional practices. This continuum applies to both the practice of individual dimensions of filial piety (e.g., son's responsibilities, the provision of time or financial support) as well as its overall practice (all dimensions taken together). In each participant's life certain dimensions of filial piety are practiced in traditional

ways while other are practiced in modified or non-traditional ways. For instance, Krish is traditional in the sense that he prefers to live with son and expects him care for and respect him. Yet, Krish is employed and enjoys his financial independence. Meanwhile, Kumari, Tina, and Rani accommodate their children's work schedule by altering their expectations surrounding "time." Yet others modified traditional expectations of sons and their daughters are active in their support networks. The form individualized filial piety takes in participants' lives in the U.S. is influenced by the intersection of societal and cultural, community, family and personal factors intersect.

Figure. 5.1 A Model of Individualized Filial Piety



Factors Influencing Filial Piety

Societal and Cultural Factors

As participants immigrated to U.S., they are aging in a foreign culture. The local culture influences their experiences in many ways. Additionally, contemporary Indian culture has impacted their thoughts and behavior. Aspects of both join to influence filial piety.

American culture. The American government's policies related to the welfare of older adults, work practices, and the more general cultural differences, particularly related to individualism, influence the participants support experiences influencing how, when and what types of support are given. Government assistance influences filial practices for some older adults. As Kumari's case example attests, she is pleased to have her own money, a monthly SSI check. She says, "I get money. They respect me. No one has to bear my cost of living." Clearly those getting public support in one or another way are not living the norm of financial dependence on their children in later years. Rather, this cultural expression of interdependence is not followed. It is disrupted by the American system and the availability of alternatives.

All participants identified their children's work schedule and time constraints as influencing their practice of filial piety. In their lives in America, they feel children have less time to share with their parents. Nikki says, "I know they [son and his wife] are busy so I do not ask lot of their time. They have lot to do." Tina says,

> To love your parents is necessary. But when kids come here, the love with parents gets less as they do not have time. They are so much stressed. It is the culture of work. So then, what can I do in that? I do not ask so much of his time.

Thus, although they would prefer more time, parents adjust to their children's work schedules. Although Nikki says, "I just busy myself with grandchildren," and Rani says, "I do

not bother my children," Tina and others try to make the best of whatever time they can spend together. In the U.S., dinner time and weekends are the times when they see their children most.

American norms of independence characteristic of individualism influence intergenerational relationships in Indian families, which themselves typically revolve around a collective lifestyle and interdependence. Krishna speaks of her (former) presence in her son and daughter-in-law's home:

> There is lack of privacy because of you. Then the grandson too is getting spoilt as when his mother scolds him he runs to the grandmother. And also the mothers-in-law do not stay with their daughters-in-law in here [U.S.]. After listening to this, we [Krishna and her husband] thought it is better we move out. This is their home and they should live as they want to.

According to Krishna this shift from an emphasis on multigenerational to nuclear family households is due to the influence of American culture. Now in the U.S., her adult children do not want to have their older parents to live with them. Nikki also thinks that her daughters-in-law (who she says are both nice to her) like to be independent and want privacy. When her son and daughter-in-law have plans, she spends time with her daughter.

Tinu and Krish also think their sons are being influenced by local culture, especially in the way that younger generations do not respect or value older people's views or experiences. When Tinu asks his son to keep his room tidy, his son does not comply. Tinu describes this behavior in terms of independence: "His mind has become independent."

Kish's daughter-in-law is an American born Indian. Although Kish does not have any domestic conflicts and says his grandchildren are being exposed to Indian food, culture, and language, he thinks that she is not raising her children in the Indian way. Though the Indian way is undefined, Kish makes it clear that his daughter-in-law is different from other Indian women and he foresees the influence of local culture on his grandchildren, which causes him to refrain

from “telling them anything.” In a way this probable assimilation is impacting the typical grandfather role of socializing the grandchildren in family traditions and culture, but Kish is hopeful that when his grandchildren from India immigrate (April, 2010), the American born children will “automatic[ally] change” in their company.

Indian culture. All participants identified ongoing social change in India as a major factor contributing to their practice of filial norms in the U.S.Modernization−accompanied by changes in the workplace, woman’s roles, and the overall family system−is key. Due to modernization, gender norms and work practices in India have become targets of change on a remarkable scale. Both men and women are working longer hours and harder, but changes are more noticeable for women whose work outside the home is influencing their traditional role as homemakers.

Women are more educated, which impacts the way daughters, think about their own parents. Rani, Kumari and Raja refer to shifts in daughters’ attitudes toward feeling equally responsible towards their own parents, which has altered their own expectation of being dependent exclusively on sons. As women achieve higher education, they are also seeking professional careers. All participants referred to the impact of dual careers on men’s and women’s availability in the households, particularly with regard to caring for parents. Babu reminisces:

> Previously we had big joint families. We are becoming nuclear family. Both [husband and wife] are working and stressed out and they are sort of not happy to look after their parents as well. If there is only one son and wife both working and when they come back they have to look after parents or grandparents then they would not like that.

Babu’s statement resonates with the experiences of Kish and Nikki, who also believe the joint family system is eroding and Nikki has begun to rethink of the practical issues related elder

care. Krish sees social change in India as responsible for the shifting relationships between generations:

> It has changed [in India] but it is not that it is America that has influenced. It is very local thing. Fifteen years ago things were different. Now people do not have time. Both men and women work. They have to work hard as well.

Thus, social change in India influences the norm of elder care. Now, older Asian immigrants often help their children with household chores, rather than assume the role of care recipient.

Women's education is also linked to changed dynamics between daughters- and mothers-in-law. Such education has led to modifications in expectations of the mothers-in-law in the sample of being served with food and water. Nikki and Tina commented that the traditional "dictatorship of mother-in-law has broken down." The dictatorship of the mother-in-law refers to a hierarchy that traditionally defined the framework for mother- and daughter-in-law relationships. Nikki explains the disappearance of this tradition saying, "Earlier they [women] did not study, so they would listen to the dictates of others but no more now." Yet, Nikki's daughter-in-law cared for her after knee surgery, and Nikki is available to help her daughter-in-law when needed. Tina too recognizes that the command the mothers-in-law had in the past has given way to egalitarianism in which, people like Tina "accommodate."

In other situations relationships are less cordial. Krishna attests that her daughter-in-law does not treat her well. Similarly, Tina's daughter-in-law sets the rules in the house. Sometimes she cannot invite her friends to her home because of the potential disruption to her grandchildren's studies. In all these cases, the common thread is the changed dynamics of mothers- and daughters-in-law relationships owing to women's increased education and thus power in the family.

Community Factors

Transportation and access to the Indian community are community level factors that influence participants' experiences with regard to the practice of filial piety. Kish has access to transportation through the local senior center, which he uses to visit doctors' offices. He says, "Then I am not dependent on my son, I can just call them and they will take me." In a way, Kish is modifying his filial expectations and gaining independence.

All participants access social and cultural opportunities provided by senior programs for the local Indian community. These include monthly get-togethers around food and recreational activities like playing games, singing songs of Bollywood movies and at times dancing to their tunes, going for picnics, and information exchange through guest speakers on health related topics. These meetings create an opportunity for some parents and children to spend time together, as few children visit or volunteer during the monthly get-togethers

Family Factors

Some features of family life, such as structure, needs, and resources influence filial piety. Family size, composition and proximity are consequential dimensions of family structure. Except Babu, who only has only a daughter, all participants have two to three children in Atlanta. All children work as a team when it comes to taking parents on their social outings. Some, such as Rani, have the option of choosing among a network of children. She prefers her son to take care of her, followed by daughter-in-law, and then her daughter. Meanwhile, Nikki feels that because her son has been in the U.S. the longest he would be able to better handle an emergency. She also suggests that her daughter, being a woman, would not be as capable in emergency situations, particularly at night. Except Babu, all move between their children.

In families with a daughter and son, support networks can be expanded. However, in Krishna's case, this composition does not translate into greater choice and support. She disapproved of living with her daughters, choosing to live on her own. Nikki makes her family composition work for her when needed, and as noted above, she prefers help from her son in emergencies. Similarly in Kumari's family, where she has three local children, she expects all to work as team and take care of her, but when she has to make doctors' visits she prefers to go with her daughter, with whom she stays, because she works in health services.

The proximity of family members, related to living arrangements, is an important factor. Krishna, who lives in a senior housing facility does receives support from her son. The rest of the participants live with their children and receive regular support, including having a bedroom and even a prayer room. Having more kin close by also provides more options. For instance, although Kish has no problems living with his son, since his daughter arrived in the U.S., he feels that if his son mistreats him, he has an alternative living situation.

In addition to family structure, needs are important. For instance, Babu came to the U.S, because her daughter wanted him to "help her husband in his business and babysit the child." Help with her husband's business, was particularly important when he attended out-of-town business meetings. After the business closed, Babu babysat his granddaughter. Tina, Tinu, Kish, Krish, Krishna too immigrated to babysit their grandchildren, so that their children could pursue their jobs in the U.S.

Critical life events are linked with participants' adult children's needs. Kumari's case example illustrates how her daughter's divorced, single, working-mother status influences Kumari's living arrangement. Similarly, Raja who prefers to live with his son, according to Indian tradition, has accommodated for the fact that his daughter is widowed and lives by

herself. He suggests, “It is not safe. She needs us. Otherwise she would be alone. It is big house, so at night she will be alone. This is our *majboori* [no other choice].” While sometimes parents may compromise their own preferences, like Raja or, even Rani, who wants to live with his son but is living with her daughter, they are accommodating the needs of their children.

