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Source: *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 853-883

Published by: The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4150964>

Accessed: 06/01/2009 11:43

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Voluntary Organizations, Social Capital, and the Social Incorporation of Asian Indian Immigrants in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex

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Abstract

This article addresses the organizational life of Asian-Indian immigrants in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. The analysis is framed in relation to the concept of social capital, and more specifically to differences between bonding and bridging social capital, and between ethnic social capital (embedded in ethnic associations) and cross-cultural social capital (embedded in mixed and more mainstream organizations). After a brief discussion of the growth of the Asian-Indian population in DFW, the article draws on examples of five different organizational forms—regional, religious, ethnic, pan-ethnic, and ethnic to mainstream—to explore how different forms of social capital are developed and deployed, as well as how nested hierarchies of identity are manifested and expressed. In the conclusion the article addresses the implications for our understanding of how dispersed immigrant populations in new suburban cities of immigration establish place through associations as well as what an analysis of these organizations contributes to ongoing debates about assimilation, incorporation, and the construction of community. [Asian-Indian, South Asia, Immigration, ethnicity, voluntary organizations, U.S.A.]

In this article I explore the organizational life of Asian-Indian immigrants in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. The concept of social capital, which refers to relationships that are developed that permit the pursuit of shared goals, is used to frame the analysis. Social capital is significant to any explanation of differential processes of immigrant incorporation (Aguilera and Massey 2003, Lauglo 2000, Portes 1998, Zhou and Bankston 1994). As Portes (2000) and others (Schuller, Baron, and Field 2000) have observed, social capital has two meanings in the theoretical literature, one emerging from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and James Coleman (1988) and the other from the work of Robert Putnam (1993). In the first case, social capital refers to the personal connections (networks) to which individuals or small groups have access and which they use to achieve certain ends. In the second case it is the community rather than the individual that is the unit of analysis.

While Portes criticizes much of the research that builds on the work of Putnam, calling it an “unmitigated celebration of community” (Portes 2000:10; see also Portes and Landolt 2000), there is, in my view, theoretical merit to this community-building dimension of social capital. Anthropologists have recently been reconsidering the concept of community (Amit 2002, Amit and Rapport 2002). Central to these reconsiderations are questions such as how people work toward effecting the continued existence of community (as a place-making process) in a deterritorialized world of movement and how community is related to both social networks and identity politics. Organizations are essential to community. They are, as Greenbaum (2002:7,8) has suggested, the “institutional underpinnings of group identity....[They] locate ethnicity and serve as vessels for husbanding capital.”

Central to my discussion are the bonding and bridging dimensions of social capital. Bonding social capital, “brings together people who are like one another in important respects (ethnicity, age, gender, social class, and so on), whereas bridging social capital refers to social networks that bring together people who are unlike one another” (Putnam and Goss 2002:11). Warren, Thompson and Saegert (2001) emphasize, that bonding capital characterizes a closed circle built on close-knit networks, while bridging social capital connects individuals and the groups to which they belong to a wider circle. Clearly both these dimensions of capital are always at play. No circle is totally closed because individuals operate within nested hierarchies of identity that allow them to locate themselves in different communities at different times. Nevertheless, in some institutional contexts the bonds of similarity might be made more salient, while in others the bridges across differences receive

greater emphasis. It is also possible to argue that some immigrant populations may have high bonding social capital but low bridging social capital while others may have high or low levels of both. These differences, which are often dependent on the human capital (level of education, ability to speak the language of the receiving society), are important in assessing the process by which different immigrant groups balance integration with the 'mainstream' host society and cultural distinctiveness.

My analysis is further informed by a distinction that Jacobs, Phalet and Swyngedouw (2004), building on the work of Fennema and Tillie (1999), have made between ethnic social capital (embedded in ethnic associations) and cross-cultural social capital (embedded in mixed and more mainstream organizations). Ethnic social capital, they argue, is drawn upon to build communities while cross-cultural social capital is invoked to achieve economic and political ends. The conceptual distinction between these two forms of social capital is also too sharply drawn. Mixed and mainstream organizations are also building communities, but at a different level of identification (i.e. communities themselves are nested). But the distinction does help us to begin to understand the 'Asian' immigrant population in the United States, a population that is often lumped together by surveys and the US census but which is characterized by marked nationality, cultural, religious, and linguistic differences.

Recently observers have posed the question of why the rapidly growing Asian population in the United States has less political clout than the Hispanic population (Armas 2004). One explanation is certainly the diversity subsumed by the category Asian—it encompasses people from South Asia (Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, Nepalese), Southeast Asia (Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Thais) and North Asia (Chinese, Japanese, Koreans). If these immigrants are to act together to achieve political ends (for example, electing an Indian- or a Chinese-origin individual to a local school board or to a State Legislature), they must bridge the cross-cultural differences and create new bonds based on a broader 'Asian' ethnic identity and unified 'Asian' voice. Arguably, they must also reach out to non-Asian, "mainstream" America. They can do this in the context of organizations where social capital is developed and then deployed.

The article begins with a brief discussion of the growth of the Asian Indian immigrant population in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area (henceforth referred to as DFW). The next section draws on case studies of several organizations that have emerged in this community. It is here that I employ the conceptual distinctions outlined above as a heuristic device to direct attention to

differences between those organizations that are primarily built upon common ties to bond subgroups within the broader community; those that primarily bridge across the lines of division within the Indian community in an effort to create a pan-Indian identity; and those that primarily serve to forge connections between the Indian community on the one hand, and other Asian communities or mainstream American society on the other. I return to some of the theoretical implications in the conclusion.¹

The Growth of the Indian Immigrant Population in the DFW Region

In 1980, Asian Indians were listed for the first time as a separate group in the US census and 387, 223 were counted. By 1990 the number of Asian Indians in the US had doubled to 815, 447 and by 2000 the number of individuals in the US self-identifying as being of Asian Indian ancestry had risen to 1.7 million.² The growth of the Asian Indian population in the DFW metroplex has followed these national trends. A small number arrived in the early 1960s to work at the nuclear plant at Comanche Peak and in other scientific or technical fields at local universities or with local companies such as Texas Instruments and Collins Radio. They were generally step-migrants who had spent some time elsewhere in the United States, often as students.

The population of Asian Indians in the metroplex began to expand in the 1970s as hi-tech industries developed. In Dallas County, Asian Indians settled in Richardson, a near-in northern suburb of Dallas with, at least at the time, a very strong public school system. But it was only after 1980, and particularly after 1990, that the population really expanded. Table 1 presents the number of foreign-born Asian Indians in the DFW SMSA/PMSA between 1980 and 2000 and for the four counties of the DFW metroplex in 1990 and 2000. The population more than doubled during each decade. Simultaneous with this rapid increase the population moved north from Richardson to Collin County, particularly Plano and west toward Irving (still in Dallas County but close to the border with Tarrant County). They also increased significantly in more suburban Denton County.

