

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF:

Rupal Satra for the degree of
Masters of Arts in
Applied Anthropology presented
on April 14, 2011

Title: The Indian Diaspora: Situating Family Building Patterns in a Migrant Community

Abstract approved:

Sunil Khanna

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study is to ethnographically examine traditionally prescribed notions of sons and daughters in an Indian diasporic community located on Devon Avenue in Chicago. Informed by the association between “ideal” and “actual” family building patterns, this study situates reproductive behaviors and demographic outcomes in its local context examining preferences of family size, sex composition, and the persistence of son preference in this Indian migrant community. This study applies a mixed methods approach—quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection—in answering the following research questions: (1) What are the “desired” and “actual” family size and sex composition patterns among married Asian Indian couples? (2) Do migrant Asian Indian married couples express son preference—how and why? Study findings indicate that son preference continues to persist in this diasporic community revealing three overlapping themes related to the reorientation of kinship networks, the transnational nature of patriarchy, and the dynamic relationship between modernity and tradition.

Copyright by Rupal Satra
April 14, 2011
All Rights Reserved

The Indian Diaspora: Situating Family Building Patterns in a Migrant
Community

by
Rupal Satra

A THESIS

Submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Arts

Presented April 14, 2011
Commencement June 2011

Master of Arts thesis of Rupal Satra
presented on April 14, 2011

Approved:

Major Professor, representing Applied Anthropology

Chair of the Department of Anthropology

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes the release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Rupal Satra, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my major professor and advisor, Dr. Sunil Khanna for his unwavering mentorship and encouragement throughout my Master's program at Oregon State University. I cannot express my gratitude for the opportunities of academic and professional development that Dr. Khanna has given me as my graduate advisor. I also wish to thank my graduate committee members Drs. Melissa Cheyney, Chenhuei Chi, and Andrea Marks for their mentorship and support that they have provided during my thesis process and graduate school experience.

I am deeply thankful to my parents, Shanti and Hema Satra, for their unconditional love and support and encouragement that inspires my academic work and life's passion. I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues in the Anthropology department for their support and words of encouragement throughout this rigorous process—the relationships forged proved to be a motivational force that inspired not only my work, but made my experiences at Oregon State University unforgettable. I thank you!

Finally, I am forever indebted to my families whose narratives served as the foundation of my work. I am honored to have shared in your experiences and am deeply grateful to represent your stories and messages in my research. I sincerely thank you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE BACKGROUND & THEORY</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>CHAPTER 3: METHODS</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION</u>	<u>60</u>
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	<u>73</u>
<u>APPENDICES</u>	<u>78</u>

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figures:</u>	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1- Regional Distribution.....	31

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Tables:</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table 1- Generational Distribution among Married Couples.....	30
Table 2- Age Distribution among Married Couples.....	32
Table 3- Income-Education Demographic Profile.....	33
Table 4- Progeny Distribution: Desired versus Actual.....	41

LIST OF APPENDICES

<u>Appendix:</u>	<u>Page</u>
Appendix A- Eligibility Checklist.....	79
Appendix B- Oral Consent Form.....	80
Appendix C- Sample Interview Guide.....	83
Appendix D- Sample Questionnaire.....	85
Appendix E- Recruitment Aid.....	89

The Indian Diaspora: Situating Family Building Patterns in a Migrant
Community

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Sit down and take a load off because I am going to tell you my life story—growing up in a conservative Indian household with a mom and dad who idolize my older brother. Me and my brother were born here—he is two years older than me, but my parents treat him like a God—in fact, I think I’ve heard my mom actually refer to him as a God—disgusting. Anyway, I have been taught from childhood how I am supposed to behave as an Indian girl—I was expected to learn to cook and by that I mean cook a full Indian meal by the time I was thirteen. My brother has never stepped foot in the kitchen—my mom doesn’t even let him clear his own plate. I always had to help my mom clean and take care of the house and what not—my brother never had that expectation on him—he was only expected to do well in school. So was I of course, but I also had other expectations—being groomed to be a wife and mother. My brother never had a curfew, he was allowed to date—he pretty much had free reign. Me on the other hand, I had to become a master manipulator/liar, which I refer to as my coping strategy. I had a 10:00pm curfew, my parents would kill me if I dated any guy—Indian or not. I’ve experienced how my parents treat my brother and me differently and it was really hard—my brother saw it, but he never got involved—he always said “it’s cultural—you can’t change mom and dad”. I’ve tried to reason with them, but my parents are stuck in their ways. When I have kids—I want one son and one daughter because I think the balance is nice—brings a unique quality to the family to have a son or daughter, but I don’t believe in the age-old adage that sons bring any more value than daughters. The one thing that frustrates me more than anything is that my parents have been here for SO LONG—practically 30 years and yet they still follow these stupid cultural rules...”

~ Ami, 2nd generation

Study Purpose

Ami’s narrative embodies the purpose of this research study—an ethnographic inquiry into *how* and *why* traditionally prescribed notions of sons and daughters

diffuse across cultures as they are reinvented and reinterpreted in Indian communities abroad. Undeniably, migration in today's society is seen as the extension of national borders and the redefinition of individual and collective identities where cultural values and beliefs are contested, preserved, and reconstructed in response to the migration experience. This ethnographic research study examines the nature in which an Indian diasporic¹ community living in an urban residential cluster negotiates the desire to maintain an Indian identity through the preservation of traditional notions of sons and daughters, while simultaneously embracing an environment that provides improved opportunities of education, employment, and overall prosperity. Son preference has often been referred to as an intrinsic trait of Indian society giving the impression that the desire for sons is an archaic, cultural characteristic that is "unchanged" or "frozen in time" (Khanna, 1997; 2010). However, this study challenges such views as it explores the nature of son preference in a diasporic community contending that culturally prescribed notions of sons and daughters are dynamic and complex as Indian immigrant families negotiate tradition with their current reality.

A strong body of literature documents a positive correlation between attitudes toward ideal family size and demographic outcomes (Khanna, 2010; Penn, 2002). Informed by this association between "ideal" and "actual" family building patterns, this study situates reproductive behaviors and demographic outcomes in its local

¹ The term diaspora refers to the movement of people, irrespective of volition, from one or more nation states to another (Safran, 2004).

context examining preferences of family size, sex composition, and the persistence of son preference in an Indian diasporic community on Devon Avenue in Chicago.

Specifically, this study focuses on ethnographically exploring the following research questions:

1. What are the “desired” and “actual” family size and sex composition patterns among married Asian Indian couples?
2. Do migrant Asian Indian married couples express son preference?
 - a. What are the reasons for the expressed preference for sons?
 - b. What are the forms of the expressed preference for sons?
 - c. How does son preference influence family size and sex composition?

Given the sensitive nature of son preference, an ethnographic approach is best suited to examine the diffusion of cultural practices and the reconstruction of group identity in a migrant community as this method not only fosters the development of rapport and trust with members of the community, it also provides an emic perspective as to how long established cultural traditions interface with the local realities that community members encounter in their everyday lives (Khanna, 2010). As Khanna (2010) argues, spending time and developing rapport with community members is the only way to acquire a nuanced understanding of long established cultural traditions and to become familiar with the local realities that members encounter in their everyday lives. I applied a combination of participant observation, open-ended interviewing, household demographic surveys, migration history questionnaires, and

focus group interviews in developing a nuanced understanding as to the nature and extent of son preference in this migrant community.

Significance:

This ethnographic study contributes to an emic perspective on son preference in the Indian diasporic community – a phenomenon that has been reported exclusively by macro-level census data that uses a masculine sex ratio among Asian Indians in the US as a proxy indicator of preference for sons in this community. Specifically, it provides a more in-depth understanding of how son preference is manifested and what factors contribute to the overall disproportionate sex ratio. This study informs scholarly literature as it locates son preference within the larger socioeconomic context that underscores the consequences of son preference and gender inequalities as a means to achieve a desired family size and sex composition.

Academic inquiry examining the dynamics of diasporic communities has been criticized for being ahistorical and uncritical in nature, failing to address historical conditions that produce the embodied experience (Brazier, et al., 2003). The inherent design of the study aims to bridge this gap by situating the migrant lived-experiences within its historical roots as well as within the larger cultural setting of the host country. Results from this study not only challenge simplistic and reductionist modernization paradigms, but also suggest a need for more complex explanations of transnational migration. A nuanced understanding of transnational migration must contend that immigrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous ‘embeddedness’ in more than one society as they are no longer spatially bound or culturally

homogenized as people freely shift across borders and between different cultures and social systems (Appadurai, 1996; Schiller et al., 1995). This ethnographic study contributes to a large body of literature that underscores the persistence of son preference in Indian communities both at home and abroad as well as to research exploring the nature of migrant experiences in diasporic communities.

Chapter 2: Background Literature & Theory

“I came here with my three sisters when I was 14. My mother and father felts that we girls would not have a future growing up in India because of the strain of having daughters—you know, like dowry, boys, dating, pregnancies—things that could disgrace the family and ruin any prospects of a good match. So we came here thinking we would have an easier time because there are more opportunities for girls growing up in this country—you don’t have that social pressure like you do in India. At least this is what we all presumed and the reason we came here. I was the oldest of four—I had the responsibility to preserve our family name because if I screwed up it meant that I would ruin my sisters’ lives as well. I was expected to cook and clean and take care of the house in addition to doing well in school. I went to college, became a cosmetologist, and now I have my own business. I love my life, but if I had a chance to pick my ideal family, I would want only boys—girls are such a huge responsibility and I understand why my parents chose to leave India and come here, but the social pressure here is just as bad if not worse because girls can get into even more trouble here in the US because the culture is so different and so permissive of things that are not ok in our Indian culture like sex and drinking and things like that. Having a girl is a liability in the sense they can easily ruin a family’s name—you can’t tell if a boy gets a girl pregnant, but a girl pregnant—forget about a future. I love my daughter, but I am glad she has an older brother to watch out for her and make sure that she is ok and protected. I don’t know what I’m going to do when my daughter asks me if she can go out on a date—I let my son and I don’t want to hold double-standards, but I also don’t want my daughter dating until she is much older [laughing]”.

~ Deepa, 1st generation

This account demonstrates how traditional cultural beliefs and practices are preserved outside their country of origin as it represents a means by which Indian immigrants preserve their group identity. The following section provides a theoretical perspective on the relationship between cultural diffusion and migration, and also

locating the practice of son preference within its context 'at home' and abroad.

Migration and Cultural Transmission:

There has been a renewed interest in scholarly work that examines the movement of people across national borders and the subsequent process of cultural diffusion that reflects the transformations in how time and space are experienced and represented by migrating and host communities (Appadurai, 1996; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, Schiller, 1995). The desire to understand how cultural practices and group identity are reconstructed in a migrant community requires ethnographic inquiry into the nature of locality as a lived experience in a globalized, deterritorialized world (Appadurai, 1996). Given the sensitive nature of son preference, an ethnographic approach is best suited to examine the diffusion of cultural practices and the reconstruction of group identity in a migrant community as this method fosters the development of rapport and trust with members of the community (Khanna, 2010). As Khanna (2010) argues, spending time and developing rapport with community members is the only way to acquire a nuanced understanding of long established cultural traditions and to become familiar with the local realities that members encounter in their everyday lives. The purpose of this study is to examine how an Indian migrant community preserves and reproduces traditional cultural beliefs and practices in a new sociocultural environment. In today's globalizing society, migration is seen as an extension of national borders and the redefinition of a group's identity where religion, customs, rituals, and culture are reconstructed and often reinvented as migrants rely on innovative methods to construct identity, claim history

and rights, assert themselves in public spaces, forge kinship and social relations, and reinforce their 'authenticity' (Das Gupta et al., 2010).

Re-defining the Indian Diaspora:

Diaspora communities were originally classified as minority ethnic groups that were forced from their homeland (Tambiah, 2000). William Safran (1991) exoticizes diasporic communities by describing them the communities as expatriates who maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their homeland; a continued desire to return to their country of origin; an active loyalty and support toward their homeland; and the preservation of a collective identity.

More recent studies, however, have redefined diaspora in what James Clifford refers to as a "traveling term" that incorporates a more fluid and universal subtext in today's globalizing world (Clifford, 1997; Tambiah, 2000). Diaspora more appropriately refers to the movement of people, irrespective of volition, from one or more nation states to another (Safran, 2004,). This reconceptualized notion of diaspora more accurately describes the migration patterns of Indian immigrants particularly those in the US as this population migrated in search of economic and educational opportunities as opposed to other diaspora populations who fled their homeland for political reasons (Bubinas, 2005; Rangaswamy, 2005).

History of Migration Policy for Indian Immigrants:

The 1965 Immigration Reform Act accomplished two major feats facilitating the first wave of Indian immigration to the US. First, the Act abolished the National Origins Quota law limiting immigration from Southern and Western Europe as well as

Asian nations (Rangaswamy, 2000). Second, the resolution dissolved the Barred Zone Act of 1917, which prohibited the immigration of Indians to the United States (Rangaswamy, 2000). With the passage of the Immigration Reform Act ensued a record number of skilled Indian immigrants to the US. Illinois, specifically Chicago, became a magnet for educated Indians as it provided employment opportunities and economic stability in high-technological companies (Ashutosh, 2008). The US Immigration Services conducted a classification survey in 1975 in which 93 percent of Indian immigrants were categorized as “professional/technical” workers or “spouse/children of professional/technical” workers (Rangaswamy, 2000). Indian Immigrants in Chicago did not reflect the socioeconomic archetype of other ethnic minority populations in urban locations. Rather, Indians monopolized professional and managerial positions in science, medicine, engineering, commerce, and real estate in addition to claiming the highest household median income compared to other ethnic minority groups (Rangaswamy, 2000).