Personal Factors

Several personal factors influence how filial piety is practiced. These include: personal resources, personal characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, as well as personal history shape participants’ support experiences.

Personal resources are those which individuals draw on to negotiate their daily lives and relationships. They include: language skills, driving abilities, health, and financial status. Language skills, possessed by Babu, Krish and Tinu, are a key resource. Such skills reduce participants’ dependence on their children in terms of arranging doctors’ appointments, shopping, and making friends. Of the advantage of his skills, Krish says, “I am open to learning from other religions and people.” Nikki’s limited skills allow her to “carry on the conversation” with Americans.

Driving ability is another important resource that reduces parents’ dependence on their children. This skill, possessed by Babu, Krish and Tinu, allows them to go out with their wives for social outings, like visiting friends, grocery shopping, and attending events organized by local senior programs. For participants who do not drive, children do their best to incorporate their parents’ doctors’ visit and social outings into their busy schedules. Nikki, for example, attends social outings with her daughter.

In their relationship with their children, the participants' education level plays an important role. Krish's higher education helps him contribute to his grandchildren's studies. Both Nikki and Tinu are receptive to others' ideas and try to understand their children's perspectives.

Another important personal resource is health. None of the participants has any major health problems, except Krishna and Nikki, who have minor knee problems that do not need immediate attention. No participants need any hands-on care. Babu expresses the sentiments of many: "I [do not] expect my daughter to take care of me. I can take care of myself."

Financial independence also plays an important role in the practice of filial piety. For some, this independence is provided by public support (societal factor), as in the cases of Kumari and Tinu. Kish has SSI and he also reflects upon his financial independence in his youth and adult years, "Never in my life have I asked anyone for any money." As we see in Tinu's case example, he has no income and Tina too refers to having no dollars (except food stamps). Tinu does not like to be dependent on his son, despite the tenets of filial piety. Tinu wants to return to India so that he can live with his more affluent son. Tinu and Tina feel the economic crunch in their lives, which they relate to their son's reduced business profit.

Participants' personal characteristics, such as gender, marital status, and living arrangement, impact the practice of filial norms. Female and male participants experience filial norms differently. While men expect and some draw respect from their children, as Krish's example suggests, female participants expect their children's time, as Krishna's case example illustrates, and the love of their children and grandchildren. Marital status influences dependence on children. Except Kish, Nikki, and Kumari, all participants live with a spouse. Those who are married have someone to spend time with, especially when children are out to work.

Participants' attitudes, behaviors and personal strategies also are influential. Rani explains, "I have changed according to the culture and demands of the times. Parents should behave like friends." Such changed attitudes open up room for deliberations and discussion between parents and their children and grandchildren. Tina too is open to what her children have to say and she refrains from any arguments. As Nikki says, "One should follow the wind and listen to what the young have to say, observe them and give them adjustment. Then only one can be happy."Nikki also cites her father's example, who was mindful of his children's view points, thereby reflecting the influence of her family history.

Kumari's case example illustrates that some parents feel they should be less demanding, especially of their children's time. All participants, particularly because of their grandchildren, have learned to eat foods other than Indian. Food still must be vegetarian, except in cases of Babu, Tina and Tinu, whose grandchildren eat some non-vegetarian snacks outside the house, as in the school. These examples show how participants tend to be flexible in their food behavior and do not consider it their place to establish or enforce household rules. These participants feel that having flexibility in their attitude and behavior with their youngsters facilitates better interaction and an acceptance of each other's ideas and reduces conflict.

Past family experiences can influence how individuals think about family relationships in the present. In the context of filial practices, all participants' experiences are rooted in their families' past treatment of elders. Raja says, "Our children have seen us taking care of our parents and other family members as well, they take care of us. They imitate us."

Nikki is open to living in an institutional setting if her children cannot care for her, although this solution would not be her first choice. Nikki's brother could not take care of their mother, so that has somewhat made Nikki realize the exigencies of time in which her children

can fall short of resources to take care of her. Nikki's experiences with her mother-in-law also shape her current experiences with her own daughter-in-law. As her mother-in-law was strict, Nikki thought "I faced hardship with my mother-in-law. I should not repeat that." Right now she has very good relationships with her daughter-in-law, but still Nikki thinks that "daughter-in-law loves her independence."

CHAPTER 6

Elders' Everyday Family and Social Lives

Engaging Life Styles

Individualized filial piety is a dimension of all participants' lives. It is a defining feature of their everyday family and social lives, but it is by no means the only feature. These older adults' lives, as the case examples attest, are comprised of several dimensions, with much, although not all, of their daily lives and activities centered on their families and households. Similarities exist with regard to participants' daily lives, but so do notable differences. For instance, all participants' lives are family-centered and they live "engaging lifestyles" where they interact and actively engage with the social world around them. Yet there is a range in the size and composition of their social networks, and hence a range of activities and lifestyles from those that are family-dominated to those with more open social networks formed within the broader community. Differences can be attributed to the intersection of community, familial, and individual influences. Below, I explore the key dimensions of these older immigrants' lives in the U.S. Then, I turn to examine the factors that influence their individual and shared experiences. Throughout, I explore participants' perceptions of life in America relative to India.

Household- and Family-centered Activities

Household chores and family support are examples of activities that participants involve themselves with in the homes of their adult children. As will be seen, such types of activities are unpaid, but instrumental to the operation of the household. These activities also involve the transmission and preservation of the Indian culture.

Family support. The data show that participants play important roles in their adult children's lives in the U.S. In the context of daily operation of the household, Tina, Rani, and

Kumari are responsible for daily household chores, which include cleaning, cooking, laundering, and taking care of grandchildren. Work aimed at benefiting the collective often takes priority over individual pursuits. As Kumari explains, “I have lots of work cleaning, cooking, and when I am done with household chores, I read my books.” All male participants have responsibility for household tasks involving supervision of others (i.e., paid laborers), running errands, yard work, and helping with childcare and chores like making tea. For example, in addition to his other daily activities, Babu attends to the “odd jobs to be done at home.” He says,

> If some people come to work in the home, I supervise them, painters and repairmen. Sometimes I go out for shopping, go to bank, post office, and some errands, drop my granddaughter to the school or pick her up. Like my granddaughter goes to learn Bharatnatyam [form of classical Indian dance], we take her on every Saturday, sometimes her father, or her mother or me. You know in our family, we like switch jobs depending on convenience.

The seven participants who are married spend most of their time with their spouses. During the day in the absence of their children, the spousal support is of considerable importance. This inclination represents a shift in behavior for some participants. Tinu comments, “I have learned to spend more time with my wife and family in the U.S.” Kish, Tina, Tinu, Krish, and Krishna immigrated to care for their grandchildren while their children are out in the paid labor force. Babu immigrated to help his son-in-law with his business, but when the business closed down, Babu took care of his granddaughter. These are examples of the strength of participants’ intergenerational family ties. Tina says, “I came to the U.S. to help my son raise his children. He applied for my green card, when he became citizen. So I lived with my grandchildren, who were actually born in India.”

Participants’ presence in their children’s homes and their activities in supporting the household, particularly preparing Indian food, are some ways they maintain culture and educate

their grandchildren. As grandparents, their contribution to day-to-day activities intersects with their role as cultural custodians. Speaking of her grandchildren, Tina says,

> Yes, I love them and you know, I raised them and they got to see me more than their own parents. And I trained them in Gujarati, as I do not speak English. I understand but cannot talk [speak]. I tell them about our culture, Books, religion. I also take care of what they are eating; I do not want them to eat non-vegetarian so always tell them that they should not eat outside.

Tina's quote is representative of how participants not just engage in daily provision of food for their grandchildren but also act as cultural custodians. Their grandchildren are an important part of their daily and family lives. Tina emphasizes the importance of Indian food, religion, language, traditions and values, all of which she believes are necessary components of maintaining traditions and socializing grandchildren in core Indian values.

All participants, except for Tinu and Tina, have American-born grandchildren. Their socialization into Indian values and customs is a major undertaking and a difficult task. Once children leave the household they encounter a different culture. Tinu made the observation that when Indian grandchildren "look to others, they do feel that at home they are being tortured." Food and dietary practices are key dimensions of cultural transmission. Others include language and religion. Some participants teach grandchildren and communicate with them in their regional languages. Some tell grandchildren stories from their religious books. Such stories reinforce values such as respecting parents and older members of their family and older people in general. Many emphasize the importance of taking grandchildren out for cultural events in temples or at other community places. Tinu explains his understanding of what it means to be a grandparent saying, "I think as grandparents we can give our culture to our grandchildren and it is good that grandchildren live with their grandparents. By culture I mean how in India, parents and children and grandchildren all live together."

It cannot be stressed enough how important their role is in the transmission of Indian culture to their grandchildren. Tinu accurately notes the home-bound and retired status of many grandparents, which creates considerable opportunity for engagement with grandchildren. Nikki talks about her daily activities with regard to her grandchildren noting, “I also tell them about their grandfather, our family, about solar system.” She further reinforces the teaching role saying, “Parents should teach good things to their children, even [the] grandmother should do [it] if she is there.”