The growth and dispersion of this community was simultaneous with the dramatic boom in the telecommunications corridor to the north of the city of Dallas where the headquarters of companies such as Nortel, Alcatel, SBC, and Erikson are located, and to a lesser extent to the west toward Fort Worth as companies like Nokia and Verizon built headquarters along highway 114 in

Irving, Texas. In the 1990s many Asian Indians moved to the area on H1B (temporary work) visas or on F1 (student) visas that were then converted to H1B visas. Some of these individuals have since become legal permanent residents. Others, after the bust of 2001, have returned to India.

TABLE 1: Foreign-born Asian Indians by County and Major Cities, DFW Metroplex 1980-2000

R E G I O N	1980*	1990	% change 1980-1990	2000	% change 1990-2000
Collin County		703		5,753	718%
Dallas County		6,408		16,030	150%
Denton County		758		2,911	284%
Tarrant County		2,478		5,336	115%
TOTAL		10,347		30,030	190%
City of Dallas		2,256		5,339	137%
City of Fort Worth		646		1,417	119%
DFW SMSA/PMSA	5006	12,660	153%	42,852	238%

*In 1980 the total figure is for the entire SMSA. There are no figures at the county level for Asian Indians in particular. Rather Asians and Pacific Islanders are grouped together

Asian Indians are residentially dispersed throughout the metroplex. While generally well-educated (Asian Indians have the highest median income of any group in the United States), Asian Indians are very diverse. They speak a range of regional languages (for example, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Konkani, Malayalam, Marathi, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu), and they adhere to a host of religious traditions (Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity of various sorts). Many of them also arrive in the United States with solid English-language skills, with a cosmopolitan experience, and with familiarity with a democratic form of government. Given these characteristics, it is not surprising that Asian Indians in DFW, like Asian Indians in some other cities of the United States (Khandelwal 2002, Rangaswamy 2000) have built a wealth of organizations. These organizations bring individuals together in contexts where their identities as Americans, Asians, South Asians, Indians, Gujaratis or Bengalis, Muslims, Christians, or Hindus can be expressed, and where ethnic and/or cross-cultural social capital can be developed and deployed to build community and to achieve certain cultural, social, or political ends.

Voluntary Organizations in the DFW Indian Community

It is difficult to offer a complete list of the organizations that have emerged from and that serve the Indian population in the DFW area. Some are certainly more active than others and there is no single place where they are all listed and no list that is kept up-to-date. One such list is the “Directory of Organizations” in *Bharati Magazine*, the monthly publication of the India Association of North Texas (see discussion below). Over 80 are listed. The majority are religious or regional organizations, but the list also includes an Indian Classical Musical Circle, the Indians Lions Club, various charity organizations, and some professional organizations such as the Indian Nurses Association or the Association for Alumni of the India Institute of Technology. On a website called Ek-Nazar that serves as a bulletin board for the DFW Indian community (see Brettell 2005), close to 100 organizations are listed. These too are categorized according to type (cultural/regional, devotional, professional, social, spiritual, sports) with a few listed under more than one category.

Bonded by Region, Religion, and Nationality

REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The organizations that primarily nurture the development and deployment of bonding social capital are religious and regional, reflecting the diversity that Indians themselves describe as a fundamental characteristic of their culture. Among the more important regional associations are the Kerala Association of Texas, the Telugu Association of North Texas, the Bengali Association of Greater DFW, the Punjabi Cultural Society, the Gujarati Association, and GEMS (Goans, East Indians and Mangaloreans of Texas). These organizations have similar structures—they are all run on a volunteer basis with a Board of Directors elected by the membership. They charge a nominal fee for membership (\$20-\$25 annually). Generally they have a major banquet each year as well as a summer picnic, both of which bring people together from across the metroplex and sometimes from smaller towns in North Texas. Some have programs for senior citizens (largely elderly parents brought to the US by their children) who find it harder to connect in the United States than in India because of the dispersed patterns of settlement and the absence of good public transportation. Most have programs for children, including essay contexts, spelling bees, dance classes, language classes, and summer camps. As the President of the Punjabi Association put it, these activities are to halt “radical Americanization. Children who attend these programs and other events discover that their parents are not

the only parents who want them to learn about their culture.” Some of these organizations also sponsor charitable events—blood drives, for example, and on occasion they raise funds for charitable programs in India. Many of them have a regular publication and virtually all of them now have websites. Their missions are very similar—to promote the culture of the particular region and to provide ‘fellowship.’

When interviewed about their participation in these regional associations, Indian immigrants responded in two primary ways—for the social contacts and for the cultural exposure for their children. Above all else, these regional associations are, to borrow from Robert Bellah (1985), communities of memory—they give people a sense of place and familiarity, and help to reaffirm their localized cultural identity, which may include a caste identity. One 40 year-old male informant from Karnataka, speaking about the Kannada Association, put it this way:

“This is my primary social group—people who come from the same region and speak my language. You want to get together with people of your same background because they share your culture...If you are of the same caste then you know a lot about people already and you can start with one another at a different place than if they are just strangers. You know what they eat, what they are like, it is easy to communicate. You can come to a city and not know anyone so you seek out these organizations to build up a group of friends whom you understand. In 2-3 months time through this organization we know 20-30 families very well. It makes you feel at home.”

Clearly for this individual, and for others who are active in these regional associations, the primary goal, and one that is important to social incorporation as an immigrant, is to develop a close network of people of similar cultural background with whom one can interact on a regular basis and whom one can trust as one would trust one’s own family or people one had known for some time. This element of trust has often been described as a key component of social capital (Schuller, Baron, and Field 2000).

Regional associations are often networked into nationwide umbrella associations (for example, of all the Gujarati Associations in the US or all the Kerala Associations in the US) that hold annual or biannual meetings in different cities around the country where as many as 5000 families (all from the same region of India but from different parts of the US) might gather. One informant described the benefits of this national network in the following way:

“This is a good way to start looking for potential spouses for your children because the people are from the same background. People can come to know families better and spot families with say a son who is five years older than your daughter and then you can keep up with them and with what the son is doing and you can build confidence. At these meetings there is a booth for matchmaking where you can leave all your information and exchange data. Doing this in India is so much easier because everyone knows everyone. If you want to find out about the family of a particular boy you can ask the grocery fellow or the servant. They all know things and they will tell you—say that the boy has another girlfriend. It is easy to become informed. But in the United States you are often working in a vacuum because neighbors do not know one another. There are not the kind of powerful connections that exist in India so it is much harder to get information.”