Some researchers argue that Indian immigrants are simply *en route* toward modernization (citation). Classical studies exploring the relationship between migration and culture often rely on the modernization paradigm to explain social phenomenon. Grounded in Western ideologies of civilization, this explanatory model operates under the assumption that civil society progresses from industrialization toward urbanization and ultimately, to technological advancements where the underlying assumption presumes these values will inevitably and naturally take root in all modernizing societies (Tambiah, 2000). Moreover, this paradigm assumes that

migrants adopt the social norms and practices of a host country and shed traditional ties to their homeland as immigrants become homogenized, or “melt” into the social melting-pot that constitutes the dominant culture (Bhatia, 2004, McCartney et al. 2007). However, this paradigm consequently establishes a generalized, and often essentializing, account of the migrant experience as it fails to address the diversity of experiences within a migrant community and the extent to which immigrants acculturate and adapt to their host cultures.

Recent studies have reevaluated the relationship between migration and cultural transmission to examine not only the physical movement of people across borders, but also this so-called ‘sociocultural baggage’ which encompasses a predefined social identity, religious beliefs and practices, predefined norms and values that govern family and kinship, and language (Jayaram, 2004). As such, immigrants intuitively interpret their cultural histories in ways that engender symbolic meanings that, in turn, structure their kinship norms and behaviors in their new environment (Foner, 1997). The Indian diaspora in Chicago has arguably achieved social and economic success compared to other ethnic minority communities (Rangaswamy, 2000). However, the ubiquitous classification of diaspora to all ethnic groups no longer captures the nature of their migration, the degree of cultural diffusion, or the extent to which these communities maintain connections to their homeland (Rangaswamy, 2000, Safran, 2004).

The Transmigrant Indian:

Today's society is demarcated by shifting cultures that permeate geographical and political barriers intensifying the creation of diverse diaspora populations as they resettle in many locations and engage in complex interpersonal and intercultural relationships with both the host society and their society of origin (Tambiah, 2000; Walton-Roberts 2004). As such, migrant communities that preserve social, economic, and political ties to their country of origin have been reclassified as diaspora populations having transnational relations, or simply, transnational migrants (Safran, 2004; Tambiah, 2000). This dynamic relationship between host- and home- land redefines how traditional cultural practices are maintained and reproduced as migrant communities reinvent their group identity in a new environment.

Transnational migration is the nature in which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their homeland with their host land (Schiller et al., 1995). Scholars emphasize the ongoing and continuing ways that immigrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous 'embeddedness' in more than one society (Schiller et al., 1995). From this perspective, transnational migrants are not "uprooted" persons, but rather, people freely shifting across borders and between different cultures and social systems. As Appadurai's (1996) argues, migrant groups are no longer spatially bound or culturally homogenized, but are rather deterritorialized in which traditional concepts of group identity as it relates to cultural reproduction in their host land must be reevaluated beyond models of assimilation and acculturation (Appadurai, 1996; Ashutosh, 2008). Changing the social, territorial, and

cultural production of a group's identity also reconfigures traditionally held cultural beliefs and practices (Appadurai, 1996), in what Ferguson and Gupta (1992) argue, are recreated on this imagined 'memory of place'.

Devon Street- "Little India"

Indian migrant communities exemplify one of the most transnational groups in "behavior and outlook"—a salient characteristic that is visible in the development and establishment of Devon (Ashutosh, 2008). Situated on the north side of Chicago, the ethnic enclave of Indian immigrants represents a "home away from home" where they can live among people of their own ethnicity, caste, and religion while experiencing the unfamiliarity of a new environment (Rangaswamy, 2000). This "residential clustering" allows families to recreate several residential and community characteristics that often mimic their traditional cultural environment that establish new alliances and strengthening existing ties with their ethnic roots (Khanna, 2009).

The area of Devon is home to a myriad of consumer shops catering to the local Indian population. These include grocery stores, restaurants, jewelry shops, clothing stores, and other Indian boutiques that exclusively sell Indian merchandise. Devon's thriving business district serves as a nexus point for Indians emigrating from India as it echoes a nostalgic sentiment of home. The aroma of Indian spices, storefronts adorned with Indian garments exploding with color, and posters of the latest Bollywood movies suggest the repositioning of Indian culture into an urban setting in the United States (Ashutosh, 2008).

Devon has become a testament to this imagined memory of place as it is the

site where Indian American identity is reterritorialized as “Indian Place” through the experience of a community that shares a common migration history as well as social and cultural practices all of which are rooted in a common Indian homeland (Bubinas, 2005). Most importantly, Devon represents the link between host and homeland—where Indian immigrants reproduce traditional practices through both the memory of India as well as through the experiences of migration and the creation of transnational relations (Ashutosh, 2008).

Situating Son Preference in its Local Context:

Scholars are in accordance that we must first understand the historical and local context of migrant communities to capture the immigrant experience and explain how cultural traditions are maintained and reproduced in a new social setting (Rangaswamy, 2000). It is therefore important to situate son preference in its cultural, social, historical, and ideological context in order to understand *why* and *how* it is manifested in Indian communities abroad (Sagar, 2007).

Reproductive decision-making involves a combination of personal preferences coupled with socio-cultural factors that are predominantly influenced by kinship structures and societal norms (Casique, 2006; Hirsch, 2008; Hirsch et al., 2003; Hirsch et al., 2002; Szasz, 2003). Northern and northwestern Indian communities have historically been characterized in terms of a strong preference for sons, its patrilocal rules of inheritance, patrilineal patterns of family name and assets as well as marriage customs and practices, and limited participation of women in education and income-generating activities (Khanna, 2009). The term *son preference* refers to the attitude

and values attributed to sons, in which culturally established norms and practices favor sons as compared to daughters (Clark, 2000). Son preference constitutes one of the strongest and most salient manifestations of gender inequality and patriarchal ideologies² that are deeply rooted in the social fabric of Indian society (Khanna, 2007; Pande & Astone, 2007). The overwhelming desire for sons is also indicative of the low status of women in Indian society, a characteristic common in patrilocal³ and patrilineal⁴ communities (Dasgupta, 2000; Arokiasamy, 2002). This patriarchal kinship system reinforces pervasive gender inequalities as it highlights the social power and cultural worth that sons are endowed with while denigrating the value of women (Kishore, 1993). The strong desire for sons is a cultural phenomenon that is visibly evident particularly in these regions where census records indicate a significantly masculine sex ratio⁵ partially explained by the rigid sexual division of labor as well as highly differentiated gender roles (Khanna, 2010).

Scholarly work has generally focused on economic determinants to explain son preference as a social phenomenon while minimizing non-economic factors that are rooted in Indian culture as well as social, economic, and political processes (Khanna,

² Patriarchy or patriarchal ideologies refer to the collection of social institutions that deny women the opportunity to be self-supporting and self-sustainable thereby making them dependent on male relatives for survival, and that otherwise favor men in the intrafamilial allocation of resources and power (Malhotra & Kishor, 1995).

³ Patrilocal refers to residential dwelling where women leave their maternal family and reside with husband and his family.

⁴ Patrilineal refers to the transferring of family name and assets through the male line (as opposed through the matriline)

⁵ Sex ratio refers to the male-to-female ratio

2010; Sagar 2007). Furthermore, research on son preference and daughter devaluation suggests that Indian families perceive sons to be economic and social assets and daughters to be liabilities and burdensome (Arnold et al., 1998; Malhotra & Kishor, 1995; Khanna, 2010; Patel, 2007).

Gender inequality is the result of historical social practices based on perceived value and worth of women versus men and the strong development of beliefs and practices that are institutionalized throughout Indian society (Maternowska, 2009). As an economic utility, the birth of a son is perceived as an opportunity for upward mobility while the birth of a daughter is believed to be a regression in economic mobility of the household and family (Arnold et al., 1998; Patel, 2007). Historically, “the woman’s place is in her home” where women’s contribution to the family unit and to society remains within the domain of domestic responsibilities reinforcing this notion that women are non-productive members of a household (Sagar, 2007). Women’s lack of participation in income-generating activities gives them less bargaining and decision-making power in the household and by extension, within society (Gill & Kahn, 2009). However, as Patel (2007) points out, it is with the birth of a son that defines and ascends a mother’s position in the household giving her greater negotiation and decision-making power.

In addition to limited participation in income-generating activities, the institutionalized practice of dowry and wedding expectations reinforces the low status of women in society as daughters represent an economic burden (Arnold et al., 1998; Gill & Kahn, 2009; Patel, 2007). In the Indian context, a dowry is a collection of gifts

given to the daughter by the parents and other natal relatives at the time of the wedding (Khanna, 2010). These “gifts” symbolize the social and economic status of the daughter’s natal family as well as a lucrative opportunity for the son and natal his family (Khanna, 2010).

Fertility patterns and family building strategies are strongly related to gender inequality, specifically the way in which inequality is embedded in a society's kinship structure (Malhotra & Kishor, 1995). The social utility of sons is grounded in patriarchal institutions that establish norms and social rules that favor males as it relates to the allocation of material goods, rights, opportunities, and obligations (Malhotra & Schuler, 2005; Pande & Astone, 2007). Son preference and daughter devaluation is generally associated with patrilineal kinship structures in which systems of descent, marriage, and inheritance reinforce the subordinate position of women while inherently touting the social dominance of men (Gill & Kahn, 2009). Marriage is a key feature of a patriarchal kinship structure as it defines status and access to resources within a family unit as well as the family's social ties outside (Malhotra & Kishor, 1995). Sons provide support to the parents both before and after marriage whereas daughters move on to the husband’s family after marriage (patrilocality) providing little economic and emotional support to her natal family (Arokiasam, 2002). Sons symbolize the source of social and economic security for the parents in that they provide financial support as well as security for parents in illness or old age; they also bring in considerable wealth through marriage dowries in addition to bringing in a wife and daughter-in-law who becomes vital in the production and

reproduction of the household (Arnold et al., 1998; Khanna, 1997; Khanna 2010). In Hindu tradition, sons are also needed for the cremation of deceased parents and to ensure the salvation of their parents' souls (Arnold et al.,1998; Arokiasamy, 2002). The inherent design of this patriarchal kinship structure places a cultural burden on households intensifying the desire for sons and disfavor for daughters (Gill & Kahn, 2009).

Son Preference Abroad- Traditions and Diaspora

Indian immigrants migrate along with their cultural traditions and beliefs that continue to have a powerful influence in shaping their values and behavioral patterns as they resettle in a new socio-cultural setting (Foner, 1997). Son preference constitutes a complex phenomenon that is entrenched in the social fabric of Indian society (Obermeyer & Cardenas, 1997). Scholarly work has generally focused on son preference "at home". However, only a few studies examine son preference among Indian migrant communities, and how the migration or diasporic experience impacts culturally prescribed preference for sons and family size/composition among migrant Asian Indians.

Although macro-level census records indicate a disproportionate sex ratio among Asian Indians in the US, there is a lack in ethnographic inquiry that explores *why* and *how* this cultural phenomenon exists among Indian diasporic communities. Supporting evidence from Canada and the UK point to the persistence of son preference in Indian migrant communities suggesting that established cultural practices continue to exist despite opposition to the host country's societal norms and

values (Gill & Kahn, 2009). The existing masculine sex ratio among Indian migrant communities is too rapid and pronounced to be correlated with biological or environment causal factors (Dubuc & Coleman, 2007), suggesting that the desire for sons is located in a social and cultural explanation.

As Foner (1997) points out, immigrants bring with them their own cultural traditions, norms, and belief systems that, although, are not reproduced in the same manner as in their country of origin, they continue to maintain a powerful influence in shaping values, norms, and behaviors in a new cultural and social context. Therefore, examining desired family size and sex composition and the contributing factors that influences the 'stated' desire underscores potential relationships between son preference and actual family size and sex composition (Khanna, 2009). Studying attitudes towards ideal family size and sex composition lends itself to a broader, more nuanced, understanding of how ideals translate into actual patterns of fertility (Penn & Lambert, 2002). Moreover, Indian diasporic communities in Canada and the UK have shown how cultural traditions and beliefs, such as son preference, are often reinforced, rather than challenged through the process of migration and resettlement, in which migrant communities often seek to maintain their cultural integrity in a host country as a means to preserve their ethnic identity (Dywer, 2000).

Chapter 3- Methods

“Living in Devon made moving to the US much easier for my family and me—it was like we never left home. My kids were able to learn about our culture as they saw it all around them all the time—language, traditions and customs, respect for elders, you know...things like that. You have to be careful about who you let your kids play with otherwise they will get into bad things like smoking, drinking, and dating. Growing up around our own people will teach them what we learned as kids growing up back in India—that is what the kids here miss growing up in the states. American kids don’t have respect for their parents—they just do what they want and then send them off to [a] nursing home. That’s not our culture; we take care of our parents and respect them, and we learn this all by seeing it in [our] culture and that is [how] it grows inside. It is very important.”

~ Raj, 1st generation

In these words, a 42 year old immigrant from India and a resident of the city of Chicago described the acculturation experience of his children.