Grandparents are concerned about their grandchildren’s futures. Rani’s anxiety over seeing her grandchildren marrying within her community springs from her attachment to her family and desire for continuity of cultural practices. It also revolves around her concern for how she will be treated. She says:

> Our grandchildren talk in Hindi so that is good. We educate them to not to become part of the American culture and tell them to marry Indian boys, those born in the U.S., I tell the boy [daughter’s son] as well, “If you bring any American girl how can we talk with her? [and] Then she will ask you to throw us outside because they do not keep their people with them.” That is their culture. Here, only girl and boy live, and if we want to stay with our grandson, she will throw us out; and we can live with him only when the girl is Indian?

Maintaining Ties

The involvement of older people in maintaining family ties is significant. Together with family support, the participants’ contribution to kin keeping includes connecting siblings and maintaining distant ties. These activities are also indicative of their transnational lives. Most participants also have formed local networks of friends and acquaintances that are important for their lives in the U.S.

Connecting siblings. Connecting siblings and bringing the family together geographically is an important activity of participants’ family life. Once they themselves are

settled in the U.S., some parents contribute to the family through the material work involved in sponsoring their children who remain in India. Kumari, Kish, Krish, Raja and Rani immigrated to the U.S. in part for the purpose of helping to facilitate their other children's immigration. Krish's case example shows his efforts and he sees his activities in the following light:

> I sacrificed for my children. I send them money so that they can give their children a better education and train them in swimming, other activities like learning both Hindi and Gujarati. I asked my son to leave the village and I bought a house [in the] city and paid for my grandson's education so that you know when they come here they do not face any problems.

This narration illustrates the collective dimensions of Indian culture and the important role older parents play in connecting siblings and bringing the family together.

Distant ties. As people relocate to a new place, they leave behind family and friends in the country of origin. Thus, a key component of participants' family and social lives in the U.S. revolves around the activity of maintaining connections to those who live at a distance. Tinu, Kumari and Krishna have children in India. Tinu talks about his son in India and also about his relatives in the U.S. and how he maintains contact with them all. He says,

> Yes he [the other son] lives there [in India] with his boys, one of whom has just joined a university in Albany, NY. We have many friends and relatives and we visit often and call them too. Like in two weeks time I email them as well. I am on Yahoo Messenger. So I maintain all my contacts.

All participants maintain relationships with siblings, relatives, and friends in India. Eight participants pay their relatives and friends in-person visits at least once every two years. Tinu feels so happy that his friends in India welcome him when he goes to India. Nikki is equally happy when she visits her sisters. Raja and Rani do not go to India as often as others because they have very few family members or friends, so they rely mainly on their children and grandchildren in Atlanta. Raja says,

> I have just one friend whom I call and have maintained contact in the past years. He works in a bank. And I just call my wife's relative. Like her sister's son. Actually her sister lived with us so that is why I have special liking for her son as well. We visit him when we are in India. He lives close by.

Kish, Krish, and Babu have extended family living in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, and Africa. All make telephone calls; Tinu and Babu also write emails to their distant kin on a regular basis. Babu says, "Oh yeah, we keep in touch with emails. There is a good 'this thing' [read: relation; everyone is updated on each other] in our family."

Cheaper telephone rates have facilitated maintaining ties across continents. All participants call their friends and families in India, except Nikki who says, "When I call sometimes they are not available, or I cannot find the number or something. And they cannot call, as it is expensive, but they are very happy when I make a call from here." However, she is in contact with them indirectly, as she explains, "Some of them have their children settled in the U.S. and I am in touch with them and so get to know from them about their parents. I have good relations with them."

Local ties. For all participants, local ties are also a dimension of their lives. Keeping up these connections occupies an important space in their daily routines. All 10 participants have friends in their network with whom they meet during senior program meetings, community events, and spiritual sessions organized by participants in their homes or in the temples. Sometimes, they befriend parents of their children's friends, which has proven helpful in Krishna's case. Although she moved out of his son's house, she still has contacts with people she befriended while living there.

Sometimes, the geographical proximity in terms of the state they come from in India (six of them are from Gujarat, three from Punjab and one from Uttar Pradesh) played an important role in developing friend networks in Atlanta. As Tinu says, "These are people from

Ahmadabad [place where he comes from in India] and I met them in Atlanta." Similarly Krish shares that, "I have 8-10 friends whom I know from India… they live in [Atlanta neighborhoods] I meet them in the temple, or in community center."

Local friends and acquaintances are important for all participants, except Raja who seems to be happy with his children and grandchildren, though he has one or two friends. Since all of them have land telephone lines, and Tinu, Babu, Nikki, Krish also have their personal cell phones, they have conversations almost every day or every other day; they meet with them at senior program organized at the community level, or in each other's homes. Kumari's case example shows her numerous friends and their role in her daily schedule,

> I am out of my bed to take shower then I pray until 8.00 am. I come down have some tea and read books, or watch TV for *satsang* [spiritual sessions]. Then between ten-thirty and one, I chat with my friends on phone, like what they read today, how they are, just such things. Then if I have to cook then I do otherwise if there is something in the fridge; then I take my lunch.

Nikki talks about her friend circle, saying:

> I have lots of friends. I go to *bhajans* (sessions in which people sing devotional songs) like we lived in Georgia Tech so made some friends there. I contact them through phone; they also call me. And we talk about what you ate, what you cooked, how is your health. I have a diary in which I have jotted down every one's birthday, so wish them on that day. Once a week I call them. I have like 20 friends. I am good in making friends, as I give importance to other person and adjust them. I talk to them what may please to the other woman.

When the participants meet at other individuals' homes, they cook, eat, chat, and play cards. As Tina says,

> I have five to seven very close friends and am in touch with them. I call them and they also call me. We meet chat, eat together. We talk about our cooking, different recipes, and then we can try next time. We just talk about our family, etc. We talk about our grandchildren and children, so that all fills our day.

While Tina likes to take food along with her, Rani does not take any if she goes to such events. She does not like her friends bringing food with them if she is organizing such a get-together:

> I have organized [friends' get-together] too. I like to do that and I cook. Sometimes the women will offer themselves to cook but I do not like that. I am Indian. If I invite you, then you do not bring your own food. If you want to bring you own food, then better sit and eat in your own home. Why take the trouble to go out?

Rani invokes cultural differences in her explanation. She says, "We are not Americans. Their culture is frank. In ours, we think if we call them we should feed them nicely so that they remember [the treatment given to them as per Indian tradition where a guest is compared to God and treated very well]."

Coincidently, Rani was the first participant whom I interviewed, so I started probing this issue with others as well. On the basis of other's accounts, it can be said that while three think like Rani, others views are represented by Tina, who comments,

> See, we do for we like to do that. It is good to have variety of foods, and learn from them. And also, all our friends are of our age, then only one person has the entire burden to cook for all. There are no servants here, right. So we think of helping. That is all.

Krish, Tina, Nikki, Tinu, Babu, and Kish have fun with their friends in Atlanta, whereas Raja and Rani are not as positive about their friends or acquaintances acquired in the U.S. Although Rani is "happy here [in the U.S.]," she explains, "There is no feeling of [belongingness]. In India we know everybody. We met these people [friends picked up in Atlanta] just here." Raja explains, "[I came to] know people who come to the local program and we just chat as we sit on the same table. That is all. I do not call anyone." Actually Raja thinks he does not need friends as such because he counts his children as his friends. He comments, "Our children are our friends. We are happy with them and the grandchildren. That is all. Why should I have friends?"

For those participants who have active friendships and social ties locally, these connections can be meaningful. Kish's statement helps summarize this,

> I have many friends, which I made when I visit local program meeting, or temple, or local community center [for Indians]. We are like 15-20 of us. I meet them and call them or they call me. We keep a check on each other. Like if one or 2 days I do not call they will call me to know how I am doing. We go to community events and we chat, sit, play. We just do some things, like prepare tea, or something. This is all nice. At least we get to go out of the house. Otherwise if there is nothing of this sort then I am just at home.

Certain participants are enthusiastic about their friends in Atlanta and Tina's comment illustrates feelings shared by some, "I have gained friends here. I have fun time with them."

Individual Pursuits

There are some activities that involve only an individual's pursuits that are important on a daily basis. For example spiritual activities, physical activity, and self care are part of their daily routines. Such activities show that participants also value solitary activities.

All participants enjoy reading. They read religious books as part of their daily activities, which includes morning prayer. As Babu explains, "I get up shower get ready do my prayers. We [family] have a micro temple. My wife prays very religiously morning and evening." Kumari's case example also shows that reading religious books and praying are part of her daily schedule. Krishna describes her daily routine, "I get up take bath, pray and by that time my husband prepares tea as he gets up early. We talk and read some Hindi books." She refers to both religious and secular literature. Krish likes to read English books. He explained why he likes to read:

> I read English books and my secret you want to know: I have read Bible from page 1 to 1445. People in my job ask why you read Bible, you are a Hindu? Now you see my answer: "I pray my Hindu God with Jesus." Why? Because I came to this country, I drink water of this country; I take food of this country. God's name help us in this country. Pray with the God of this country [and] with your own God.

Reading helps pass participants' time. It is an indicator of their spirituality as well as a means of fulfilling their roles as cultural custodians, as Krish's case example attests.

All participants enjoy watching television with their family members, particularly in the evenings when their children are home from work. The provision of cable connection and entertainment channels in Indian languages is an indicator of experiencing/living inter-generational bonds in the daily life in the U.S. This means watching television in the Indian languages in particular. As Tinu says, "I watch T.V. I tell you I enjoy serials, as we have Indian channel here. We [wife, daughter-in-law, son] watch together in the evening." Such an activity not only bonds the older parents with other family members, it also shows adult children taking care of their older parents by making available what the older parents would like to see or do.