Both the informants quoted above point to something vitally important about the uprooting that characterizes the migrant experience. Regional associations help to reestablish roots which, in India, have had much more time to take hold. Regional associations are among the most powerful mechanisms by which individuals maintain attachments to their place of origin—not India per se, but their state and their language. It is through these organizations that parents can foster the transnational ties for children who might not otherwise have a connection to the culture of their homeland. And it is through such associations that parents can conduct the kind of intelligence-gathering vital to arranged marriages.³ In other words, rituals, traditions, a new set of close and trusted friends who might substitute for the extended family left behind, and spouses for one’s children are the capital that result from membership in these organizations. Religious organizations serve some of the same rooting and bonding purposes, but based upon a different and broader dimension of identity.

RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS: THE DFW HINDU TEMPLE

The Indian immigrant community in DFW is composed of Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Zorastrians, and some smaller religious communities. When interviewed about why they participate in these religious communities, Indians of whatever religious background say that these organizations are important because they facilitate the spiritual and religious education of their children and reinforce the cultural traditions that are associated with religious

belief and practice. Some of the religious institutions also offer language classes in which parents enroll their children. The comments of this forty-year-old father were typical:

We want to expose our children to their culture so that they will not miss any of it and then blame us later for not teaching them; but it will be up to them as to whether they follow it or not. We also like to go to the temple because it makes us feel like they are still in India. There is a large crowd on festival days. We feel that we have things in common with others; it has a psychological effect. You feel you are not missing anything.

Many Indians also commented on the role of religious organizations in community building. This comment emerged in particular in discussions of the construction of the DFW Hindu Temple. Recently several social scientists have published essays on the role of Hindu temples in the emerging Indian communities in the cities of the United States (Jacob and Thakur 2000, Kurien 2002, Lessinger 1995, Levitt 2000, Waghorne 1999). These temples find themselves fostering a different kind of culture in the United States, bonding Indian Hindus together by bridging the differences across the Indian subcontinent based on regionally-based Hindu traditions. The story of the DFW Hindu Temple is one that fully illustrates this trend.⁴

In 1979 members of the Indian community in Dallas began to discuss building a temple. They realized that they had a social organization in the India Association of North Texas, but no religious organization other than the Hare Krishna Temple, which was devoted solely to the worship of Krishna. Their idea was to found a temple where all deities could be worshiped. This decision was made in recognition of the fact that different people from different regions and with different personal gods, different rituals, and different spiritual needs were moving to the area. They needed an “umbrella” temple. As one founder put it, “This was a radical idea—normally you would have a temple dedicated to a single god with a small icon in it.”

A group of Indian community leaders decided to purchase land in Plano, north of the city of Dallas with the idea of building a permanent temple there. Once this plan, including a groundbreaking, was made public, the Indian community met with opposition from local people who had some idea that they worshipped snakes. There was a local referendum based on zoning and the plans for the temple were stopped. But since there were other churches on opposite corners of the proposed site for the Hindu temple, it was quite appar-

ent that this was not a zoning issue. Rather, the Indians felt that there was prejudice against them and some of them, particularly the women who would be spending time alone at the temple, became afraid. Some of the leaders were also threatened and eventually a decision was taken to sell the land back to the individuals from whom they had purchased it and look for another location. When the sellers refused to buy the land back, the Indian community leaders who had spearheaded the project resolved to take their case to court. With the help of a group of Jewish lawyers who worked pro bono, they filed suit and the judge ruled in their favor. The land was sold back and community leaders began to look elsewhere for a place to construct their temple.

A new site in Irving, Texas (west of the city of Dallas) that was convenient to both Dallas and Fort Worth was identified. According to one of the founders, the mayor of Irving was very welcoming. While the temple was being built, people in the community worshipped in the old house that was on the site, converting the living and dining rooms into prayer rooms. In 1991 the new temple building, Ekta Mandir (*ekta*, tellingly, means unity), was inaugurated and since then a cultural center has been added to the compound. One of the original founders described a multi-phased plan. The first phase involved buying the land and building the original temple. The second phase involved the construction of the cultural hall. The third was the extension for the school and the decorations to the facade that would make the temple “look more Indian” (work on this phase was carried out in 2003-2004). The fourth phase will involve building priests quarters and the fifth will be a residence for old people that will include a health clinic that can serve the entire Irving population, not just Indians. This founding member, a physician himself, observed that opening up the clinic to a broader population would be a way for Asian Indians to engage in broader community service.

The current temple houses eleven deities in the main hall and four other deities in an annex. Before the temple was opened there was a good deal of discussion about what deity to put in the center. Founding members went back and forth in terms of their favorite deity and then finally someone suggested Lakshmi-the goddess of wealth. About this decision, one of the founders said: “No one criticized that. How could you criticize that? You would have disfavor in relation to wealth.” It seemed to make sense to a group of people who had left their homeland to come to the United States in search of more opportunity for themselves and their children.

A number of interviewees commented on the multiple Gods in the temple and how different this is from temples in India.

“In India there are different gods that people pray to in different regions and in different languages. Here they all have to get together in one place so the temple has to cater to all people across all regions. They have no other choice. It has to be an umbrella for everyone. It is more generic than in India although now in India with so much internal movement it is changing and there are broader temples in the city that cater to more diversity.”

A new pan-Indian Hindu identity is being constructed in the United States that coexists with the regional identities that are strong in the homeland and expressed in the regional associations discussed above.⁵ One of the founders noted that what has happened is that people who come to the DFW temple learn about the gods of their compatriots from other regions and they learn about particular festivals celebrated in other regions of their country. He commented, for example, on the annual celebration of a northwestern Indian festival that features the Garba, a circular dance with sticks.

“Everyone comes here because they like to dance. So they learn it and they come together. They are picking up different regional traditions as a result of the mixing that goes on in the immigrant context.”

Another interviewee, a 52 year-old female, had this to say:

“In India temples were built by the kings for the people. Here it is the people who have built it. There things are stricter; here it is not so strict. There, there are different forms of worship and different rituals in different regions of India; here everything is brought together so we have learned about different festivities—what the Gujaratis celebrate that is not celebrated by people from the south. We are exposed to more here.”⁶

While the founders of the temple were motivated primarily by the desire to have a place where their children could learn about the Hindu religion, the DFW Temple has also become a community center, fulfilling social as well as spiritual needs. The temple sponsors programs for the entire DFW Hindu population (for example an annual Diwali—Indian New Year—celebration) and various regional associations use the cultural hall for their own festivals. People attend on Sundays not only for prayer, but also to see their friends. Thus one interviewee commented:

“People participate in activities, and the temple organizes them, to bring people together and create a sense of society. Back home, temples do not work like this.”

In short, the DFW Hindu temple is a place for a large segment of the residentially-dispersed Indian immigrant population to gather at least once a week and share a common Hindu identity that transcends the regional religious diversity brought from India. It offers an additional level of social incorporation that may or may not overlap with that provided by a regional association. But the goals are the same for both types of organizations—promoting the maintenance of cultural traditions, and developing social contacts and community with people of similar (in this case Hindu) background.