Research Site:

I conducted ethnographic research in an area locally referred to as “Little India” or simply “Devon” located on Devon Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. For data collection, I focused on Indian families living between two large cross-sections on Devon Avenue—California and Western Avenue—also recognized as the Honorary Mahatma Gandhi Way.

Situated on the north side of Chicago, the ethnic enclave of Indian immigrants represents a “home away from home” where they can live among people of their own ethnicity, caste, and religion while experiencing the unfamiliarity of a new environment (Rangaswamy, 2000). This “residential clustering” allows families to

recreate several residential and community characteristics that often mimic their traditional cultural environment that establish new alliances and strengthening existing ties with their ethnic roots (Khanna, 2009).

The area of Devon is home to a myriad of consumer shops catering to the local Indian population. These include grocery stores, restaurants, jewelry shops, clothing stores, and other Indian boutiques that exclusively sell Indian merchandise. Devon's thriving business district serves as a nexus point for Indians emigrating from India as it echoes a nostalgic sentiment of home. The aroma of Indian spices, storefronts adorned with Indian garments exploding with color, and posters of the latest Bollywood movies suggest the repositioning of Indian culture into an urban setting in the United States (Ashutosh, 2008).

Methodology:

For my study, I adopted a mixed methods⁶ approach to examine the intersection of migration and culture in the context of fertility practices and behavior in an Indian diasporic community. As Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2008) argue, research has moved beyond quantitative *versus* qualitative methods of data collection to a third, pluralistic, paradigm that embraces the strengths of both research methods while minimizing the weakness of a single-technique approach. My research design used a combination of open- and closed- ended questionnaires and surveys as well as

⁶ Mixed methods research is formally defined in this article as the third research paradigm where the researcher combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2008).

open-ended, in-depth interviews to examine fertility practices within this international migrant community. This eclectic approach to data collection allows for both tools of data collection to inform one another thereby maximizing data accuracy and ensuring for study reliability and validity (Bernard, 2006, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2008).

Sampling Technique:

The study sample consists of north and west Indian married couples who are first or second generation⁷ US residents. The sample selection criteria are based on currently scholarly literature that suggests similar fertility patterns in northern and western communities in India as well as on US Census records that survey Indian migration patterns in the US. To ensure for heterogeneity of the sample size, participants were recruited using a combination of purposive and respondent-driven sampling techniques (Bernard, 2006). I identified and recruited participants through multiples avenues including several local businesses in Devon that cater to a high volume of north and west Indian customers as well as previous social connections that I have as a Chicago resident. Furthermore, the sample size (n=48) was designed to be representative of the north and west Indian demographic distribution in Devon and to ensure for theoretical saturation⁸.

Participant Observation & Recruitment:

The first phase of my study involved participant observation and subject

⁷ For the purpose of this study, first generation is defined as those who immigrated to the US and second generation as those who were born in the US.

⁸ The point at which you are no longer discovering new categories or relations among categories (Bernard, 2006)

recruitment in which I situated myself in the community as both a member of the community and as an observer. I participated in local community functions such as weddings and religious ceremonies; I also dined at local restaurants and shopped at Indian boutique stores. This strategy allowed me to establish my role as a researcher, develop a rapport with community members, and become an instrument of data collection and analysis using my own experiences and interactions—experiential knowledge—in my research (Bernard, 2006).

I recruited subject simultaneously through study announcements or through dissemination of IRB approved recruitment material (Appendix E) that was displayed by local storeowners. Fifteen potential subjects contacted me either by phone or email expressing interest in participating in the study. Seven subjects actually qualified to participate based on the selection criteria. I used an IRB approved eligibility screening questionnaire (Appendix A) to determine study eligibility. The remaining thirteen subjects were primarily recruited through respondent-driven methods or through my pre-established social connections within the community. Participants who expressed interest and qualified to participate underwent consenting procedures using an IRB approved oral consent form (Appendix B). I conducted the informed consent process in a private location chosen by the subjects, usually their home, to ensure participant's comfort and anonymity. During the recruitment process, I noticed a polarizing pattern of responses from potential informants. While some couples would either convey extreme enthusiasm and support to participate, others would express trepidation in the prospect of divulging private or sensitive information that

could potentially damage their reputation in the community. More men than women were inclined to participate in the study. However, if a husband had refused to participate in the study, the wife could not counter her decision. This suggests that the decision-making power continues to remain within the husband's domain—a characteristic generally associated with India's patriarchal family system.

Following informed consent, I began scheduling interviews based on a time a location convenient to my informants. Whenever possible, I scheduled separate appointments with each individual based on his/her availability to facilitate each spouse's schedule. However, I remained sensitive to the existing gender hierarchies and decision-making processes within the family unit, and therefore, allowed respondents to choose if they wanted to be interviewed separately or as a couple (Khanna, 2009).

Structured and Semi-Structured Interviews:

Several of my informants chose to proceed with the interview immediately upon completing consenting procedures. Although many of my informants adhered to our agreed upon meeting, there were several cases of missed appointments and last-minute cancellations. I attempted to reschedule any missed/cancelled interviews with subjects, and was successful with the majority of my participants, but I did lose a fair number (how many) to follow-up.

I conducted 48 interviews over a six-month period in which each interview lasted on average for up to 40 minutes. I used a digital voice recorder in conjunction with note-taking during my interviews; however, some of my informants were

apprehensive about using a digital voice recorder at which time I reverted to handwritten notes only. The interviews consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions administered in consecutive order. The quantitative section included questions focusing on migration history and household demographic information (Appendices D). These data collection instruments were informed by and developed based upon current scholarly literature that examines fertility patterns in India and in Indian diasporic communities in the UK and Canada as well as by my own experiential knowledge as a second generation Indian. I used a self-designed interview guide (Appendix C) for semi-structured interviews. The questions were open-ended allowing respondents to freely discuss their opinions and feelings related to family building processes and strategies. Applying both structured and semi-structured methods of data collection allowed me to collect and compare all sources of information and clarify any discrepancies and/or ambiguities that emerged in informants' responses.

Although I conducted 48 interviews, I reached theoretical saturation after seven interviews in which no new themes or concepts emerged thereafter indicating that I had reached a conceptual saturation (Bernard, 2006). This is not to say, however, that each of my interviews produced the exact same data; rather, each interview captured various subtleties and nuances that provide a greater understanding of how migration influences cultural beliefs and practices as it relates to fertility patterns and behaviors within this community. For example, the following two personal narratives highlight the convergent and divergent themes related to the

experiences of those who participated in the study.

“I was the oldest of 4—1 brother and 2 sisters. I was only 17 when my father died, but I had to grow up quickly and become man of the house (using air quotes)—I know that sounds stupid but you know how Indian households are—my uncles expected if of me and my mom did too so that’s what I did—no questions asked. But I can understand things now that I didn’t then—if I didn’t step up, I don’t know where my brother or sisters would be—my sisters never would have had good marriage prospects and my brother would not have gone to grad school. I mean, I’m not patting myself on the back, but I think me taking control of the situation made a HUGE (signaling with hands) deal. Now that I’m married and Neelum is expecting, I’m hoping our first child is a son—I want to that peace of mind that if anything was to happen to me that I can rely on my son to step in and take control kinda like the way I had. I know this sounds insanely stupid and macho, but I’m speaking from my own experience”.

~ Kunal, 2nd generation

“I am the oldest of 3 siblings and although my dad has a son, I was always referred to as my dad’s son (using air quotes) because I am the oldest and although my parents have never said anything, I know they wanted their first kid to be a boy. I mean come on—this is why I’m an engineer (States in between laughter)!! Not because I’m Indian, but because I was always the son my dad never had—until my parents had my brother of course. It’s really weird, because my parents don’t saliently differentiate between us kids—but there are definitely moments that I can tell that my dad and my mom wishes I was a boy”.

~ Pooja, 2nd generation

Although both of these stories share an overarching common theme, they also demonstrate how two, second generation migrants from India have experienced son preference in unique ways.

Triangulation & Reciprocal Ethnography:

Finally, I conducted two focus group interviews to triangulate my data and to broadly test the validity and reliability of the data (Bernard, 2006). The focus group interviews also gave an opportunity for reciprocal ethnography in which the study participants themselves determined if my interpretations of their “words” were correct. Reciprocal ethnography, according to Elaine Lawless (1993) removes hierarchal constructs that demarcate the researcher as the scholar and the subject as the inferior, and returns the focus of ethnography to the level of discourse between researcher and informant. The two focus groups -- one comprised of only men and the other with all women -- included people who had previously participated in the individual interviews. I used this opportunity to inform the group of my research findings, and to receive feedback from them as to how they felt about my interpretation and whether they believed it to be representative of the community. The group interviews validated the emergent themes as a collective discussion ensued on son preference as a cultural practice that continues in the Indian migrant community, but in a clandestine manner compared to its persistence at “home”⁹.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

I conducted qualitative analysis through transcription examination and thematic coding. I transcribed each interview while extrapolating and coding emerging themes from individual interviews. After transcribing

⁹ Referring to India

interviews, I used discourse analysis¹⁰ to examine and contextualize emerging themes that were consistent across all interviews. Specifically, I conducted a cross-sectional analysis of commonly reoccurring themes across all interviews, and categorized them into four broad themes. I applied discourse analysis to examine the relationship between discourse and social realities as it relates to larger social phenomena (Philips & Hardy, 2002). I mapped these themes into schemas or models representing respondents' responses, and further examined these themes in relationship to culture, migration, and family building strategies. This method of analysis allowed an critical examination of the fluidity of links between culture and migration and contextualize this relationship as it applies to fertility patterns and behaviors within the Indian diasporic community.

Quantitative Data Analysis:

I applied distribution frequency analyses using Microsoft¹¹ Access and Excel to analyze my quantitative data. Distribution frequency analyses indicate variability and degree (magnitude) of variation of dependent variables such as socioeconomic status, education, and religion among other factors (Bernard, 2006). This method of data analyses contextualized and supplemented qualitative analyses by establishing relationships

¹⁰ Set of techniques used to conduct structured, qualitative analysis of discourse that focuses on sociocultural and political contexts to understand social phenomena (Lupton, 1992, Philips & Hardy, 2002).

¹¹ Microsoft Office 2010

between migration and culture as it relates to fertility patterns and behaviors.

Study Limitations:

This study focused on examining the relationship between culture and migration in the context of family building patterns and behaviors in an Indian diasporic community in Chicago. However, given the sensitive nature of my research topic combined with a myriad of cultural, generational, societal, and gender-related factors, the possibility remains that couples may not have felt entirely comfortable disclosing their opinions or experiences. Moreover, as previously mentioned, my study design was sensitive to the gender hierarchies and decision-making processes that existed in the family, and therefore, I did not always interview couples separately. In such instances, I found that women become relatively muted compared to men who were the more active participants, or often times, women would simply defer to their husbands to answer, a common characteristic of patriarchal societies where women's voices are, at times, muted in the presence of men (Khanna, 2010; Raheja & Gold, 1994).

My region of interest specifically focused on Chicago as it has the second largest Indian population¹² in the United States. However, my

¹² Rangaswamy, P. 2000 *Namaste America: Indian immigrants in an American metropolis*: Pennsylvania State University Press.

sample population represents an urban residential cluster that exhibits distinct characteristics compared to Indian migrant families living in suburban Chicago. As such, it is important to note that my study results suggest a fertility pattern that is relevant to my region of interest and possibly representative of other urban ethnic enclaves. Further research is required to examine the interface between culture and migration among Indians living in suburbia, as they possess cultural qualities that are significantly different compared to urban migrant families (Logan & Zhang, 2002).

Chapter 4: Results

“Raising a daughter is like watering your neighbor’s plant—you give it life, provide it food, water, and shelter, but then it’s the neighbor who enjoys the beauty and fruit. We love our daughter, but at the end of the day she will leave us and be a daughter to someone else—to her husband’s parents. Our sons will stay with us—they will pass on our name and be our future. This has been part of Indian tradition for centuries and it works—why fix a system that is not broken? Just because we live here in this country does not mean we give up our identity has Indian”

~ Sandip, 1st generation

Sandip’s narrative embodies a culturally rooted belief that often defines the value of sons and daughters in Indian society. The following section provides an interpretive analysis that unpacks the complex nature of son preference as it is manifested in a transmigrant community.

Socio-demographic Profile:

I collected demographic data from forty-eight respondents who completed study surveys and questionnaires. Of the forty-eight informants, twenty-six (54%) were first-generation Indian immigrants and twenty-two (46%) were second-generation Indians (Table 1).

Table 1: Generational Distribution among Married Couples

	Men	Women
1 st Generation	13	13
2 nd Generation	11	11

N = 48

The demographic population varied in self-identified, regional affiliation with eighteen respondents (38%) from Gujarat, sixteen (33%) from Punjab, six (13%) from

Rajasthan, and eight (17%) from Maharashtra (Figure 1). Although the majority of my informants were from the same region as their spouse, I had several couples whose native regional affiliation was different than that of their spouse. Northern and northwestern Indian communities have historically been characterized in terms of a strong preference for sons, its patrilocal rules of inheritance, patrilineal patterns of family name and assets as well as marriage customs and practices, and limited participation of women in education and income-generating activities (Khanna, 2009) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Regional Distribution



Between generational groups, the age distribution (Table 2) significantly varied with fifty percent of first-generation respondents falling into the 46-50 age category compared to seventy-three percent of second-generation respondents who fell into the 25-30 age category. It is important to note that my first-generation informants

are not reproductively active and, for the most part, have achieved their desired family size and desired sex composition compared to my second-generation cohort who are still reproductively active and have yet to achieve a desired family size or composition.