Participants' daily lives involve physical engagement of some sort. For example, some go "out for walks if weather permits." Otherwise they walk inside; Kumari and Kish walk in the "basement area." As part of their daily physical exercise, Krish, Kish, Rani, and Tinu do some yoga. Tinu says, "I get up exercise, do some yoga at least for two hours perform yogic exercise." They also realize the importance of physical activity, as Kish puts it, "I go for walk as I have diabetes and doctor has asked me to walk for at least half an hour daily, so I do that."

Community Engagement

As the participants relocate to the U.S., it is important to learn about their experiences at the community level. Both engagement with the American community and the Indian community is an indicator of how far their social networks extend beyond their families.

Engagement with "mainstream" culture. One participant, Krish, works for a local supermarket and has befriended his colleagues and has good relations with them. Babu too has

some interaction at the mainstream level as he is a freelance journalist. Nikki because of her language skills is able to converse with people when she goes to the park with her grandchildren.

Involvement in the Indian community. All participants are members of programs organized by the Indian community. They all mention the senior program and other community activities such as spiritual sessions and temple events. Kumai thinks that, “There are many [community programs] and I cannot be everywhere. I think it is fine with me to the places I go.” She is happy with the group of women that constitute her group. Babu volunteers at various Indian community events, like health fairs, senior meetings, and then he writes a report in some local magazines. Atlanta has a vibrant Indian community which organizes various social and cultural events in community halls or temples. Babu suggests that the role of temple is changing from just a worship place to a:

> Social and community center where families meet. Like running language, dancing classes, SAT classes, plays and other cultural events, wedding. There is more interaction. Parents take their children to such places. Like my granddaughter goes to learn Bharatnatyam [cultural dance].

Krish feels his contribution to the community is to “promote any such program organized by bringing many people. What is the point if some program is organized and there are only 10 people?” Such community events help keep Indian tradition alive in the U.S. Participation is reflective of participants’ involvement in their children’s and grandchildren’s lives in various ways and degrees.

Factors Influencing Everyday Life

The participants are involved in myriad of activities on a daily basis, which involve not just household tasks and childcare but also the socialization of family members, including their own grandchildren. As suggested above, individualized filial piety is a defining feature of their family and social lives and many of the factors influencing filial piety also influence family and

social life more generally. However, as will be seen, in some instances they operate in ways not previously examined. In addition, filial piety is among the most influential factors.

Social and Cultural Factors

Similar to the factors influencing filial piety, American and Indian culture and society influence participants' everyday lives. And, as stated earlier, the use of government programs such as SSI and food stamps alters parents' financial dependence on children.

All participants, except Krishna, live in white suburbs and have identified lack of relationships with their neighbors. Babu identifies this as a general problem in Atlanta, saying that, "The mainstream is not as inviting as our Indian. This [is] the thing." Babu's comments indicate that lack of familiarity and long-standing ties with those around them, as well as neighbors' busy work and social schedules and an absence of commonality, contribute to feelings of isolation in the U.S. He says,

> This is another thing that I do not like that the mainstream is not as inviting as our Indian this thing. In India your house is like an open door they will come in and sit with you ask, "How are you?" Sit with you for 2-3 minutes and go away. They won't expect a cup of tea or snacks. So, that makes old people at ease, which is not here.

Rani adds that lack of long standing ties as well as ethnic differences contribute to lack of contact with neighbors:

> We cannot go to neighbor like in India. In India we know the neighborhood and people, but here we came to know them [just exchange hello] since few years. We were born in India, so those are our childhood neighbors. Here we do not know what other person's schedule is. Our community is white [and] we can go nowhere.

Beyond the feeling of being somewhat isolated within their neighborhoods, there is a perceived lack of social support from neighbors, including social monitoring, also common in India. Tinu says,

> What I do not find here is relatives and neighbors. In India these two are very important and they really keep a good check on you. Old time in India is good. You have neighbors

> and if you do not meet them for two days they come and look for you. They are important than even relatives, who will not even call you if they do not need anything from you.

The social monitoring in India also can extend to social control. Tina shares her view:

> Back in India, if one [the children] does not treat [their parents] well then there is some social pressure of like relatives or even neighbors. The very idea that others can ridicule you works positively for family relationships. In order to be considered good in front of others you got to behave in a certain way, because you always want that others (like friends, extended family, neighbors) to think of good of you. These family things are very important unlike in the U.S. where it is one's job that is important. How much you earn is very important here.

Krishna finds that even in the senior community where she and her husband live, neighbors lack social bonds that are representative of Indian culture. She says:

> When we have meetings we go and meet people, but no interaction as such. We do not visit anyone at home nor do they come to ours. People in my residence community do not like to mingle as such, even among themselves. They do not socialize. It is a rivaaj [custom, tradition] if you go to them they won't welcome you to take a seat. Like when I was unwell, they will come and drop the get well soon card outside and not come inside. They see you, they will say hi, and then leave. Sometimes we go out for shopping like every Monday so we are together. They joke, talk in the bus, and take care that we are all together. So that way it is good. On Fridays we just go somewhere to roam around… any park, shopping district.

In general, participants indicate that in India one's neighbors are a regular source of social interaction and perform important social roles. Therefore, they miss the configuration of their former neighborhoods and the types of interaction that they had with neighbors, which were characteristic of Indian culture. Kish's comment clearly illustrates that, "In India, there is interaction with neighbors. If someone is alone there, you will call him 'come eat with me'. But here no one will do that. They [neighbors] think, 'What we are losing? Let him die without food.'" In the absence of neighbors who could have been an important component of their social lives, the participants are dependent on their children, local friends and even their distant ties for social interaction.

Community Factors

Certain factors at community level aid or constrict participants' family and social experiences, including transportation services, access to the Indian community, local senior centers. Seven participants do not drive. Both these factors constrict their lives, as Rani says,

> In Atlanta, there are very few options for public transport so even if I want to go, let us say to my *kirtan* (sessions in which people come and chant hymns and sing devotional songs to the accompaniment of instruments) group, I have to depend on someone for the ride. Like the local program meeting, I cannot be there all by myself. I do not drive.

When participants were questioned about whether they like to visit or use local senior centers, eight of them pointed out transportation as a barrier. Without transportation participants' family and social lives revolve almost exclusively around their children. According to Kish, "Here no ride, no life." For some participants this lack is catalytic to leading transnational lives. It triggers in Kish, Tinu, Tina, and Nikki a desire to go to India more often or even contemplate a complete return. As Tina explains of her past life in India, "I divided my time in family things and going out with friends and relatives. I was free to move, like I did not need car and could take any other means of transport."

Public services that influence participants' daily and social lives include senior centers and their services. Krish finds that the "good food, water and air" in the U.S., make life more comfortable. Although Rani is not interested in using facilities provided by senior centers, but she realizes that the lack of traditional foods is as a barrier to senior center participation:

> I do not want to go. I went there once to meet my friend, who was dropped off there by her son. I did not like her to see there. The food, how could she eat corn? She did not get Indian bread.

One county in Atlanta has been able to introduce culturally appropriate programs, in which, service providers transport seniors to local temples and serve them Indian food. Kish is using this program and Tinu and Tina want to join.

Family Factors

There are some family factors such as participants' children's work schedules, living arrangements, family composition, history, and needs that play role in their daily and social lives. To begin, participants acknowledge work-related stress in their children's lives as part of life in the U.S. but also evaluate children's long absences from home in the light of changes in India. Both factors influence the likelihood of participants, such as Rani, Tina, Kumari and sometimes Kish, doing regular domestic work.

For six participants, their social activity is influenced by whether their children have time to drive them. Kumari explains:

> If she [daughter] has to take me out for satsang or senior meeting, etc. And like when she does not have time, then my other children take me. They just talk and see who so ever has time and wants to also attend then accordingly we go to our ….. It is good that my children are part of these groups, so they learn good stuff.

In Krish's case he cannot invite his friends to his home for any get-together, as his children work from home. He says, "They do not come to my house, as there is no program as such. My children work from home." Of course, another factor is the changing position of elders in the family. In some instances, participants are not permitted to entertain at home because, from the perspective of adult children, doing so would interfere with grandchildren's needs.

Because participants are sharing or have shared living arrangements with their adult children and grandchildren, their families exert enormous influence on their daily lives and family relationships. Family factors that impact their social lives are the same as those that influence the practice of filial piety: structure, needs, and resources. It follows then that filial piety attitudes and practices also are key influences.

The effect of filial piety is variable because, as described earlier, participants have developed individualized filial piety practices. Factors such as attitudes toward the role of

daughters-in-laws and of children in general impact how participants experience their family and social life. Being cultural custodians affects participants' interaction with their grandchildren. Family size and relationship history have obvious influence on participants' daily life. All participants, except one, have two to three children living in Atlanta, which affects family interactions.

All participants, except Krish and Nikki, are either open to or are living with their daughters, an arrangement which serves to enlarge participants' support networks. The presence of grandchildren also affects social interactions and activities. Raja, for example, has a big family with number of grandchildren, whom he counts as his friends. Similarly, Tinu and Tina refer to having intense relationships with their grandchildren. Changes in family composition can lead to changes in social life as shown in the example of Nikki. She says, "I am fine with anyone, I have no issues talking with people from different communities or countries." Yet since her family expanded with her son's marriage and the presence of a daughter-in-law, she no longer invites them to her house. She feels there is no need as there are others around.