AN ETHNIC ASSOCIATION: THE INDIA ASSOCIATION OF NORTH TEXAS

While the DFW Hindu Temple bridges the diversity within Hinduism that characterizes the Indian immigrant community in Dallas, the most important secular organization that unifies Indians as Indians, no matter what their regional or religious background, is the India Association of North Texas.

In 1962 a group of Indian students in the DFW area who were joined by a handful of professionals, founded the association. They promoted cultural events and hosted various visiting dignitaries. Their focus was on pan-Indian events such as the celebration of India Republic Day and India Independence Day. In 1976 the organization was incorporated with not-for-profit [501(c)(3)] status and became affiliated with the National Federation of Indian-American Associations. IANT has a fifteen member Board of Directors, twelve elected annually by the general body and three of them nominated by the council of delegates of associate member organizations.

Over the years the organization has put other programs in place—a monthly health clinic run by volunteer physicians; consular services run in collaboration with the consulate general of India in Houston; a senior citizens group that sponsors social events; a women’s forum to promote the interests of women of Indian origin in the US; a social services forum operated by a team of professional social workers to provide confidential counseling and referrals to individuals and families; and a youth forum that sponsors programs for that group. In addition the organization raises money for and helps charities in India, and continues to sponsor the Anand Bazaar, an annual event celebrating India’s Independence Day that takes place at the local race track and brings more than 20,000 Indians together. IANT publishes a month-

ly magazine and broadcasts a radio program every Saturday morning for two hours. Finally, IANT sponsors India Nite every January on the Saturday closest to Republic Day. India Nite is a dance festival where children of all ages perform. In recent years there have been between forty and fifty different dance groups performing. Various dignitaries are invited and introduced. One year Congressman Frank Pallone, the founder of the India Caucus in the US House, attended. Board members are introduced. Sponsors are prominent.

IANT is self-consciously an apolitical umbrella organization for the entire community. The mission is “to serve as an organization that brings together all people of Indian origin in North Texas. IANT will strive to promote India’s rich heritage and cultural diversity, and help people of Indian origin become a part of mainstream America. IANT will also strive to serve the North Texas community at large, regardless of the person’s national origin, race, creed, color, or any other characteristic.” In this spirit, the four Past Presidents have been Muslim, South Indian Hindu, Sikh, and North Indian Hindu. The IANT sees itself as the face of the community to mainstream American society (as a kind of organizational broker) and officials in DFW seem to respond accordingly, contacting this organization when there are inquiries about India, local Indian families, and Indian traditions. One 39 year-old male interviewee stressed this as the reason to explain his own involvement:

“I wanted to be involved with an organization that the mainstream would respect—so they will think of Indians as good citizens who make a contribution to society.”

A woman in her mid 50s who, with her husband, is actively involved made the following comment about the organization and its significance to the community

“There should always be an organization like the IANT that brings together all the different ethnic groups of India who are abroad. On the executive committee there are people representing the different states. They do a lot of good things for the community. People’s elderly parents come to the US and they need help with information on where to go, how to pass the time.... The IANT provides venues where people can meet and speak their own language. They have picnics and dinners and the free medical care and the consular service and the fundraisers for natural calamities and such. What they do is also important for the children to learn their culture. At India Nite every child who participates

gets a trophy. That is a big motivator. Their spirits are raised high. They had 350 trophies last year.”

IANT serves as a training ground for community leaders and many of these individuals have remained actively involved for years, giving their time quite generously.⁷ Indeed, some informants observed that this organization provides opportunities for people here that they might not have in India because of their education or background. In other words, people without advanced degrees or who are not of high caste can hold offices and serve as community leaders, something that they might not be able to do in their local communities in India. Individuals who are active in this organization often move on to become active in other civic organizations, a phenomenon that supports Fennema’s (2004:442) broader observation that overlapping organizational (and board) memberships “create a network of interlocking directorates that in itself is an indication of the amount of social capital of the ethnic community.”

The India Association also offers exposure and social contacts for businessmen in the community; indeed, an organization like IANT depends on the business community for its success and longevity since these individuals help to sponsor community events. Many of the individuals who are deeply involved in the activities of IANT talk about one another as if they were family. They have forged powerful bonds of friendship and these are the people they call on when they might call on kin at home. One such individual talked about his own involvement over the years.

“When I first joined there were maybe 300 people who came to the one annual event, the Anand Bazaar.... I would get on the radio and encourage people to come.... What could be more important than celebrating the freedom of their country? I would also tell them that we are in America and America allows us to observe the independence of India. It is a great country and we should support it by recognizing the spirit of freedom.... I would say that some of them have their parents visiting and that their parents were probably there at the time of liberation and they would know first hand what it was like to gain their freedom and so they should be brought to the bazaar.... It is important to have events so that people do not lose their roots. It gives them a chance to see other Indians-to see how big the community is. It is so hard for Indians who live in places with only small numbers of people to have this sense.”

In 2004 IANT sponsored several meetings for all the Asian Indian organizations in the area—to discuss common issues and problems. At one of these meetings the current President mentioned that for certain issues it was important to operate with one voice and that the IANT could do this for all the organizations in the area. He also encouraged the organizations to maintain their membership, noting that the first question that many donors ask is “how many members do you have.” Among current supporters of the association are Texas Instruments, which donates to the youth and women’s forums, and NY Life, which supports the social services program. In addition to the heads of various Indian associations, three Hispanics representing the Student Intake Center of the Dallas Independent School District, and a Chinese man representing the DFW Asian Citizens Council also attended. Their presence clearly demonstrates the consciousness with which the leaders of the Indian community in DFW, as represented here by IANT, are reaching out to and building social capital with other communities with which they interact and to venues (the schools) where they want to have an impact. Indeed, at this meeting it was the Chinese man who stood up to make an impassioned plea for Asians to work together to “enhance our image in the mainstream. We need to show that we are not just here to help ourselves,” he said, “but also to help the mainstream. We need to work to gain visibility.” This comment drew applause.