Table 2: Age Distribution among Married Couples

Age Category	1 st Generation		2 nd Generation	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
20 – 24 Years	--	--	1 (9%)	3 (27%)
25 – 30 Years	2 (15%)	2 (15%)	9 (82%)	7 (64%)
31 – 35 Years	--	--	1 (9%)	1 (9%)
36 – 40 Years	--	2 (15%)	--	--
41 – 45 Years	4 (31%)	3 (23%)	--	--
46 – 50 Years	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	--	--

N = 48

First-generation Indian immigrants have resided in the US for at least, one generation¹³-- equivalent to the mean age of second-generation informants (Table 3). The majority of respondents qualify as middle- to upper-middle class¹⁴ according to US standards in which fifty-eight percent of all households (N_H=24) have a double-income source where both the husband and wife financially contribute to the household (Table 3).

An overwhelming ninety-four percent of all respondents possess, at minimum, a Bachelor's or equivalent degree. There is a greater frequency of professional/Master's degrees among men compared to women. In professionally qualified fields, women dominated areas that were classified as "nine-to-five" or

¹³ One generation is equivalent to 24 years

¹⁴ Based on US Census Bureau

“having flexible hours” such as dentistry, pharmacy, psychiatry, and pediatrics whereas men dominated fields that were self-identified as “technical” and “masculine” such as engineering, medicine (internal medicine, cardiology, & anesthesiology), and academia.

Table 3: Income-Education Demographic Profile

	Family	Men	Women
Average Age of Marriage		25.3	24.4
Average Level of Education		Master’s	Bachelor’s
Average Time in the US		27.6	27.5
Single-Family Income (Only Husband Employed)	10 (42%)		
Double-Income	14 (58%)		
Average Household Income	\$50K - \$70K		

N=48

Mixed Methods Results:

Attitudes toward ideal family size strongly influence family building strategies and reproductive outcomes (Khanna, 2010; Penn, 2002). Informed by this association between “ideal” and “actual” family building patterns, this study situates reproductive behaviors and demographic outcomes in its local context examining preferences of family size, sex composition, and the persistence of son preference in the Indian diasporic community living on Devon in Chicago. This ethnographic inquiry specifically examined the interface of migration and culture as it relates to family building strategies and son preference. In the following section, I provide a theme-based analysis of qualitative and quantitative data related to family composition preferences, migration history, level of education, participation in the work force, and socio-economic status among married couples in the Indian community.

The analysis presented here is based on forty-eight interviews with Indian married couples living in the Devon area of Chicago. Three overlapping themes, emerged as they relate to the reorientation of kinship networks, the transnational nature of patriarchy, and the dynamic relationship between tradition and modernity.

Reorientation of Kinship Network:

As one unpacks the complex domain on studies on transnational migration, several key areas emerge as significant to understanding the experiences of migrant communities. Most relevant to the purposes of this study is understanding how immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous kinship and other social relations weaving together their practices and beliefs from their country of origin with their new country of settlement (Schiller et. al., 1995). This dynamic relationship between host- and home- land redefines how traditional cultural practices are maintained and reproduced as transnational migrant communities reinvent their group identity in a new environment.

Indian migrant communities exemplify one of the most transnational groups in “behavior and outlook”—a visible characteristic that is apparent in the development and establishment of Devon (Ashutosh, 2008). Interestingly, Devon has become an archetype of the creation of an imagined memory of place as it is the site where Indian American identity is reterritorialized as “Indian Place” through the experience of a community that shares a common migration history as well as social and cultural practices all of which are rooted in a common Indian homeland (Bubinas, 2005).

For the Indian migrant communities, kinship relationships collectively constitute as one of the most important basis for social organization and for developing secure network linkages. As many participants expressed, the desire to live in residential cluster (i.e. Devon) by Indian immigrants marked an active attempt on their part to maintain and reproduce their history, traditions, and a secure kin and social network environment. According to a 42 year old father of two:

I brought my family to Devon so they can see how Indians live like in India. They [children] need to know that about our culture and customs and they learn that through watching and seeing and living. I thought that raising my family here [Devon] means that they will have their *Kaka* (uncle) and *Bua* (aunt) also raise them—that is important to be raised around family and family friends. It is our heritage”

~ Anil, 1st generation

As evident from this account, the family kinship structure is a fundamental unit of Indian society, both ‘at home’ and abroad, as it represents the mode in which cultural values and beliefs are fostered and collectively expressed as well as in establishing a social and economic support system (Singh, 2007). For Indian families in Devon, the kinship network is like an extended web of social relationships providing social support, resources, and security. However, as they attempt to recreate this kinship system based on their imagined visions of ‘home’, this reoriented support system appears to fall short of what Indian families in Devon had expected. As one married couple expressed:

“We thought moving here—to the states—that life would be much better than at home. We will make money and live very comfortable lives and raise a good family. Our expectations and what really happened were very different. We moved to Devon because we wanted to be around our own people. But the hardship of raising a family and

living here were very stressful. I had to do it on my own [raise the children] because uncle worked long hours. I too worked the night shift. We had a tough time with the kids. In India—this type of stress doesn't exist. We have family to help out with money and kids—it is not stressful in India like it is here”

~ Anand & Meena, 1st generation

An aspect often neglected in the experience of immigrant families is the loss of a supportive social network in which immigrant families become inundated and often socially isolated in their host country indicating the social importance of extended family members and friends within the family structure (Aldarondo & Ameen, 2010). Despite living in a residential cluster, couples admitted to the dissolution of the “at home” family kinship system, and the subsequent impact it had on their family building decisions. Participants attributed the shift in the family kinship network to their desire for smaller families—two to three children. According to a thirty-four year old mother of two:

“When I was growing up—I had my brothers and sisters taking care of me, my aunties and uncles, my grandparents, our neighbors, and my parents. We were never alone—there were multiple sets of eyes on us making sure we're staying out of trouble and not getting in with the wrong crowd or getting into anything bad. I didn't appreciate it then because it was normal—but I loved it so much. I loved having all of these people around me all the time—you always felt safe. I feel my kids are missing out on this—they go back home [India] to visit and they love being around everyone and when they come back, that is the one thing they miss the most. I never heard of the word ‘baby-sitter’ until I came to this country. You never paid someone to watch your kids in India—it was part of the culture to watch out for one-another. When I started working, I had to get another kid to watch my kids and then I had to pay her. It's a bad system, but we have no choice here. That's why I wouldn't want a big family here—there is not support system to support that kind of lifestyle—it would work in India, but not here”

~ Surpa, 1st generation

The 2001 Indian Census reflects a starkly different family structure as compared to the nostalgic visions of family composition as described by Indian immigrants in Chicago. Rather than a *village raising a family*, as many of my informants alluded to, the Indian family system has experienced significant changes that has, subsequently, moved away from an extended household toward a more nuclear system (Singh, 2004). Despite the restructuring of the family system in India, Devon couples continue to express a sense of nostalgia of their past experiences and idealize their family life in India. At times, the couples retrospectively reproduce those values in a new socio-cultural environment. For many Devon couples, building a large family is analogous to maintaining Indian identity. However, as Foner (1997) argues, immigrants bring with them a “memory of things past”, external social and economic pressures of the host society requires immigrants to renegotiate and restructure traditional beliefs, values, and behavioral patterns. As Devon couples find themselves *isolated* in a new environment, they have reconceptualized their desired family size to reflect and adapt to the new socio-cultural context.

Interestingly, in spite of growing up in different familial and cultural environments, both first- and second-generation informants echoed similar sentiments regarding social kinship networks and family size. This congruity in views across generations suggests that a continual connection to their homeland, despite generational differences, reifies pervasive cultural values and beliefs as they are reinvented and reproduced in a new environment (Braziele, 2003; Bruttell, 2000;

Foner, 1997; Schiller, 1995; Tambiah, 2000,). According to a twenty-three year old mother of one:

“I would like a relatively big family, but I also don’t want my kids partially raised by a baby-sitter. I get so jealous of my cousins in India—they were raised around aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. I have so many aunts and uncles—I get so spoiled by them and I am so close with my cousins. I would love my kids to have that experience but it’s just not feasible”. We don’t get that here and I think that’s really unfortunate. I am very adamant about living near my parents and my in-laws so our kids get to grow up with both sets of grandparents—it’s so important. I love our Indian culture views of family and I want to instill that same idea in my kids’ minds as well. When I compare our culture with the American culture, I think it is important to have a strong social support system that consists of aunts, uncles, and grandparents—I know I can trust them to help me raise my children the same way I was raised because we all have the same values. That is very important to me—I don’t want to lose that facet of our culture”.

~ Priya, 2nd generation

This account captures the nature in which Indian immigrants in Devon emphasize the role of cultural continuity, and demonstrates how pre-migration cultural traditions and social practices continue to persist within Indian diasporic communities (Foner, 1997). Confronted with social and economic constraints of an urban environment such as social isolation, economic stress, and a shift in kinship system, Indian immigrants in Devon have reevaluated the benefits of smaller, more balanced families—fewer children translates into improved parental investment and allocation of financial resources improving the overall well-being and future of their children (Khanna, 2009). This community shares and uses memories of their homeland as a lens through which they interpret their urban environment and define their preferred family style of life (Khanna, 2010).

Son preference & family size:

As Indian couples in Devon opt for smaller, the desire for sons has remained mostly unquestioned or unchallenged. A large body of scholarly work emphasizes the continuity of son preference among parents preferring a small family size. (Arnold & Choe et al., 1998). According to Yanagisako (1992), immigrants construct their own versions of tradition and behavior as they reconceptualize the past to contextualize their present particularly in response to emerging social and economic issues. For many in the Indian community in Devon, sons continue to maintain as a preferred “child” as compared to daughters. For majority of Devon couples, sons represent the strength and legacy of the family and are considered a source of economic and social support for the parents. According to two participants:

“I expect that when my sons get married that they and their wives and their children will live in the house that I have built. That’s what happened when I got married and this process should continue. Just because we move to a new country does not mean we forget about our values and traditions. We take care of our children, raise them, shelter them, provide them with everything and in-turn, they take care of us when we get older. This is why Indian culture is so strong—American kids, they just throw their parents into nursing homes and say ‘to hell with them’ I need to live my own life—now that’s not right”.

~ Vishal, 1st generation

“I wanted to have only two kids—preferably one daughter for me and one son for my husband or two sons—I didn’t want three kids, but husband did. He felt that we should have a two sons and one daughter—we got lucky you know. My first child he is son and second was a girl and then the youngest another son. My husband, he says we need two sons to split the responsibility of taking of the family. When daughter gets married she will go and she will take care of her in-laws. Having two sons means we can rely on both—responsibility spread evenly. I didn’t want more than two kids because it’s so expensive to take care and be home and still work at the same time. Three kids was

very hard to take care especially because I am alone—uncle works and comes home but I had to take the kids to school be home when they come and take them to their friends' homes—it is tiring. But my husband, he wanted three kids. Now our family name will go through two people, not just one and we will have two daughters come into the house”

~ Meena, 1st generation

Quantitative data consistently substantiates a stronger preference for sons among Devon men compared to women. Table 4 and Figure 3 compares the distribution ($N_P = 37$) of “desired” versus “actual” family sex composition among sample women and men. With an average desired family size of 4.3, majority men (forty-six percent) expressed a strong desire for *only* sons as compared to majority women (seventy-nine percent) who expressed a strong desire for a sex balanced family—one son and one daughter. A striking observation is that none of the Devon couples “desired” a “girls only” family sex composition. This can be explained, in part, due to pervasive and entrenched cultural demand for sons; a demand that has remained mostly unaffected by the migration experience. Therefore, one could argue that the patriarchal kinship system in Indian communities, regardless of their place of residence, creates social and economic disincentives in raising daughters compared to sons (Gill & Mitra-Kahn, 2009), thus extending deeply rooted cultural values and behavioral norms that are associated with the sex of a child even in migrant communities (Khanna, 1997; 2010).

Table 4: Progeny Distribution: Desired versus Actual

	Men	Women
Ideal Boys	11 (46%)	2
Ideal Girls	0	0
Balanced Sex (1:1)	9 (38%)	19 (79%)
More than 2 Children	4	3
Actual Boy	6	6
Actual Girl	5	5
Balanced Sex	7	7
More than 2 Children	3	3

$N_p = 37$, Mean *desired* family size = 4.3

Transnational Nature of Patriarchy:

Patriarchy traditionally refers to the economic, social and/or political oppression of women by men in which this institutionalized form of gender inequality is predominantly found in extended family structures where the senior men maintain authority over the household unit (Shankar, 2009). A large body of literature argues that migration offers a means to which women can overcome patriarchal structures (add references here). Scholarly evidence suggests that exposure to new social and cultural opportunities in the host country allows immigrant women to recreate new gender roles and expressions of identity as they become economically and socially independent (Parrenas, 2001; Siddiqui, 2001; Shankar, 2009; Sweetman, 1998). However, several scholars have presented counter views arguing that patriarchal customs and practices often permeate and transcend geographical boundaries. However, patriarchal forms and kinship relationships are transformed as people migrate, especially as the migration experience relates to gender relations (Shankar, 2009; Walton-Roberts, 2004). Cross-cultural evidence from Indian migrant

communities in the UK documents the retention of traditional hierarchical family structures that revolve around an elderly patriarch placing an emphasis on male-centered decision-making (Gill, 2004; Gill & Mitra-Kahn, 2009; Khanum, 2001).