Participants' family and social lives are tied to other family members. Tinu drives his wife for grocery shopping and social outings. In doing so, he spends more time with his wife and has taken on more responsibilities than was true in the past. He also gets to enjoy the company of his wife's friends. Similarly the need to take the grandchildren to cultural activities brings both Babu and Krish into contact with them. Tina feels happier when she stays with her granddaughter, who is now 22 years old, compared to caring for a two- year child. Raja's choice to live with his daughter because she is widowed, rather than his son, means he does not have access to a television with a cable connection.

Some participants' families of origin had been more egalitarian than others. Nikki's father was open to his children's ideas; Babu's father was somehow convinced that it was okay to have marriages outside the Indian community; and Tinu too had accepted the girl that was chosen by his son. These more liberal attitudes make all three of them open to such marriages with regard to their grandchildren. Babu declares, "I am pretty open. Love just happens." While Nikki's first preference is a marriage within community, if someone falls in love, he or she has to "be sure to maintain relationship as a long lasting one. Should have good socio-economic standard, well-groomed, nice." This sort of family history is encouraging Nikki and Babu to rethink their traditions in the light of their family lives.

Participants' family needs also have necessitated their late-life relocation to the U.S. As a result, many miss other family members and friends in India, who were once part of their social network, although all of them maintain their contacts, and also visit them frequently. When asked why she will think of returning to India when her children lived in the U.S., Nikki replied, "So what? They have their own family. My family is there too, my memories, my sisters." The above examples show how family needs can impact participants' family and social lives in different ways.

Some participants, including Kish, Nikki and Krish, have support from a wider group of relatives beyond the immediate family. Krish even wants to travel to London for a few days on his way to India to meet with his nephew. But Tinu's case example attests to how relatives can change in the U.S. He complains that there are "less relatives here and those who are here have become more Americans. They do not like to invite me."

Other participants think of returning to India, because they have successfully sponsored their other children and brought them to the U.S. Krish, for example, feels that he has fulfilled

his “responsibilities” and he would find a preferable lifestyle there. He says, “I can buy services. There is tiffin service [food service] so food is no problem. You can get servants who can work for you. Then these children can also come. I have my money is it is no problem. I have house in India.” Other participants noted the value of aging in India. In general though, although participants have successfully made friends in Atlanta and are maintaining their contacts in India, what holds most importance for them is family. As Raja says, “I miss my country, but my world is with my children.”

Personal Factors

Some personal factors specific to participants influence their family and social life in negative or positive ways. Personal resources, history, characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors impact participants’ support experiences in unique ways.

Personal resources that influence participants’ family and social lives include language skills, education, attitudes, health status, driving ability, and income. Language skills are highly influential. Kumari says, “When they [granddaughters] are around, they are watching television or chatting amongst themselves. I do not speak English so I cannot participate, but if they ask me anything in Hindi then I just reply.” Nikki has some language skills and thus is able to talk to non-Indian people as well. While command of the English language facilitates more interaction with their grandchildren and with people from other communities, a lack of it may hinder meaningful communication. Rani has fears that if her grandchildren, who can speak her language, marry into a non- Indian community she can never have any meaningful conversation with their spouses.

Except Krish, Babu, Tinu and Nikki, lack of language skills limit other participants’ interaction with non-family. They may exchange greetings with neighbors, as Raja says, “When I

go out for walk," but otherwise participants do not get to see or meet their neighbors. Talking about neighbors, Babu points out, "They [older Indian parents] should also have friends. They should try and learn English; some of them are not comfortable. They can also befriend with neighbors."

Education is related to language skills and helps these older immigrants form friendships more easily. Nikki made it very clear that she is educated, broad minded, and is open to other people who do not necessarily speak her language. Even with regard to her daughter-in-law, Nikki thinks broadly and is ready to listen to others view points.

Education and attitude often go hand in hand, but not always. Kumari is not highly educated but her attitude affects her family and social life in positive ways. She says:

> Much depends on the older person as well and how you are and then that is how people/ or your children behave with you. If you are cool, then you can maintain cool. You have to be quiet if the children are not in their usual mood. And you have to listen to your children and God has granted me this power.

Krish is open to other's ideas, interacts with people at his workplace as well, and wants to learn from others. Nikki, Kumari, and Babu also are open to making new friends.

All, except Krishna, enjoy good health. Babu knows that he is healthy and does not want his daughter to take care of him. Babu indicates that his good health and ability to care for himself influenced his daughter and son-in-law's decision to invite him and his wife to the U.S.:

> Take my case for instance, my son-in-law and daughter they wanted to move us with them. We could be helpful, help him in the business and babysit the child. And we were in good health but it may not have been the care if we were in poor health or we were not in good financial position.

All participants in fact are in good health, which means they create no burden for their families and are able to maintain their own social networks.

The importance of access to transportation has been discussed above. Participants' able to drive can expand their social lives. Work status and participants' own job demands, as in the case of Babu and Krish and their respective spouses, also affects daily interactions and relationships. As Krish says,

> I work at [*supermarket*] and I have my …… [*two days*] as off days. My wife works at…. [*Another supermarket*] and I give her ride as well. On a holiday, I do like clean the backyard, so some exercises, which I do daily as well. And pray for like 40 minutes, unlike my son who comes only for 10 minutes. There is nothing special that I do… read books, as I like to read, then go out if I want, or like pick up my wife. She has a different schedule. When she is at home she does laundry and in fact both she and son's wife do work. My wife likes to work. She is also sports person thus likes to move and be active.

Whereas Krish's and Babu's work status influences their spending time with their wives, Krish's financial means and Tinu's lack of such means indicates their independence or dependence on their children, as evident from their case studies.

Personal characteristics such as marital status and gender are important in defining participants' social and family experiences. The presence of a spouse is key, and Raja and Tinu spend more time with their wives than they would have in India. Tina says,

> I have company of my husband, as he is retired and stays at home. I play with him cards on computer and we go for shopping on the weekend, and he drives me. We watch TV, as we have Indian channels and movies too.

Krishna says, "I cannot imagine myself without my husband." For Kish, after his wife's death he feels lonely and says,

> If my wife was living then I will not be lonely. It would have been lot different. It would be different and I wouldn't have to do anything [cooking etc]. She will be my company. We will be together here. She was very nice lady. We never had any time any fight.

For those without a spouse, it is a different story. On the days when Kish does not have anywhere to go out, he finds himself lonely as he does not "have his wife to give him company."

While Kumari does not talk about this, Nikki feels the loss of her husband's company and says if her husband was alive they would have gone to India more often than she is able to do now.

Family and social life is different for men and women. When women get busy with their household chores, their spouses help them with small things, like making tea. As Tinu says "I do not work in the kitchen, except making tea sometimes." A component of female participants' lives is their present or past relationship with their daughters-in-law as in Krishna's case. Rani and Kumari do not live with her daughters-in-law but they enjoy good relationships like Tina and Nikki. There is some mother-in-law and daughter-in-law dynamism here in which the former have been accommodative of their daughters-in-law's work schedules, as Tina says,

> My son does not have time, the daughter-in-law also works. And here you cannot find people who can work in your house. But it is okay I enjoy it. It is good to work and I think everyone must. It is good for body, mind remains fresh, no depression, time pass and I like it.

This quote shows how Tina changed her perception and accommodates her daughter-in-law's work schedules and Tina's attitude towards household work. Nikki also commented, "If she [daughter-in-law] is ill then I prepare food that day."

Some participants develop strategies to fill their time in America. Babu and Krish regularly visit local libraries. Both of them like to read books and have made acquaintances with the staff of the libraries. Babu suggests that older adults should learn English and then go to public libraries to read books. As noted earlier, when Nikki no longer could watch programs in Hindi language, she began to read more to avoid a potential conflict between her son and daughter-in-law. Similarly Rani, who also does not have a cable connection, watches CNN news, saying, "I am interested in watching news in English so that I know what is happening and I get to learn the language as well."

On the basis of aforementioned factors, it can be concluded that despite limitations due to lack of transportation and English language skills participants are able to maintain a lifestyle that is “engaging.” They have their family’s support and both their local and distant contacts are important too in their present lives in the U.S. They enjoy reading and teaching their grandchildren about Indian values and traditions, and at the same time they have what Rani calls, “lots of options,” which include watching television in Indian languages and movies on video cassette players.

CHAPTER 7

Discussion and Implications

This research investigated older Indian immigrants' family and social lives and the factors influencing their experiences after they relocated to the U.S. I used a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews with 10 older Asian Indian immigrants. Data analysis was informed by principles of grounded theory method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Findings provide insight into the different ways exchanges of support take place between generations in participants' families and reveal that while family-centered, their social lives and networks can, and in some instances, do extend beyond their children and grandchildren. Participants' post-immigration life trajectories reveal that personal, family, community, and socio-cultural factors join to shape their experiences. Overall, findings contribute to the sparse literature on the daily life experiences of immigrant older populations, particularly as they pertain to the practice of filial piety, a tradition and norm associated with Eastern cultures.

In this chapter I examine my key findings in the light of existing research. I address theoretical and policy implications and present a consideration of the study's strengths and weaknesses. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of future research directions.