Emphasis on the bridging and bonding dimensions of social capital is appropriate to an analysis of how any immigrant community builds an infrastructure, but it is particularly significant to an understanding of the Asian Indian community. Indeed where this distinction has been used to analyze Indian society itself it has been noted that associations can bridge the cleavages between Hindus and Muslims that occasionally flare up in the home country. The India Association of North Texas has constructed a “culture of encompassment” (Baumann 1996:116), and by doing so it is able to put forward a unified voice that expresses the collective interests of the entire Indian immigrant population in the DFW metroplex rather than the interests of a single regional, linguistic, or religious group. This is an important achievement that enhances the social capital of this community in North Texas. Research among Indian immigrant populations in some other US cities describes difficulties in creating such cooperation (Agarwal 1991). It is difficult to offer a complete explanation as to why this difference exists. It is certainly possible that the smaller size of the Indian population in DFW (by com-

parison with Los Angeles, New York, or Chicago), and its selectivity (a larger proportion with advanced degrees working in education, medical, and high-tech fields) facilitate cooperation and collaboration.⁸

Bridging Organizations: Being South Asian, Asian, or American

Asian Indians organizations in DFW that primarily facilitate the development of bridging social capital are equally varied. Some of them serve as bridges to broader South Asian or Asian-American society; still others serves as bridges to what is referred to as the “mainstream”; and still others serve as bridges back to India.⁹

BRINGING SOUTH ASIANS TOGETHER: FUNASIA, A PROFIT-MAKING ORGANIZATION

A group of individuals in the DFW South Asian community had been discussing for some time the need for a center where they could hold community events and show Bollywood movies.¹⁰ They conceived of it as a model project—a showcase for their culture built on partnership. Forty founding directors, many of them involved in other organizations in the area, each made a symbolic financial commitment of \$1000. The goal was to assemble credible representatives from every segment of the community—Hindus, Bahai, Muslim, Pakistanis, political organizations, religious organizations, etc. Out of this group of founding directors, a steering committee was formed which had the task of finding a site for the project. They identified a property (an old movie theater) on Beltline Road west of central Expressway in Richardson just north of Dallas—a well-located site in relation to the major settlement patterns of the South Asian population—and raised the capital necessary to carry out the necessary renovations. These renovations included the construction of three movie theaters (deliberately and symbolically named Anthony, Akbar, and Amer after a well-known movie about three brothers who are separated at birth, brought up in different religious traditions—Christian, Muslim, and Hindu—and then reunited later in life), a banquet hall, a restaurant (that serves North Indian cuisine), and a disco club (named *gungaroo* for the ankle bracelet on a dancing girl that makes noise when she dances). In the main foyer there is a concession stand (that serves South Indian *dosas* and *chaat*) and some tables and chairs.

A Pakistani physician took a leave of absence from his practice to become the CEO; his brother, a CPA, took responsibility for the financial end; and a Sikh immigrant was hired as Operations Manager. According to the CEO, the

project really got started after 9/11. Indeed he described the impact of this event on his own decision to become involved.

“Until 9/11 I had been living in the future, tomorrow was always tomorrow. We will get to things tomorrow. And then all those people were killed and you realize that tomorrow may not come so it is important to do things today. So I took a year off from Parkland [Hospital] and my brother took a year off from being a CPA and we devoted ourselves to this project.”

The bridging goals of this organization both within the South Asian community but also beyond it are apparent in the strategic planning that took place. The parent company is called Circle Asia, clearly a symbolic title that underscores the embracing actions of the initiative. According to the CEO, the mission statement includes three elements.

“First, the center would be a “silk road,” introducing South Asian culture to the mainstream. Second it would be a safe and shiny place for the younger generation. South Asians are concerned about their children. They put restrictions on them and then the kids ask where they can go. FunAsia would be a safe place where they could bring their friends and introduce them to their culture... And third it would be a place to bring the community together regardless of religion, race or national background. It would be a place where the differences would be eliminated so that the South Asians could focus on their commonalities. They could all be part of one picture and understand their shared South Asian culture.”

While this comment indicates that FunAsia fulfills some of the same cultural needs as other organizations discussed here, the effort to create a South Asian identity as well as to reach out to and build an understanding of the culture of South Asia among other communities is something new.

When FunAsia opened in December of 2002 the goal was to break even within a year. However within the first quarter the facility started to make money and the profits were reinvested on improvements that included the addition of a stage to the middle theater, and audio systems to all three theaters—all with the goal of sponsoring more corporate events.¹¹ The CEO hired a prominent female member of the Indian community to work on corporate bookings that extend out beyond the South Asian community. Since opening

they have hosted functions for Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, and Christians, but also for Hispanics (there is a Mexican chef in the restaurant) and African Americans. They have hosted an Afghan concert, Palestinian, Persian, and Korean film festivals, and a public broadcasting (PBS) event. Congressman Pete Sessions has spoken at the facility, as has the Pakistani ambassador. In the spring of 2005 FunAsia hosted a meeting of various immigrant communities that were involved in raising funds for the international tsunami effort as well as a meeting of Dallas International, an umbrella organization for all immigrant communities in the DFW area. The facility is also open to private events—weddings, *quinceañeras*, *diwali*, sweet sixteen and graduation parties. The rates are very competitive with local hotels.

When asked about the rapid success of FunAsia, the CEO commented on the DFW context and the nature of the South Asian community in this particular city.

“Compared to Chicago, New York, and even Houston, the Dallas South Asian immigrant community is smaller and better educated and this makes a difference in terms of getting along and working together. We can rise above issues of conflict and discrimination. There is less prejudice here.... The South Asians in New York and Chicago are often there because others brought them, but the people who have come to Dallas are here because a job brought them—it is a movement by choice rather than movement by invitation. If you have education, money and a job you moved here. This makes a big difference. There are no Pakistanis driving cabs here. In other communities that are larger there are already smaller nuclei and more polarization so it would be hard to bring the entire community together around one place.”

Clearly, and as alluded to earlier, the context of DFW, by comparison with much larger cities of immigration (New York, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles) may be extremely significant in facilitating the development and deployment of cross-cultural social capital such as that which has emerged in an organization such as FunAsia.¹²

BRIDGING THE ASIAN COMMUNITY: THE GREATER DALLAS ASIAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

While FunAsia aims to bridge the South Asian community, the mission of other organizations is to bridge Asian American populations who come from different regions of Asia. The best example is the Greater Dallas Asian American

Chamber of Commerce (GDAACC), which was founded in 1986 out of something called the Asian American Voters Coalition, an organization whose mission was to increase political participation in the Asian community by encouraging those with green cards to become citizens and by encouraging those who were citizens to vote. The founders of the GDAACC had the idea that by banding together across different Asian groups they would have more impact on the political system. From this starting point the organization moved from a primarily political mission to a primarily economic mission, spurred by a move in 1995 to the Harry Hines/Royal Lane area in Dallas where an Asian Trade District was being developed.¹³ Today the GDAACC boasts on its website of being the largest Asian Chamber of Commerce in the US.

The mission of the GDAACC is 1) to promote business within the Asian American community by providing a place where people can network among themselves and expand their business connections; and 2) to introduce Asian American business into the mainstream. The Chamber has been fairly successful. Between 1995 and 1998/9 they did not want to deal with minority certification—that is eligibility for contracts and opportunities by virtue of being certified as a capable minority-owned enterprise. The Asian attitude, according to the current Executive Director who is of Japanese heritage, was “we do not need any help, any extra push, we can do it on our own.” But he pushed for this certification because it meant not only access to government contracts but also some private sector jobs. The Executive Director of the Greater Dallas Asian American Chamber reported that his biggest hurdle was to change the attitude of Asian business people in the area “who did not believe in crutches.” He observed that more entrepreneurs now view this certification as an advantage because it provides new business opportunities—“it opens up a universe and can make them competitive and give them an edge.”

The GDAACC serves as a point of contact between the mainstream and Asian businesses. According to the Executive Director, majority companies come to the Chamber seeking to identify more Asian suppliers. He said that outsiders like the quality of the work and the product that they get from Asian business. The AARP has called the GDAACC for help in reaching senior citizens in the Asian community. The American Cancer Society wanted to form an Asian American Advisory Board and called for contacts. The GDAACC has even brokered for other chambers. The Executive Director commented that once the President of the Hispanic Chamber called him on behalf of some of his members, Latino tenants at the Harry Hines Bazaar who were having trouble

with the Korean owner. But, despite this role, the Chamber does not refer to itself as an umbrella organization.

“Each community has its own social organization. We respect that. If we called ourselves the umbrella organization we would have the various communities saying—who put you in charge. We never voted for you or to have you speak for us, we speak for ourselves. The “umbrella role” is an outside perception and even though we act as a kind of broker to the communities from the outside world, we are careful about how we describe ourselves to the various Asian communities. We respect the right of other chambers, like the Indo American Chamber, to exist.”

The GDAACC has eight paid employees, a Board of Directors and an Executive Committee. The Chair-Elect of the Board of Directors has rotated from one national group to the next although national origin is not the only factor in the choice, according to the Executive Director. In the past few years they have had Filipino, Korean, Chinese and Indian chairs. The membership, about 1100, is largely business people and it reflects the composition of the Asian community in the DFW area. The biggest groups are Indians, Chinese, Koreans and Filipinos. According to the Executive Director, the Vietnamese, despite their size in the DFW area, are not as active. He described the Vietnamese as being more interested in doing business within their own community rather than reaching out to trans-Asian networks and even mainstream networks. Thus, he said, they do not see the value of the Chamber.

Fifty percent of the members are corporate while the rest are entrepreneurs of Asian background looking for ways to expand their customer base by reaching out beyond their own communities. Most of these entrepreneurs are in service businesses—printers, computer supplies, import/export people, environmental companies, graphics companies, public relations companies.

The meetings are conducted in English although there are pockets of people who converse in their own languages. People coalesce along ethnic lines but also on business lines. Some people join because the leaders in their communities tell them to join. Sometimes they stick with it and some after a few years ask themselves if their \$100 membership fee is worth it. The programs offered by GDAACC are informational and contact-driven. On one occasion, for example, a meeting was held to introduce members to new people at City Hall; on another they invited members of city government to talk about mass transit plans; on a third the organization invited speakers to address changes

in social security or on retirement programs. The Chamber also supports a microbusiness loan program by extending loans of between \$10,000 and \$75,000 for expansion, purchase of capital equipment, to start a second location, etc. The GDAACC has no bank underwriter but rather a million-dollar line of credit from Chase bank. The bank cannot loan any money if someone's credit rating is problematic but the GDAACC can. According to the Executive Director, the GDAACC puts more weight on the letters of reference than on other criteria. "It is a kind of character loan aimed at propping up Asian businesses in the area."

Finally, the Chamber recently started a Leadership Development program to reach out to the second generation to teach them how to lead their communities. Among the topics addressed as part of this program are being Asian American, Asian-American stereotypes, being engaged in politics, etc. Sessions that expose members of the second generation to mainstream CEOs, multinational companies, the city manager, etc., are also part of the program. According to the Executive Director the aim is to move young people away from thinking they have to become this or that because their parents want them to and to ask themselves what they want to do and also what they want to do in the community. "We are interested," he said, "in developing future civic, business and political leaders."

Those Indian immigrants who are members of the Greater Dallas Asian American Chamber seem to see both the benefits and the shortcomings of the organization. Said one interview respondent, "This organization is important because it tries to make sure that Asian business has a fair shake in this area and they support trade missions." But another had more negative observations that suggest the difficulties and challenges of moving beyond the 'minority' pigeon-holing.

"This organization is supposed to promote business and to merge Asian business with the mainstream but there is not much happening. It is more social and educational than anything else.... The mission should be to mainstream business. After all, the chamber is supported by companies like EDS (Electronic Data Systems), TI (Texas Instruments), AA (American Airlines). In a way they are too afraid to move forward with the mainstreaming."

This individual's observations suggest that while the GDAACC may have been successful in building bridges across the various Asian communities in DFW to

achieve certain economic ends, it has been less successful in deploying the capital that this has generated to achieve broader economic incorporation.

REACHING INTO THE MAINSTREAM: THE INDIAN AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP COUNCIL

Mainstreaming as a concept is in the air within the Indian community in DFW. It is manifested in the comment just cited; it is manifested in the theme of the 40th anniversary dinner of the India Association of North Texas which was “Merging for a Strong America”;¹⁴ and it is manifested in new organizations that are forming with a national reach and a reach into Washington. One such organization is the Indian American Friendship Council (IAFC), founded in California in 1990 by Dr. Krishna Reddy, but launching itself nationwide in March of 1996.¹⁵ The Texas chapter was established in Dallas in 2003, spear-headed by a past-president of the India Association of North Texas.

The logo of IAFC, which shows an arm draped in an American flag shaking the hand of an arm draped in an Indian flag, perfectly symbolizes the bridging and mainstreaming aims of the organization. This logo hung behind the stage at the first annual awards banquet of the Texas State Chapter of IAFC, which took place in January of 2004. The title of the evening was “Connecting the Communities—Making a Difference.” A number of local dignitaries including Congressman Eddie Bernice Johnson, the mayors of various local communities in the DFW area (several of whom have become members of the local chapter of IAFC), and the Acting Dallas Police Chief were present. The President of the Texas State Chapter opened the evening by invoking those present to become “aggressive” in entering mainstream politics. He mentioned local efforts to persuade various members of the US Congress to join the India Caucus, a growing political entity that nurtures the relationship between India and the United States. At the end of his introductory remarks he called for a moment of silence to recognize a soldier named Singh who had died in Iraq.

This was followed by several opening activities that clearly symbolized the mainstreaming goals of the organization and the blending of identities. A color guard of the Long Horn Council of the Boy Scouts of America (all of them Anglos) was called forward, one carrying the American flag and the other the Indian. After the color guard, the scout asked everyone to stand for the pledge of allegiance. Then a young woman was invited up to sing both the US and the Indian national anthems. The next activity was the lamp-lighting ceremony, a customary ritual at Indian gatherings. Several of the invited dignitaries were asked to come to the stage to do the honors.

The hostess for the evening, an Indian woman who works for the local public television station, not only talked about the mainstreaming goal of IAFC but also about its goals to foster excellence. IAFC, she said, is “proud of the bonds that it has constructed and the feeling of mutualism. The pledge of allegiance echoes the Council’s mission to create one family under the US flag.” Indeed, she noted that IAFC also stands for “integrity, amity, friendship and cooperation.” She commented that she was proud to say that she was born in India but that America had nurtured her. Among the speakers that the hostess introduced that night were New Jersey State Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula (who said that when people have trouble with his name he tells them to think about Chevy and Cola) and Swati Dandekar, an Indian-born member of the Iowa House Representatives.

The Texas Chapter of IAFC is one of the newest organizations in the area, but it reflects the growing political aspirations of the local population, and of the Indian immigrant population nationwide. Indeed IAFC boasts on its website that it is the “premier organization in establishing grass-root political involvement of Indian Americans throughout the country” and that one of its express aims is to “build the visibility of the Indian American community in Washington.” These political goals were made even more apparent at the annual banquet in the spring of 2005 when the theme was “Democracy leads to freedom, and freedom leads to opportunity.” Two more Asian Indians who were successfully working in state legislatures were invited to speak—South Carolina State Representative Nikki Randhawa Haley and Democratic State Senator from Minnesota Satveer Chaudhary who amused the audience when he spoke about his surprise win against an opponent named Skip Carlson (clearly someone with deep Minnesota roots). The bridging to the mainstream mission of this organization was perhaps best represented by the choice of the emcee for the evening—Jamie Story, Miss Texas 2004. But it was equally apparent in the honoring (with checks for \$1000 each) of two mainstream organizations, Meals on Wheels and the Girl Scouts.

CONCLUSION

In this article I have discussed various organizational spaces constructed by the residentially-dispersed Asian Indian immigrant population in one urban metropolitan area in the United States. In these organizations different kinds of social relationships, or social capital, are developed and husbanded to pursue different shared goals—the retention of cultural traditions, the creation

of community and a unified voice, the expansion of business opportunities, or the development of a greater political voice within mainstream America. All these organizations offer fields of belonging, interaction, and communication and some individuals participate in several of them.

Some organizations reinforce pre-existing identities, thereby sustaining the regional and cultural diversity that already exists among Asian Indians. Others organizations offer a context in which new identities, constructed out of the heterogeneity of the Indian, South Asian, or Asian immigrant populations, can be forged by deploying different forms of social capital. In her study of Asian pan-ethnicity Yen Le Espiritu (1992:3) begins by noting that “most studies of ethnicity have focused on the maintenance of ethnic boundaries and intergroup conflict.” However, among both Latinos and Asians in the US today pan-ethnic institutions such as some of those described here are being created to realize specific economic and political ends that pertain particularly to the immigrant context. Pan-ethnicity can yield competitive advantage because it fosters a unified voice and creates effective community capital. Asian Indians in DFW have thus sometimes put aside localized regional or religious differences to create and/or participate in pan-Hindu, pan-Indian, pan South Asian, and pan-Asian organizations. Finally I have discussed organizations that serve primarily as points of articulation, helping to bridge the Asian Indian population to the US mainstream. In these organizations, participants can be both Indian and American, they can develop social and political relationships with both Indians and Americans, and they can promote both Indian and American causes.

The study of such organizations raises a host of broader theoretical issues pertinent to anthropology in general, and to immigration and urban research in particular. Recently, Nicholas Harney (2002:43) has called for more attention to be paid “to the reterritorialization and materialization of identity and culture.” He suggests that the new emphasis in scholarship on fluidity and movement has been “at the expense of analyzing the constitution of identities through locally-specific physical spaces.” Voluntary organizations such as those discussed here are one such site of place-making and identity construction based on networks of both horizontal and vertical relations (Fennema 2004). They are not only important as localities where members of residentially dispersed populations can gather and act together, they also provide an arena wherein first-generation parents can impart a transnational and transcultural commitment to their children. If second generation immigrants do not return to their parents homeland, particularly as time

passes, it is in associational spaces such as those discussed here that they will continue to foster their own dual identities as well as those of their own children—the so-called third generation.

Equally, the study of immigrant organizations can engage the continuing debates on assimilation or social incorporation (Alba and Nee 1999, Portes and Zhou 1994). In her work on ethnic associations among Greek, Turkish and Italian immigrants in West Germany, Schoeneberg (1985:419) argues that “whether ethnic associations have a predominantly segregative or integrative effect will depend in large measure on basic orientations and activities they offer to their members and on the position they take to the rest of society. Depending on whether they essentially direct their organizational efforts toward the preservations of traditions and the defense of their culture of origin from the influences of the new culture, or whether they make it possible or even necessary for their members to relate to members of the host society, ethnic associations will have social consequences for the assimilation of their individual members.” The organizations within the Indian community in DFW demonstrate various ways in which immigrants can draw on different dimensions of social capital (ethnic and cross-cultural, bonding and bridging) to express both their distinctiveness from and their affinities with the host society. But even when the main focus of an organization is on the preservation of culture, this is not necessarily perceived as antithetical to ‘assimilation’. One female informant, talking about the concerns that parents had about their children’s religious education that drove the construction of the DFW Hindu temple, noted that “Indians love to assimilate but at the same time they believe in maintaining strong roots. If your roots are strong you can go anywhere.” The panoply of organizations constructed by this particular immigrant population suggest a process of incorporation that is non-linear (i.e. not truly assimilative), multifaceted, and that expresses multiple and layered (or nested) identities.

Immigrant organizations are also spaces where civic skills can be developed; indeed, participants learn about American ways of organizing, including fund-raising, in these contexts. As the President of one organization observed,

“Indians have to learn about governance structures—everything is more informal in India.... They look at this country and they see the success that formal organizations have and they know it has been missing from their activities. They are influenced by how the US does things. They were not used to operating with Roberts Rules of Order and that really

strikes them. Indians are first struck by the formality of meetings. They think it means that Americans do not care about them. But after a while they learn also that Americans are respecting your time and you. They have to learn this. They come to see things differently.”

He went on to note that while many organizations do not charge membership fees Indians have come to learn that if you ask people to put down something, even nominal, it fosters commitment as well as an expectation of return.

Some of the individuals involved in these organizations, particularly the men, have become the ‘power elite’ of the community. In other words it is within these organizations that varying forms of incorporation—social, economic, political, cultural—can be identified. Incorporation involves gaining some sort of public recognition. This can happen in many ways—through good works, through visibility, through community strength, and through political power and influence. One male informant in his early 60s not only noted changes in the focus of immigrant organizations but also wondered what they might mean, down the road, for the second generation.

“The attitudes toward the absorption of immigrants has changed. When I came it was about being integrated. Now the emphasis is on the mosaic—a woven fabric of different cultures. The purpose of these organizations now is to teach the children about their own culture but also to teach them about a community consciousness. Even if they are native born they should know about their background. But, will these young people respect what their elders did? Will they be as concerned about the community and work to move it forward or will they become part of the melting pot?”

In a study of Asian Indians in Los Angeles, Agarwal (1991:73) describes a population that is not particularly united and not very politically active. She links these characteristics to a traditional Indian distaste for politics and volunteerism—“the average Indian feels a strong sense of responsibility toward his family, but not necessarily toward his community.” By contrast, the DFW Indian community is quite different; at least one segment demonstrates a powerful commitment to volunteerism and action and to promoting the voice of Asian Indians in the area and nationally. This is manifested in the organizations they have created. While I cannot offer a complete explanation of these differences, I have suggested, as have some of my informants, that certain selectivity factors

in the Dallas migration stream may be at play in addition to the smaller size of the immigrant population by comparison with other US cities. The differences underscore the importance of assessing the impact of the urban or regional context not only on institution-building in immigrant communities, but also to the process of immigrant incorporation more generally.

ENDNOTES

¹The data for this paper are drawn from 101 purposively sampled interviews within the Indian community, as well as semi-structured interviews with community leaders and with the Presidents of various organizations in the area. The research, which was conducted between 2001 and 2004, also included participant observation at organizational meetings and events, and an examination of various textual materials including websites. This research was part of a larger project on “Immigrants in a Suburban Metropolis” supported by the National Science Foundation (BCS 003938). Other investigators involved with this project are James F. Hollifield, Dennis Cordell, and Manuel Garcia y Griego. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

²As the number of South Asian immigrants has increased, so too has the literature discussing various aspects of their social, political and cultural incorporation. For example, Leonard (1997) offers a broad overview of South Asians in the US while Lessinger (1995) and Khandewal (2002) explore the development of the large Indian community that has settled in the New York area. Khandewal’s includes a final chapter on organizations, dividing them into pan-Indian, cultural, women’s, youth, and political organizations. An interesting book, written by a young South Asian journalist S. Mitra Kalita (2003) describes three quite different Indian families in New Jersey. Maira (2002) focuses in particular on youth culture among the second generation while George (2005) examines the gendered and class dimensions of migration from the state of Kerala in South India to California. Gibson (1988) describes the processes of Americanization and assimilation among Punjabi Sikhs in a rural California high school. Bacon (1996) and Rangaswamy (2000) explore assimilation and community formation among Indian-born parents and their children in the Chicago area. Both these authors also address the organizational life of Asian Indians in the city. A number of authors address the diasporic culture and transnational practices that have emerged among Indians in the US, as well as in other receiving societies (for example, Raj 2003, Shukla 2003, van der Veer 1995, Vertovec 2000).

³Marriages arranged by the immigrant parent generation for their American-born children are quite common in the United States although clearly there are cases of intergenerational conflict over this issue (see Khandewal 2002, Leonard 1997, Rangaswamy 2000). The classified sections of national-level Indian newspapers such as *India Abroad* (published in New York) and *India Tribune* (published in Chicago) are full of ads placed by parents seeking a spouse for a son or daughter. There are also websites (for example, www.matrimonials.com; www.shaadi.com; www.indianmatrimonials.com; and www.matrimonialsindia.com) where information can be placed both by parents abroad and by those in India. The last site has links to a series of individual regional specific sites.

⁴Space does not permit discussion of the host of other religious organizations in the metroplex that bond subgroups within the broad Indian population. Among these are the Jain, Sikh, and SwamiNarayan Temples, various mosques, and various Christian churches. In addition there is a very active Chinmaya Mission, a Sai Center (for people devoted to the

teachings of Satya Shri Sai Baba), a group of the Devotional Associates of Yogeshwar (founded in Dallas in 1985 with the purpose of teaching children about Hindu philosophy and the Hindu way of life), and Bal Gokulum.

⁵As this informant notes, changes are occurring in India as well and a pan-Indian identity is also emerging there, particularly as the population becomes more mobile.

⁶Although primarily a South Indian temple, a similar process of learning from one another has been described among those who are members of the largest Hindu Temple in Houston (Jacob and Thakur 2000).

⁷Kurien (2002) has suggested that pan Indian organizations like IANT have more male than female participants (in terms of active leadership roles). To some extent this is true in DFW—the majority of the individuals who have served on the Board and as President are men. But in 2003-04 there was a female President, a woman who is extremely active and very visible in the community.

⁸Kurien (2001) attributes the conflicts that exist between Muslims and Hindu Indian immigrants in Southern California to certain aspects of the regional context. She suggests for example that Indians in Southern California experience greater marginalization than in other areas of the US. A sizeable number are in the lower classes. They have also experienced more racism, connected, she argues, with the rise of the anti-immigrant movement in the region. It is also worth noting that the two organizations she discusses are national level organizations based in Southern California (in one case by virtue of the current president being a Southern Californian). This may also help to explain why they are less successful at unifying the community—the stage is a national and international stage. For further discussion of the significance of urban or regional context see Brettell (2003).

⁹Space does not permit discussion of an example of this latter type of organization.

¹⁰Prior to the opening of FunAsia the only public movie theater showing Bollywood movies was an old house in a strip mall in Irving operated by a South Indian. It is at a distance for those Indians living in North Dallas and many considered it a run-down and unattractive facility.

¹¹FunAsia has been so successful that it expanded in the spring of 2005 to two additional sites, one in Carrollton (a 6500-square-foot banquet facility) and the second in Irving (a 15,000-square-foot theater and 4,500 square feet of banquet and meeting space).

¹²For a discussion of the concept of city as context see Brettell (2003). This is a very complex issue that requires much more extensive and systematic comparative research.

¹³Despite the pan-Asian thrust, the majority of businesses in this area are Korean.

¹⁴While to some of us “merging” may be different from “mainstreaming” the email message that went out about this banquet contained the following sentences: “We, the Asian Indian American Community, recognize the need in establishing a strong bond with the mainstream and chose our banquet theme as “Merging for a Stronger America. We are inviting Mayors, Superintendents of ISDs and Chiefs of Police and Fire Departments of various Cities as guests to attend this one of a kind historic program.... We want to showcase our Indian community of successful people like you to the mainstream. Your presences makes a big difference.”

¹⁵The mission of IAFC (as stated on its website and in published material) is “to create political awareness among Indian Americans, and to maintain an ongoing dialogue with local, national and international policy makers, as well as to educate, encourage, and involve Asian Indian Americans with voter registrations, volunteerism, community service, and youth leadership training, better the ties between the USA and India, protect the interests of the Indian-American community, promote global democracy, and support developing countries.”

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