As previously mentioned, *son preference* constitutes one of the strongest and most salient manifestations of patriarchal characteristics deeply rooted in the cultural and ideological fabric of Indian society (Clark, 2000; Khanna, 2007; Pande & Astone, 2007). Son preference is grounded in patriarchal institutions that establish norms and social rules favoring men in terms of allocation of household resources, decision-making power, and control of family property and income (Malhotra & Schuler, 2005; Pande & Astone, 2007). Son preference is generally associated with patrilineal kinship structures in which practices of descent, marriage, and inheritance continue through the son while daughters are considered as temporary sojourners in the parents' home and are expected to become part of the husband's family after marriage (Gill & Mitra-Kahn, 2009). This dual system of patriarchy and patrilineality puts daughters at a considerable disadvantage, which often manifests in terms of poor allocation of resources, physical and emotional abuse, early marriage, limited decision-making power, and poor overall education and health status (Khanna, 1997; 2010).

Reproductive decision-making clearly involves the integration of a host of interrelated factors, including personal preferences, family socio-economic status, level of education of parents, preexisting kin structures, and societal norms (Casique, 2006; Hirsch, 2008; Hirsch et al., 2003; Hirsch et al., 2002; Szasz, 2003). Members of the Indian migrant community in Devon expressed a general desire for sons as it

relates to family size and sex composition founded on explanations consistent with those reported by scholars on studied son preference in “at home” communities in India.

“My ideal family would be either one son and one daughter or two sons. Having a son means our family name will continue—that is very important—our daughters leave us and take the name of their new family—so our history will get lost. Our sons and daughters offer different things—in India, sons are looked at with more importance because they are the carriers of the family—both in terms of name and financial. Although over here both our daughters and our sons are very important—sons still represent the family. When issues of family or business come up—it is the son who will take care of it. Sons represent the family”

~ Kushal, 1st generation

These are the words of a fifty-year-old father of two reflecting on his desired family composition. Kushal’s views echo a common theme that resonates among other participants who generally define the social advantage of sons as a vehicle for the continuation of family name and as a means to higher social status and economic mobility in the larger Indian community. Scholarly research on son preference amongst Indian migrant communities in the UK supports the view that sons offer greater financial and social benefits in societies where kinship and social systems facilitate patrilineality and the associated practice of dowry (Gill & Mitra-Kahn, 2009).

Family Legacy and Security:

Many Devon couples described their sons as means to continue the family name and legacy and to ensure the immortality of the family through generations. The prevailing views symbolized sons as (1) a source of social and economic security for

parents as they provide financial support as well as security in illness or old age and (2) providing resources through dowries in addition to bringing in a wife and daughter-in-law who becomes vital in the production and reproduction of the household (Arnold et. al., 1998; Khanna, 1997; Khanna, 2010). According to two married men:

“I have one daughter and one son—but it is my son who will pass on our name and I hope he too will have a son and pass on our name. Having a son is important for that—otherwise, how will you know where you come from?”

~ Vasanti, 1st generation

“I wanted either a son and a daughter or two sons. A son will carry on our family name—it was very important to me to have at least one son”

~ Surinder, 1st generation

Devon men expressed that sons *represented the family* referring to a metaphorical *passing of the torch from father to son*. Fathers represent the head of the household and therefore, the son, by virtue of gender symmetry, is an extension of that position:

“My son represents our family when I am not there. He takes care of his younger sister—makes sure that no harm comes to her. He also takes care of him mom when I’m not around. My son is learning how to be a future father—the rules and responsibility that come with be the head of a household”

~ Rajesh, 1st generation

“My son is me—in public and when I’m not around. If I have a daughter she will share the responsibilities of taking care of the family along with my son, but it’s the son that usually bears the burden—at least the way I was brought up. I’m not sexist and I don’t think that my daughter can’t do it—it’s just that I guess I see myself in my son and I

want him to represent me and the family if I'm not around and when he gets married and has his own family..."

~ Nirav, 2nd generation

As family size becomes smaller, the desire to ensure the family lineage and parental security intensifies as Indian immigrants in Devon preserve and reproduce traditional cultural norms through sons. As in communities 'at home', sons continue to represent the continuation of the family name and legacy and to ensure the immortality of the family through generations. The prevailing views symbolized sons as (1) a source of social and economic security for parents as they provide financial support as well as security in illness or old age and (2) providing resources through dowries in addition to bringing in a wife and daughter-in-law who becomes vital in the production and reproduction of the household (Arnold et. al., 1998; Khanna, 1997; Khanna, 2010).

Dowry & Marriage Customs:

The birth of a son is perceived as an opportunity for upward mobility while that of a daughter is considered a regression in economic mobility of the household and family (Arnold & Chloe et al., 1998; Patel, 2007). A daughter in her parents' home is considered a liability or threat to the resources and honor of the family. The practice of dowry further reinforces this bias by casting girls as economic and social liability (McCartney & Gill, 2007; Singh, 2010). Historically, many communities in north and northwestern regions in India have engaged in dowry practices placing an onus on the woman's natal family to provide "gifts" in the form of household goods, jewelry, and money to the prospective husband's family (Khanna, 2010; Singh, 2010).

Dowries are symbolic of the social and economic status of a daughter's natal family; increasing dowry costs often forces parents into financial debt as parents compete in the marriage market to acquire a prospective husband with a superior family background (McCartney & Gill, 2007; Khanna, 2010; Singh, 2010).

Amongst migrant Indian families living in Deven, the practice of dowry continues unabated and, at times, even intensified. The persistence of dowry practices in Devon exemplifies the continuation and reinforcement of a patriarchal system by the Indian community to reassert its traditional cultural identity on to the larger "less traditional" social environment. Cross-cultural studies of Indian diasporic communities in Canada and the UK reinforce this observation and suggest that an increase in dowry expectations suggesting that improved economic conditions and overall living standards are positively associated with dowry practices as Indian immigrants seek to maintain a connection to their cultural heritage (McCartney & Gill, 2007; Purewal, 2003). Sample couples particularly expressed concern regarding high costs of marriages and related customs to further reinforce the stereotype that daughters are considered economic liabilities in the migrant Indian community.

According to two mothers:

"I love my daughter—but her 'upkeep' is very expensive. When I was growing up, my father was concerned about my dowry and paying for my wedding—the traditional worries that every Indian father has. Nowadays, there is an added expense of having daughters that dictates her social status and reputation that I can understand is very important to maintain. I don't seem to have the same issues with my sons—they are quite low maintenance. Thank God!"

~ Neerali, 1st generation

My first child was a son, and then a daughter, and then came a surprise pregnancy—my husband and I were quite relieved when it turned to be another son. I think two daughters would have given Kunal a heart attack—he already stays up at night worrying how he is going to pay for Somya’s upcoming wedding”.

~ Sushila, 1st generation

The relationship between the *high cost* of daughters and dowry practice in this diasporic community indicates the diffusion of traditional cultural practices from homeland to the host society. Clearly, traditional patriarchal forms and relationships are transformed as immigrants move through space (Shankar, 2009); in the case of this migrant community, economic and social improvement has not stopped the reproduction of dowry practices, but rather heightened its importance and social value as the practice of dowry has come to represent the social status of the rising economic prosperity of Indian families (Singh, 2007).

Religious Rituals:

Scholarly literature documents the persistence of son preference in migrant communities as expressed through elaborate and often ostentatious rituals that celebrate the birth and critical phases in a son’s life (Gill & Mitra-Khan, 2009; Purewal, 2003). Several second-generation participants expressed noticeable differences in the way community members reacted to news of sons as compared to daughters. According to a twenty-three year old mother of one:

“I just attended my best friend’s baby shower—she is having a daughter and announced it at the shower. Compared to the reaction I received when I announced that I was having a son—there was a clear difference in people’s reaction. I got “yelps” and “hoorays” whereas

my friend got an *awww* and even one auntie said “good luck”. It was odd”

~ Anita, 2nd generation

Several informants reported the practice of ornate religious rituals surrounding the potential birth of a son, especially in cases of a first-born or in cases where the first born was a daughter. According to a twenty-eight year old mother of one:

“My in-laws drove me insane with their religious rituals PRAYING that their first grandchild be a son. They planned a huge Pooja and ceremony that the entire community showed up to. It was embarrassing, but I had to humor my in-laws. I didn’t care—I just wanted my child to be healthy. I want my next child to be a daughter—I want that mother-daughter bond—my in-laws don’t get it—they come from an old school of thought. I want one son, which I now have, and one daughter. My mother-in-law actually told me that I need to increase my intake of hulthi (Turmeric) and some other bullshit—I wanted to tell them that if I don’t have a son it’s THEIR son’s fault given he’s the holder of the y-chromosome, but I refrained”

~ Tina, 2nd generation

The narratives in this section demonstrate how the desire and celebration for sons continues to exist as Devon families reconstruct traditionally prescribed notions of son and daughters within this migrant community. Whether it is through dowry giving, the celebration of sons, or perceived notions signifying the birth of sons such as strength, legacy, and security of the family, these characteristics share a common thread in that they are products of transnational patriarchal beliefs and customs. It can therefore be argued that as Indian families in Devon embrace their improved social and economic status, the preservation and reproduction of patriarchal values such

as son preference becomes a way for Indian families to try to reinvent and reinterpret their Indian identity in their host culture.

Dynamic Relationship between Modernity & Tradition:

Indian families in Devon undeniably engage in a balancing act between preserving traditional cultural values and practices while simultaneously trying to embrace their current socio-cultural environment that provides improved opportunities for education, employment, and overall prosperity—characteristics often associated with modernity. A strong body of evidence suggests a positive relationship between urbanization, education, female participation in the labor force, and improved household income with smaller and more balanced families (Das Gupta, 2000 ; Khanna, 2009). This interrelatedness demonstrates how pre-migration conceptions are modified and reoriented to *fit* their new socio-economic and cultural environment. A popular argument that once dominated theories of modernization was this notion of the *melting pot* in which this framework assumed that immigrants eventually lose their cultural identity and fully assimilate into the ways of the dominant culture (Aldarondo & Ameen, 2010). This paradigm has consequently established a generalized, and often essentializing account of their experiences as it failed to address the diversity of cultural encounters within a migrant community and the extent to which immigrants acculturate and adapt to their host cultures. Theories of transnational migration contend that immigrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous ‘embeddedness’ in more than one society as they are no longer spatially bound or culturally homogenized, but rather, free to shift across borders and between different cultures

and social systems (Appadurai, 1996; Schiller et al., 1995). Many Indian families living in Devon exemplify how this dynamic relationship between host- and homeland redefines how they preserve and reproduce traditional cultural practices as they reinvent their group their identity in a new socio-cultural environment.

The discussion in this section demonstrates how Indian families exert their *simultaneous embeddedness* both 'at home' in India as well as in their reconstructed *India Place* in Devon. As these families embrace notions of modernity with smaller more balanced families, opportunities of education, improved household income, and an increase in female participation in the work force, the following ethnographic accounts reveal how they continue to adhere to traditional patriarchal beliefs and practices as it relates to sons and daughters. Cross-cultural studies of Indian migrant communities in Canada reveal how continuous social networks between host- and homeland provide opportunities for transnational mobility as well as the transnational extension of patriarchal practices such as son preference reinforcing the traditional status of women and perception of daughters in India and overseas (Walton-Roberts, 2004).

Balance Families with Birth-order Preference:

Ethnographic studies of South Asian culture in general and Indian culture in particular reveal interesting and discernable pattern of family structuring and birth order with a general desire for balanced families. Achieving a balanced family order is ascribed as attaining the ideal sex composition of one son and one daughter. Often described as *one for him and one for her*, a balanced family provides an opportunity

for mothers to pass on their skills of motherhood to their daughters while fathers passed down their skills and family legacy through the son. According to a twenty-seven year old mother of one:

“My ideal family composition is one son and one daughter. This gives parents the joy of having a son and a daughter and establishing a mother-daughter relationship and a father-son relationship as opposed to an unbalanced family. Even brothers get the experience of having a sister and sisters the experience of having a brother. Two children is my ideal family size—and so having a balanced family would be my ideal family composition”

~ Deepa, 2nd generation

According to a father a forty-nine year old father of two:

“If I could choose my ideal family—I would like one son and one daughter. Yes I have two daughters—and I love them both dearly, but I wish I had one of each—the make the family complete. I see my wife in my daughters, but I don’t see myself in them. I would have liked to pass on a piece of myself in my son—that would be my only regret. But I don’t think my daughters are any less valuable or special because they are not boys. But their bond is with their mother—their mother will teach them how to become wives—I will not have the chance to teach a son how to be a husband or a father”.

~ Hitesh, 1st generation

These two accounts capture the nature in which many of my respondents perceive the benefits of having a balanced family. Daughters represented an extension of their mothers and the bond that existed between mother and daughter. Sons, on the other hand, represented an extension of their father—a protector and provider of the family.