Cultural practices, continuity and change

Research findings presented in Chapter Five identified support exchanges between participants and their adult children and grandchildren. *Seva* typifies a time in the life of both adult children and older parents (when the former give back to their parents the love, care and support received as a child/young adult) which traditionally involves a uni-directional flow from adult children to older parents. Yet, as I and others have found, exchanges within Indian households in the U.S. are characterized by multi-directionality and an increased role of older

parents in their children's household (Kalavar & Van Willigen, 2005; Nandan, 2005; Rangaswamy, 2000). According to Lamb (2009b: 217) this multi-directionality means "reversing the expected direction of transactional flows and extending their [older parents] phase of giving into old age." This practice suggests a pattern of interdependence and interconnectedness of family members, which has been shown to be psychologically beneficial to elders (Mui and Shibusawa, 2008). Participants are an important part of their children's families, not exclusively because tradition dictates, but also for what they contribute. The elders in my study give company to their children and enact their roles as grandparents by socializing the youngest generation in family traditions and Indian values and customs. Thus, the increased role for older parents entails not just domestic housekeeping responsibilities, but includes, what Treas (2008: 474) calls "academic and moral development of youngsters." Echoing this idea, I use the term "cultural custodians" to refer to their role in preserving and passing along Indian culture, particularly in their grandchildren's lives. Moreover, older immigrant parents' conscious desire to stick to the Indian food, language and religion are conspicuous ways of "symbolic kin keeping" (Treas & Mazumdar, 2004:116).

Traditionally, financial support to older parents comes from their adult children (usually a son); this is how reciprocity (given back for what had been given in childhood) is played out in intergenerational relationships in the Indian families in the U.S. (Kalavar & Van Willigen, 2005). Like Lamb (2009b), I found that life in the U.S., along with existing programs for seniors, alters this tradition for some who immigrate. In my research 7 out of 10 participants draw on one or more U.S. government-funded assistance programs. Financially independent participants are happy not to be dependent on their children, and those dependent do not like their situation. The pattern of upholding financial independence among participants suggests a break from the Indian

tradition (of dependent old age). It is an interesting situation in which there used to be a pride in being well taken care of by one's son and children but now it is reversing as elders take pride and feel respected if they have some financial means.

In terms of non-financial support, Lamb (2009b:216) finds that adult children "do not end up reciprocating such [cooking, serving food and tea, entertainment and providing companionship] services [to their parents]" which may cause some "tension and perceived failure and disappointment." The older adults in my study do not emphasize disappointment. Rather, they redefine the situation, in the ways Goffman shows people defining their own situations, when they interact with others in a social setting and make sense out of events which are deep embedded in various social establishments and techniques they use to sustain their real social situations (Goffman, 1959), and align expectations with their perceptions of reality. There are examples in my research where older parents do not expect their children to cook and serve them and elders are sensitive to and understanding of their children's work/career demands and accompanying time constraints more than might have been true for previous generations.

All participants believe in being close (physical proximity) to children. With one exception, all maintain joint households with their children. The practice of maintaining multigenerational households is suggestive of collectivist culture and intergenerational reciprocity, as also seen among Chinese older parents who relocated to the U.S. for family reunification (Xie & Xia, 2009). With the exception of two participants, adult children in Atlanta work as a team with regard to decisions, activities or outings related to their older parents. This teamwork resonates with findings from studies involving Western families. For example, such cooperation is similar to what Bengston (2001:9) calls "tight knit relationships" which are characterized by emotional closeness between family members. Meanwhile, Connidis and Kemp

(2008) examined how sibling networks negotiate actual and anticipated care for their older parents. Certain families anticipated they would work together as a team. Yet, factors such as relationship history, physical proximity, and gender norms influenced ideas about caregiving in a given family. Similarly in my research, structural factors such as adult children's occupations and physical proximity influence participants' actual and anticipated care management.

Although most participants consider the family to be the only site for aging and long-term care, two participants are open to ending their lives in nursing homes. Personal resources and family history account for this deviation. This formal care arrangement is highly atypical and deviates from what appears in the literature about ethnic communities.

Participants' lives are family-centered, yet their lives and experiences vary considerably. As an ethnic group in the U.S., Indians hold distinct cultural beliefs and norms that can influence the aging process. Yet, ethnicity is everything but a "constant force" (Cox, 2005:134). Values and norms are ever-evolving. Participants' experiences with filial piety illustrate the ever-evolving nature of culture, through a phenomenon I identify as "individualized filial piety." The concept and the accompanying conceptual model represent the idea that both the older parents and their family members negotiate their daily lives and responsibilities under specific circumstances that join together and shape the practice of filial piety. Given that circumstances vary for each individual and family, filial piety becomes "individualized." This concept resonates with Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) work on the notion of individualization, which is based on their observations of Western culture and families. For these theorists, one dimension of individualization is the notion that individuals are actively involved in shaping their own lives. Family relationships and exchange of support in participants' lives are suggestive of their own decisions in which "place polygamy" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 25) or transnationalism,

through worldwide communication and visits back home, influences their lives. These theorists argue that individuals organize their lives amidst worldwide influences. This practice impacts the way people, including my participants, think about and negotiate intergenerational relationships. It is important to point out that traditional family norms in India are witnessing changes due to urbanization and modernization (Liebig & Ramamurti, 2006), which results in less hierarchical (*cf.* Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004) and more reciprocal patterns of mutual help and respect between generations and between genders. Thus, changes to traditional practices of filial piety, such as those experienced by participants, cannot be attributed solely to life in America and accompanying norms and values.

In research on Indian families in the U.S., Rangaswamy (2000) and Gupta (2005) found sons were identified as the sole caretaker of older parents, but in practice daughters-in-law assumed the actual care and support responsibilities. My findings add to the existing literature pertaining to son's responsibilities. Participants in my study neither think the son is the sole provider nor necessarily believe in the transference of obligations from the son to his wife (their daughters-in-law). Moreover, participants either incorporate their daughters into their support networks or are open to this option following recent trends in India (Liebig & Ramamurti, 2006).

Another important shift away from traditional family life I observed involves the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship. Yet, my findings are somewhat different compared to existing work. Gupta (2005) suggests that daughters-in-law compromise their jobs and other needs for their parents-in-laws, who are resentful of their employment. In my work participants refer to the changing dynamics of mother- daughter-in-law relationships. They do not expect and want their children, including their daughters-in-law, to disrupt their work life and come to their aid. The changed expectations are related in part to expanding educational opportunities for

Indian women. This group of older women has more agency than their own mothers-in-law.This agency translates into greater choice for older adults because they do not have to depend on their daughters-in-law, as was the case for their own mothers-in-law. They care for themselves as well as other family members. Insofar as they are able, they take charge of their lives and have more independence than previous generations of older Indian women.

On a daily basis participants lead what I refer to an “engaging lifestyle” - they are engaged with their families, but not exclusively. Owing to the friends they have acquired in Atlanta, some have rather large social networks, which promote “integration, information exchange, contacts and support” (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2007: 255). For the majority of my participants, non-family networks are limited to the Indian community because of limited or no language skills (see also Diwan, 2008). Yet this contact, even though limited to other Asian Indians, provides them with the opportunity to socialize outside of the household.

Recalling that in Berry’s (2003) scheme there are four distinct types of acculturation outcomes associated with the adaptation phase: 1) integration; 2) assimilation; 3) separation; and 4) marginalization. Those participants who have language skills and an attitude to interact with others may strive for integration but the rest are still leading somewhat separated lives.

Among immigrants spatial mobility can cause discontinuity in social relationships and result in losing their support system from their home country (Rangaswamy, 2000). For some, including participants in this study, communication through telephone and the opportunities to visit India contribute to intact ties with friends in their country of origin. Although not a replacement for ties back home, participants have managed to establish and negotiate new relationships. Most have a network of local friends with whom they meet frequently or speak with on the phone.

Theoretical and Policy Implications

My findings have implications for theories of individualization. Broadly, the conceptual framework of "individualization" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) purports that scientific and technology improvements, labor market conditions and globalization have created environments which render individuals in western societies makers of their own biographies. Some of the other changes involve the loosening of traditions. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2000) argue that individuals' lives are not necessarily defined and determined by traditional institutions such as family or religion. Individualization theories examine western culture, but seem relevant to understanding the experiences of my participants who have relocated from the east. The new environment suggests replacement of long held beliefs and societal norms (such as gender roles, family) by new norms and demands (such as absence of women for hands-on care & lack of time). The participants' experiences fit in the category of "detraditionalization" which in the context of individualization does not mean that "traditions no longer plays any role, but that traditions must be chosen and invented and they have force only through the decisions and experience of individuals" (25-27). This means that traditions are less likely to be taken as given or normative, thus participants in this study are seen tailoring the traditions according to their circumstances and the resulting changes impact the ways family relationships are negotiated. Of course, such changes also are being observed in India. In their lives in the U.S., participants' social and family relationships are tied to the lives of other institutions and persons, including their children's lives, which are regulated by work. In turn, older parents are, in a sense, creators of their own biographies through their own actions as they negotiate new ways of living. For some participants, this means modifying filial expectations or abandoning tradition altogether.

Several policy implications can be drawn from this research. First, stereotypical views that ethnic families are the only site of eldercare need critical examination. My findings show this is not universally the case, as two of the participants are open to the option of aging in a nursing home. The formal long-term care industry likely needs to prepare for increasing cultural diversity. Providers should prioritize cultural competency both in the services they provide and among the staff they hire. The second policy implication is the need for policy makers and those who work with elders to realize that given the work demands and their children's busy lives those in ethnic families cannot necessarily rely on their children to provide care In this sense, aging among ethnic elders may not be very different from the White or African-American elders' or any other community. There is a stereotype of Asian families in which family is the site of aging. Services providers, like social workers and family counselors, need to know, at the very least, there are similarities and differences both among and between ethnic groups. It is important to ask whether "the differences make a difference" (Sokolovsky, 2009:293). This question draws attention to whether or not aging differs along the ethnic divides. The third policy implication is related to social services. Those who provide services should be better equipped to handle the needs of the ethnic communities. As evident in my research, the program initiated by the local senior center is a step in the right direction. Thus it is suggested that facilities with culturally competent programming and services should be established within local senior centers' curriculum. This suggestion implies interlinking existing philosophy of a given senior center with practices that are sensitive to ethnic groups' needs (Uttal, 2009). Examples of cultural competence include practices around food, entertainment and group activities. For older Indian adults living in the Atlanta-area, involvement at the ethnic community level, there are two programs for the Indian seniors right now, and the third program called SEVA (Senior

Enrichment Volunteer Association) held its first meeting in April 2010 and it seeks to address various services such as transportation, translation, etc.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions

The study had many strengths stemming from its design, guiding theoretical perspectives, and focus. First, a qualitative approach made visible contradictions and tensions, drew attention to negotiation processes and highlighted everyday life experiences from participants' perspectives. I was able to get participants' "personal interpretations of important personal experiences" (Usita, 2007:164). Next, I analyzed data informed by principles of grounded theory. The information generated is culturally relevant as I studied the meanings that participants assigned to different phenomena. I was able to identify traditional themes as well as concepts that are new, yet culture-specific, such as gender dynamics in the Indian households, and gender disparity when it comes to parental care. With the insights of Symbolic Interactionist and Life Course approaches, I found older Indian immigrants constructing their ways and designing their own life course in response to changing social, cultural and historical contexts as well as family and personal ones. Participants face an ever-changing cultural context in both in the U.S. and in India. This results in a new social world in which they have revised cultural norms, especially related to filial piety. Finally, the topic of study and access to older Asian immigrants addresses a gap in the gerontological literature.

Despite the strengths of the study, there were a number of limitations; most have implications for future research. To begin, my sample size was small. Thus future research would benefit from use of a larger and more diverse sample in terms of age, marital status, health, living arrangements, work, education, access or lack of community resources. This approach would allow for greater heterogeneity and help capture similarities and differences

among different groups of individuals from the same community. The second limitation to my research is related to the first and involves my participants' being in relatively good health status. All participants are in relatively good health and do not require any assistance with ADLs. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain aspects of direct care in their families. It is unclear how their family and social lives might differ and how filial piety might be practiced if participants were in poor health. The third limitation relates to the recruitment site. All participants were recruited from a local program. As a result, there may be a sample bias which means it may not be representative of the population from where it comes. All participants have access to social outings which impacts their family and social lives and experiences. The next limitation is geographic. The study site is Atlanta which has a bigger Indian community. Thus, there is yet another bias. Participants have a larger ethnic community on which to draw than those in other parts of the U.S. In order to obtain a more complete picture of Indian immigrant lives in the U.S. would require carrying on research in those parts where access to the ethnic community may be limited. Another limitation is my own insider status. There is a risk that my status as an Indian immigrant may have affected some responses. However it also works to my advantage as I was able to establish a rapport and secured the participants' cooperation. Finally, the cross-sectional design of the study did not allow for an examination of continuity and change across time among individuals and their families. As parents get older and frailer or become incapacitated, they may require more assistance, especially hands-on personal care. Following participants over time will yield important insights into how filial piety is negotiated over time and under different sets of circumstances. Future work might wish to consider a longitudinal design and also including the participants' children to get their perspective on filial piety and its related practices in their households.

Substantively, future researchers might wish to consider studying the role of religion on older immigrants' perception on aging, particularly in a foreign country. Religion was an important part of my participants' daily lives. Although it was not the focus of the study, it could be a fruitful line of inquiry. Lamb (2002b) explains that classical Hindu ethical-legal and cultural texts uphold the notion of detachment from worldly affairs in old age. In the present scenario where the older people are still giving to their families, how do they reconcile with traditional ideas around dependent old age? Studying this cultural contradiction will shed light on how the local context of an active old age impact the traditional reclusive old age.

Another avenue for further inquiry could include efforts at understanding how globalization and transnationalism might render older immigrants' lives flexible (i.e., not as steeped in tradition). While religion provides a cultural continuity to the immigrants in a foreign land, it will be worthwhile to study intersection of their religion with their new identities. Doing so will lay groundwork for looking at the lived reality of everyday religion from the perspective of older adults.

Future research might also wish to consider older immigrants' attitudes towards and use of formal long-term care. There is a burgeoning industry in India (Lamb 2009b), yet what is known or assumed about immigrant families in the U.S. suggests families are the primary, if not the sole, site of elder care. Identifying immigrants' (both adult children and parents) perspectives of and familiarity with formal long-term care services and settings will help to understand and met future needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, given the socio-demographic changes related to increase in the population of older adults, my study has added to understandings of aging in an era of globalization. This

study contributes to existing understandings of older immigrant experiences and their transnational lives. Continuity and change, as well as heterogeneity, define these older adults' everyday life experiences as they negotiate the lives in their non-native land. My research points to the centrality of elder parents in immigrant families (and vice versa) and has added to the literature on intergenerational relationships within ethnic communities by demonstrating heterogeneity. It is important to expand on this study in order to further explore exchanges of supports between generations in the Indian families in the U.S., particularly as the country ages rapidly and grows increasingly diverse.

REFERENCES

Administration on Aging. 2008. *A Profile of Older Americans*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Retrieved September 1, 2009 from http://www.mowaa.org/Document.Doc?id=69.

Agbayani-Siewert, P. 2004. Assumptions of Asian American similarity: The Case of Filipino and Chinese American students**.** *Social Work*, 49/1, 39-51.

American Community Survey. 2007a. Report retrieved September 1, 2009 from http://www.census.gov/PressRelease/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/013385.html.

American Community Survey. 2007b. Report retrieved on October 15, 2009 from http://www.factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_S0103&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-redoLog=false.

Beck, U & Beck-Gernsheim.E. 2002. *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences.* New Delhi, London: Sage Publications.

Bengston, V.L. 2001. Beyond the nuclear family: The increasing importance of multigenerational bonds. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 63/2, 1-16.

Bengston, V.L., Lowenstein, A, Putney, N.M. & Gans, D. 2003. Global aging and the challenge to families. In V.L. Bengston & A. Lowenstein (Eds.), *Global Aging and Challenges to Families* (pp. 1-24). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Berry, J. W. 2003. Conceptual approaches to acculturation. In G. Marin, P. Balls-Organista, & K. Chung (Ed.), *Acculturation* (pp.17-37). Washington, DC: APA Books.

Berry, J. W. 2007. Acculturation strategies and adaptation. In J.E. Lansford, K. Deater-Deckard, & M.C. Bornstein (Eds.), *Immigrant families in Contemporary Societies* (pp. 69-82). New York: Guilford Press.

Berry, J. W. 2008. Globalisation and acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. *32*, 328–336.

Bhatia, S. 2007. *American Karma: Race, culture, and identity in the Indian diaspora*. New York and London: New York University Press.

Bhattacharya, G., & Schoppelrey, S. L. 2004. Preimmigration beliefs of life success, postimmigration experiences, and acculturative stress: South Asian immigrants in the United States. *Journal of Immigration Health*. 6, 83-92.

Blumer, Herbert. 1969. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Cobb, A. K., & Forbes, S. 2002. Qualitative research: What does it have to offer to the gerontologist? *Journal of Gerontology*. *57*, M197-M202.

Connidis, I.A. & Kemp, C. 2008. Negotiating actual and anticipated parental support: Multiple sibling voices in three-generation families. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 22/3, 229-238.

Coon, H.M. & Kemmelmeier, M. 2001. Cultural orientations in the United States: (Re) examining differences among ethnic groups. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. 32/3, 348-364.

Cox, C.B. 2005. *Community care for an Aging Society: Issues, Policies and Services*. Springer Publishing House, NY.

Detzner, D.F. 2004. *Elder Voices: Southeast Asian Families in the United States*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.

Diwan, S., Jonnalagadda, S. S., & Gupta, R. 2004. Differences in the structure of depression among older American Indian immigrants in the United States. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*. *23*, 370- 384.

Diwan, S. 2008. Limited English proficiency, social network characteristics, depressive symptoms among older immigrants. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. 63B, S184-S 191.

Giele, J. Z., & Elder, G. H. 1998. Life course research: Development of a field. In J. Z. Giele & G. H. Elder (Ed.), *Methods of life course research* (pp. 4-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gelfand, D. E. 2003. Programs, services, and the ethnic aged. In D.E. Gelfand, *Aging and Ethnicity: Knowledge and Services* (2nd ed.). (pp. 154-182). New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Goffman, E. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books Doubleday.

Gupta, R., & Pillai, V. K. 2000. Caregiver burden in South Asian families: A systems theory perspective. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*. 9, 41-53.

Gupta, R. 2005. Acculturation and marital problems among South Asian immigrants: Implications for practitioners. *Clinical Gerontologist*. 29/1, 71-77.

Hagestad, G.O. & Uhlenberg. P. 2007. The impact of demographic changes on relations between age groups and generations: A comparative perspective. In K.W. Schaie. & P. Uhlenberg

(Eds.), *Social Structures: Demographic Changes and the Well-being of Older Persons*. (pp. 239-261). Springer: New York.

Halai, N. 2007. Making use of bilingual interview data: Some experiences from the field. *The Qualitative Report*. *12*(3), 344-355. Retrieved [092109], from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR12-3/halai.pdf.

Jamieson, A. 2002. Theory and practices in social gerontology. In A. Jamieson & C. R. Victor, *Researching Ageing and later-life* (pp. 7-20). Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Jasso, G. 2004. Migration, Human Development, and the Life Course. In J.T. Mortimer & M.J. Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course* (pp. 331-364). New York: Springer-Verlag New York, LLC.

Jeon, Y-H. 2004. The application of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Science*. 18, 249–256.

Kalavar, J., Kolt, G. S., Giles, L. C., & Driver, R. P. 2004. Physical activity in older Asian Indians living in the United States: Barriers and motives. *Activities, Adaptation & Aging*. *2*, 47- 67.

Kalavar, J. M. & Van Willigen, J. 2005. Older Asian Indians resettled in America: Narratives about households, culture and generation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*. 20, 213-230.

Katbamna, S., Ahmad, W., Bhakta, P., Baker, R., & Parker, G. 2004. Do they look after their own? Informal support for South Asian carers. *Health and Social Care in the Community*. 12, 398-406.

Lamb, S. 2002a. Intimacy in a transnational era: The remaking of aging among Indian Americans. *Diaspora*, *11.3*, 299-330.

Lamb. S. 2002b. Love and Aging in Bengali Families. In D.P. Mines & S. Lamb (Eds). *Everyday life in South Asia.* (pp. 56-68). Indiana University Press: Bloomington.

Lamb. S. 2009a. Elder residences and outsourced sons: Remaking aging in cosmopolitan India. In J. Sokolovsky (Ed.), *The cultural context of aging: Worldwide perspectives* (3rd ed.) (pp. 418-440). Praeger: Westport, CT.

Lamb, S. 2009b. *Aging and the Indian Diaspora: Cosmopolitan Families in India and Abroad*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Liebig, P. & Ramamurti., P.V. 2006. Living Arrangements and Social Support for older adults in India. In. H.Yoon & J. Hendricks (Eds.). *Handbook of Asian Aging* (pp. 237-260). Baywood Publishing Company, NY.

Longino, C.F & Bradley D. E. 2006. Internal and International Migration. In R. Binstock & L. George (Eds.), *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences* (6th ed.) (pp. 76-93). 6th Edition. San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.

Markus, H.R. & Kitayama, S. 1991. Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion and motivation. *Psychological Review*. 98/2,224-253.

Nandan, M. 2005. Adaptation to American culture: Voices of Asian Indian immigrants. *Journal of Gerontological Work*. 44, 175-203.

Nandan, M. 2007. “Waves of Asian Indian elderly immigrants": What can practitioners learn? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*. 22, 389-404.

Park, K. 2009. *Korean Immigrant Women and the Renegotiation of Identity: Class, Gender and the Politics of Identity*. El Paso: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.

Patton, M. N. 1990. Qualitative evaluation and research methods. Sage Publications: London & New Delhi.

Purkayastha, B. 2005. *Negotiating Ethnicity: Second-generation South Asian Americans traverse a transnational world*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Rangaswamy, P. 2000. *Namaste America: Indian immigrants in an American metropolis*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University.

Settersten, R. A. 2006. Aging and the Life Course. In R. Binstock & L. George (Eds.), *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences* (6th ed.) (pp. 3-19). San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.

Sokolovsky, J. 2009. Ethnic Elders and the limits of family support in globalizing world. In J. Sokolovsky (Ed.), *The cultural context of aging: Worldwide perspectives* (3rd ed.) (pp. 289-301). Praeger: Westport, CT.

Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. 1998. Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Terrazas, A. 2008. Indian Immigrants in the United States. File retrieved on October 15, 2009 from

http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?id=687#1.

Treas, J. & Mazumdar, S. 2004. Kinkeeping and caregiving: Contributions of older people in immigrant families. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies.* 35/1, 105-122.

Treas. J. 2008. Transnational Older Adults and their Families. *Family relations* 57, 468-78.

Treas, J., & Batalova, J. 2007 Older immigrants. In K. W. Schaie & P. Uhlenberg (Eds.), *Older persons* (pp. 1-24). New York: Springer Publishing Company.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2008. Retrieved September 1, 2009 from

http://www.census.gov/PressRelease/www/releases/archives/population/011910.html.

Usita, P.M. 2007. Parent-child ties of culturally diverse aging families. In B.S. Trask & R.R. Hamon (Eds.), *Cultural diversity and families: Expanding perspective*s. (pp. 154-69). Sage: London and New Delhi.

Uttal, L. 2009. The Impact of Latino Immigrants and bicultural program coordinators on organizational philosophy and values: A case study of Organization responsiveness. In R.L. Dalla, J. Defrain, J. Johnson, D.A. Abbott (Eds.), *Strengths and challenges of new immigrant families: Implications for research, education, policy and service*. (pp. 393-410).Lexington Books. Lanham, MD.

Warren, C.A.B. & Tracy X.K. 2005. *Discovering qualitative methods: Field research, interviews, and analysis.* Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Xie, X & X,Y. 2009. Co- residence in Chinese immigrant families. In R.L. Dalla, J. Defrain, J. Johnson, D.A. Abbott (Eds.), *Strengths and challenges of new immigrant families: Implications for research, education, policy and service*. (pp. 309-325). Lexington Books: Lanham, MD.

Yeh, K. H., & Olwen, B. 2003. A test of the dual filial piety model Filial piety. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*. 6, 21- 228.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW WITH

AN OLDER IMMIGRANT FROM INDIA

Cover Sheet

Date _____

Participant ID _____ Start time _____

Student ID_____ End time _____

INTRODUCTON

I am interviewing older adults who have migrated from India to the United States to live with their adult children in the Atlanta area. My main goal is to learn about their experiences when they relocate to a new place, like America. I am interested in learning about their family, their relationships with their family members, their friend and other social networks.

Before we start, I have a letter that outlines the study and, if you agree to participate, what your rights are and what you can expect to happen. It also lets you know that everything you tell me is completely confidential and your names will never be used.

What you tell me is important and I would like to remember everything. With your permission, I will tape record our conversation.

SECTION I: PERSONAL AND FAMILY HISTORY

1) Can you please tell me when and where you were born? What did you do in India? How many siblings you have?
2) What was life like before you to the U.S.?
3) Can you please tell me when and how you came to the U.S.?
4) Why did you come to the U.S and how this decision was made?
5) How did you feel about moving to the U.S.?
6) Please describe a typical day for you

   Probes: what is your favorite part of the day, least favorite part of the day, different days of the week which day you like the most? What do you do in a day? Anything that you miss that you used to do in India? How do you spend any free time that you might have? Who do you see in a day and how do you communicate: with email or phone somebody?
7) Can you please tell me about your family in the U.S.?

   Probes: where and with whom do you live? Are you children married? Are there spouses/partners Indians or non-Indians? Are any family members or extended family members living in the U.S. or in Atlanta? How often do you visit them or they visit you?
8) Please tell me about where you live?

   Probes: do you have your space, your own telephone, your computer? Where and how do you spend time once you are at home?

SECTION II: FAMILIAL AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

1) Can you please tell me about your interaction with your family in the U.S.?

   Probes: What would be a typical day with your child/and their partner like? What do you talk to your children? Do you offer some advice or do they seek your advice?

2) Do you have grandchildren? Are they born in the U.S.?

   Probes: If they have grandchildren, then ask what is a typical day with the grandchild, language of communication between them and the grandchild?

3) When you think of your grandkids, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?

4) How would you describe your relationship with them?

5) Can you please tell me if you have family in India?

   If yes, do you contact them or get in touch with them and how?

   Probes: do you pay yearly visits or call them? Do you use email or video conferencing?

6) Can you please tell me if you have any friends in India? Are you in regular touch with them?

   If yes, then how do you do that?

7) If you could change anything about daily life, what would you change?

SECTION III: INTERACTION WITH THE LOCAL CULTURE

1) Please tell me your thoughts on American culture.

   Probes: what are the things needed to be successful in America? Things that you like about American culture. Why do you like that? Things that you dislike about American culture? Why do you dislike that?

2) What, if any, similarities are there between the two cultures? If they say there is similarity, ask them what makes you say that? If they say there is dissimilarity between the two cultures, ask them what makes you say that?

   Probe: what do you find the most different?

3) Do you perceive any change in Indian culture? How? And if things changed, how do you see the difference?

4) Have you made friends in the U.S. and if yes, how do you contact them?

   Probe: Have you made association here? Please tell me more about your friends here: like their nationality, what do you do when you are together, where do you meet, do you go and eat out together, etc.

SECTION IV: GETTING OLD IN AMERICA

1) Let us talk as you grow older in the U.S., how do you view your old age?

   Probe: Do you think getting old in India is different from getting old in U.S.?

2) Why kinds of support do you need?

3) Are you getting the amount of support that you need?

   Probe: Thinking about your life and people in it, is there anything that you would change, like amount or type or source of support.

4) Researchers talk about filial piety, in which the parents are taken care of by the young family members, how it operates in your family.

   How it would have been different had you been in India?

5) Since you arrived in the U.S., please tell me how would you define any gains and losses?

   Probe: do you think a lot about India and what you left there?

SECTION V: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Marital Status
4. Language skills
5. Education
6. Occupation
7. Any health condition
8. Source of income
9. Income Range

SECTION VI: CONCLUSION

We have talked great deal about you, your family, your life both in India and the U.S., but now I wanted to give you a chance to add anything you might think might be important for me to know that we haven't talked about. Is there anything you would like to add?

If no --- thank you very much. Good bye.

If yes – discuss, and thank you very much. Good bye.