This need for a balanced family however, is complicated by an associated desire for ‘the right birth order’. Even as participants articulated strong opinions about the benefits of balanced families, it appeared that striking the right ‘order’ in birthing

children is of equal significance because it is directly related to the cultural imperativeness associated with having a male child. Women establish a secure position in society through bearing a son, just as the couple perceives the birth of male child as a ‘right of passage’ to security and peace of mind. Many participants expressed a birth-order desire in which they preferred a son-daughter birth order, where the son is preferred to be the first-born. According to two mothers:

“I want a balanced family, but I do have a preference of what I want—I want my first child to be a son and my second to be a daughter. I like knowing that my daughter will have an older brother to look out for her safety. I do believe that girls can take care of themselves, but I also things that girls can be too trusting and emotional which can be a recipe for disaster. I just feel better knowing that my daughter has an older brother to look out for her—it’s comforting”.

~ Tejal, 2nd generation

“I wanted my first-born to be a son—it was very important to me that I had a son first. I did not care as much the outcome of my second child, but I am happy that I have a daughter—one son and one daughter is perfect—my wife has a child and I have a child. That is they way it should be. When my daughter gets married—she will leave and take care of her in-laws and my son gets married, he will bring a wife home and we will always have one son and one daughter. That is perfect—my ideal”

~ Prashant, 1st generation

These accounts indicate perceived values of sons as *protectors* and *providers* in comparison to daughters who are *emotional* and *gullible* and in need of protection until marriage. Embedded in these beliefs are polarizing perceptions between the desires for ‘balanced families’ juxtaposed against striving for the ‘right’ birth-order. Indian immigrant families illustrate such conflicting and often contradicting value

systems as a direct outcome of the inherent struggles in bridging redefined identities, new cultural integrations and the social outcomes of modernization (Appadurai, 1996).

Education & Employment & Gendered Division of Labor:

Irrespective of the misperceived assumption among some western observers regarding gender-based discrepancies in educational attainment among Indian immigrants, ethnographic studies reveal generational preference for a more universal approach to education based on principles of equity (Das Gupta, 2007). This phenomenon is evident in my own research, where the majority of participants migrated to the US for economic and educational opportunities. The Immigration Reform Act set into motion a wave of migration of skilled Indian immigrants to the US. Illinois, specifically Chicago, became a magnet for educated Indians as it provided employment opportunities and economic stability in high-technological companies (Ashutosh, 2008). A US classification survey conducted in 1975 revealed 93 percent of Indian immigrants categorized as “professional/technical” workers or “spouse/children of professional/technical” workers (Rangaswamy, 2000). Indian Immigrants in Chicago do not reflect the socioeconomic archetype of other ethnic minority populations in urban locations. Rather, this population monopolized professional and managerial positions in science, medicine, engineering, commerce, and real estate in addition to claiming the highest household median income compared to other ethnic minority groups (Rangaswamy, 2000). As expected, my study findings reveal high levels of education among respondents with ninety-four percent holding at least a Bachelor’s or equivalent degree along with high rates of participation in the

work force with seventy-nine percent involved in income-generating activities (Table 4).

Family building patterns in terms of family size and sex composition are often correlated to levels of education and employment particularly among women in that the influence of cultural background on reproductive behaviors are often times mediated through women's social position suggesting that education and economic independence are crucial factors influencing fertility practices and outcomes (Basu, 1992; Khanna, 2009). Although there exists a strong body of literature supporting the importance of women's level of education and their role in income-generating activities as it relates to fertility behaviors, the evidence as to the association between education and employment on fertility patterns are not unequivocally positive or negative (Khanna, 2009). My study findings, however, reveal a positive association between education and employment and its influence on reproductive behaviors. A common proxy for measuring the relationship between education and reproductive patterns is through the use of contraception as a means to avoid pregnancies and to limit family size (Mason, 2000; Khanna, 2009; Saleem, 2008; Saleem 2005; Singh, 2010). Within my sample population, quantitative data indicates that contraceptive use among both men and women occurred at an overwhelmingly high rate with ninety-three percent of women using an oral form of contraception and eighty-nine percent of men using condoms in which all couples attributed using some form of contraception to either prevent pregnancies or to limit family size. Most couples agreed that the decision to use some form of contraception was a joint decision. According to one

participant (speaking for him and his wife):

“We were not ready for children just yet—we had school to finish and other obligations—it wasn’t the right time. We want to have children when we are financially stable and can in all honesty, just afford it. It is the decision that me and Alpa have decided together—we know it’s not the right time for either of us”

~ Sagar, 2nd generation

Similar to Sagar’s account, the majority of couples all emphasized the importance of education in terms of financial independence and individual accomplishments prior to starting a family. According to a thirty-two year old mother of one:

“I need to be able to take care of myself—I don’t believe in relying on my husband for financial support. I refused to get married until I got into graduate school and told my husband that I did not want to start planning our family until I was done with school because I didn’t want anything to deter me from my path. I want my kids to look up to me as more than just a mother or homemaker. I want them to see that they can have the best of both worlds—especially my daughters. I want them to see that they can raise a family and still have a career. My parents raised me to be self-sufficient and independent—to be a contributor and not a dependent. I am so thankful they [parents] instilled this value in me because I know a lot of my friends whose parents expected them to get married right after undergrad before they even had a chance to experience the real world—forget even thinking of grad school. I want my daughters to be raised the same way I was”.

~ Neha, 2nd generation

According to a thirty-year old mother of one:

“I love my husband and I know he respects me, but I have to admit—working and making my own money makes him respect me even more. I am not docile I’m not a damsel in distress—I can take care of myself and I don’t need anyone to depend on. I think that’s important being a girl especially an Indian girl because we’re often thought of as “weak” and in need of someone to take care of us. I got married when I was doing my rotations, but I told my husband that I did not want to have children until I was done—it is important for me to finish and not have

to worry about taking care of a baby while going through my rotations”

~Priyanka, 2nd generation

These narratives underscore the importance of financial independence and personal accomplishments for both men and women indicating a gender-neutral demand to achieve social and economic success. However, as Indian families embrace improved opportunities for education and employment, they are simultaneously struggling with maintaining a perceived Indian identity that is culturally rooted in patriarchal beliefs and customs. Indian families in Devon have not completely discarded traditionally held gender roles particularly among women who now have the expectation of balancing domestic responsibilities with their professional career.

Historically, the common position guided by patriarchal norms has been that “the woman’s place is in her home” where women’s contribution to the family unit and to society remains within the domain of domestic responsibilities –thus reinforcing the notion that women are non-productive members of a household whereas men symbolize a source for upward economic and social mobility (Sagar, 2007). My population demographic revealed a greater frequency of professional/Master’s degrees among men compared to women. In professionally qualified fields, women dominated areas that were classified as “nine-to-five” or “having flexible hours” such as dentistry, pharmacy, psychiatry, and pediatrics whereas men dominated fields that were self-identified as “technical” and “masculine” such as engineering, medicine (internal medicine, cardiology, & anesthesiology), and academia. This suggests that traditional cultural characteristics ascribed to women

with regards to domestic responsibilities have not changed, but rather, they have been renegotiated to conflate careers with domestic responsibilities. For example, the following personal narratives highlight convergent and divergent themes related to their own life experiences.

“Women should work, but their first responsibility is to their home—they must be a mother before their career. Both men and women have responsibilities—men are to work and women are to raise a family. They can work—that is their decision, but it should be a job that they can still take care of the home and be home for the children. This goes for my wife, my daughters, nieces, and granddaughters.”

~ Ragav, 1st generation

“I grew up with my dad working and my mom staying at home and taking care of me and my brother. I think it’s important to have that balance. My mom has a college degree, but for her, her greater responsibility was to the welfare of her family—of her children. I agree with her on many levels—I want to be there for my children and not have to balance a career and a family, but then there is the reality. My parents put me through school and taught me the importance of an education and being financially independent—in the sense that I can take care of myself—you know, don’t have to rely on my husband for financial support. And that’s great—I love that feeling. But, I also want to be there for my kids like my mom was for me when I was a kid. My parents encouraged me to choose a profession that would make both sides possible—career and family life. As a physical therapist, I set my own schedule. I debated between physical therapy and medicine, but felt that medicine would be too time consuming.

~ Shruti, 2nd generation

“I became a doctor because that’s what my parents wanted. Yes, I enjoy my work, but I was also steered in the direction of medicine. Being a doctor means immediate status in the community because that equates intelligence and wealth. I love watching my mom and dad tell people that “their son is a cardiologist”. I went to IMSA (Illinois Math & Science Academy) along with every other Indian kid. We were all on the same path—high school, college, and then med school. It was always expected of me. I was actually envious of my sister because she didn’t have the same expectations put on her that my parents had on

me. She's in college now figuring things out—she'll probably follow some Indian path and become a pharmacist or something like that, but the expectation is definitely not on her.

~ Nithesh, 2nd generation

The common thread weaved through these accounts demonstrate how son preference is a pervasive and dynamic characteristic in Indian culture as it presents itself at varying degrees irrespective of generation and gender. As with many diasporic communities, there is a constant struggle to maintain a perceived identity while trying to assimilate in the host country. Similarly, Indian immigrants are also dealing with identity conflicts and assimilation struggles that play out through conflicting world views and evolving value systems. Individual and group identities vis-à-vis the homeland and the host-land are continuously renegotiated and redefined but a striking generational change occurs as families participate in processes of modernization leading to more gender neutral 'perceptions' regarding family structure and size. It is however, the 'performed' behavior and not 'perceived' behavior that is at the root of this analysis. This ethnographic study unravels how economic and educational achievement among Devon families have created a divide between how people 'express' their position on key issues such as the position of daughters in a family and the actual performance of these values in real life as revealed through birth-order preferences and gendered divisions of labor.

A significant outcome of this research underscores the need for ethnographic and emic depiction of group behavior to understand nuanced characteristics of particular cultural identities. While these characteristics are specific to Indian

immigrants living in Chicago, these observations have a more generalizable applicability for understanding diasporic dynamics among all diasporic groups as these findings demonstrate the complex nature of transnational migration and cultural diffusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion & Conclusion

“We both wanted one son and one daughter—one child for each of us—a daughter for me and son for him. We will have someone who continues on our family name and who will bring home another woman (daughter-in-law). We have raised our daughter and given her our cultural values—she will make her in-laws very happy and us very proud to be her parents. I have taught what it means to be a wife and mother—how to take care of the home. But I also wanted her to be independent and educated—that was important. We both believe that our children should be well educated—there is no compromise in that! Our daughter became a physical therapist and son is in medical school and specializes in cardiology. Both professions fit them well”.

~ Purvi, 1st generation

In the words of Purvi (speaking for her husband), the need for a sex-balanced family reflects a balancing act involving a reevaluation or even reinterpretation of culturally prescribed notions of son preference and the importance of education for both sons and daughters. This account reflects the *simultaneous embeddness* of Indian families in Devon as they negotiate traditional cultural beliefs and practices while simultaneously embracing characteristics often associated with modernity.

This study shows how attitudes toward ideal family size strongly influence family building strategies and reproductive outcomes (Khanna, 2010; Penn, 2002). Informed by relationships between “ideal” and “actual” family building patterns, it situates reproductive behaviors and demographic outcomes in its local context examining preferences of family size, sex composition, and the persistence of son preference in the Indian diasporic community living on Devon in Chicago. This ethnographic inquiry specifically examined the interface of migration and culture as it relates to family building strategies and son preference. In the following section, I

provide an overview of my findings as well as an interpretive analysis that locates son preference in the larger context of patriarchal beliefs and customs as well as the transnational nature of gender inequalities.

Summary of Findings:

The Indian diasporic community living on Devon Avenue in Chicago represents a residential clustering that reflects an attempt by the migrant community to preserve and reproduce traditional cultural practices in an environment that challenges—even threatens—traditional values and beliefs associated with the community’s regional culture and history. This community seeks solace and fortitude in recreating an imagined India based on nostalgic memories of their “homeland” as they simultaneously negotiate their social embeddedness in their urban environment. Devon Avenue has come to represent *Little India* as it has developed into a thriving business and residential district serving as the nexus point for Indians emigrating from India as it echoes a nostalgic sentiment of “home”. Indian immigrant themselves have, in many ways, social and economically acculturated into their new urban environment as they have monopolized professional and managerial positions in science, medicine, engineering, commerce, and real estate in addition to claiming the highest household median income as compared to other ethnic minority groups (Rangaswamy, 2000). Most importantly, however, Devon symbolizes the link between host and homeland—a location where Indian families can reproduce traditional practices through both their memory of life and culture in India as well as through the experiences of migration and adjustment, and by creating transnational

relations (Ashutosh, 2008). Although Indian immigrants have recreated an *Indian Place* in a pocket of Chicago, they are not impermeable to the cultural norms of their urban environment.

Reproductive Decision-Making in a Diasporic Community:

Reproductive decision-making involves the integration of a host of interrelated factors, including personal preferences, family socio-economic status, level of education of parents, preexisting kin structures, and societal norms (Casique, 2006; Hirsch, 2008; Hirsch et al., 2003; Hirsch et al., 2002; Szasz, 2003). Desired family size, sex composition, and the extent of son preference, as it exists in this diasporic community, represents the fusion of traditional and *modern* norms and values.

Improved education and reproductive knowledge as well as household income and an increase in women's participation in the work force have changed the way Indian immigrants in this community perceive family-building. Confronted with social and economic constraints of an urban environment, Indian immigrants in Devon has reevaluated the benefits of smaller, more balanced families— a family fewer children translates into increased parental investment and allocation of financial resources improving the overall well-being and future of their children. This community shares and uses memories of their homeland as a lens through which they interpret their urban environment and define their preferred family style of life (Khanna, 2010).

Study participants expressed a sense of nostalgia of their past experiences as they idealize their family life in India going so far as to retrospectively reproduce those values in a new socio-cultural environment. Couples expressed a sense of

isolation in their new environment as they reconceptualized their desired family size to reflect and adapt to the new socio-cultural context. This pattern of reconceptualization of family in order to adapt to the new cultural environment is consistent with Yanagisako (1992) who argues that immigrants construct their own versions of tradition and behavior as they reconceptualize the past to contextualize their present particularly in response to emerging social and economic issues.

As Indian couples in Devon opt for smaller, more balanced families, the desire for sons has remained mostly unquestioned or unchallenged. A large body of scholarly work emphasizes the continuity of son preference or even its intensification among parents preferring a small family size. (Arnold & Choe et al., 1998). Couples in Devon expressed a general desire for sons as it relates to family size and sex composition founded on explanations consistent with those reported by scholars exploring son preference “at home” on communities in India. For many Devon couples, the desire for sons was most apparent for first-order births as sons continue to represent the “preferred child” as compared to daughters. Sons were often described as a means to continue the family name and legacy and to ensure the immortality of the family through generations whereas daughters were considered to be *flowers in need of care and protection* that ultimately belonged to her husband’s family. The prevailing views symbolized sons as a source of social and economic security for parents as they provide financial support as well as security in illness or old age as well as a source for providing resources through dowries in addition to bringing in a wife and daughter-in-law who becomes vital in the production and reproduction of the

household (Arnold et al., 1998; Khanna, 1997; Khanna, 2010). The practice of dowry among Indian families living in Devon continues and, at times, has even intensified as families have achieved social and economic success. The persistence of dowry practices in Devon exemplifies the continuation and reinforcement of a patriarchal system by the Indian community to reassert its traditional cultural identity on to the larger “less traditional” social environment.

As Indian families living in Devon work to preserve traditional family-centered ideals and values that are reinforced by culturally prescribed gender roles remain strong, these values are simultaneously under strong social and economic pressures to change. Traditionally, women possessed limited participation in income-generating activities and decision-making capacity particularly with regards to reproductive behaviors as their role was generally confined to domestic duties and reproduction. However, adjustment to migration along with urbanization has changed the ways in which men and women negotiate traditional social and cultural norms. Many families in Devon stressed the importance of education for both sons and daughters as means to achieve economic and social success in addition to emphasizing the importance of completing school and attaining financial independence prior to starting a family. The emphasis of education and financial independence for women is especially important in societies where son preference is prevalent in that the influence of cultural background on reproductive behaviors are mediated through women’s social position suggesting that education and economic independence are crucial factors in influencing fertility practices and outcomes (Basu, 1992; Khanna,

2009). Indian families in Devon, however, have not completely discarded traditionally held gender roles particularly among women who now have the expectation of balancing domestic responsibilities with their professional career. Interestingly, study results indicated that women dominated areas that were classified as “nine-to-five” or “having flexible hours” whereas men dominated fields that were self-identified as “technical” and “masculine”. This gendered division of labor demonstrates how traditional cultural characteristics continue to persist even though families in Devon emphasize the importance of education and financial success.

Overall study results suggest that the desire for sons has remained mostly unaffected by the migration experience as it reinforces this patriarchal kinship system in Indian communities, regardless of their place of residence creating social and economic disincentives in raising daughters compared to sons (Gill & Mitra-Kahn, 2009), thus extending deeply rooted cultural values and behavioral norms that are associated with the sex of a child even in migrant communities (Khanna, 1997; 2010).

Discussion:

Son Preference in Diasporic Indian Communities- Extension of Patriarchy:

An ethnographic analysis of reproductive behaviors, as examined in terms of family size and sex composition, suggests how traditional cultural beliefs and practices are constructed and reproduced in an Indian diasporic community living on Devon Avenue in Chicago. This study contends that the desire for sons continues in this diasporic community at varying degrees as Indian immigrants negotiate between the preservation of traditional cultural norms and the norms of their new socio-cultural

environment. Broadly, this study shows that son preference cannot be explained as a characteristic exclusively associated with traditional rural societies in northern and northwestern regions of India (Khanna, 1997). Rather, the desire for sons is evident in communities that have emigrated from India. Understanding this transnational extension of son preference must be contextualized and interpreted as a social phenomenon that is a product of patriarchal norms and behaviors grounded in Indian society. The resilient nature of son preference and by extension patriarchal customs and relationships, are clearly not bound by any country of origin as evident from the Indian community living on Devon Avenue. This migrant community more accurately represents a transmigrant or even transnational group that has established bidirectional relationships between their homeland and host country demonstrating how the migrant experience spans multiple societies and cultures. The sustained connection to their homeland combined with their current “distant” homestead allows the Indian migrant community to be eclectic about what cultural traditions to follow despite its opposition to the host country’s societal norms and values (Gill & Mitra-Kahn, 2009). As such, son preference as it exists in this Indian community is the manifestation of patriarchal norms and values that, although are pervasive ‘at home’ in Indian society, continue to persist in varying degrees in this migrant community. The desire for sons constitutes one of the strongest and most salient manifestations of gender inequality and patriarchal ideologies that are deeply rooted in the social fabric of Indian society (Khanna, 2009; Pande & Astone, 2007). This patriarchal kinship system reinforces pervasive gender inequalities as it highlights the social power and

cultural worth that sons are endowed with while devaluing the importance of women (Kishore, 1993). Indian families in Devon have arguably achieved social and economic success, however, in maintaining their Indian identity, families continue to preserve and reproduce many of these patriarchal norms and values such as son preference. As Khanna (2010) argues that although urbanization has created improved opportunities for employment, education, and prosperity, it is also a formidable force that threatens the very core of Indian culture and ethos thereby resulting in a collective desire to preserve traditional patriarchal values as it represents a strong cohesive response against losing their identity.

It is important to recognize that the migrant experience impacts men and women differently particularly in societies that are characterized as patriarchal where traditional gender roles are often contested and renegotiated in response to the norms and values of the host environment. As previously stated, patriarchy is generally defined as the economic, social, and/or political oppression of women by men (Shankar, 2009). However, it is noteworthy to point out that women are not passive recipients of patriarchal norms and practices, but are often times active agents in negotiating, resisting, and even propagating these patriarchal relations (Kandiyoti, 1988; Purewal, 2003; Shankar et al., 2009; Walton-Roberts, 2004). A theoretical concept referred to as *patriarchal bargaining* emphasizes how women strategize within a set of concrete constraints in order to maximize their security and life options (Shankar et al., 2009). As Kandiyoti (1988) states, women invest in patriarchal relations, such as the desire for sons, in an effort to secure their economic and social

status. It can therefore be argued that both men and women in the Indian community living in Devon contribute to the perpetuation of son preference because it improves their individual and collective social and economic status within the Indian community at large. As made evident by Devon families, patriarchal beliefs and customs and by extension patriarchal bargaining are not timeless or immutable entities, but are susceptible to transformations that engage or create new areas of struggle and renegotiations between the roles of men and women (Kandiyoti, 1988).

Evolving Framework of Migration:

This ethnographic examination of a complex interaction between traditional cultural practices and migration suggests that diasporic communities do not shed ties with their country of origin, but rather create bidirectional relations between host- and homeland. Exploring transnational communities, such as the Indian diasporic community in Devon, provides a fresh perspective on understanding culture change in a diasporic community and helps establish a framework that contextualizes and interprets how traditional cultural behaviors persist in an era of globalization. Clearly, the study results highlight the problematic of *assimilation* and *integration* type approaches (Canales & Armas, 2010) to explain culture change in migrant communities. Studies exploring the relationship between migration and culture that rely on modernization theories to explain social phenomenon often fail to account for persistence or reinterpretation of cultural practices in migrant communities as they offer a homogenizing perspective of the migrant experience. Such homogenizing models often prematurely assume that immigrants readily adopt the social norms and

practices of a host country as they shed traditional ties to their homeland (Bhatia, 2004, McCartney et al., 2007). As clearly revealed by this study that although the Indian migrant families living in Devon have attained economic and social success by embracing opportunities of education, employment, and prosperity, they have simultaneously preserved and reproduced many cultural beliefs, values, and customs as they maintain their Indian ethos within their host culture thereby contesting traditionally held notions of modernization theories.

These results study not only challenge simplistic and reductionist modernization paradigms, but also suggest a need for more complex explanations of transnational migration. A nuanced understanding of transnational migration must contend that immigrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous 'embeddedness' in more than one society as they are no longer spatially bound or culturally homogenized, but rather, free to shift across borders and between different cultures and social systems (Appadurai, 1996; Schiller et al., 1995). Cross-cultural studies of Indian migrant communities in Canada support this observation by suggest that continuous social networks between host- and homeland provide opportunities for transnational mobility as well as the transnational extension of patriarchal practices such as son preference reinforcing the traditional status of women and perception of daughters in India and overseas (Walton-Roberts, 2004).

Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to examine *how* and *why* traditionally prescribed notions of son preference exists in an Indian diasporic community in. My focus was

on exploring reproductive behaviors and demographic outcomes measured in terms of “actual” and “desired” family size and sex composition in an Indian community located on Devon Avenue in Chicago. In applying a mixed methods approach—quantitative and qualitative methods—I specifically aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the “desired” and “actual” family size and sex composition patterns among married Asian Indian couples?
2. Do migrant Asian Indian married couples express son preference?
 - a. What are the reasons for the expressed preference for sons?
 - b. What are the forms of the expressed preference for sons?
 - c. How does son preference influence family size and sex composition?

Given the sensitive nature of son preference, I believe that an ethnographic approach was best suited to examine the diffusion of cultural practices and the reconstruction of group identity in a migrant community as this method not only fosters the development of rapport and trust with members of the community, it also provides an emic perspective as to how long established cultural traditions interface with the local realities that community members encounter in their everyday lives (Khanna, 2010). I collected data using a combination of participant observation, open-ended interviewing, household demographic surveys, migration history questionnaires, and focus group interviews on twenty-four married couples living in an Indian residential cluster in Devon.

Overall study results suggest that the desire for sons has remained mostly unabated by the migration experience. For Devon families, sons continue to

symbolize a source of social and economic security for parents as they provide financial support as well as security in illness or old age as well as a source for providing resources through dowries in addition to bringing in a wife and daughter-in-law who becomes vital in the production and reproduction of the household (Arnold et al., 1998; Khanna, 1997; Khanna, 2010). Although traditional notions of son preference are preserved, couples generally expressed a desire for smaller, more balanced families suggesting that urbanization and improved opportunities of education, employment, and increase in household incomes—characteristics associated with modernity—have inspired Indian families to reconstruct traditionally prescribed practices in response to their changing socio-cultural environment.

This study has demonstrated how patriarchal beliefs and customs such as son preference are not impermeable or absolute as they are susceptible to time and space. As observed cross-culturally in other Indian migrant communities, there is a growing acknowledgement, at least in rhetoric, that traditional notions of son preference and daughter disvalue are expanding into a spectrum of views where on one end of the continuum lies a more equitable understanding of the value of sons and daughters and on the end, a more entrenched patriarchal support of the desire for sons (Purewal, 2003). This dynamic continuum demonstrates the nature in which traditions and cultural practices such as son preference evolve in response to time and space particularly in migrant communities where individuals and groups are collectively negotiating traditional values and beliefs with that of the dominant culture.

While study findings are specific to Indian immigrants living in Chicago, these discernable observations have a more generalizable applicability for understanding diasporic dynamics among all diasporic communities as these findings make salient the complex nature of transnational migration and cultural diffusion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Almond, D, and L Edlund. 2008. Son biased sex ratios in the US 2000 census. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105 (15):5681-5682.
- Almond Jr, D, L Edlund, and K Milligan. 2009. Son Preference and the Persistence of Culture: Evidence from Asian Immigrants to Canada. *NBER Working Paper*.
- Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*: Univ Of Minnesota Press.
- Arnold, F, MK Choe, and TK Roy. 1998. Son preference, the family-building process and child mortality in India. *Population Studies* 52 (3):301-315.
- Arokiasamy, P. 2002. Gender preference, contraceptive use and fertility in India: regional and development influences. *International Journal of Population Geography* 8 (1):49-67.
- Ashutosh, I. 2008. (RE-) Creating the Community: South Asian Transnationalism on Chicago's Devon Avenue. *Urban Geography* 29 (3):224-245.
- Basu, A.M. 1992. Culture, the status of women, and demographic behaviour: illustrated with the case of India.
- Bernard, HR. 2006. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*: Altamira press.
- Bhatia, S, and A Ram. 2004. Culture, hybridity, and the dialogical self: Cases from the South Asian diaspora. *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 11 (3):224-240.
- Brazier, JE, and A Mannur. 2003. Nation, migration, globalization: Points of contention in diaspora studies. *Theorizing Diaspora: a reader*: 1-22.
- Brettell, CB. 2000. Theorizing migration in anthropology: the social construction of networks, identities, communities, and globescapes. *Migration theory: talking across disciplines*:97-135.
- Bubinas, K. 2005. Gandhi Marg: the social construction and production of an ethnic economy in Chicago. *City & Society* 17 (2):161-179.
- Canales, A.I., and I.M. Armas. 2010. *MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM AND POST-MODERNITY, Social Change, Resistance and Social Practices*: Brill Academic Pub.

- Clark, S. 2000. Son preference and sex composition of children: Evidence from India. *Demography* 37 (1):95-108.
- Clifford, J. 1997. *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*: Harvard Univ Pr.
- Das Gupta, M. et. al. 2007. Rethinking South Asian Diaspora Studies. *SAGE Publications* 19:125-140.
- Dasgupta, P. 2000. Population and resources: an exploration of reproductive and environmental externalities. *Population and Development Review* 26 (4):643-689.
- Dubuc, S, and D Coleman. 2007. An increase in the sex ratio of births to India-born mothers in England and Wales: Evidence for sex-selective abortion. *Population and Development Review* 33 (2):383-400.
- Dwyer, C. 2000. Negotiating diasporic identities:: Young british south asian muslim women.
- Foner, N. 1997. The immigrant family: Cultural legacies and cultural changes. *International Migration Review* 31 (4):961-974.
- Gill, A, and T Mitra-Kahn. 2009. Explaining Daughter Devaluation and the Issue of Missing Women in South Asia and the UK. *Current Sociology* 57 (5):684.
- Gill, A. 2004. Voicing the silent fear: South Asian women's experiences of domestic violence. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 43 (5):465-483.
- Gomez, C.A., and Marin VanOss. 1996. Gender, culture, and power: Barriers to HIV-prevention strategies for women. *Journal of Sex Research* 33 (4):355-362.
- Gupta, A, and J Ferguson. 1992. Beyond" culture": Space, identity, and the politics of difference. *Cultural anthropology*:6-23.
- Jayaram, N, and Y Atal. 2004. *The Indian diaspora: dynamics of migration*: Sage Publications.
- Johnson, RB, and AJ Onwuegbuzie. 2004. Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational researcher* 33 (7):14-26.
- Kandiyoti, D. 1988. Bargaining with patriarchy. *Gender & Society* 2 (3):274.

- Khanna, SK. 1997. Traditions and reproductive technology in an urbanizing north Indian village. *Social Science & Medicine* 44 (2):171-180.
- _____. 2010. *Fetal/Fatal Knowledge: New Reproductive Technologies and Family-Building Strategies in India*: Wadsworth Pub Co.
- Khanna, SK, S Sudha, and SI Rajan. 2009. Family-building strategies in urban India: converging demographic trends in two culturally distinct communities. *Contemporary South Asia* 17 (2):141-158.
- Khanum, S.M. 2001. The household patterns of a 'Bangladeshi village' in England. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27 (3):489-504.
- Kishor, Sunita. 1993. "May God Give Sons to All": Gender and Child Mortality in India. *American Sociological Review* 58 (2):247-265.
- Lawless, EJ. 1993. *Holy women, wholly women: sharing ministries of wholeness through life stories and reciprocal ethnography*: Univ of Pennsylvania Pr.
- Logan, JR, W Zhang, and RD Alba. 2002. Immigrant enclaves and ethnic communities in New York and Los Angeles. *American Sociological Review* 67 (2):299-322.
- Lupton, D. 1992. Discourse analysis: a new methodology for understanding the ideologies of health and illness. *Australian Journal of Public Health* 16 (2):145-150.
- Malhotra, A, R Vanneman, and S Kishor. 1995. Fertility, dimensions of patriarchy, and development in India. *Population and Development Review*:281-305.
- Malhotra, A., and S.R. Schuler. 2005. Women's empowerment as a variable in international development. *Measuring empowerment: Cross-disciplinary perspectives*:71-88.
- Mason, KO, and HL Smith. 2000. Husbands' versus wives' fertility goals and use of contraception: the influence of gender context in five Asian countries. *Demography* 37 (3):299-311.
- Maternowska, C., F. Estrada, L. Campero, C. Herrera, C. D. Brindis, and M. M. Vostrejs. 2009. Gender, culture and reproductive decision-making among recent Mexican migrants in California. *Cult Health Sex*:1.
- McCARTNEY, M, and A GILL. 2007. From South Asia to Diaspora: Missing Women and Migration. *economics* (152).

- Pande, RP, and NM Astone. 2007. Explaining son preference in rural India: the independent role of structural versus individual factors. *Population Research and Policy Review* 26 (1):1-29.
- Patel, T. 2007. *The Mindset behind Eliminating the Female Foetus, Sex-selective abortion in India: gender, society and new reproductive technologies*: Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Penn, R, and P Lambert. 2002. Attitudes towards ideal family size of different ethnic/nationality groups in Great Britain, France and Germany. *Women* 16 (34):35-59.
- Phillips, N, and C Hardy. 2002. *Discourse analysis: Investigating processes of social construction*: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Pulerwitz, J., S.L. Gortmaker, and W. DeJong. 2000. Measuring sexual relationship power in HIV/STD research. *Sex Roles* 42 (7):637-660.
- Purewal, T. 2003. Re-producing South Asian Women: Female Feticide and the Spectacle of Culture. *South Asian women in the diaspora*.
- Raheja, GG, and AG Gold. 1994. *Listen to the heron's words: reimagining gender and kinship in North India*: Univ of California Pr.
- Rangaswamy, P. 2000. *Namaste America: Indian immigrants in an American metropolis*: Pennsylvania State Univ Pr.
- Safran, W. 1991. Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return. *Diaspora* 1 (1):83-99.
- _____. 2004. Deconstructing and comparing diasporas. *Diaspora, identity, and religion: new directions in theory and research*:9.
- _____. 2005. The Jewish diaspora in a comparative and theoretical perspective. *Israel Studies* 10 (1):36-60.
- Sagar, Alpana D. 2007. *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Social Context of the, Sex-selective abortion in India: gender, society and new reproductive technologies*: Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Saleem, A, and GR Pasha. 2008. Women's reproductive autonomy and barriers to contraceptive use in Pakistan. *European J. of Contraception and Reproductive Healthcare* 13 (1):83-89.

- Saleem, S, and M Bobak. 2005. Women's autonomy, education and contraception use in Pakistan: a national study. *Reproductive Health* 2 (1):8.
- Schiller, NG, L Basch, and CS Blanc. 1995. From immigrant to transmigrant: theorizing transnational migration. *Anthropological quarterly* 68 (1):48-63.
- Shankar, I., and H. Northcott. 2009. Through my son: Immigrant women bargain with patriarchy.
- Singh, JP. 2010. Socio-cultural Aspects of the High Masculinity Ratio in India. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 45 (6):628.
- Singh, JP, BN Adams, and J. Trost. 2004. *The contemporary Indian family, Handbook of world families*: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Tambiah, SJ. 2000. Transnational movements, diaspora, and multiple modernities. *Daedalus* 129 (1):163-194.
- Walton-Roberts, M. 2004. Transnational migration theory in population geography: gendered practices in networks linking Canada and India. *International Journal of Population Geography* 10 (5):361-373.
- Yanagisako, S.J. 1992. *Transforming the past: Tradition and kinship among Japanese Americans*: Stanford Univ Pr.

APPENDICES

The Indian Diaspora: Situating Family Building Patterns in a Migrant Community

Subject ID # _____

Date: _____

Eligibility Checklist

Inclusion Criteria	Yes	No
Self-Identify as north Indian		
Reside within a 10-mile radius of Devon area		
1 st or 2 nd Generation		
Married		
> 18 years		

Subject must check "Yes" to all to qualify for participation

Eligibility Checklist
IRB Form v. 6/14/2010
1 of 1

The Indian Diaspora: Situating Family Building Patterns in a Migrant Community

Subject ID # _____

Date: _____

Oral Consent Form

What is the Purpose of this study?

My name is Rupal Satra and I am a Master's student at Oregon State University. You are being invited to take part in a research study designed to learn about views on family in terms of size and composition—number of boys and number of girls desired among Indian immigrants. This is my Master's thesis and the information obtained will be used in thesis and other academic literature. You may ask any questions about the research, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else that is not clear. When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in this study or not.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

If you agree to take part in this study, your involvement will last for approximately one to one-and-one-half hours. We will report findings from the interview and survey analysis and ask you to discuss whether you agree with them. You will also be asked to add your own interpretations of the findings. We plan to audio-record the interviews; otherwise, notes will be taken on your comments.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS STUDY?

The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include emotional discomfort that may arise based on your opinions and experiences. To minimize discomfort, you may chose not to answer a particular question or you may discontinue participation in the study at any time.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

We do not know if you will benefit from being in this study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION I GIVE?

The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. To help protect your confidentiality, we will use coded numbers and/or pseudonyms to refer to all participants. Any materials that could be used to connect names with numbers or pseudonyms will be stored in a locked and secure file box and/or using password protected computer files.

If the results of this project are published, only aggregate data will be used and your identity will not be made public.

DO I HAVE A CHOICE TO BE IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. You are also free to skip any questions during the interview that you would prefer not to answer. You may withdraw your interview text from analysis at any time prior to publication with no penalty by contacting one of the researchers by phone or email.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Sunil Khanna, Ph.D. and/or Rupal Satra

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Protections Administrator, at (541) 737-4933 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu

For the Researcher to complete:

Name of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Gender: Male Female Agree to Participate in study? Yes No Agree to be audiotape? Yes No

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The Indian Diaspora: Situating Family Building Patterns in a Migrant Community

Subject ID # _____

Date: _____

Sample Interview Guide

1. What do you think is your ideal family size?
2. What factors influence this?
3. How much of an impact do extended family members have?
4. Did your perception of family size change after immigrating to the US?
5. Are there cultural or religious rituals practiced by you or other family members to obtain ideal family size?
6. What is your ideal family composition?
 - a. Boys or girls, Is there a birth order preference?
7. What should be an ideal family size and composition for an India family living in the US and living in India? Why?
8. Do you perceive benefits of having daughters over sons or sons over daughters?
9. What or whom do you think influenced your opinion?
10. Are there cultural or religious rituals practiced by you or other family members to obtain ideal family composition?
11. Do you think your ideologies about family size and family composition are aligned with other South Asian families in the community?
12. Can you comment on the typical family size and composition among Indian immigrants living in your town/city/neighborhood?

13. What changes to you see here among men and women compared to in India?
Do you see any differences?

14. In India there is a pattern where families prefer to have sons over daughters ---
what do you think about that?
 - a. Do you see it in this community?

 - b. What do you think about this pattern? Do you agree or disagree with it?

The Indian Diaspora: Situating Family Building Patterns in a Migrant Community

Subject ID # _____

Date: _____

Sample Questionnaire

Husband Wife 1st Generation 2nd Generation

1. Age? _____

2. Year immigrated to the United States and from where? -

3. How long have you been living in Devon? _____

4. What is your religious affiliation?

 Hindu Sikh Jain

Other: _____

5. What state are you from in India? _____

6. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree received.

 High school graduate - high school diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED) 1 or more years of college, no degree Associate degree Bachelor's degree Master's degree Professional degree Doctorate degree

7. What is your total household income?

 Less than \$10,000 \$10,000 to \$29,999 \$30,000 to \$49,999

- \$50,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

8. Occupation: _____

9. Do you own or rent your home?

Rent

Own

10. How many immediate members in your family? _____

11. Actual number of children: _____

• Number of Girls: _____ Age: _____ Level of Education: _____

Private

Public

• Number of Boys: _____ Age: _____ Level of Education: _____

Private

Public

12. Ideal/desired number of Children: _____

• Number of Girls: _____

• Number of Boys: _____

13. Daughters are a greater economic burden compared to sons.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. Sons are less of a liability (economic and social) compared to daughters.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. Sons represent a blessing whereas daughters are more of a burden.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. Do you use any form of Contraception?

No

Yes

* If answered yes on the previous question:

- What type of contraception do you use?

- How long have you been using contraceptives?

Why did you start using contraceptives

Migration History Questionnaire

1. What year did you migrate to the US?
2. Where did you first live when you came to the US?
3. What made you decided to come to the US?
4. Did you live with someone when you first immigrate to the US? What was your relation to them? For how long?
5. What was your marital status when you first migrated?

6. What was your socioeconomic status in India prior to migration?
7. What types of jobs did you hold when you first immigrated?
8. How long did you stay in the US before you went back to visit India? How often do you go back to visit?
9. Did you immigrate by yourself or did your family come with you?
10. What was your highest level of education completed prior to immigrating to the US?
11. Did any friends or relatives living in the US help you get settled when you first immigrated? In what ways?
12. How would you compare your living conditions from your place of residence in India to when you first immigrated?
13. Did you plan on permanently settling in the US or did you plan on moving back to India?
14. What were your perceptions of the US prior to migration? Do you feel like they were correct?

S. Khanna
Questionnaire
IRB Form v. 6/14/2010

The Indian Diaspora: Situating Family Building Patterns in a Migrant Community

Recruitment Aid

Front Side:

Hello,

My name is Rupal Satra and I am a Master's student at Oregon State University. I am conducting a research study on what Asian Indian married couples living in the Devon community think about family such as the size of families, and the number of children in a family, and the number of boys and girls in a family. If you are interested in learning more about or participating in my study, please contact me. My information is located on the back this card. Thank you for taking the time to consider participating—your assistance is greatly appreciated!

- Rupal Satra
Oregon State University
2011 Master's Candidate

Back Side:

Rupal Satra

Phone #:

Email Address: