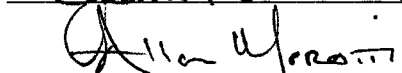THE ORTHOGONAL CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION SCALE

IN ASIAN INDIAN INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS:

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF MEANINGS ASCRIBED TO SCALE ITEMS

By

Timothy A. Lower

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Advisory Committee Chair

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Chair, Department of Psychology
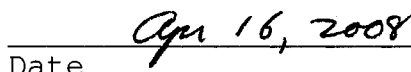
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Dean, College of Liberal Arts

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Dean of the Graduate School

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Date   Apr 16, 2008

THE ORTHOGONAL CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION SCALE

IN ASIAN INDIAN INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS:

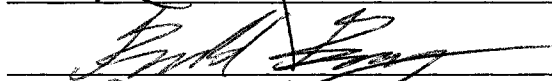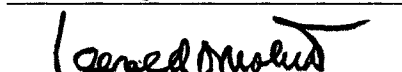A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF MEANINGS ASCRIBED TO SCALE ITEMS

A

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty

of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Timothy A. Lower, M.A.

Fairbanks, Alaska

May 2008

UMI Number: 3322396

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Abstract

In order to facilitate greater cultural competency, a study regarding the use of the Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale (OCIS) in a sample of Asian Indian exchange students was conducted. The specific research questions to be answered were: (a) what meanings would participants ascribe to key terms and phrases on the OCIS, (b) what meanings would participants apply to differences in categorical placement on the OCIS, and (c) what themes would the participants associate with cultural identification? To answer these questions, 47 participants completed the OCIS and a demographic questionnaire, while 8 of these participants also participated in a semi-structured individual interview and group feedback interview. A phenomenological method and participant feedback were used to analyze and summarize the data. Internal consistency of the OCIS subscales was good, while the White American or Anglo and the Asian Indian subscales correlated positively to a significant extent. The OCIS term, "traditions," was associated with festivals, family, puja, and special foods. The OCIS phrase, "way of life," connoted Hinduism, family-centered, day-to-day activities, gender differences, and intra-cultural variation. Finally, the term, "success,"

connoted karma, family life, education/knowledge, social life, and practical considerations. Because no previous study has investigated the meanings of key terms or phrases on the OCIS, this study adds to the literature by providing: (a) an initial indication of the meanings ascribed by Asian Indian exchange students to items on the OCIS, and (b) a model for similar investigations in other cultures.

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Introduction

This work is an attempt to determine a fruitful

beginning point for studying diasporic Asian Indian peoples

in order to advance the cultural competency of

practitioners and researchers who work with this

population. Chapters one through four of this dissertation

review the literature regarding cultural competency,

culture, the processes by which culture operates and

reveals itself in individuals, and the importance of

meaning in the understanding of cultural identification.

Next, the phenomenological research method is discussed

because of its relevance to investigating meaning-making in

cultures. After this, the literature regarding Asian Indian

populations both in India and in various diasporic

communities is discussed. A review and analysis of Asian

Indians in India, acculturation as it pertains to Asian

Indians, and the demographic and identity characteristics

of Asian Indian diasporic communities is included in this

discussion.

Chapters five through seven of this dissertation

describe a project I conducted in a group of Asian Indians

exchange students. The description covers the research

questions investigated in the project, the methods taken to

conduct the project, and the procedures used for data analysis. It also presents a brief description of my personal context in order to facilitate complete disclosure of any personal characteristics, motivations, or relationships that might impact the project.

Chapters eight and nine of this dissertation present both the results of the project, and a discussion about these results. The results are divided into both quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative findings consist of the distribution of the larger sample (47 students) on the Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale(OCIS), an analysis of reliability of the OCIS subscales, and comparison of demographic characteristics to OCIS scores. The qualitative findings regard the meanings applied to key terms or phrases in the individual items on the OCIS, the meanings applied to the participants' own categorical placement on the OCIS, and the identifiable themes that indicate the participants' understanding of cultural identification.

Finally, in the discussion chapter, I summarize the results and compare these to the literature presented in the first four chapters. In doing so, I summarize the manner in which this project adds to the existing

knowledge-base, as well as note the limitations of this project and the implications it holds for further research.

Chapter 1 Culture and Cultural Competency

Culturally Competent Research and Practice

During the last three decades of the twentieth century
(particularly in the 1990s), increasing awareness of the
influences that culture may have on mental health and
psychological research has led to the creation of
guidelines and disciplinary regulations for both mental
health practitioners and researchers conducting research in
cross-cultural and multicultural situations. Specific
guidelines for assessing and treating individuals of
different cultures now exist for mainstream organizations
(e.g., American Psychological Association, 1993).
Guidelines have also been included in the premier
diagnostic system for mental health (see the guidelines for
conducting cultural formulations in American Psychiatric
Association, 1994). Texts and other writings now exist
providing information about conducting research in
different cultures (e.g., Andersen, 1993), as well as the
provision of mental health services in multi-cultural and
cross-cultural populations (Cuellar & Paniagua, 2000; Dana,
1998; Dana, 2000a; Dana, 2000b; Pedersen, 1995; Sue & Sue,
1999). Indigenous peoples have created their own writings

about science (James, 2001; Kawagley, n.d.; Smith, 1999) and established their own guidelines for researchers wishing to conduct research within their cultural groups (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, February, 27, 2001; Caulfield, n.d.).

This growing body of guidelines has increasingly called for cultural competency in those who wish to either investigate populations or provide mental health services in cross-cultural/multicultural situations. In order to be culturally competent, in turn, investigators should be familiar with the literature about the culture they wish to study. They should also be familiar with the research on culture in general, the way in which cultures interact when they come into contact, and the process by which individuals maintain identification with a given culture.

Dana (1993) discusses the notion of cultural competence in service providers and methods for training mental health clinicians to become more competent in cross-cultural and multicultural situations. Dana appears to be an established expert in the field, based on: (a) citations in the literature, (b) amount of publications in general, and (c) number of editorships specifically. Dana's discussion mirrors Pedersen's (1997) similar work.

The qualities of a culturally competent clinical practitioner espoused by Dana (1993) include: (a) openness to diverse perspectives, (b) ability to establish empathy, a desire to keep abreast of recent research in relevant fields, and (c) providing services in a manner that is in accordance with the wishes of the client. Additional specific qualities of the culturally competent practitioner include: (a) understanding the influence of cultural worldviews in general, (b) specific knowledge of the client's culture of origin, (c) the use of cultural experts, (d) considering cultural aspects of the person in interpreting behaviors and statements as well as deriving diagnoses from these observations, and (e) knowledge of the limitations of psychological assessments in cross-cultural and multicultural populations.

Culturally relevant assessment has also received attention in the literature over the last few decades. Most published works in this area focus on: (a) qualities and competencies of the person who administers the test, and (b) the relevance of assessments in cross-cultural and multicultural populations.

The literature on cross-cultural and multicultural relevance of specific assessments appears to be a growing

base. Dana (2000a) differentiates between etic and emic

measures of psychological assessment. Etic measures are

those that are purported to measure universal psychological

characteristics, while emic assessments are those that

measure culturally encapsulated characteristics. In another

work Dana (1993) differentiates these etic and emic

measures along the traditional lines of objective and

projective assessments respectively.

A wide body of literature cites specific examples of

research based on existing objective assessments as well as

adapted editions of such assessments (see, e.g., Handel &

Ben-Porath, 2000; Holden, 2000; Nichols, Padilla, & Gomez-

Maqueo, 2000, for a recent summary of findings and issues

with use of the MMPI series, as well as other objective

assessments, in such populations). However, Dana (2000a)

asserts that these apparent etics should really be

classified as "anglo emics" or "psuedoetics" (p.10) as they

have not established their universal application and

ability to provide information that can be validly

interpreted in various cultures. Dana, in this same

chapter, proposes a decision tree for selecting assessments

according to the acculturation status or cultural

orientation of the individual and whether or not a diagnosis is a necessary outcome of the assessment.

It can be seen, therefore, that the current atmosphere concerning cultural research and practice requires an investigator to understand not only the observable differences in behavior and environment between cultures, but also to understand: (a) the nature of culture in general, (b) the processes by which cultures are acquired or change (i.e., acculturation and related constructs), and (c) the particular cultural status (i.e., ethnic or cultural identity, as well as degree of acculturation or cultural identification) of those individuals with whom the investigator plans to work (be they research participants or clients). The remainder of this chapter will attempt to address these three areas. It will, therefore, provide a definitional overview of culture in order to further understand its nature. It will then discuss methods by which culture is acquired or changed within individuals in order to determine the most accurate and problem-free conceptualization of cultural change. Finally, it will identify a key aspect of culture that appears to be necessary for a competent understanding of the affects of

culture on individuals, but also appears not to have a substantial history of investigation in the literature.

Culture

The word "culture" most probably derives from the Indo-European root represented by Claiborne (1989) as KWEL-1, meaning to "turn, move around, hence dwell…" (p.145). Through its Latin root *colere*, it relates to cult, cultivate and though somewhat less straightforward, colony (Claiborne, 1989, p.145; Kellerman, 1981). In short, linguistic and etymological definitions of the word, therefore, relate to a religious group or identity, movement within a space, to grow or foster, and to relate to others within a defined spatial context. Taken together, one may understand the word to consist of close relations with a common land, certain people, and shared spirituality.

Interestingly, the Indo-European root is related to a space/time concept, meaning "far in space or time" (begetting tele- and paleo-) that is no longer directly associated with the word (Claiborne, 1989, p.146). Given this separation, culture could also be defined in the negative as being not related to distant time or not consisting of things that are spatially distant (i.e, a

culture is experienced *now*, and to have or behold a culture, one must be in its midst or at least near it—physically or psychologically).

Moreover, etymologically culture consists of the way in which aspects of the land, people, and spirit(s) *relate*, not the aspects themselves. Culture is a web or construct, in which the thing itself is the manner in which certain observables (here being the land, people, and spirit) relate. Just as intelligence is often conceived of as being the way certain behaviors (or the performance on certain tests) relate, but not necessarily the behaviors themselves, so culture is defined by the way in which specific observable aspects of interactions relate to other aspects. The presence of a child, for instance, in a given society does not necessarily speak to anything about the culture of that society. The way in which people of that society *relate* to that child, however, does.

Beyond etymological definitions, there are also operational definitions of culture. Operational definitions of culture, however, appear to number in the hundreds (Cuellar, 2000a; Marsella & Yamada, 2000). Indeed, noting the diversity of the various definitions of culture leads Oetting, Donnermeyer, Trimble, and Beauvais (1998) to

conclude that, "it is probably impossible to define culture in a way that is fully acceptable to all scientists" (p. 2081). These authors proceed to list the qualities of culture that seem to be inherent in many of the definitions:

> 1) Culture is a body of knowledge, attitudes, and skills for dealing with the physical and social environment that are passed on from one generation to the next. 2) Cultures have continuity and stability, because each generation attempts to pass the culture on intact. 3) Cultures also change over time as the physical, social, political, and spiritual environments change. (p. 2081)

This definition appears to closely mirror the etymological definition previously discussed. It appears to cover most of the aspects typically associated with a culture that I have read in my own survey of definitions during my education. Though the authors do note the importance of symbolism in the paragraph preceding the one from which the quote is taken, one aspect of culture, however, does appear to be under acknowledged: the projective or symbolic aspect.

Whiting and Child (1953) proposed that culture is composed of two basic systems: maintenance and projective. The maintenance system is composed of the activities that members of the culture engage in to ensure that the culture (and its members as a whole) survives. These are methods and rules for acquiring food and other resources, raising children and providing rules for good and bad behavior (taboos) that must be followed in order to maintain the group as a cohesive and identifiable culture. The maintenance system is, in short, that thing that creates or shapes lives (including behavior and personality); in Gestalt terms it is the ground that bounds, moulds, and presents the figure of the person. This is the system that is explicitly identified by Oetting, et al.(1998).

The symbolic or projective system of culture is composed of those activities that members of the culture engage in which are designed primarily to relay the meanings that the inhabitants of the culture apply to their lives. Moreover, it is the mechanism for expressing the identity of the culture and of its individual members. It is composed of religion, art, ceremony, and stories (the latter being more than just obvious fictional tales; rather they are the narratives, sometimes immersed in metaphor but

sometimes described as fact, that the culture or person employs to create order and express the basic needs of life). This projective system has been the object of study for many cultural anthropologists and psychologists researching and writing in cross-cultural situations (see, e.g., Campbell, 1949; Eliade, 1959; Freud, 1950; Geertz, 1973).

When this symbolic system of culture is acknowledged explicitly and combined with the definition of Oetting, et al.(1998), I believe a complete definition should read:

1) Culture is *constituted by a system of meanings, constructs, or beliefs,*[1] *which support* a body of knowledge, attitudes, and skills for dealing with the physical, social, *and spiritual* environment that are passed on from one generation to the next. 2) Cultures have continuity and stability, because each generation attempts to pass the culture on intact. 3) Cultures also change over time as the physical, social, political, and spiritual environments change (additions are italicized).

---

[1] In my theoretical background, these three terms reflect an ontology, or way of being-in-the-world. In this sense culture is an ontology; an ontology that sets the stage for a particular modality of belief, action, and knowledge.

A definition such as this incorporates the readily observable characteristics of a given group of people, as well as those meanings that are only tacitly revealed through the particular way in which the observables occur.

Now that culture has been defined, I will discuss in succession how it is that culture is retained or passed on through generations, as well as at least one way that culture comes to change over time. The mode of cultural retention has been referred to as enculturation, while the mode of cultural change has been referred to as acculturation.

Enculturation

The process by which a culture is transmitted from one generation to another is referred to as enculturation. However, when amassing the literature for this review, I found that the word enculturation is used differently by very different sources. For instance, one article used the term enculturation in a manner that is similar to the use of cultural or ethnic identity (Rodgers-Adkinson, Ochoa, & Delgado, 2003). The authors suggested teachers assess for enculturation by asking parents of immigrant children what foods they prepare, what holidays are celebrated, how long the family has lived in the U.S., etc. In a plethora of

other articles (especially in the educational literature related to immigrants and disabilities), enculturation appears to be confounded with either indoctrination or the process of acculturation. These articles discuss the process by which a student moves from one idea of him- or herself into another idea of selfhood brought about by the inclusionary practices of the institution. Some of these practices included explicit teaching to the student, while others emphasized methods for relaying tacit knowledge (after more than a dozen or so articles, I lost count of the number of articles that appeared to confound enculturation and either indoctrination or acculturation).

As noted previously, enculturation is, according to many in the educational, psychological, and anthropological communities (see, e.g., Milstein & Lucic, 2004; Oetting, et al., 1998), the process by which a person takes on the worldview, methods for interaction, and knowledge-base of the culture that surrounds him or her. Taking on the worldview, methods for interaction, and knowledge-base of one's culture may occur unconsciously through mechanisms similar to introjection, or more consciously through overt observational learning and teaching. With the exception of those articles noted in the previous paragraph, most

authors appear to assume that enculturation deals specifically with the group into which one is born (or brought into near the time of birth).

The Oetting, et al.(1998) article does point out, however, that though most people agree that enculturation involves the intra-cultural transmission of the general contents of culture, there are many rather large disagreements concerning what specifically enculturation involves and how exactly it occurs. They note that the definitions available would generally assume some sort of social interaction is involved in enculturation, but there is substantial disagreement about whether enculturation is synonymous with socialization.

It is apparent that there is much disagreement about the form and process of enculturation. However, the function does appear to be agreed upon by most. Enculturation is the medium through which culture is transmitted from one generation within the culture to subsequent generations of that same culture.

Acculturation

Many social scientists believe that, when two cultures meet (as when a person or group of people migrate to a new land), a process known as acculturation occurs. When

seeking to review the literature pertaining to acculturation, one must come to terms with the size of the available research from which to draw information. The study of acculturation, and the processes by which it progresses, maintains a large literature base. Indeed, I conducted a search through *PsycINFO_1887 to present*—the American Psychological Association's premier database of psychology related articles—that resulted in 5,194 records found when the keyword, "acculturation" was entered into the search query[2]. Querying the same keyword in *PsycFirst*—a search engine that limits records to the most recent three years of articles contained in the *PsycINFO_1887 to present* database—results in 1,221 records[3]. It could, therefore, be asserted that not only is the literature base quite large, it has recently been growing at a rapid pace. Given the size of this literature base, I have stayed with summary sources in this section as much as possible to avoid repetition, and so that the reader may verify citations with greater ease. For this same reason I selected the two

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[2] Query conducted on December 1, 2004.

[3] Query conducted on December 1, 2004.

theorists in acculturation who appear to have had the most influence in the field.

Acculturation has been defined as the prolonged contact between members of at least two different cultures with the result being that members of at least one of the groups adapts their behavior or belief systems to incorporate portions of one of the other cultures (Cuellar, 2000a). The process has been described in both linear and multidimensional manners. The theory and practice of contemporary approaches to assessing acculturation have been summed nicely by various authors in part III of Dana's (2000b) *Handbook of cross-cultural and multicultural personality assessment*(see specifically, Burlew, Bellow, & Lovett, 2000; Cuellar, 2000b; Roysircar-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000; and Trimble, 2000).

Dana (2000a) proposed the following categories of acculturation: traditional, transitional, marginal, bicultural, assimilated, and anglo based on his and others' writings and studies. These categories generally reflect a continuum from highest association and identification with culture of origin to highest association and identification with the host culture (or culture that dominates or subsumes the culture of origin). The notable exception is

the difference between marginalized and bicultural individuals. Marginalized individuals are not accepted by (or do not accept) either the culture of origin or the host culture. Bicultural individuals appear to operate effectively in both the culture of origin and the host culture.

Berry's (see, e.g., Berry, 1980; Berry, 1997; Berry & Kim 1988; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki 1989; Berry & Sam, 2003) model of acculturation proposes four orientations and two dimensions. The four orientations or strategies for acculturation are: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Assimilation is in the process of discarding the old culture and assuming the qualities of the new or host culture. Integration involves becoming what Dana (2000a) called bicultural; in such an orientation the person seeks to operate in both the culture of origin and the host culture. Separation refers to an orientation that is similar to that called traditional in Dana's (2000a) conception. Marginalization, according to Berry would appear to be in accordance with the Dana's (2000a) acculturative category of the same name.

According to Berry in the various articles previously cited, each of the four orientations just discussed can occur in either or both of two value-oriented dimensions: (a) value of maintenance of cultural identity and practices, and (b) value of maintenance of relationships with other groups outside the culture of origin. These two dimensions allow for assessment of acculturation within a variety of the aspects involved in the person's identity and behavior. Berry's model does appear to be an improvement on previously existing unidimensional models and his model does appear to have influenced numerous researchers in the field.

Cuellar (2000a) lists 31 scales of acculturation developed between 1955 and 1995. The author writes that acculturation has been found to be a greater variable on scales of psychopathology than in general personality scales. Cuellar also writes that acquiescence has been found to vary between cultures and, therefore, is related to acculturation status, though the author also notes that high degree of within-group variation makes incautious generalization of such findings somewhat suspect.

Roysircar-Sodowsky and Maestas (2000), review the research on acculturative stress and measures of ethnic

identity. They conclude that acculturative stress, though manifesting differently in different groups and within the different stages of acculturation, is related to the generation post contact. First generation immigrants, therefore, manifest more acculturative stress than do their children and their children's children. Finally, they note that primary identification with the ethnic group of the individual decreases over the course of generations, though this decrease "only appears to affect the behavioral aspects of ethnic identity and not its internal, affective state" (p. 156). This finding, it could be argued, indicates that those people who acculturate may do so primarily through public behavior, while personal belief systems, values, and emotion may remain affected by the culture of origin long after the individual (or group of individuals) otherwise appears to have assimilated.

However, there are some who critique the acculturation construct. Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) provide a summary of the various critiques of acculturation—one which mirrors the various other critical summaries I read in the course of preparing this literature review (see, e.g.,

Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; Swartz-

Kulstad & Martin, 1999)[4]. They note that acculturation

models (which, in the article, they refer to as adaptation

models) are varied, but have several theoretical

difficulties. The first difficulty found with acculturation

theory is that minority and majority cultures are conceived

of as being on opposite ends of one or more continua, thus

they are always in polar opposition[5]. A second difficulty

found with acculturation theory deals with the case of

bicultural models in particular. Oetting and Beauvais

(1990-1991b), note that there is generally a lack of

acknowledgement that a person can vary in the degree or

type of association *within* one culture itself (in addition

to variance *between* cultures)[6].

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[4] Interestingly, in this article Oetting and Beauvais seem to
cite their model, called orthogonal identification, as a
model of cultural adaptation. As will be discussed in the
section that follows, Oetting later separates orthogonal
identification from adaptationist or acculturative models
as being a qualitatively different entity.

[5] But the study by Roysircar-Sodowsky and Maestas, (2000)
shows that this assumption of the bicultural models—as well
as the unidirectional models, is not always true. Only
some characteristics were found to acculturate, while
others lasted substantially longer.

[6] This *within* group variation was, as discussed previously in
this section, cited by Cuellar (2000) in that author's

The final difficulty that Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) find with acculturation theories is that these theories may often maintain either overt or inherited prejudices, which assume that an individual from a minority culture will gradually assume the values, beliefs, and actions of the majority culture while reducing or dispensing with their affiliation to the minority culture because of some sort of greater value being placed on the majority culture. Indeed, given the widespread ethnic, national, and political turmoil in the world during the 1990's and early 21st century (ranging from various genocidal and ethnic cleansing campaigns, to the rise of nationalism in regions of various countries, to antisocial gang-related behavior, to the increasingly divisive political situation in the U.S.), in which acculturation or even integration cannot be said to be the goal of many cultures, this criticism seems to me to be especially poignant. It is reminiscent of a question about civilization in general raised by Sigmund Freud in his work *Civilization and Its Discontents,* published in 1930:

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caution about making generalizations about a variable that was found to vary *between* groups (acquiescence).

The fateful question for the human species seems to me

to be whether and to what extent their cultural

development will succeed in mastering the disturbance

of their communal life by the human instinct of

aggression and self-destruction….Men have gained

control over the forces of nature to such an extent

that with their help they would have no difficulty in

exterminating one another to the last man…. And now it

is to be expected that the other of the two 'Heavenly

Powers,' eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert

himself in the struggle with his equally immortal

adversary [the death instinct]. But who can foresee

with what success and with what result? (Freud, 1989,

pp. 111-112)

The use of Freud's quotation to support this critique of

acculturation theory, it should be noted, is not an

indictment of minority cultures or a placing of greater

value on any one culture over another. Rather, it is an

attempt to make explicit the assumption that there is or

can be such things as long-term acculturation,

assimilation, or maintenance of a bicultural attitude is,

in the end, an assumption. As is noted in the text from

which I drew Freud's quotation, Freud added the last

sentence in the second edition in 1931, "when the menace of Hitler [and National Socialism] was already beginning to be apparent" (Editor's note to Freud, 1989, p. 112). The nationalistic zeal of the middle 20th century appears to have resurfaced in a variety of forms (if indeed it ever went away) only some 50 years later. The greater history of humankind does not clearly support a belief in the long-term peaceful cohabitation of separate yet integrated groups of peoples, nor does it necessarily support a trend toward unification of cultural identity.

It should also be noted, however, that the critiques of acculturation just described are not universally accepted by researchers in the field. There are, indeed, many who remain supportive of the acculturation construct (see, e.g., the rejoinder to Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001, by Berry & Sam, 2003). They argue either (a) that key concepts within acculturation theories are either misunderstood or misrepresented by some critics, or (b) that the utility of acculturative assessment tools for clinical or research use remains, despite the various theoretical critiques of the construct (i.e., the empirical evidence supporting the validity and reliability of acculturation scales either

offsets or overrides most theoretical or political critiques of the construct underlying such scales).

Given the current debate in the literature regarding acculturation, a summary of other similar constructs used in explaining the phenomena of cultural contact would help to identify whether other constructs might be as useful as the acculturation construct, but which at the same time avoid the current critiques associated with the acculturation construct.

Cultural Identification

Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) propose that cultural identification should be the object of study when one wants to understand a person of a minority culture who is operating in contact with a larger, majority culture. However, these authors define cultural identification very specifically. According to these authors, in order to understand what cultural identification is, one must first understand what it is not.

Cultural identification is not ethnic identity, nor is it cultural identity. Ethnic identity, as Oetting describes with others, is a construct that is generally tied to what used to be referred to as a race (Oetting, et al., 1998, p. 2086). These authors critique ethnic

identity as having somewhat many and disparate methods for determining whether a person belongs to a given ethnicity (e.g., geographic location in Hispanic Americans determines whether someone is one or another of the sub-types of this ethnic category, but blood quantum is used to determine tribal membership in many Alaska Natives and American Indians). They note that the labels for ethnic identities may include too many subgroups (e.g., Koreans and Japanese are both often included together in studies on Asian Americans, but as I learned as a child, one should not mistake a Japanese immigrant for someone from Korea as some might be greatly offended by this mistake). Ethnic labels may also, according to these authors, not sufficiently account for individuals of mixed ethnic backgrounds, and does not account for the fact that some people may, at various times, identify with one ethnic heritage while at other times state that they are of a different heritage.

Instead of ethnic identity, the authors appear to favor cultural identity. Cultural identity, as Oetting notes elsewhere, is the process of identifying as a person who belongs to a particular group, whether it is, "of a national culture, of the culture of religion, of the drug culture, or even… of a specific marriage" (Oetting, 1993).

In this conception of cultural identity, an ethnic identity is but one specific subtype of the many systems that can comprise a culture[7]. People (indeed, every single person) in this conception of cultural identity, maintain multiple cultural identities dispersed across a variety of levels. Furthermore, each of these multiple identities can become revealed depending on the social, physical, or spiritual situation at-hand.

Recalling the critique of bicultural adaptation models, in which individual variation within a given culture is often under acknowledged, Oetting discusses the difference between cultural identity and cultural identification. While cultural identity deals with a given type of identity (e.g., being a member of a particular corporation or being a member of a particular religion), cultural identification instead deals with the degree or strength of this identity (i.e., how strongly one values being a member, or participates as a member of a particular corporation or religion). Thus cultural identification is a measure of within-culture variation.

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[7] If one recalls the definition of culture that began this proposal, no requirement of ethnic or racial similarity is required to have a culture.

Oetting's cultural identification model is, furthermore, orthogonal in nature. Each cultural identity maintained by a given person is orthogonal to any other cultural identity the person may maintain. Being orthogonal, variation in strength or degree within any one cultural identity is not related to such variation in any other cultural identity. If, therefore, people begin to express more and more cultural identification within one culture, such increase in identification does not require any commensurate change in identification with any other culture.

Figure 1 presents Oetting's model, as depicted in Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) with some alterations[8]. The figure contrasts the orthogonal nature of cultural identification with the various acculturation models previously discussed. While Oetting and Beauvais note that, "the diagrams are ours and may unjustly simplify these [non-orthogonal] models," (p. 660) the figure does help to illustrate the differences between the orthogonal

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[8] Alterations include the deletion of the, "Alienation," model and changing labels of some of the diagrams from culture-specific labels (e.g., "Native American," "Hispanic") to more general ones (e.g., "Host Culture," "Culture A").

nature of cultural identification and other acculturation models.

The left side of the figure presents both the traditional unidimensional models of acculturation and more contemporary multidimensional models. The assumptions of unidimensional models—that an individual from a minority culture will adopt the culture of the majority or dominant culture—is depicted by the unidirectional arrows in the upper left portion of the figure. The multidimensional model presented (in the lower left portion of the figure) allows for an individual to experience acculturation in different aspects of their being. It also allows for greater flexibility in the acculturation goals or outcomes of the individual (i.e., there appears to be less strong of an assumption that the person will eventually assimilate). However, as Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) note, "people are still placed somewhere *between* cultures" (p. 661). Therefore, these models still place two cultures on opposite ends of the continua, while locating the entirety of the individual along these continua. The two cultures are still in opposition and these models still require that movement toward one culture on a given continuum results in movement away from the other culture.

The right side of the figure presents the bicultural models and the orthogonal cultural identification model. Oetting and Beauvais note (1990-1991b) that, although bicultural models allow for, "high levels of involvement in both cultures," (p 661) at the same time, they do not generally acknowledge that there can be differences in the degree or strength to which a person holds a given cultural identity. Furthermore, the apparent goal in bicultural models is to become fully bicultural.

The bottom right diagram in Figure 1 presents the orthogonal model of cultural identification. As Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) point out:

Any pattern, any combination of cultural identification, can exist and… any movement or change is possible. There can be highly bicultural people, unicultural identification, high identification with one culture and medium identification with another, or even low identification with either culture. (p. 662)

The diagram (in this instance) is presented as a three-dimensional square. The term, "Anomic" represents a person who has no (or extremely little) identification with any of the cultures (A, B, and C) depicted. The 90-degree angles

of the square represent the orthogonal (non-related) nature

of cultural identification between the cultures presented.
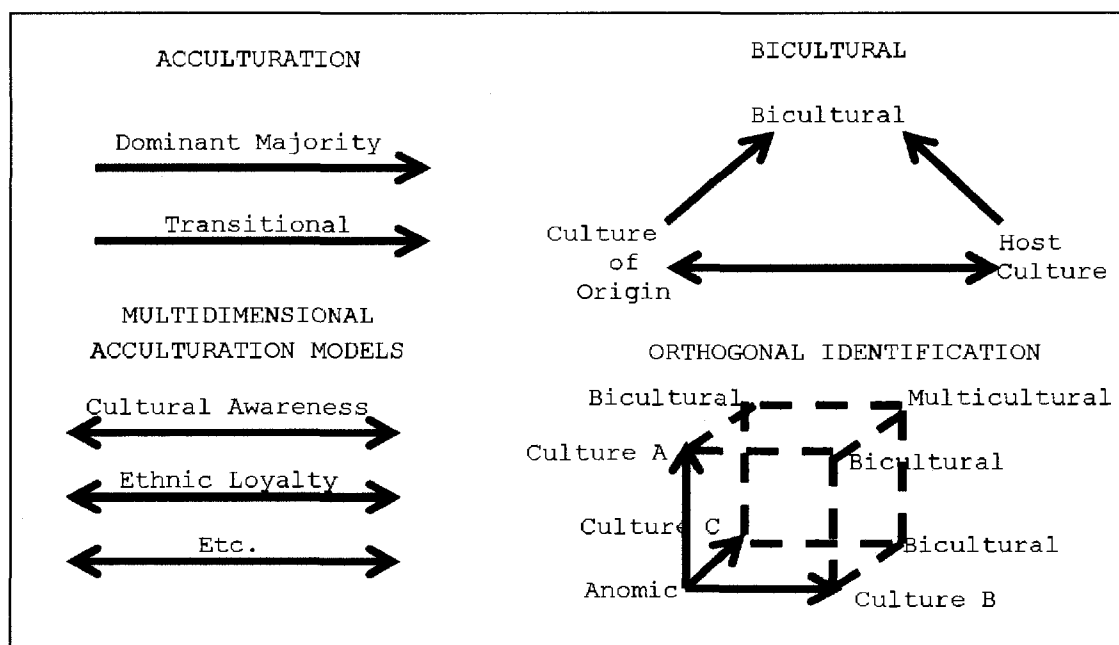
Figure 1. The orthogonal nature of cultural identification, from
Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) with alterations.

The orthogonal nature of cultural identification

allows Oetting's model to explain many of the observations

previously explained by acculturation (adaptationism),

ethnic identity, and cultural identity theories, without

maintaining the difficulties or controversies that seem to

accompany these previous theories. Cultural identification

theory, furthermore, seems to be more flexible than

previously discussed theories. Finally, cultural

identification theory seems to maintain more explanatory

power when Freud's question and the history of humanity—

all-to-filled with between- and within-group conflict—is considered. Why is the question as to whether or not human groups can co-exist peacefully still an open question? Because the conditions by which human beings assume different levels of cultural identification are not set out in predetermined pathways, such as one might assume from theories of acculturation. Rather, the conditions for cultural identification are dependent on situational factors. These situational factors, in turn, are determined in large part by the chance interactions of humans with each other in each of individual, societal, and historical contexts, as well as a variety of occurrences in the natural environment, which no human has yet to infallibly predict.

Measurement of Cultural Identification. In order to quantitatively measure cultural identification, Oetting and Beauvais have developed the Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale (OCIS; 1990-1991a), which is designed to be amenable to use in a wide variety of cultural identities and has been used in Mexican American (Oetting & Beauvais, 1990-1991b; Oetting, Swaim, & Chiarella, 1998), Native American (Oetting & Beauvais, 1990-1991b; Oetting, et al., 1998), Asian American (Johnson, Wall, Guanipa,

Terry-Guyer, & Velasquez 2002)[9], and African American

(Strunin & Demissie, 2001) populations. When used in a

cross-cultural/multicultural environment with people of

minority cultural heritage, factor analysis of the OCIS

indicates that--at least in Mexican American adolescents,

American Indian adolescents, and Asian American young

adults--the scale has two factors: minority identification

and majority identification (Oetting, et al., 1998; Johnson

et al., 2002). Furthermore, and at least among Mexican

American and American Indian adolescents, these two factors

themselves contain three latent factors each: traditions,

lifestyle, and success (Oetting, et al., 1998). No

differentiation between the participants' view of their own

individual cultural identities and their view of their

families' cultural identities were found in these two

populations.

Criterion related validity has been explored via

correlation of OCIS scores to specific questions

distributed to a sample of adolescents from a "Southwestern

[American] Indian tribe" regarding the amount and kind of

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[9] Specifically, the subjects were of Chinese, Korean, or
Japanese heritage.

culturally related activities they have experienced

(Oetting & Beauvais, 1990-1991b). Construct validity, both

convergent and discriminate, has also been explored in a

sample of Asian American young adults (Johnson, et al.,

2002). The former study revealed a pattern that suggests

that the scale does indeed discriminate between different

cultural identities by showing higher correlations between

American Indian cultural identification scores on the OCIS

and specific activities commonly associated with an

American Indian culture (e.g., following tribal customs)

while simultaneously revealing low correlations between

White American or Anglo cultural identification scores on

the OCIS with these same activities (again, e.g., following

tribal customs) and *vice versa* (i.e., higher correlations

between White American or Anglo cultural identification

scores and activities commonly associated with this

culture—such as voting in elections—than between these same

activities and American Indian cultural identification

scores). The latter study—that conducted among Asian

American young adults—analyzed construct validity by

studying the association of OCIS scores with the Suinn-Lew

Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA). The

results of this study support construct validity by finding

that OCIS subscales distinguish between high acculturation and low acculturation Asian American individuals via the degree to which they hold either high White American or Anglo cultural identification scores or high Asian American cultural identification scores on the OCIS. Furthermore, and as would be expected, the number of years a participant has lived in the U.S. is highly correlated with their score on the White American or Anglo cultural identification score on the OCIS, but not significantly correlated with a person's Asian American cultural identification score on the OCIS.

Finally, this same study (Johnson, et al., 2002) revealed that the OCIS measures a construct related to, but different than that measured by the SL-ASIA. The SL-ASIA has been studied and largely confirmed to be a measure of acculturation (see Johnson et al., 2002, for a summary of these studies). The OCIS White American or Anglo cultural identification score and the overall SL-ASIA score maintained a high degree of correlation, and therefore functioned similarly when compared to country of origin and years lived in the U.S. (as a measure of acculturation, high scores on the SL-ASIA are indicative of being highly aligned with the host—and in this case White American or

Anglo—culture). The OCIS Asian American cultural identification score and the overall SL-ASIA score were significantly negatively correlated. However, there were no significant correlations between the OCIS Asian American cultural identification score and either country of origin or years lived in the U.S. If the OCIS were simply another scale measuring acculturation, one would expect scores on the OCIS Asian American cultural identification scale to be significantly negatively correlated to country of origin and years lived in the U.S. (i.e., it should express the opposite relationship to these variables if it is indeed measuring the opposite end of a continuum of acculturation). Therefore, and at least in this study, the OCIS appears to measure a construct (cultural identification) that is distinct from the construct called acculturation and measured by the SL-ASIA.

Given that the OCIS appears to be applicable to many cultures, has support in the literature for its validity as a measure of cultural identification, and is based on a theory that accounts for the observations of previous theories without maintaining these previous theories' potential difficulties, it should be a good tool to use to assess people of minority cultures who have come to the US.

However, Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) do note
that an investigation has not been conducted that describes
what the items on this scale mean to the person taking the
assessment. While the authors note this absence of
knowledge with respect to only one phrase contained in the
assessment ("way of life"), other terms used in the
assessment are also uninvestigated and could carry
different meanings for different individuals (such as the
terms, "success," and "traditions")[10]. Furthermore, these
uninvestigated terms are an integral part of the scale. In
reviewing the literature, I could find no article
subsequently published that addressed this topic.

The Importance of Meaning

While the lack of understanding of the meanings
ascribed to these terms may not at first appear to be of
great importance for many uses of the scale, two different
approaches to the interpretation of human behavior indicate
that such an understanding is vital to the creation of a
truly multicultural (and, indeed, cross-cultural)

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[10] The authors do acknowledge, at least for the phrase, "way
of life," that individuals likely define the phrase
differently.

psychology. Both of these approaches focus on what Whiting and Child (1953) called the projective system. They both deal with cross-cultural research in which meaning is applied to certain behaviors.

In an interesting text that summarizes studies on the expression of emotions in different cultures and languages, Wierzbicka (1999) indicates that researchers need to be cautious about how exactly they define emotions. She asserts this need for caution because the words used to describe a particular expression or emotional state in one culture contain denotations and connotations that do not necessarily generalize to other cultures. To illustrate: Wierzbicka (1999) identifies several psychological universals related to the conception of emotions across cultures, they are: feel, feel good, feel bad, smile/laugh, cry/weep, emotive interjections, emotive terms, fear-like, anger-like, shame-like, emotions described via external bodily symptoms, and emotions described via internal bodily images. She notes throughout the text that researchers cannot state that fear is a universal emotion, rather they can say that there is a group of emotions that are fear-like. The distinction may, by some, be construed as mincing words. However, the German *angst* is a fear-like

condition that is truly experienced differently than the simple state of English dread or fear, both of which are common translations for the word (indeed, even a translation which combines the two into fear/dread fails to relay a comprehensive understanding of *angst*). Thus fear-like feelings can be universal states; but fear itself cannot.

Similarly Wierzbicka (1999) explains that the behavior of raising one's eyebrows has been identified as generally indicating surprise. This, however, does not cover all meanings of the behavior. She, instead, proposes it to mean "I want to know more" or, more exhaustively, "I know something now—I want to know more" (pp. 201-206). So the emotion felt during this instance can be generalized across those that express this behavior as "I know something now—I want to know more," but not surprise.

Wierzbicka's (1999) focus on the culturally encapsulated nature of facial behavior can be extrapolated to more complex behavior as well. Kim (2000) asserts that, "the greatest variation across cultures exists in the area of phenomenology" (p. 283). Kim then proceeds to cite an example in which the phenomenology of a U.S.-based research group initially proposed a faulty interpretation of a

subject's behavior during a cross-cultural research project.

In the study cited in Kim (2000), a team of researchers from the U.S. and a team of Japanese researchers both set out to understand parental disciplinary methods. One incident involved a Japanese mother who stated that a child did not have to eat the vegetables that the mother had just previously been attempting to get the child to eat. The U.S. team interpreted the response of this Japanese mother to her child as "giving up after a mild attempt at persuasion" (as cited in Kim, 2000, p. 284). However, the Japanese team interpreted this same behavior as an attempt to make the child feel guilty.

Kim (2000) goes on to explain that, within the context of Japanese culture, such a statement would indeed be an attempt to make a child feel guilty for his or her actions. Furthermore, the type of guilt that the mother was attempting to get the child to feel is conceived of as a healthy response to an aversive situation in Japanese culture. The difference then, between the U.S. team and the Japanese team was at the level of applying meaning to the situation. Both teams had observed essentially the same

behavior, but the meaning construed from the behavior was substantially different.

The differences between the U.S. and Japanese teams occur at the same level of understanding that Wierzbicka (1999) cites as differing across cultures: the making or drawing-out of meaning from an observed event. This meaning-making level occurs at a phenomenological level: the level of affective and emotional response. Kim (2000) asserts that, to several East Asian populations, "feeling" serves as the foundation of existence and then proceeds to restate Descartes' statement from an East Asian perspective as, "I *feel* therefore I am" (p.279). However, it should be noted that many Western theorists and researchers have long maintained a similar belief system: that the emotional or feeling states of the human determine the rational conclusions that the person will develop. This group of people includes those who study phenomenology. The methods, intentions, and assumptions of phenomenology likely require brief explanation.

However, prior to turning to a description of phenomenology, I believe it necessary to point out an underlying similarity between three superficially different phenomenon discussed so far within this proposal. I

noted, when discussing definitions of culture, that Oetting, et al. (1998) did not appear to have explicitly included the symbolic aspects of culture in their definition of this construct. Also, I previously discussed that Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991) note that they do not know what at least one term ("way of life") on the Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale means to those completing the scale. Finally, Roysircar-Sodowsky and Maestas, (2000) found that in acculturating individuals the primary identification with the minority ethnic group of the individual decreases, though this decrease "only appears to affect the behavioral aspects of ethnic identity and not its internal, affective state" (p. 156). Current research on acculturation finds that overt behaviors based on the maintenance cultural system adapts, but the person's phenomenological (i.e., affective states, belief systems, etc.) aspects based on the symbolic cultural system may not.

As evidenced by the increasing efforts to assess acculturation and cultural identification, there is in the multicultural/cross-cultural research community a progression toward greater understanding of non-Western or minority cultures. It could be argued that when a single

researcher or small research group enters another culture,
a process similar to acculturation (or change in cultural
identification) occurs. As predicted by acculturation
research and revealed by the progression of assessment in
cross-cultural/multicultural situations, the behavior of
psychological researchers who expose themselves to other
cultures has indeed changed. Have their beliefs changed as
well? Are they willing to explore cultural phenomena from a
perspective that—similar to many non-Western cultures—
emphasizes meaning-making or feeling over that of behavior
or thought processes? The comparatively small amount of
phenomenological research pertaining to scales of
acculturation and cultural identification would indicate
that Western researchers have not reached such a stage of
acculturation or such a degree of change in cultural
identification that they hold such investigations to be as
important as those others being performed. But such an
investigation is vital if the field is to become truly
relevant across and within cultures. Filling the lacuna
concerning the meanings people ascribe to the items on the
OCIS, therefore, would not only be a valuable addition to
the literature, but it would also serve as an example for
researchers in the field to follow in altering their own

cultural identification sufficiently enough to more fully understand the people from other cultures whom researchers are studying.

Chapter 2 Phenomenology

Phenomenological investigations have been used to understand the experiences of a variety of peoples and topics. Recent examples of such research includes projects as varied as satisfaction of older female widows (Porter, 2005), Jewish identity (Friedman, Friedlander, & Blustein, 2005), Western representations of tantric yoga (Starcher, 2004), and leadership experiences of executives during business mergers and acquisitions (Bullock, 2004). The continued use of phenomenological research methods and attention to the phenomenology of events is evident in that the *PsycINFO_1887 to present* search from which the preceding examples were drawn (key word: phenomenolog*) resulted in 12,118 records returned[11].

Phenomenology is a method of investigation that seeks to understand events (e.g., behaviors, verbalizations, natural phenomena) in manner that is as true to the event as possible. However, any event is co-created by both the thing itself and also the observer of the thing. All

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[11] Query conducted on February 5, 2005.

events are pregnant (to use a term that occurs often in phenomenological writings) with meaning. The meaning and the event are one complex entity. In phenomenology there is no distinction, in the end, between subject and object; both are required to construct the event. As Valle, King, and Halling (1989) write, "objects have their basis and are sustained by the constituting power of consciousness" (p.11); the presence of the object and the consciousness of the observer act together to create the phenomenon. Hence the use of the term phenomenon rather than some other term such as: action, object, etc.

Just because all happenings are complex, co-created phenomena that are pregnant with meaning, it does not follow that one could not peel away layers of meaning in order to come to a truer understanding of the thing itself. Indeed, phenomenologists would argue that the lack of attempts to pare away the assumptions and meanings that people apply to situations is precisely what often causes poor science. For example, researchers that conduct studies on the psychological adjustment of a person from one culture who has recently moved to another culture by giving this person a test of acculturation run a substantial risk of misinterpreting their data if these

researchers do not attempt to understand the tools they are using from the point of view of the person being studied. Such researchers may indeed complete their research, meet common standards for good research practice, and achieve statistically significant results, but contain fatal flaws in their interpretation of the data because they did not understand the event (the taking of the acculturation assessment) from the point of view of the participant. In this instance, the researchers did not peel away their own meanings from the event and, therefore, what they witnessed and interpreted was a substantially different event than the participant witnessed.

To peel away their own meanings from an event, phenomenologists engage in what is called bracketing (Polkinghorne. 1989, p. 51). In the process of bracketing, the phenomenologist identifies key meanings associated with the event, and then determines whether these key meanings are restricted only to themselves, are apparent to others, or are connected with other associated meanings that also require identification and removal via bracketing. The phenomenologist repeats the bracketing procedure until a new meaning emerges which is thought to reflect the lived-experience of the event, or the researcher believes that he

or she cannot bracket out any more information without causing the event to lose all identifiable meaning (and, therefore, cease to be an event).

Many phenomenologists also believe in multiple, non-exclusive truths. They follow Gadamer's (1989) analysis that truth is inextricably dependent upon the method taken to identify it. In other words, the methods researchers select to understand the phenomenon at hand necessarily reflect their own perceptions of that phenomenon. Furthermore, the methods themselves are generally creations of a science which has incorporated the perceptions and biases of the culture in which it was created. Therefore, the application of a method even with the best of intention, will necessarily create a particular type of truth and it is left to the researcher to identify where and how this truth was formed by the method taken. If the researcher fails to do this, then one runs the risk of mistaking one of many truths for the one universal truth.

Since there are many truths, phenomenologists therefore prefer to write of the fruitfulness of a given method. It is not so important as to how well a method brings out a given truth. Rather, what is important is that the method be fruitful; that it yield results that are

meaningful to both the researcher and either the participants involved in the study, or those who will eventually be involved with the results of the research (e.g., the eventual clients of a therapeutic intervention, which is currently being researched).

In such a phenomenological approach then, the research project is judged on the applicability to the population or event at hand, rather than a set a universally predetermined methods or standards for determining significance. Phenomenological research is produced and is used so long as it is useful for understanding or (in the case of a therapeutic intervention) treating a given phenomenon. As times change and the experience of a given phenomenon changes in the general public, or different phenomenologies emerge with greater utility, older phenomenologies become less useful. What is created in the research field, therefore, could be likened to Adam Smith's marketplace of ideas.

It is important to note the connection between phenomenology and Eastern—particularly Hindu and Buddhist—philosophies. Several prominent existential-phenomenologists have come to conclusions or developed concepts that bear similarities to Hindu and Buddhist

conceptions on existence. These existential-phenomenologists include Sartre, Heidegger, Levinas, and Nietzsche.

In his *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 1993), Sartre discusses a state of existence he calls Bad Faith. This state comes into existence when people attempt to ignore the reality of a given situation, or attempt to stifle their beliefs to please another. As will be discussed in the next chapter, this Bad Faith, though maintaining a Western bent, is similar in fashion to the Hindu notion of *dharma*.

Heidegger's seminal phenomenological work *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1996) presents a conceptualization of existence that I distinctly recall being reminded of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy while reading *Being and Time* during my preparation for my Master's degree. Rather serendipitously, when preparing for this dissertation, I unintentionally came across a source (Walsh, 1988) that not only cites phenomenology as being one Western method that is amenable to use in Eastern psychological research because of the confluence of phenomenology and Eastern modes of understanding reality, but also quotes Heidegger as stating, "If I understand… [Zen master D.T. Suzuki]

correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all of my writings" (as cited in Walsh, 1988, p. 557).

Throughout his writings, though particularly in *Totality and Infinity* (Levinas, 1969), Emmanuel Levinas's phenomenologies come to the conclusion that, during the fundamental moments of our lives--those moments which provide the deepest meanings--we are called by our relationship to the face of the Other out of our egos—our very selves—and into a direct relationship with the Other (both human and God), which is always more than we can comprehend in our daily existence. This breaking of the ego and entering a state of existence beyond the mundane social world holds nearly uncanny resemblance to the experiences in the upper *cakras* of the *Raja* yoga, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Finally, careful interpretation of some of the writings of Nietzsche reveals several similarities to Hindu and Buddhist conceptions of existence. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche (1966) discusses his analysis of the history of humanity and determines that good and evil are concepts that are always relative to, and manufactured by, the times. He finds no innate distinction between good and evil in a reality existing beyond the human being's will to

force events into this dichotomy. The Hindu Krisna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (Mitchell, 2000) is both creator and destroyer. To the Hindu faithful, good and evil are complimentary dual aspects of the same existence. As the Hindu progress in their spiritual path, they move beyond good and evil. Nietzsche (1967), furthermore, believed in eternal recurrence and wrote in a passage reminiscent of both Hindu and Buddhist thought:

> To endure the idea of the recurrence one needs: freedom from morality; new means against the fact of pain (pain conceived as a tool, as the father of pleasure; there is no cumulative consciousness of displeasure); the enjoyment of all kinds of uncertainty, experimentalism, as a counterweight to this extreme fatalism; abolition of the concept of necessity; abolition of the 'will'; abolition of 'knowledge-in-itself.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, abolition of the will and abolition of knowledge-in-itself are the intentions of the Hindu practicing Raja yoga. Indeed, the similarities in this passage between Nietzsche and Hindu faith exceed these two abolishments, but space considerations for this section probably require that I

terminate the list of similarities at this time, believing

enough have been offered that the reader will understand

the confluence of many phenomenological authors with

Eastern philosophies.

Chapter 3 Cultural Competency and Asian Indians

In 2000, 1,899,599 people in the United States who took part in the Census reported being at least partially of Asian Indian descent (Barnes & Bennett, 2002). Over 1,670,000 of these reported Asian as their only race. This group is the third largest group constituting the Asian racial identity category on the census (behind Chinese and Filipino; Barnes & Bennett, 2002). Furthermore, Asian Indians were the fastest growing Asian subgroup, more than doubling in total population between 1990 and 2000 (Chhabra, 2001). In addition, India has remained the largest country of origin for foreign exchange students since 2002, with 79,736 Asian Indian students attending US colleges and Universities in the 2003/2004 school-year (Gardner & Witherell, 2004). Clearly, there is a large and growing Asian Indian population in the U.S.

If, when they attempt to work with Asian Indians in the U.S., researchers or practitioners are to meet the guidelines for cultural competency discussed two chapters ago, familiarity with research on Asian Indian cultural identification patterns is required. What then is the current state of research regarding the acculturation or

cultural identification of Asian Indians in either

diasporic communities in general, or the United States

specifically?

Determining the extent of the current research is

difficult. This is due—at least in part—to the fact that

Asian Indians are not identified by a consistent

designation in the social science literature. They are

often referred to as one of: Asian Indians, South Asians

(which often includes people from Southeast Asian countries

as well), or simply Asians (which can include individuals

from the entire Asian continent). However, it is widely

known that there is great variation across Asiatic

nationalities and cultures concerning religious,

linguistic, political, economic, educational, and social

systems. Extrapolating (or interpolating, as the case may

be) psychological data to Asian Indians from other Asiatic

populations may be quite questionable. Indeed, given the

diversity within India itself, the term, "Asian Indian"

might be too generalized of a category.

Using databases to search behavioral and educational

works about this population is hampered by these multiple

designations. When trying to be specific about the

population in question, a rapid decrease in the available

literature occurs. Searching the *PsycINFO_1887 to present* database with the search terms Asian AND Indian AND cultur* resulted in 399 records. Searching South AND Asian AND cultur* resulted in 461 records. These totals combined are less than at least two Asian cultures with smaller populations (both the population of these cultures in the world in general, as well as in the US as immigrants or citizens; 1,115 records found for Korean AND American AND cultur*, while 1,373 for Japanese AND American AND cultur*)[12].

When the terms acculturation, cultural identity, ethnic identity, and cultural identification were searched, in turn, with the co-terms Asian AND Indian, the records found were 74, 71, 66, and 14 respectively[13]. Among the works located in each of these searches were: (a) repetitive records, (b) largely irrelevant works (i.e., works focusing on a specific disorder or topic with little cultural information pertaining to Asian Indians revealed or discovered), and (c) several in which Asian Indians were

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[12] I conducted the queries in this paragraph on February 5, 2005.
[13] I conducted the queries in this paragraph on February 5, 2005.

studied as a group which included other Asian populations and reported findings without subgroup breakdowns (so that results for Asian Indians cannot be distinguished from results of other subgroups, such as Chinese, Korean, etc.). What appears, therefore, is a convoluted and relatively limited literature base from which to draw information about this population. Caution should be taken then, when applying the findings of many of these studies to Asian Indians.

With this caveat in mind, the rest of this chapter will be divided into three parts. The first part will be devoted to a general description of Asian Indian peoples. This is done so that the reader might more fully understand the rather large differences in culture that are potentially present between Asian Indian diasporic communities and those of the mainstream Euro-American culture. Secondly, a review of the extant literature regarding acculturation in Asian Indian diasporic communities will be conducted so that the current state of research in the field with Asian Indians is revealed to the reader. Finally, the literature regarding the demographics and identity characteristics of Asian Indian diasporic communities (with particular emphasis on the U.S.) will be

discussed so that the reader will be able to understand how and in what ways Indian diasporic communities have established themselves in their host communities while at the same time retaining aspects of their culture of origin.

Asian Indians

According to the CIA World Factbook (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2005), the current borders of India encompass a land approximately 1/3 the size of the continental United States. The geography of the land includes wide expanses of plains, deserts, and high mountainous regions. The climate ranges from a tropical South to temperate Northern regions. The CIA Factbook estimates the population of India at over 1 billion people as of 2004. India maintains 15 official languages, Hindi being the most prevalent. Though English is not an official language, it is widely used in the population.

A religiously diverse nation, the Hindu faith is maintained by over 80% of the population, while Islam is followed by slightly over 12%. Christianity is the faith of 2.3% of the population, while Sikhs comprise just under 2% of Indians. Buddhists, Jains, and Parsis comprise together about 2.5% of the population (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2005).

Literacy rates vary widely between males (70.2%) and females (48.3). Life-expectancy at birth is, for the total population, 63.99 years. The purchasing power parity is estimated at $2,900 per-capita, which places it as 156th out of the 232 countries assessed by the CIA (the U.S. for comparison, is 3rd, with a $37,800 purchasing power parity). The labor force of the country is comprised of 60% agriculture, 17% industry, and 23% services. Ethnic composition of the country is listed as Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, and Mongoloid and other 3%. (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2005).

Consideration of these facts alone can reasonably lead one to conclude that the people of India live a life that is very different physically, socially, and spiritually from the average Euro-American life. However, these facts alone do not encompass the wide difference between Asian Indian cultures and that of Euro-Americans. A brief summary of the dominant Indian religion, Hinduism, is in order to more fully appreciate the vast differences between Asian Indian and Euro-American cultures.

While not all Indians are Hindu (a common misperception), a wide majority of them adhere to the Hindu faith. Just as the predominance of protestant Christianity

is widely accepted to have shaped (and continues to shape)
American society and culture, the predominance of the Hindu
faith has affected the social structure of India. Moreover,
it could easily be argued that the basic concepts of Hindu
spirituality constitute the grounds for a psychology
divergent from Euro-American psychology.

The Hindu conception of existence does not begin with
birth and end with death (by extension, the Buddhist faith
holds a similar notion to Hinduism). Rather, to the Hindu,
existence is a circle of birth and rebirth, the eventual
goal of which is to be reborn at successively higher levels
of the social strata until one has reached such a level
that one can extinguish the circle of birth forever. The
methods for extinguishing one's existence are called yogas
(suicide is no good, one would simply be reborn). A yoga is
a means of attempting to tie oneself to a higher plane of
existence (yoga derives from the Sanskrit yuj; "to yoke").

The Bhagavad Gita (Mitchell, 2000) sets forth the
several types of yogas common in the Hindu faith. Following
Campbell (2003), I will describe a few of them here: *Dharma*
yoga, *bhakti* yoga, *jnana* yoga, and *Raja* Yoga. Dharma yoga
is action yoga. It is the practice of following the fate
or duty prescribed to you at birth (*karma*). The action is

the *karma* while the pathway or fate prescribed at birth is one's *dharma*. In essence, it is also the practice of following the directives of one's superiors without question, since they are giving the direction out of their own *dharma* to *karma*. Importantly, this yoga is the practice of following one's fate and performing actions without care for the results of one's actions. Investment in the results, even out of a strong need to help others, is bad *dharma*. Bad *dharma* changes one's *karma* and the cycle of rebirth takes a turn for the worse.

Bhakti yoga is the yoga of devotion. In this one yoga all the characteristics of Western religions reside. Attendance at rituals, the use of images, prayer and worship, all of these are aspects of the single yoga of devotion. Loving god before all others is, contra to the West, only one path to the supernatural.

Jnana yoga, it could be asserted, is the pathway out of existence for the academic or intellectual person. This yoga involves the conscious reflection on the distinction between thought and action, mind and body, contemplator and contemplated. The participant in this yoga attempts to identify with the agent of all things (e.g., the participant is thought not action, mind not body). In such

a way the participant detaches oneself from all things physical and all emotions, which bind the participant to the physical world.

Raja yoga is a practice in the Hindu faith by which Hindus attempt to reach out of the experiential world, surpass the realm of God-in-energy (*Brahman-atman*) and God-in-heaven (*Isvara*) and become one with the source; this unification with the eternal light, is in turn the extinguishment of the light of existence. The practitioner of this type of yoga is trying to move through different *cakras*, each with their own existential realities. There are seven *cakras* in order from most basic needs through the ego-feeding and social realms to the realm of release from existence. According to Campbell (2003), at least two of them can be said to correspond to different psychological theories in Western sciences.

The second *cakra* concerns sex and desire or *kama* and is located in the genital area. All energy in this *cakra* is toward the experience of pleasure and any blocking of the acquisition of pleasure leads to psychological pain. Is this not, Campbell (2003) asks, essentially in concurrence with a major component of Freudian thought: the pleasure principle (see, e.g., Freud, 1990)?

The third *cakra*, that located at the level of the stomach, is concerned with aggression, power, and the assimilation of things. While Campbell (2003) finds connection with the common interpretation of Nietzsche's theories (see, e.g. Nietzsche, 1967; but please note my brief discussion of Nietzsche's similarity to Buddhist and Hindu philosophy in the Phenomenology chapter of this text) on the ultimate goal of humanity, I would suppose that this *cakra* could also be related to Freud's (1990) death instinct.

The *cakras* progress through the fourth, which is the first glimpse at the transcendental realm and introduction to the sound of God. The fifth *cakra* is centered on turning inward to cleanse the corporeal being and discard the physical separation between self and God. After discarding this false separation one reaches the sight of God in the sixth *cakra* located between the eyes. This is the final level of existence; one in which the self relates directly to the God. To pass to the seventh and highest *cakra*, one leaves existence behind, or steps out of the karmic path and does not step into another *dharma*. The distinction between self and God is lost, never to arise again.

These yogas reveal several differences between the Hindu and the Euro-American. The ultimate goal for the Hindu is to purge oneself of attachment to pleasure, while the ultimate goal of the Euro-American, as handed down through the dominance of Christianity, is to achieve an everlasting pleasure in a heaven. Indeed, the Hindu yogic notions of the renunciation of self, the detachment of the spoils of one's actions, and the Indian social systems that arose, at least in part, out of Hinduism (e.g., the Indian caste system, filial piety, arranged marriages) are in direct conflict with many Euro-American psychologies as well. This is not to say that Euro-American psychological explanations of behavior would not operate in Indian Asian populations. Pleasure drives, reinforcement, self-actualization, biological determinates all have their place in the Hindu construction of psychological health. Their place, however, is a state of (ultimately) inauthentic behavior; authentic behavior releases oneself from this world, not involves oneself more in it. Perhaps insane (in the original sense of this word: not mentally sanitary) behavior more precisely fits. Why, when the ultimate goal is to release oneself from continual rebirth in a world of suffering, would anyone in their right mind adhere to an

explanatory system which holds that the ultimate ruling principle of humanity is only one or a few of the lower *cakras*?

To the Euro-American reader the last few paragraphs might be viewed as being helpful in understanding spiritual differences between Asian Indians and Euro-Americans. Such readers, however, may balk at the notion that such a spirituality has any affect on the actual psychological structure of Asian Indians. Such readers would do well to examine an article by Sinha (1998), which summarizes some of the differences that came to light only recently, when Asian Indians began to move from a psychology based on Western constructs, to a psychology based on Hindu and Indian constructs. As in Hindu spirituality, only when one moves to the next *cakra* may one witness a different reality.

Sinha (1998) summarizes recent research in India by a variety of authors who are moving toward Indian conceptualizations of psychology based on the Hindu faith. Some of these are listed here. Process oriented management (i.e., dharma-oriented management) was found to produce less stress in Indian workers. In Indians, the idea of achievement involves not only personal success, but also

social and familial success. Indian self-concept is interdependent (rather than independent or dependent) and involves greater emphasis on group or social identity and roles than Euro-Americans. Indians are not predominantly collectivistic, nor individualistic (thus differentiating themselves not only from Euro-Americans, but also other Asian populations).

Acculturation in Diasporic Asian Indians

Farver, Bhadha, and Narang (2002) studied 170 Asian Indians in the United States. Half (85) of those studied were adolescents born in the United States, while the other half (85) consisted of one parent of each of the adolescents. The focus of study was to understand the "factors that may contribute to differences in acculturation among Asian Indian families" (p. 12) as well as how acculturation status affects self-esteem and school performance. The authors assessed demographic information, social class, and self-identification via completion of a questionnaire constructed for the project. Acculturation was assessed by adapting the Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire. Religiosity was assessed via self-report of familiarity with, and participation in, the religion by the participant. Self-Esteem was assessed in the adolescent

group by completion of the Adolescent Self-Perception
Profile. Results of the research were that males appeared
to have an integrative acculturation status in general,
while females appeared to have a tendency toward being
marginalized. An additional finding was that acculturation
status was related to self-esteem and school performance in
that integrated and bi-cultural adolescents maintained more
self-confidence and self-efficacy, and also performed
better in school than adolescents with other acculturation
styles. Finally, the authors note that acculturation status
was only partially associated with the length of time the
parents were present in the United States and that a
relationship between acculturation style and ethnic self-
identification was not supported by the results.

Mehta (1998) studied the relationship between
acculturation and mental health in Asian Indian immigrant
populations in the U.S. using the American International
Relations Scale and three measures of psychological well
being (or the lack thereof): a 22-item index of
psychological duress, a measure of acculturative stress,
and participants' self-report of life satisfaction and
psychological well-being. The author found that the more
Asian Indians expressed a feeling of acceptance by the host

country, the better their mental health. Furthermore, the author notes that this finding held constant regardless of time in the U.S., gender, age, and general socioeconomic status (SES). Another finding was that the more Asian Indians felt culturally oriented or associated with Americans, the better their mental well-being (again this finding was independent of years in the US and SES). Finally, language usage (either primarily English or primarily the language of origin) was not related to mental well-being.

Ghuman (1997) assessed the type of acculturation prevalent in a sample of adolescent second-generation immigrants from India to England. This sample was given an acculturation scale created by the researcher. The scale divides the acculturation status of the individual into two categories: traditional and acculturation. The former category is related to retention of Indian culture and the latter is related to the acquisition and maintenance of English culture. The author found that females tended toward the acculturation status to greater frequencies than did males. However, religion appeared to be a confounding factor, and indeed, Hindu and Sikh were much more likely than Muslim Indians to be in the acculturation category.

The author did find that adolescents whose parents held manual labor employment were placed in the traditional category with greater frequency than those adolescents whose parents held non-manual labor employment.

An article by Guglani, Coleman, and Sonuga-Barke (2000) explores the relationship between ethnic identity of adolescent females and the mental well-being of the adolescent's grandmother. The study was conducted in a sample of Asian Indian Hindu teenaged females from families that had immigrated to Great Britain. This study found that the more traditional the adolescent is (i.e., the more likely the adolescent is to report an ethnic identity that is solely Asian or Asian Indian, rather than also report a British identity as well) the more likely the grandmother is to report positive mental well-being. A positive interrelation between the grandmother's well-being and the adolescent's well-being was found in measures of depression and anxiety.

One final research project loosely associated with acculturation or cultural identification was a study among Asian Indian women who were immigrants to the United States and who were married to Asian Indian men (Kohli, 1998). The study investigated the relationship between native

language retention and fertility rates. The author of this study found that, "native-language retention had a negative impact on fertility" in the sample studied (p. 366). The author notes that this is contrary to one theory regarding acculturation (Goldscheider & Uhlenberg, 1969, as cited in Kohli, 1998), which holds that those from minority cultures who want to assimilate or succeed in the White-American culture will exhibit smaller fertility rates than those who retain a high degree of identification with their minority culture. This expected decrease in fertility rates was posited to be the result of the postponement of childbirth until after success had been achieved. The observed negative relation between native-language retention and fertility rates would, however, provide initial evidence that either acculturation processes are at least partially dependent on the particular culture in question, or that native-language retention is independent of cultural identification.

Demographics and Identity Characteristics of Diasporic Asian Indians (with an emphasis on the US)

Due, in part, to immigration laws that were present until 1980, Asian Indian immigrants tend to be highly educated when compared to other immigrant populations and,

indeed, the population of the United States in general. The Report of the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora (Ministry of External Affairs, 2002) notes that per capita income of Asian Indian immigrants in the U.S. ($60,093) is substantially higher than that of the average American and that 62% of Asian Indians have completed some college (compared to about 20% of the U.S. population) with most of this college education coming prior to arrival in the U.S. (p. 169). This information is interesting in itself, but when compared to the average purchasing power of Indians in India and the literacy rates of Indians in their home country reported in the previous section, the uniqueness of diasporic Indians in America is further illuminated.

The report further notes that Asian Indians often maintain the religious affiliations they had in India (p. 171). It notes that many diasporic Indians have established several political organizations and become active in U.S. politics (pp. 171, 173-175). The report also asserts that many diasporic Indians contribute through employment substantially to both the U.S. and Indian economies (p. 175-176), and frequently give financially to organizations in India (pp. 176-177).

Many of the findings of the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora are supported in the research of other authors. For instance, Gandhi (2002), Kurien (2001), and Mathew and Prashad (2000) support the presence of an active and diverse political life in immigrants from Indian to the U.S. (and other countries). Walton-Roberts (2004) supports the economic influence of Indian immigrants, both in their host country and in India.

The authors cited in this and the previous section continually refer to the fact that Asian Indian immigrants tend toward biculturalism in general (though with several exceptions) and retain a substantial connection to their culture of origin. Most note further that, in accordance with other immigrant populations, second generation Asian Indian Americans tend to take on the characteristics and values of American culture to a greater extent than did their parents. Ibrahim, Ohnishi and Sandhu (1997) propose a set of "basic beliefs and values [which] may be consistent for all South Asian Americans" (Cultural Identity and Worldview section, ¶ 2). These beliefs, taken directly from the article (with truncation), are:

- self-respect, dignity, and self-control,

- respect for the family/filial piety,

- respect for age,

- awareness and respect for community,

- fatalism, and

- humility,

(Cultural Identity and Worldview section, ¶ 3).

In addition, another article by different authors adds the following characteristics, selected from a third work regarding Asian communities in general, which based on their research and clinical experiences, they believe to be applicable to Asian Indian immigrants (truncated to avoid repetition with the previously cited list):

- Nonconfrontation or silence as a virtue

- Moderation in behaviors

- Devaluation of individualism

- Harmony between hierarchical roles

- Structured family roles and relationships

- Obedience

- High regard for learning

- Modest about sexuality

- Not demonstrative with heterosexual affection

- Less need for dating

- Marrying within verses outside ethnic group

- Importance attached to preserving the original
  religion

(Das & Kemp, 1997, The Immigrant Experience section, ¶ 10)

It is important to note, however, though they may share some values and beliefs similar to other Asian cultures and nationalities, Asian Indians tend not to identify themselves as being Asian or being strongly affiliated with other Asian peoples (Durvasula & Mylvaganam, 1994, p.98).

Chapter 4 The Proposed Research Questions

Given:

(a)   the prevalence of the general Asian Indian diaspora

       in the United States, and Asian Indian exchange

       students specifically;

(b)   the potentially wide difference in culture between

       Asian Indians and the general U.S. population;

(c)   the relative lack of information available on the

       assessment of cultural identification in this

       population, and

(d)   the lack of investigation into the meaning of items

       on the most prevalent scale of cultural

       identification (yet the understanding that meaning

       is a vital aspect of individual cultures and,

       therefore, the meanings of the items on this scale

       may vary greatly between Asian Indians and other

       cultures)

I conducted an exploratory study that sought to clearly

understand the meanings ascribed to cultural identification

as measured with the Orthogonal Cultural Identification

Scale (OCIS) among Asian Indian international exchange

students who were attending the University of Alaska

Fairbanks. Within this group, I sought to answer the following questions:

- What themes can be identified, which indicate the participants' understanding of cultural identification, as measured by the OCIS.

- What within-group meanings are applied to key terms or phrases in the individual items on the Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale by users of this scale who are Asian Indian foreign exchange students?

- What within-group meanings are applied to a participant's own categorical placement on the OCIS?

Each of these three broad questions likely needs some elaboration.

What themes can be identified, which indicate the participants' understanding of cultural identification, as measured by the OCIS? Given the responses of participants in this project, what themes can be identified that not only pertain to the specific questions or categories, but to cultural identification as measured by the OCIS? Are there persistent statements or discussions that would indicate that certain life-realms, certain ways of being,

or certain outlooks on life are integral in their way of understanding cultural identification?

What within-group meanings are applied to key terms or phrases in the individual items on the Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale by users of this scale who are Asian Indian foreign exchange students? Here I sought to understand how the participants perceive key phrases or terms in questions on the OCIS. Do the participants identify certain thoughts, activities, feelings, social structures, career pathways, stories, or memories, etc. from their lives with the terms or phrases? What meaning units or themes does each term or phrase appear to pull out of the participants?

What within-group meanings are applied to a participant's own categorical placement on the OCIS? How would participants view the different categories available for placement on the OCIS (high, middle, or low) as these relate to the specific questions asked on the scales? Are there certain qualities or characteristics that they associate with such categories of cultural identification as they apply to a person in general?

This dissertation project resulted in additions to the known literature in the field by providing an initial

indication of the meanings ascribed by Indian Asian foreign exchange students to items on the OCIS. In addition, it is the first investigation involving Asian Indians and the OCIS. It therefore provides foundational research that future projects can be based to develop a greater understanding of Asian Indian populations in the United State. It also serves as an initial indication of underlying meaning systems involved in cultural identification for practitioners working with Asian Indian foreign exchange students. In these ways, this project begins the effort to increase the cultural competency of those who work with Asian Indians in the United States. Finally, because qualitative investigation regarding the meanings participants ascribe to the OCIS in any culture has not been published to-date, this investigation can serve as a model for future, similar investigations in other cultures.

Chapter 5 Methods

Sample

I recruited a purposive sample of 47 Asian Indian international exchange students who were attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks between the spring semester of 2005 and the spring Semester of 2006. As described in the following section, this sample completed a cultural identification scale and a demographic questionnaire, and served as the group from which a smaller sample was selected to participate in interviews. Participants were solicited via email and through presentations at meetings of the Namaste India student organization. All those people who: (a) self-identified as Asian Indian, (b) reported that they were attending the university on a student visa, and (c) were 18-years-old or older were eligible to participate. All others were ineligible.

Though achieving proportional representation of the overall population of Indian students at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) was not a priority in this project, my respondents do appear to be similar to the statistics regarding the population of Asian Indian Exchange students at UAF, which are available from the UAF Office of

Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research (PAIR) (Ian Olson, personal communication)[14]. Comparisons of my sample with UAF PAIR office statistics on the Asian student population indicate that my sample is quite similar across age, gender, years at UAF, years in the US and marital status, although the latter is not as close to the general population (though not significantly so—a Fisher's Exact test reveals a p value of .39).

Age

The UAF PAIR office estimates that 54.55% of the Asian Indian population at UAF are 21-24 years-old, and 45.45% are more than 24 years of age. The proportion of 21-24 year-old Asian Indians in this research project was 57.45%, while the proportion greater than 24 years of age was 42.55%.

Gender

The UAF PAIR office estimates that of the Asian Indian Exchange students attending UAF, 84.85% are male, while 15.15% are female. Males comprised 85.1% of the total

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[14] Ian Olson is the Director of the UAF PAIR office. UAF statistics on this population are themselves estimates, due to the variety of ways in which an international student is categorized.

participants for this dissertation project, and females comprised the remaining 14.9%.

Time at UAF

Data from the UAF PAIR office estimate that 33.33% of the Asian Indian exchange students at UAF have been in the US less than one year, 45.45% have been in the US one to three years, and 21.21% have been in the US more than three full years. Of the full sample of Asian Indians participating in this research project, 27.66% less than one year, 46.81% have been in the US one to three years, and 25.53% have been in the US more than three full years.

Marital status

The UAF PAIR office estimates that 3.03% of the Asian Indian exchange student population at UAF is married, while 96.97% are unmarried. Married persons comprised 10.6% of my participants, while unmarried participants comprised 89.4% of the sample.

Income

The majority of participants indicated that they perceived their family income to be of average levels compared to other Indian families in India (57.4%), while 40.4% believed their family had a high level of income and

one only respondent indicated a below average family

income.

Caste

Pertaining to caste or varna, the most frequent

selection was *Brahmin*, being selected by approximately 1/3rd

of the respondents (34.0%). Almost 1 in 4 respondents

(23.4%) selected one of, *None/Don't Know*, or *Other*. The

Kshatriya, *Vaisya*, and *Sudra* varnas were represented by

several respondents (comprising 21.3%, 12.8%, and 6.4% of

the respondents respectively), while one person selected

the *Dalit* varna. No respondents selected, *Adivasi*

indicating that individual affiliation with indigenous

tribes of India was not present in the participants.

Home Region

The largest identified state or region of origin for

the participants was the state of Andra Pradesh (42.6%).

This state was followed by the states of Maharashtra

(34.0%) and Tamil Nadu (10.6%). Two participants each

reported one of: West Bengal, Karnatake, or "South."

Reported Ethnicity

When asked to describe their ethnicity, the primary

response pattern was one in which the person appeared to

categorize themselves according to Western or American

classificatory systems. Just over 70% (70.21%) of participants responded with, "Asian," "Asian Indian," or "Indian." Another 19.15% left this question blank. The balance of participants (10.64% of the sample) described their ethnicity in a manner that could be construed as differentiating themselves from other Indian nationals: some differentiated based on language characteristics, one based on caste or varna, and one based on regional affiliation.

Religious Affiliation

Hinduism was by far the most reported religious affiliation among the respondents (91.5% of the sample selected it), followed by *Other/None* (4.3%), *Buddhist* (2.1%), and *Christian* (2.1%).

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

I administered two Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale (OCIS) subscales to the participants. The subscales administered were those that pertain to the White American or Anglo, and Asian Indian cultures (12 questions in all; 6 for each cultural category). After completion of the scale, the participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire. Completed OCIS forms and demographic questionnaires were individually coded so that I could

match each participant's OCIS form and demographic

questionnaire for data analysis.

After the survey data was analyzed, eight participants

were selected and asked to participate in individual

interviews. These interviewees were selected so that (in

descending order of importance): (a) they represented a

frequency of categorical distribution on the OCIS that is

similar to the larger sample in general, (b) equal amounts

of interviewees were male and female, and (c) they were

similar to the larger sample in terms of other demographic

characteristics as revealed on the demographic

questionnaire. The most random sample possible within these

constraints was desired. Therefore, participants were

divided according to categorical placement on the OCIS and

then listed and numbered. Participants' numbers were then

subdivided according to gender. The number-code of each

participant was written on a slip of paper and these slips

were selected blindly from a container. This method was

used in order to select participants so that each category

on the OCIS and each gender was represented in as equal a

manner as possible. The demographic information for these

individuals was then compared to the demographic

information of the larger sample. The demographic

information of the individuals was judged to be similar to that of the larger group, and so these individuals were notified that they were being requested to participate in an individual interview. Though it was not needed, I planned to repeat the selection process if the demographic information substantially differed between the eight individuals and larger group.

Prior to commencing the study, it was decided that should a selected participant refuse to participate in the interview after this stage, other participants of the same gender and with a similar score pattern as the person who has refused to participate would be listed and a random number generator would be used to select one number. The person corresponding to this number was to be solicited to participate in the interview. This procedure was utilized in two-cases to complete the necessary interviews (though without change in the representational nature of the eight interviewees).

Each semi-structured interview consisted of a series of questions designed to further understanding of the participants' responses to items on the OCIS. The data acquired from these interviews were then analyzed qualitatively. After completion of the data analysis, I

sent an individualized analysis and interpretation of the interview—along with a transcript from the interview—to each participant. Each participant saw only the interpretation and transcript from their own interview. Feedback regarding these individualized analyses and interpretations were then incorporated into the analyses, and any required changes were made. After this step was completed and individual participants were satisfied with the interpretations of their interviews, I combined individual interpretations into a joint analysis of the data as a whole.

I then met with a focus group drawn from participants who were interviewed. All participants who were involved in the individual interviews were invited to be a part of this focus group. During this meeting, group members were asked to provide feedback on the results of the data analysis. Any feedback or alternative explanations that were provided by the focus group were recorded and integrated into the results.

The Institutional Review Board at the University of Alaska Fairbanks granted exempted approval of this project (see Appendix A for the approval letter). In accordance with University of Alaska Fairbanks policies, all

participants were, prior to participation, informed of: a) their rights as research participants, b) the extent of confidentiality of responses, and c) the voluntary nature of participation. Data were handled and stored in accordance with University of Alaska Fairbanks policies.

Instruments

The Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale

The Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale (OCIS; Oetting & Beauvais, 1990-1991a) is an instrument created by Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991b) in order to measure cultural identification in individuals. The scale has two forms: one for adults and one for adolescents. Each form consists of six questions. Of these six questions, two each concern cultural traditions, lifestyle, and success. Furthermore, one question in each of these three areas pertains to either the individual's current family or the individual's family of origin, and one question pertains to the individual (see Table 1).

Table 1. Areas and persons assessed by the Orthogonal Cultural

Identification Scale

	Traditions	Lifestyle	Success
Family	X(1)[1]	X(3)	X(5)
Individual	X(2)	X(4)	X(6)

Note. [1] The number in parentheses corresponds to the item number on the

OCIS that pertains to this combination of person and area

The responses for each question are structured in

table form, and allow the respondent to rate the degree to

which they identify with the question at-hand, according to

six possible cultures. The respondent is allowed to mark

one response for each culture to which they feel some

identification. There are four possible responses to

indicate the degree to which the respondent identifies with

each culture: (a) *None at all* (b) *A few* or *Not much*, (c)

Some, and (d) *A lot*. Each response receives a point-score

from one to four, with one point for marks indicating a

response of *None at All*, two points for a response of *A few*

or *Not much*, three points for a response of *Some* and four

points for a response of *A lot*. For quick reference, Figure

2 shows one question from the OCIS Adult form.

3. Does your family live by or follow the…

```
                                        A lot  Some  A few  None at all
     American Indian way of life          (  ) (  )   (   ) (         )
     White American or Anglo way of life  (  ) (  )   (   ) (         )
     Mexican American way of life         (  ) (  )   (   ) (         )
     Black or African American way of life(  ) (  )   (   ) (         )
     Asian or Asian American way of life  (  ) (  )   (   ) (         )
     Other culture                        (  ) (  )   (   ) (         )
```

Figure 2. A Question from the Orthogonal Cultural Identification Scale

After the participant completes the scale, cultural

identification scores are obtained by averaging the scores

of completed questions for each culture. Therefore, the

final full cultural identification score should range from

one to four points for each culture to which the participant

relates[15].

The OCIS allows the scorer to determine patterns of

identification during group administration by assigning

categories to the final full cultural identification

scores. Final scores in excess of three indicate that the

person is highly affiliated with that particular culture

and are therefore assigned to the high identification

category. Scores of two to three place the participant in

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[15] The scoring instructions accompanying the OCIS state,
however, that scores range from 1-6 (Oetting & Beauvais,
1990-1991a). The "6" in the instructions would appear to be
a typographical error as the greatest average score a
person could receive for one cultural identification
subscale is indeed a score of four.

a middle category equivalent to a moderate amount of identification. Scores of less than two result in the assignment to the low category and indicate a low amount of identification with that culture.

Brief Demographic Questionnaire

All participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire after completing the OCIS. The demographic questionnaire was developed specifically for this study (see Appendix B for a reproduction of the questionnaire). The function of the questionnaire was to both facilitate a greater contextual understanding of the sample itself, as well as to provide information for use in understanding the data acquired from the sample during completion of the OCIS and the qualitative interview. Given the function of the questionnaire, the size of the research study, and the existence of other instruments, I decided to keep the number of questions the questionnaire contained to a minimum. The items in the questionnaire are derived from four different sources: (a) a review of the literature pertaining to activities and life events that potentially impact cultural identification, (b) a review of the general cultural belief systems and social structures of peoples from the India, (c) discussions with two local practicing

research professionals, and (d) discussion with an Indian
informant who was also a leader in a local university-
related Indian student organization. Generally, an item
was selected for inclusion if it addressed topics discussed
in either of the literature bases reviewed (i.e.,
activities and life events that impact cultural
identification, or the general belief systems and social
structures of peoples from India) and either the practicing
research professionals or the informant believed that it
was necessary.

A few of the items are common in the literature
regarding cultural identification (and, indeed, human
sampling procedures in general). Therefore, they will not
be discussed within this section. Several, however,
deserve some discussion.

Item number three on the questionnaire asks for
information regarding the gender or sex of the individual.
This item includes a third option in addition to the
typical male or female options. The third option is
hijra/ali and represents a traditionally acknowledged
gender role for the male whom we would in Euro-American
circles label as being: a transvestite,
transgendered/transsexual, a eunuch, or a hermaphrodite.

Hijra is the term commonly given to this third gender in the Northern regions, while *Ali* is the term used in Southern India. While it happened that no participant identified as a *hijra/ali*, the option was added to prevent any misidentification in the eventuality that a person did indeed identify in this manner.

Item number four addresses the religious faith of the participant. The available options are glosses, in the sense that many different worldviews can arise from within subdivisions of each of the listed faiths that would substantially differ from other subdivisions of the same faith. Given the size of the sample proposed for this project, however, I determined that division beyond the six options allowable might create too many variables to analyze fully, should patterns arise in the data.

Item number five asks participants to write the state or union territory in India from which they came to the United States. This question was a fill-in-the-blank format as there were at least thirty-five options available and listing all of them would make the questionnaire quite large. Depending on the distribution of the states or union territories actually listed by the participants, it was thought that this variable could be coded for analysis

according to population density along three categories (low, medium, and high), geographic region (southern, eastern, western, northeastern, and northern), or both.

Item number six assesses economic status by way of three broad choices. The participant is asked to select, relative to the average Indian family in India, whether their family of origin is financially below average, average, or above average. Responses to this item were expected to be fairly homogenous (i.e., nearly all or all reporting *above average*). The item was included, however, in order to provide contextual information that is useful in describing the sample.

Item number seven asks participants to fill-in the ethnicity that best describes them. Ethnic identity is often conflated in India with community of origin, caste, religious affiliation and other variables. It was listed on the questionnaire as it is an expected variable to survey in cultural identification research specifically, as well as many social science research projects. The plan prior to commencing the project was to code and group data from this item in a manner that appeared to best reflect the variation in responses provided by the participants (e.g., if a preponderance of respondents list a

geographically-based ethnicity, then responses would be coded according to geographic location).

Finally, item number nine asked respondents to circle the *varna* that best represents their family of origin. *Varna* is the term most often used to correspond to what Euro-Americans conceive of as the English term caste.[16] The *varna* of a particular individual is the same as the *varna* of the individual's family of origin. Therefore, asking for the *varna* of a person's family of origin results in the same answer as one would receive when asking the person for their own *varna*. The question seeks the information indirectly ("If you *were* asked to select one of the following as the *Varna* that best represents *your family of*

---

[16] The English, Caste actually derives from the Portuguese, "*casta*" meaning pure, or unmixed. What the Portuguese referred to as *casta* was the Indian method of grouping based on profession (and, by the time of the Portuguese contact, also largely heredity) known as "*jati*." There would appear to be a plethora of *jati* available as the word simply refers to a community of people with some shared characteristic (and is used to label various types of relationships between people, including but not limited to professional, regional, and religious relations). Though the term *varna* is associated with spiritual color (and some, though not all, link this with racial origins), it is the term which closest corresponds to the concept that the English and Americans use when referring to "caste."

origin…"[emphases added]) in an effort to reduce the social stigma that may surround the reporting of such a quality[17].

In addition to the four historical *varnas* (*Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya*, and *Sudra*), I added four additional options for this item: *Dalit/Harijan*, Adivasi/Scheduled Tribe, *None*, and *Other*. The first two of these four additional *varnas* were traditionally grouped together as, "untouchables" in Hindu texts. The *Dalit/Harijan* are Hindus and non-religious persons with very low economic status. Those with *Adivasi*/Scheduled Tribe status would have traditionally belonged to the tribes that did not historically relate commercially or socially with the larger, more interrelated Indian societies. The *None* option is provided for those who do not personally adhere to the caste system because of personal, political, religious, or other beliefs. Finally, the *Other* option,

---

[17] India outlawed discrimination based on caste-related qualities in 1949, with the exception of what is often termed "positive discrimination" practices in which lower caste members are allowed preference for some employment opportunities and social programs. Though many Indians still use caste-related descriptors, the practice often carries associations similar to racism in the US and, therefore, some Indians will avoid discussing their *varna* so as not to appear intolerant.

which allows the person to fill-in another label for a *varna* that best describes them, is provided for Indians who are Muslim, Buddhist, or Christian, many of which maintain separate designations for their caste status (though with some correspondence to the Hindu system).

Qualitative Interview

The qualitative interview consisted of a series of questions designed to elicit more information regarding the participants' responses to items on the OCIS. As noted in the *Procedures* section, interviews were conducted with eight individuals from the initial sample after initial quantitative data analysis has been completed. Each interview was expected to last at least 30 minutes. A script was developed, which I used as a guide during each interview, so that all interviews were conducted in a similar manner (see Appendix C). However, in order to acquire more meaningful data, the interview generally proceeded as a conversation. The method used for qualitatively analyzing the interview mirrored that done by Worthen and McNeill (2002).

I began with the following statement at the outset of the interview:

Thanks for meeting me today. As you know, I've been doing research with Indian exchange students. You and others completed some written questions a few days ago [*or other approximate time-period between the completion of the OCIS and demographic questionnaire, and this interview*]. I've been looking at the data and have selected a few people to talk to about their results so that I can get a better understanding of what certain types of answers to this form [*show the participant a blank OCIS form*] means for Indian exchange students such as you.

I'm going to ask you to tell me what you were thinking about or feeling for several of these questions. There are no right or wrong answers; any information I can get from you about this form is helpful to me. While we're talking, I'm going to be audio-taping our conversation, so that I can go back and transcribe it later. I might also take some notes from time-to-time. As with your written responses, my notes and the audio-tapes of this interview will be kept in the strictest of confidence. This interview should take about 30-45 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin? [*Answer any questions the participant has.*]. All right, let's begin. [*Provide open-ended prompts to begin and continue discussion for each question.*]

After completing the introduction, I started the tape recorder and prompted the participants to talk about their thoughts and feelings regarding key terms and phrases on the OCIS. Not only were the meanings of the questions stems investigated, but also the anchors. In other words, I investigated not only the meanings of such words or phrases like, "traditions," and "way of life," which are contained in the stem of the question (e.g., "does your family live by or follow the White American or Anglo *way of life*"), but also the words or phrases present in the responses on the OCIS from which the participant is allowed to choose, (e.g., *Some, A Lot, A Few, Not At All*). These anchors were investigated to explore whether or not the phrases they contain are individually meaningful to participants, as well as whether or not the difference in degree between the anchors had a meaning to the participants (i.e., not only was the meaning of *A Few* itself to be explored, but also whether or not there existed an identifiable difference in meaning between *Some* and *A Few*). Finally, I inquired as to whether or not the participants would have had a different number or label for each of the anchors, if the OCIS was presented in their first language.

Verbal prompts to the participant during the course of the interview were open-ended and were designed to allow the participants to answer in any manner they see fit. Such prompts included, as appropriate:

What does _____ mean to you?

When you read a question/word like _____ what things do you think about?

When you read a question/word like _____ what feelings do you have?

What other things does _____ make you think about, feel, or remind you?

In general, I attempted to generate a conversation about each OCIS item. Short prompts were utilized to acquire more information about a particular response, if the response was deemed to be too short or vague. Such short prompts included, "Tell me more about_____," and, "Explain _____ to me."

Follow-up questions to solicit specific information regarding any unclear statements made by the participants were also performed prior to concluding the interview. The intent of these follow-up questions was to acquire additional contextual information in order to better interpret the participants' responses to questioning about

the OCIS. Whereas the previous questions were investigatory, the follow-up questions were asked for clarification. I decided prior to commencing the project that follow-up questions could pertain to any peculiar pattern that emerged on the participants' OCIS (though the participants were not told if their particular OCIS pattern was deemed to be peculiar). They could also pertain to demographic information supplied by the participant. Finally, they could also pertain to any specific word or concept used by the participant that I did not fully understand.

I recorded the interview via an audiotape. After conclusion of the interview, a transcription of the audiotape was made.

Chapter 6 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed in several ways. Quantitative

analysis of data from the sample of 47 participants

pertained to: 1) reporting of the proportion of each of the

demographic variables acquired through the demographic

questionnaire, 2) a general description of the distribution

of scores on the OCIS via reporting of the mean, median,

and standard deviation of each cultural OCIS subscale

(i.e., White American or Anglo, and Asian Indian), 3)

calculation of Cronbach's alpha for each cultural OCIS

subscale, 4) correlation of Asian Indian and White American

or Anglo subscales scores on the OCIS, 5) correlation of

scores on the OCIS with time in the United States and age

respectively, and when possible 6) Chi-squared comparisons

of expectancies and observed frequencies between status on

the OCIS and gender, caste, marital status, religion,

economic status of the family, and geographic origin.

In this dissertation, reporting of the proportions of

demographic variables occurs in order to provide a richer

understanding of the sample being studied. The

distribution of scores on the OCIS subscales is reported in

order to present a concise picture of the manner in which this sample completed the scale. Calculation of Cronbach's alpha for each cultural subscale on the OCIS is performed and reported in order to better judge the internal consistency of these subscales independently. A correlation of the two subscales (Asian Indian and White American or Anglo) is presented to determine whether or not variation in one subscale accounts for a substantial amount of variation in the other subscale. Correlation of scores on the OCIS with time in the United States and age respectively was performed to determine whether a positive correlation exists between OCIS scores on the White American or Anglo subscale and time in the United States and whether or not variation in age can be said to account for variation in scores on the OCIS. Chi-squared comparisons of expectancies and observed frequencies were performed to investigate whether or not any of the categorical demographic characteristics had an effect on the degree of cultural identification with either Asian Indian or Anglo cultures. For instance, one might expect a Christian Asian Indian to score higher on the Anglo subscale of the OCIS than would a Hindu because the

religion of the former is much more prevalent in the U.S. than the latter.

The purpose of the quantitative data analysis is, therefore, 1) to provide a greater contextual understanding of the participants who were involved in the study; 2) to serve as a reference for selection of interviewees from the larger sample that completed the OCIS and demographic questionnaire; and 3) to aid in interpreting the qualitative data by providing quantitative trends or associations that can, if substantiated by qualitative differences, indicate the possibility of key demographic information that is related to the way in which these Asian Indian exchange students construct the meanings they apply to the OCIS.

Qualitative data analysis pertained to responses to open-ended questions asked during the individual interviews and regarding what key phrases or terms on the items of the OCIS means to participants. Analysis consisted of following the phenomenological investigative procedures delineated by Worthen and McNeill (2002).

The Worthen and McNeill (2002) phenomenological model was chosen for several reasons. First, phenomenological methods are explicitly designed to focus on the meanings

that people draw from, and apply to, their lives. Second, the procedures followed in Worthen and McNeill's chapter are consistent with those I learned during my studies for my Master's in Existential Phenomenological Therapeutic Psychology. Third, and as discussed in the chapter on phenomenology, the philosophical support for phenomenological methods appears to be one of Western science's closest approximations to Eastern conceptualizations of reality and, therefore, should result in greater ability to identify the meanings that Eastern peoples apply to their experiences. Fourth, the research on which the Worthen and McNeill chapter is based was performed as the dissertation project of the primary author of that chapter. Finally, the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Education assigned the book from which the chapter is drawn (Merriam, 2002) in the fall semester, 2004 for graduate students in that school's research methods course. Given these reasons, the procedure was determined to be an appropriate method for a qualitative dissertation dealing with the meanings that people ascribe to an aspect of their lives. The steps for analyzing interview data, as listed in the chapter, are:

1. Transcribe the interview verbatim

2. Obtain a sense of the whole

3. Identify Meaning Units

4. Define Relevant and Psychologically Explicit Meaning Units

5. Integrate Meaning Units

6. Articulate Meaning Units

7. Situate the Meaning Structure

8. Describe the Essential Aspects of the Meaning Structure

> (Worthen & McNeill, 2002, p. 124-125, with minor alterations in terminology)

While transcription procedures are fairly well known, the rest of these steps are probably unclear to those not familiar with phenomenological methods. I will use one of the participants (interviewee #2) and one of the themes (family) identified in my project to help illustrate how this method was utilized in my research with the Asian Indian participants. However, it is important to note that this procedure was repeated for every research question in every interviewee's transcription.

Obtaining a Sense of the Whole

To obtain a sense of the whole the researcher reads

the transcription through several times and focuses on

recording the pervasive theme, feeling, or impression that

is relayed by the interview in general (e.g., the interview

could have been one in which the participant is always

focusing on actions, spirituality, or a career of

interest).

Interviewee 2 was an unmarried female in her early

20s. The interviewee noted that she was, "not very

Orthodox," and that she had not attended a *puja* for quite

some time. She expressed progressive thinking about

acceptance of other cultures, change in culture over time,

and a balance of individual freedom with personal

responsibility. Her interests and demeanor were indicative

of a fairly independent personality, with perhaps a

tendency toward an outgoing, extroverted style of being

(e.g., she expressed an interest in travel and presented as

an equal in the conversation, often steering it to topics

that she wanted to discuss). Compared to the other

interviewees, she expressed the most acceptance of Western

ways of being and often stressed that she was much more,

"liberal," than the average Indian. Major themes running
through her transcript were: (a) family, (b) tolerance of
diversity, (c) getting together with others, (d) life is a
process, (e) balancing personal choice and duty, and (f)
cultural change is normal.

These characteristics of the interviewee and the major
themes running through the interview are used in this step
to help provide the context in which to select particular
meaning units to identify and analyze. These themes were
selected based on a combination of: the amount of time
spent discussing a topic, the number of references to words
evocative of the topic, and the intensity of the discussion
concerning the topic.

Concerning the theme of family, the interviewee
mentioned, "family," or members of her family (e.g.,
"grandmom," "parents") 29 times during the 45-minute
interview. Family was referenced during discussion of
every item on the OCIS, but comparatively more stress was
placed on family during the discussions about the meanings
of the terms, "traditions," and "way of life." Of note for
this theme was an apparently greater association between
the interviewee and other females in the family (e.g., when

she thought about cultural change across generations, she compared herself to her mother and grandmother).

Identifying Meaning Units

Meaning units are identified by making marks between each different meaning expressed in the interview (e.g., when the participant changes the topic, alters an analogy, or expresses a substantial change in behavior). These transitions between different meanings are called meaning units and are thought to reflect the different aspects a person may ascribe to a given topic. In the interaction between interviewee #2 and myself below, taken from discussion regarding the term traditions, I have bracketed out the meaning units to show how meaning units are identified and divided. As the reader will likely notice, at this point the bracketed meaning units are tenuous (requiring additional analysis) and sometimes the meaning units could overlap.

Participant: [I usually think of festivals]. [When you're talking about special activities or traditions, I think of how many] or [whether my family is celebrating only Indian festivals] or [because of the Western influence, there are some of the other Western festivals]. Like, [I'm a Hindu] so [technically I

should have nothing to do with Christmas], but

(pause), [you know, things like that]. [If my family

is involved in Christmas or whatever]. So (pause), [am

I on the right track]?

Interviewer: Oh, sure. Really this is whatever you

think; whatever it brings to mind for you.

Participant: OK

Participant: Oh, yeah [I was just thinking in terms of

religious festivals. Yeah, like Diwali or Holi].

[Those are Indian festivals]. [So that is celebrated

in our family]. But, [when you're living in a place

like India] [when you have so much cultural diversity]

[you do end up being part of things like Christmas and

Halloween]. [Maybe not with family, but with

friends]. [So it's a different kind of celebration].

Identifying Relevant and Psychologically Explicit Meaning

Units

The researcher then identifies the relevant and

psychologically explicit meaning units by deciding—based on

what is known in the literature, the researcher's own

experience, and the information known about the

participant—which of the many already identified meaning

units are of value to the study. Those that are identified

as being relevant receive continued analysis, while
extraneous meaning units are ignored for the time being. In
the example theme of family, the bracketing of the
transcript would be modified to read:

> Participant: I usually think of festivals. When
> you're talking about special activities or traditions,
> I think of how many or [whether my family is
> celebrating] only Indian festivals or because of the
> Western influence, there are some of the other Western
> festivals. Like, I'm a Hindu so technically I should
> have nothing to do with Christmas, but (pause), you
> know, things like that. [If my family is involved in
> Christmas or whatever]. So (pause), am I on the right
> track?
>
> Interviewer: Oh, sure. Really this is whatever you
> think; whatever it brings to mind for you.
>
> Participant: OK
>
> Participant: Oh, yeah I was just thinking in terms of
> religious festivals. Yeah, like Diwali or Holi.
> Those are Indian festivals. [So that is celebrated in
> our family]. But, when you're living in a place like
> India when you have so much cultural diversity you do
> end up being part of things like Christmas and

<u>Halloween</u>. [Maybe not with family], but with friends.

<u>So it's a different kind of celebration</u>.

The brackets involving family have stayed the same, while

those closely associated thoughts are underlined. As noted

in the previous section, some of the meaning units

previously identified become subservient to the family

meaning unit (e.g., "technically I should have nothing to

do with Christmas") and are therefore underlined for this

step of the phenomenology.

In this exchange, the word family is used twice

within the participant's first statement. The first use of

the term implies that one of the primary means of defining

a festival is whether or not her family is involved in the

celebration. In this first use of the term, it is unclear

as to whether or not family involvement itself constitutes

the festival, as she notes that she thinks of, "how many *or*

whether my family is celebrating," (my emphasis). How

operant the word, "or," is in determining whether or not

something constitutes a festival is not clear. It is

clear, however, that the family celebration is associated

more with, "Indian festivals," as this phrase follows

directly from the bracketed family meaning unit.

Interviewee #2 then states that, due to her religion, she

should "technically" have nothing to do with Western holidays like Christmas. However, "if [her] family is involved in Christmas," then she may participate in the event and may include it as a festival when thinking of the term traditions. What one is left with, therefore, is something to the effect that family is important to deciding what constitutes a festival. Even though she (at least nominally) subscribes to a particular faith and generally thinks of celebrations specific to this faith when thinking of festivals, the family participation takes primacy over religious affiliation.

In the participant's final statement of this exchange, she again uses the term family twice. The first use of the term follows admission that she was thinking primarily of religious festivals (which, incidentally, she rapidly equates with "Indian festivals"). She then states, "So that is celebrated in our family." The word, "so," here indicates a logic that if a festival is Hindu/Indian, her family would participate in that festival as a matter of course. The second time she refers to family in this statement, it is preceded by discussion of Christmas and Halloween as representations of the cultural diversity in India. She states that she might participate in these

events, though, "maybe not with family." The participant
then notes that participating in an event without family
results in a cognitive shift in which the event is
categorized as, "a different kind of celebration," than
those events in which she does participate with family. In
other words, it becomes something like a festival, but not
the type of festival that comes to mind for her when she
thinks of this word while completing the OCIS.

In this final statement from the exchange, one finds
the word family again related to the idea of festivals. One
also finds again that family and festival are associated
primarily with the festivals of her religious heritage.
Celebrations outside of the family, which may also be
celebrations deriving from non-Hindu religions, are not
generally considered by this participant when she thinks of
festivals.

Integrating the Meaning Units

To integrate the meaning units, the researcher then
constructs a coherent statement, which ties the remaining
and valuable meaning units into one story or narrative
(generally the story is told in the first-person). In the
example provided for the previous steps in this
phenomenology, I identified and described four meaning

units for the term family according to interviewee #2.
These four meaning units can be integrated into a larger
unit in that the meanings in the final statement from the
exchange help to clarify the meanings associated with
family in the first statement of the exchange. Therefore,
they can be seen to constitute one larger integrated
meaning unit regarding the term family.

The first-person integration of the four meaning units
into the larger integrated meaning unit reads as follows:

My family is Indian and Hindu and, because of this, we

take part in events deriving from these heritages.

These events are what I would call festivals. If I

participate in an event that does not derive from my

Indian and Hindu heritage, I will consider it to be a

festival if my family participates in the event with

me, otherwise the event is a celebration. This event

is not really a festival *per se*, and wouldn't really

come to mind for me when I complete the OCIS.

Family in this integrated meaning unit is something that is
Hindu/Indian and the family's presence is a definitional
characteristic of an event being classified as a festival.

Articulating the Meaning Units

Articulating the meaning units involves a second-level transformation of the concrete words of the participant into even more abstract words. In this step, the meaning units are abstracted from the original language (e.g., if the participant's meaning unit is, "wearing clean clothing is important," the articulated meaning unit might be something like, "upholding cultural standards for appearance is an important aspect of my identification"). Here the researcher still remains in the first-person when recapitulating the meaning unit.

Articulating the integrated meaning unit from the example interview presented in the previous step of this phenomenology results in the following first-person statement:

> Family is, for me, closely related to my Indian and
> Hindu heritage and cultural identity. In some sense,
> family is itself a manifestation of this cultural
> identity. Being that my family is a manifestation of
> my cultural identity, when I am asked about Asian
> Indian festivals on the OCIS I use the presence of
> family at an event to determine whether or not I
> consider the event to be a festival. If my family is

celebrating the event with me, then it is a festival.

Extending this, a festival in my culture is defined by

the presence of family. In the end, then, family is a

culturally unifying aspect of my life. It is one that

binds my cultural identity to my activities and

provides the basis for evaluating the meaning of these

activities for me as an Asian Indian.

Situating the Meaning Units

Turning to the seventh step, or the process of

situating the meaning unit, the researcher now begins to

formulate the articulated meaning unit in accordance with

the context of the participant and disciplinary knowledge

(e.g., what is known about the participant, given other

available information, as well as what is known in general

about the context in which the study occurs—both the

immediate context and the previous experiences that the

individuals involved have had and bring to the interview

situation).

Extending the use of the example from interviewee #2

to this current step of the phenomenology, I first situate

the articulated meaning unit within the context of

interviewee #2's personal presentation during the interview

(largely derived from the first step of the phenomenology—

obtaining a sense of the whole). I then compare her presentation to the manner in which the other interviewees presented. After this, I compare her presentation and thoughts to the literature-base on Asian Indians discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

As noted in that step, interviewee #2 presented as an independently-minded single woman in her early 20s. Interviewee #2's independent and extroverted presentation did not appear to affect her articulated meaning unit in a substantial manner. If anything, it did so positively, resulting in more detail about the meaning unit being presented in a forthcoming manner. If it would have impacted the articulated unit negatively, more speculation about the meaning or intent of words would have been necessary. Interviewee #2's assertions about her own relative liberality compared to her peers or others in India were supported by the literature summarized in Chapter 3, and also borne out in the other interviews that I conducted. She did discuss more freedoms and choices, and compared to other females interviewed, discussed family obligations and homemaking duties associated with females to a lesser extent. She also expressed less of an association between family and success than did any of the

other interviewees. In this case, then, I took care not to

overlook or diminish discussions about family obligations

and household duties, identification with other females,

and the manner in which success was indirectly affected by

family. In other words, I still incorporated information

about these aspects of family, even when she mentioned them

in a manner that would otherwise lead a person to believe

that they are not important, or otherwise not to include

them in the analysis. In this way, the relative

differences between her discussion surrounding family and

those of the other women interviewed can be accounted for

in the interpretation, but does not unduly affect the

general meanings applied to themes arising from, or terms

on, the OCIS (this is somewhat like a weighting procedure

in quantitative analyses).

The situated meaning unit, which incorporates this

comparative information, is (additions to the articulated

meaning unit are italicized):

> *Similar to other Asian Indians in India and those*
>
> *interviewed for this project,* family is, for me,
>
> closely related to my Indian and Hindu heritage and
>
> cultural identity. In some sense, family is itself a
>
> manifestation of this cultural identity, *though I am*

less associated with this culture than other females.
Being that my family is a manifestation of my cultural
identity, when I am asked about Asian Indian festivals
on the OCIS I use the presence of family at an event
to determine whether or not I consider the event to be
a festival. If my family is celebrating the event with
me, then it is a festival. Extending this, a festival
in my culture is defined by the presence of family. In
the end, then, family is a culturally unifying aspect
of my life. *Though I am allowed more freedom to*
choose than other Indian women, family *still* binds my
cultural identity to my activities and provides the
basis for evaluating the meaning of these activities
for me as an Asian Indian.

I used the same process so far described in these
seven steps of this phenomenology with each instance of the
word family in the transcript. From these, I derived six
other articulated and situated meaning units (see the next
subsection for these). I then turned to the final step of
the phenomenology of family for this participant.

Describing the Essential Aspects of the Meaning Structure

The final step in the phenomenological analysis is to
pare the situated meaning units down to their final

essences. This is done by combining very similar meaning

units until only the fewest possible units remain while

still accounting for all of the different meanings ascribed

to the topic discussed in the interview.

The essence of the example situated meaning unit

discussed so far in this section can be deduced as follows:

family is an important aspect of the Asian Indian way of

life and determines what constitutes a Hindu or Indian

festival. The balance of the situated meaning unit, though

not present in this more essentialized version of the unit,

helps to provide context for combining this unit with

others related to family.

I identified six other situated meaning units for the

term family in the transcript from the interview. An

initial essentialized distillation of these meaning units

results in the following: (a) family includes three

generations (her, her parents, and her grandparents); (b)

within the family, there is closer affiliation with others

of the same sex (she most often discussed other females in

the family); (c) family determines the degree of

participation in daily religious activities, (d) the

freedom a woman has to choose her husband is based on her

family's perspective on arranged marriages; (e) the amount

and degree of obligations a woman has in elder-care and

homemaking depends on the family's degree of

progressiveness or liberality; (f) employment and

educational opportunities and goals for women are derived

from the family's values in these areas, as well as their

perspective on the role of women in society. Attempting to

pare these seven situated units (the six just listed, plus

the one used as an example throughout this section) down to

a smaller number of groupings based on their essences, I

arrived at four groupings. These fully essentialized

meaning units are:

- family determines what constitutes a festival;

- family is constituted by three generations: the

  grandparents, the parents, and the child;

- family, particularly other women in the family,

  determine a female Asian Indian's way of life;

- family determines whether, and to what degree,

  employment and education are included in a

  person's consideration of what it means to be

  successful in the Asian Indian way of life.

The first bulleted item is the final essentialized

version of the meaning unit that has been used as an

example in this section. One will note that it is a

reduced version of the initial essentialized version

(family is an important aspect of the Asian Indian way of

life and determines what constitutes a Hindu or Indian

festival). In this final essentialized version, the

information about family being an important aspect of the

Asian Indian way of life has been incorporated into the

third bulleted item. The second bulleted item represents an

essentializing of one of the items (a) previously listed.

The third bulleted item is an incorporation portions of the

example meaning unit, as well as other meaning units (b, c,

d, e, and the second portion of f-their perspective on the

role of women in society) previously listed. The fourth

bulleted item is the essence of the first portion of the

last meaning unit previously listed (f). Having distilled

the information in the transcript down to its essential

aspects according to this interviewee, I turned to

analyzing other, non-family, meaning units in this

interviewee.

Persons familiar with Grounded Theory may recognize a

similarity between this phenomenological method and a

popular coding procedure in that qualitative approach

(Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As well, those who are familiar

with Bellak's (Bellak, 1973; Bellak & Abrams, 1997)
approach to analyzing the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
will likely find that this phenomenology is closely
mirrored by the approach that Bellak espouses for analyzing
transcriptions from client's stories.

After completion of the data analysis, I engaged
participants in the review of the analysis in both
individualized and group formats. This was done to ensure
the meaningfulness and applicability of the
interpretations.

I acquired feedback from individual participants
through a process known as memoing. I memoed participants
by sending each participant an analysis and interpretation
of their interview. A transcript of the interview
accompanied each analysis. Participants saw only the
analysis, interpretation, and transcript from their
individual interview with me. Participants were then asked
to provide feedback about the analysis and interpretation,
as well as to make any corrections in accuracy they felt
were important. Such feedback, corrections, or both
regarding these individualized analyses and interpretations
were then incorporated into the individualized analyses and
interpretations.

After individual participants were satisfied with the interpretations of their interviews, and the memoing step was therefore completed, I combined individual interpretations into a joint analysis of the data as a whole. This joint analysis of the data as a whole involved the same phenomenological method used for the interpretation of transcripts from individual interviews. Instead of one person, however, I treated the essentialized meaning units of all of the interviewees as raw data (i.e., the essentialized meaning units serve the same function as the transcript did in the individual, the phenomenology proceeds through the same eight steps, and the final results for a theme or meaning unit is a synthesis of the eight individual interviewees).

The joint analysis was then presented to a focus group drawn from participants who were interviewed. All participants who were involved in the individual interviews were invited to be a part of this focus group. During this meeting, I provided a summary of results from the individual interviews. Group members were asked to provide feedback on these results and to supply any alternative interpretations that they believed would better explain the

results.   Feedback or alternative explanations that arose

from the focus group were integrated into the results.

Chapter 7 The Personal Context of the Researcher

When conducting research in cross-cultural/multicultural settings, it is important that the researcher disclose any personal belief systems, characteristics, motivations, or relationships that could be perceived to impact either the research or the interpretation of results. Therefore, I believe it necessary to take a few paragraphs to summarize the beliefs, characteristics, motivations, and relationships that I maintain as these may relate to the project proposed within this document.

I am a 34-year-old European-American male. I was born and raised in a rather ethnically homogenous area of Western Washington State. I went to Sitka, Alaska in 1991, where I earned an undergraduate degree in Youth Services. In 1996, I left the State of Alaska and earned a Master's degree in Psychology from Seattle University (the program being officially entitled Existential Phenomenological Therapeutic Psychology) and then attended a professional psychology (PsyD) graduate program in Oregon for one academic year. In 1998, I applied for and was accepted

into the Interdisciplinary Doctorate of Philosophy graduate program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF).

I have worked in mental health related organizations in various capacities since 1995. Through this work, I developed a particular interest in meeting the needs of cross-cultural and multicultural populations. In 2004, I changed career paths and took a position at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the Division of Student Affairs. A temporary assignment arising out of this position was to serve as the coordinator of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and to help facilitate that office's transition to another division at the university. In the fall of 2005, I took a position on the faculty of the Human Services department at the University of Alaska Anchorage, where I was employed during the completion of the data gathering and analysis portion of this project.

My interest in Indian Asian communities arises from my general interest in the various mythologies, religions, and social structures that have arisen in the area in both historical and contemporary time-periods. My interest, furthermore, entails my general motivation to promote diversity and tolerance among and between cultural groups. Introspection regarding the process of cultural

identification and acculturation does not reveal a personal investment in any particular theory. Therefore, I do believe that the construct (cultural identification) and the tools (e.g., the OCIS) chosen for this project were not chosen out of undue personal investment, though the method (as will be discussed) naturally follows from the theoretical view I have come to hold.

I chose the qualitative method because I have much academic training in phenomenological investigation. Phenomenology does have an association with structuralist notions of psychology and sociology, and it has been strongly associated with an existential or humanistic theoretical view of the human being. I, as well, do base my personal view of the human condition on several existential theories. However, the research combines existentialism with behaviorism in my personal theory of human behavior. What this means is that I believe that human behavior is both governed by a system of very strong learned associations (behaviorism's influence) and also based on a nearly innate need to stand-out (ex-istent) in the world and make meaning of the events that the person experiences (existentialism's influence).

Other assumptions that result from such a theoretical view include the belief that meaning-making is highly individualistic, but is also primarily determined by the social structure in which individuals find themselves. My particular theoretical view also leads to a pluralistic notion of culture. Since, in my theoretical perspective meaning-making is dependent both on the idiosyncratic nature of the individual as well as the individual's social context (which, in turn, the individual helps to create), such a perspective leads one to find that there are many possible distinct world-views and each have their own knowledge systems and methods for determining truth. However, given the deterministic nature of the behavioral portion of my personal theory of human behavior, social systems (and therefore the individuals which constitute them) should contain some characteristics that are nearly universal in nature. This is due to the fact that social systems have interacted with other social systems for a substantial period of time and, as is consistently shown in anthropological literature, will share, for example, myths, stories, tools, and spouses. Together, these assumptions lead to a personal view of humanity that is appreciative of diversity and curious about both cultural and individual

differences and similarities—a personal view, furthermore, which fosters an appreciation of both multicultural and cross-cultural projects.

My personality characteristics are consistent with the theoretical view I have adopted over the course of my education. I do have a tendency toward trying to conduct research that seeks to prove a theory (though this should be countered by the exploratory nature of this particular project). I also do have a flair for seeking out unconventional methods for understanding the human condition. I have also been able to establish positive working relationships in several multicultural environments.

A final paragraph or two about my personal involvement with the particular group from which participants were drawn is probably needed. As was noted previously, I was employed in the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In that position, I provided assistance to the Namaste Indian student group during the fall semester of 2004. The assistance came in the form of securing a location for a celebration of *Diwali* (an Asian Indian and Hindu holiday) and acquiring university funds to provide decorations for this event. At

the celebration I spoke on behalf of the division and was honored by the student leaders and faculty advisor of the student organization. No material or monetary gifts were personally exchanged. No expectation for participation in this research project or any other activity was implied by the assistance given to the student organization, though leaders in the student organization subsequently have voluntarily provided feedback regarding both the project in general, and the creation of the demographic questionnaire in particular.

In the fall of 2005, I again assisted the student group in a limited fashion by communicating with some of the staff members at the UAF Division of Student Affairs the students' retrieval of the decorations for the event that were purchased the previous year. Furthermore, I donated money to the organization to facilitate the Diwali celebration, though I was unable to attend the festival. Some of my research participants appeared to know that I had worked with the student organization for these two Diwali celebrations, while others did not. For those who did know about my involvement with the celebrations, my involvement did not appear to affect their behavior or willingness to participate.

Chapter 8 Results

Psychometric Characteristics of the OCIS

During the proposal stages of this project,

quantitative data analysis of scores on the OCIS were to be

limited to the White American or Anglo and the Asian Indian

subscales of the OCIS. The data in this section will,

therefore, primarily relate to these two subscales.

The White American or Anglo subscale of the OCIS

received a Cronbach's alpha of .968 while the Asian Indian

subscale received a Cronbach's alpha of .862. Such alpha

levels would indicate a good amount of internal consistency

between the individual items that comprise the subscales of

the OCIS. In addition, the scores on the White American or

Anglo and Asian Indian subscales expressed a significantly

positive correlation of .341 (p<.02; N=47)[18].

Table 2 presents the mean, median, mode, and standard

deviations for scores on the OCIS for the White American or

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[18] This correlation is reported as it was found to be
significant. However, the magnitude of the correlation
would result in only approximately 9% of the shared
variance being explained by this correlation. Therefore,
while significant, the correlation is not very meaningful.

Anglo cultural identity and the Asian Indian Cultural

identity subscales.

Table 2. Distribution of scores on the White American or Anglo subscale
and the Asian Indian subscale of the OCIS

	Current or Family of Origin Traditions (1)	Future Traditions (2)	Current or Family of Origin Way of Life (3)	Future Way of Life (4)	Current or Family of Origin Success (5)	Future Success (6)	Subscale Score
White American or Anglo							
Mean	0.872	1.085	0.894	1.26	1	1.043	1.025
Median	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mode	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SD	0.924	1.158	0.938	1.31	1.161	1.215	1.034
Asian Indian							
Mean	3.553	3.574	3.745	3.596	3.638	3.532	3.606
Median	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.833
Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
SD	0.717	0.801	0.607	0.851	0.919	0.905	0.614

Figure 3 presents a scatter plot of the average scores

on the Asian Indian and White American or Anglo subscales.

Several participants achieved the same average scores on

both these subscales. Therefore, some of the point markers

in Figure 3 represent more than one participant per marker.

Figure 3. Scatter plot of average scores on the Asian Indian and White American or Anglo subscales. Note: The darker the point marker ("•"), the more individuals there were at the given point.

Another often useful method for illustrating the manner in which participants performed is to depict this performance through a cross-tabs frequency table. Table 3 presents the number of participants whose average scores on the Asian Indian and White American or Anglo subscales fell within several average score ranges.

Table 3. Frequency of participants' average scores within given ranges on the Asian Indian and White American or Anglo scales.

	Average Score	Asian Indian 0.00-0.99	1.00-1.99	2.00-2.99	3.00-3.99	4.00	Sum
	4.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
	3.00-3.99	0	0	1	0	1	2
White American or Anglo	2.00-2.99	0	0	0	4	5	9
	1.00-1.99	0	0	0	4	11	15
	0.00-0.99	1	0	4	10	6	21
Sum		1	0	5	18	23	47

As discussed in the Methods chapter, OCIS subscale scores can also be divided into three status categories: Low amounts of identification, Middle-range amounts of identification, and High amounts of identification. When quantitative point ranges for each of these status categories are applied to the data from the surveys in this project, a majority of respondents were found to be of High status on the Asian Indian subscale. A majority of respondents were also found to be of Low amounts of identification on the White American or Anglo subscale. Table 4 depicts the frequencies of placement in the Low,

Middle, and High status categories for both White American

or Anglo and Asian Indian subscales.

Table 4. Low, Middle, and High status frequencies expressed by
participants on the OCIS

	Low	Middle	High
White American or Anglo	36 (76.59)*	10 (21.28)	1 (2.13)
Asian Indian	1 (2.13)	8 (17.02)	38 (80.85)

*The number in parentheses is the proportion of respondents

Demographics and Performance on the OCIS

I compared OCIS scores across the demographic

variables. The group appears to be homogenous as far as

performance on the OCIS is concerned. Correlations and chi-

squared comparisons between actual and expected frequencies

according to various demographic information yielded no

significant relationships or significant differences

between observed and expected frequencies in performance[19].

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[19] Correlations were conducted for age and years in the U.S.
compared to OCIS scores. For both the White American or
Anglo and the Asian Indian subscales, chi-squared
comparisons of observed and expected frequencies were
calculated between status on the OCIS (e.g., High, Medium,
Low) and each of: gender, caste, marital status, religion,
and economic status of the family. Due to low frequencies
in some cells, a Fisher Exact Test was performed to further
verify insignificant results. Geographic factors were also
initially intended to be used as a comparison, but no
meaningful way of dividing the participants according to
region in Indian of origin was devisable given the places
of origin and frequencies of these places noted by
participants.

Missing Data

Seventeen participants did not endorse any one of the anchors provided for the non-Asian Indian cultural identity categories on the OCIS (e.g., White American or Anglo, Asian or Asian American). Thirty participants did endorse an anchor for any non-Asian Indian cultural identity on at least one of the questions, while 28 participants endorsed a White American or Anglo anchor on at least one of the questions (19 endorsed no White American or Anglo anchor). Only three people did not endorse an anchor on one or more question for the Asian Indian cultural identity, and two of the three did not endorse anchors on two questions for the Asian Indian cultural identity. While there was wide diversity as to whether or not a given person endorsed items for non-Asian Indian cultural identities, there was a fairly uniform pattern in which people did consistently endorse anchors for the Asian Indian cultural identity.

When one refers to the instructions given to the participant at the top of the OCIS (see Oetting & Beauvais, 1990-1991a), one will notice that the participant is not required to endorse anchors for more than one cultural identity on a given item, though this is encouraged. Given

that some participants did not endorse an anchor on some items for the White American or Anglo cultural identity while endorsing anchors for this cultural identity on other items, I chose to treat these forms as complete and meaningful so long as the participant did complete the required number of items on the Asian Indian cultural identity. No participants completed an insufficient number of items on the Asian Indian cultural Identity (which would have consisted of leaving more than 2 questions blank). In the case where a participant did not endorse a particular anchor, the response was quantified as "0." Further supporting quantifying such responses as a "0" (as will be discussed more fully in the section on the participants' meanings ascribed to the anchors on the OCIS) was the meaning the participants ascribed to the anchor *None at All* (which was the selection representing the most infrequent possible degree of identification on an item and was scored as one point). According to the participants, someone who selects the *None at All* anchor would express a degree of identification equal to levels up to the 40th percentile and would participate in a given activity up to 40% of the time. Given this, it would seem that the anchor *None at All* represents someone who is identifying to an extent

greater than no identification at all, or someone who is indeed participating in given activities. Therefore, quantifying such blank responses for the White American or Anglo subscale on the items as a, "0" would best reflect the meaning the participants themselves apply to the OCIS (whereas imputing the mean, substituting a score of, "1," or listwise deletion would be less reflective of this and could distort the actual manner in which the participants completed the OCIS). Using the meanings the participants ascribe to the anchors to determine how to score the blanks is, as well, supported by one of the authors of the OCIS[20].

What Themes can be Identified, which Indicate the

Participants' Understanding of Cultural Identification, as

Measured by the OCIS?

I first analyzed the results I order to draw from it themes regarding Asian Indian cultural identification from the various meaning units previously presented in this dissertation. These themes, as discussed with and agreed upon by consensus of the participants, are:

- Family;

- Karma;

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[20] Fred Beauvais, personal communication on April 1, 2008.

- Tolerance of diversity;

- Getting together, giving to others, and getting along;

- Life is a process;

- Personal choice should be balanced by sense of respectful duty and obligation; and

- Cultural change is normal—one should try to keep basic philosophy alive through the generations, but specific practices can change.

These themes cross the terms and phrases on the OCIS for which the participants supplied meanings. Analyzing the participants responses thematically (as opposed to only analyzing them within the OCIS-determined phrases or terms) provides an alternate way to compare the results of the OCIS to existing literature on Asian Indian cultural identity as discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Figure 4 provides examples from the participants as to the manner in which the themes manifest in different meaning units across the terms on the OCIS.

Traditions	Way of Life	Success
Family Bonding, Transmission	Home-centered Activities	Generational Improvement
Karma		
Tolerance of Diversity Other Religions/Beliefs	Variation in Practice	Individual Pathways
Getting Together/Giving to Others		
Life is a Process Intrapersonal Changes	Learning /Adaptation As a Value	Depends on Age
Balance of Personal Choice and Duty		
Cultural Change is Normal Generational change		Integration of Western Ways

Figure 4. Themes regarding cultural identification.

What Within-Group Meanings are Applied to the Individual

Items on the OCIS by Users of this Scale who are Asian

Indian Foreign Exchange Students?

Given the OCIS repeats certain key phrases and terms throughout the scale (e.g., "traditions," "success," "way of life,"). This section of the chapter focuses on these terms as a way of understanding the meanings the participants applied to the individual items on the scale. Whereas the terms, "success," and "way of life," are used herein to refer to only these terms themselves, I will use the term, "traditions," as a space-saving gloss to refer to those terms found in the first two questions on the OCIS, which include, "special activities," "traditions," "holidays," "special meals," "religious activities," "trips," and "parties."

Meanings Associated with the Term, "Traditions"

When participants were asked to express their thoughts about the term, "traditions," all participants thought of particular festivals that occur in India and are celebrated (to varying extent) within the Asian Indian community abroad. Other prevalent themes included family and puja, while some discussion around food also occurred.

Festivals. All of the participants mentioned at least one type of festival during the portion of the interview that pertained to traditions. The type of festivals cited by participants tended to be those that I believe Westerners might commonly associate with Hinduism. While participants noted a religious overtone to these celebrations, the ones most often cited were those that, like Christmas in the United States, were loosely religious in the sense that they originated within a faith, but are widely celebrated and may have attributes to their celebration that have a secular origination (e.g., Diwali). The specific festivals cited included Diwali, Holi, Durga Puja (or its local derivative), and celebrations related to Ganesha. Participants also cited national or regional festivals, though generally not by name. Also noted were seasonal festivals.

Though participants noted that there were customs and decorations unique to a given festival, the central aspect of such festivals was a gathering or "get-together." As interviewee #4 states when referring to the purpose of religious festivals, "I mean, those festivals or those events are based on religion, but their aim is to gather people." Therefore, while the particular god celebrated

during the festival, the specific décor of the house, or the actions engaged in by the celebrants might change depending on the festival, the central aspect of all festivals for the participants was a gathering of friends and family. Another aspect cited by participants was of giving to others and spending time with them during these festivities.

Three participants also discussed marriage in terms of festivals. The magnitude and duration of the marriage celebrations could vary, but those who discussed this also mentioned the ceremony as a time of family getting together of family and friends.

Other information from this topic that might prove useful to subsequent researchers or practitioners included the understanding that though certain festivals might be religious in nature or origin, these festivals were not seen as exclusive to a particular faith—at least as far as Hindu and Christian celebrations were concerned. As interviewee #1 states:

India is a potpourri of so many different religions and cultures and traditions and it's not that I just follow Indian festivals. I like to go and partake in Christmas…. Where I used to live, it's like a mixture

of all religions: Us Hindus, our neighbors were
Christians, and after some years there was a Muslim
family too. So during the Diwali we used to go ahead
and give them some sweets…. They also reciprocate
when their festivals occur.

While two people noted that pilgrimages were important
to them or their family, three cited a lack of time for, or
disinterest in, such trips. For instance, interviewee #2
notes that pilgrimages are not something she has done in
"eight or ten years," and states, "it's not a binding thing
that you have to take time out to go on a pilgrimage or
something." Interviewee #1, in turn, states, "I don't like
going there [to a particular popular religious site
requiring him to travel], it's too much of a hassle."

Finally, all participants either directly noted during
individual interviews or agreed during the group interview
that the practices associated with such festivals were
changing over the generations. Most would seek to educate
and involve their children in the celebrations and
practices that they themselves enjoyed. However, they also
acknowledged that their children would likely not
participate in such activities to the extent that they
themselves had participated. As interviewee #8 states,

As a matter of fact, what our parents used to follow,
we don't follow that much. So I don't think that our
children will follow what we follow….

Puja. A second association with terms subsumed in
traditions was associated with puja: religious practices
associated with the expression of devotion to something
larger than the human. This association was made by six of
the eight participants. One other participant discussed
puja within the context of the phrase, "way of life," but
agreed with the others during the group interview that the
better placement for this activity would be under the term,
"traditions." While some festivals, such as Durga Puja,
may contain the word, "puja," in them and may involve some
sort of religious practices, puja itself was viewed
separately from these festivals by participants. As noted
by the participants, puja may involve praying to one of:
(a) a God with wide-spread following or belief in the
general Hindu population (such as Ganesha), (b) a specific
God of the region, (c) a family God, or (d) books as a form
of knowledge. The participants stated that puja may
involve the assumption of ritualistic actions or bodily
positions, or the lighting of devotional candles and the
burning of incense. Though they noted that puja may occur

on a daily basis, the participants generally appeared to
practice puja less frequently than daily. As with the
participation in festivals, there was acknowledgement that
the intensity and frequency of participation might decrease
through the generations.

   Food. Though food was associated with terms subsumed
by traditions, thoughts about such things appeared to be of
secondary importance to participants. In other words,
while certain foods might be appreciated and, when
possible, made as part of certain traditions, the presence
of a specific food was not an absolutely necessary
component of tradition. As interview #4 states,

   The festival doesn't mean only to have good food, but…

   we have sometimes to follow, things like fast and all

   that, and sometimes we have to pray.

Also, discussion about food during the interviews centered
on the general food preferences of different regions and
castes and appeared to relate more to a way of life, rather
than the citing of a specific food that is eaten only
during or primarily during a given festival. One
participant noted a differentiation between food
preferences between northern and southern Indians.
According to this participant, people of the north make

foods based primarily on wheat (generally in a flat-bread, tortilla-like fashion), while people in the south make foods primarily based on rice.

Family. All participants mentioned family and friends in the course of discussing their thoughts about traditions. Indeed, "get-togethers," or "getting together," with family and friends was the central component of most if not all celebrations, traditions, festivals, or ceremonies (mentioned by seven of the eight participants). While gifts might be exchanged, food prepared, or specific decorations set out, these aspects all appeared to serve not as the main purpose of the tradition, but rather as a means of making the gathering more festive and conducive to good relations with others. As interviewee #2 states, "As long as it's fun and brings the family together and you can have a nice time and celebrate, anything is fine."

The family noted by participants might in some ways be different than Western understandings of this term. Indeed, as is apparent in the following exchange between participant #3 and myself reveals, "close" family can include parents, aunts and uncles, and cousins, as well as in-laws and close friends:

Interviewer: When you see the word, "families," or, "family," what do you think of when you hear that word, like what would be your, "family," I guess? Participant: Well, when you talk about family, the first thing that comes to mind is like my parents, my uncle, auntie, their kids. Like my immediate family. Beyond that, I mean it depends, when you are talking about families, like if you are married and things like that, then you will also consider some friends who are very close to you and you are very free in discussing things and you are very comfortable with the people who are comfortable with you. You can make fun of them, they can make fun of you, you are very free with them discussing any matter in your life.

It should be noted that, when discussing family, participants tended to first identify members of the family that were of the same sex as the participant. For example, when processing aloud about change in Indian practices, interviewee #2 states, "OK, let me just compare three generations: my grandmom, my mom, and me." Moreover, and while she on a few occasions mentions her parents and grandparents, she does not list an independent male relation (e.g., "father") during her interview. Therefore,

there might be a closer identification with family members
of the same sex and when a person is completing the OCIS,
it might be these same-sex family members that the person
thinks of first. Finally, when family was discussed in
terms of traditions, there was an emphasis on respecting
one's elders and fulfilling family obligations to older
members of the family, though the latter was noted more
often by females than males.

Meanings Associated with the Phrase, "Way of Life."

   Hindu/Hinduism. Participants repeatedly expressed that
Hinduism was central to their way of life. Indeed, seven
of the eight participants spent time overtly discussing
Hinduism during this portion of the interview. Though many
reported being "liberal," "not orthodox," or not practicing
religion frequently, Hinduism still formed the center from
which their way of life emanated. However, as was expressed
in several individual interviews and agreed upon by
consensus during the group interview, it should be noted
that the participants themselves felt that Hinduism should
not be construed as a religion *per se.* Several
participants noted reservations about discussing the term
explicitly as being synonymous with the phrase, "way of
life," out of apparent concern that I would take this to

mean that the Indian way of life was centered on one
particular religion or that I would mistakenly assume that
since Hinduism was the way of life for them that Indians of
other faiths could not practice the Asian Indian way of
life. These assumptions would be, to the participants,
false. Hinduism meant, to them, simply a way of life.
Indeed, interviewee #6 states this explicitly, "Actually
Hinduism is not a religion, it's a way of life."

For the participants, a person could be Hindu and
worship any God or belong to any faith that he or she felt
was appropriate (so a person who was Christian or some
other faith could also be Hindu). Indeed, the following
exchange between interviewee #6 and myself makes this
explicit when the interviewee refers to the original or
pure sense of Hinduism:

Interviewer: OK. Do you think, would it be maybe
possible to describe just a little bit about what the
Hindu way of life would be? Like what kind of things
you might do or, or that?

Participant: Uh… The Hindu way of life means that you
can follow whatever religion you want. Actually,
Hinduism means that you can follow whatever religion
you want. Worship God in whatever the form you want.

According to the participants, the Hindu way of life involves a karmic relationship with others and oneself. However, karma should not be understood as referring to a reincarnation-focused construct, but rather something more closely representing a law of nature or a social psychological concept. As interviewee #3 states, "whatever you do in this life you have to repay in this life." A person lives a Hindu way of life if the person understands that a given action will lead to similar reactions by others to the person. Citing interviewee #3 again:

> Like, if you consider the majority of people, they will always be willing to help the people who are in need. It all boils down to your *karma*. If a person believes in karma, whatever he does today, he gets paid for it tomorrow. Or, if he does something wrong today, he'll have to repay for it tomorrow.

From this, then, it follows that a person living a Hindu way of life expresses respect for others, a tolerance for other religions, individual choices regarding lifestyle, and groups of peoples (see the subsection on Karma in the discussion on the term, "success," for more detail). The Hindu way of life considers family obligations as an important aspect of life and will

strongly consider the directions of elders when making decisions regarding life choices.

Most participants appeared to believe that non-violence was a central part of the Hindu way of life. As interviewee #6 states, "It [Hinduism] gave a lot of freedom to people to do whatever they want. The only condition that this way of life demanded of its people was not to harm others." Interestingly, however, one participant, who noted that he was Kshatrya (the warrior caste), expressed more openness to occasionally using violence to resolve conflict, so long as the violence was necessary. Given the other participants' acknowledgement that the Hindu way of life involves letting others follow the pathway that is correct for them, it would seem that such a perspective is admissible as a valid form of the Hindu way of life as well, though with perhaps several caveats. I discussed this with the participants during the group interview and it was decided that this aspect of the Hindu way of life might be best summarized in that a non-violent approach to others appeared to generally belong to the preferred Hindu way of life, though here diversity is allowed so long as the violent action appears to be the right action for the person given his or her role, the context in which it

occurs, and whether it is a measured response appropriate to a violent action, which has already occurred to the person or those for whom the person has responsibility.

Family Centered. The Asian Indian way of life is, according to the participants, family centered. While most did not explicitly state this as such during the interviews, all of the participants spent much time discussing either family members and activities, or family commitments or obligations. The family was generally viewed positively and appeared to consist of the same members noted previously when discussing family in the section regarding associations with the term, "traditions." Even when discussing such things as marrying the person your parents feel is appropriate for you—something that Westerners might feel imposes on their individuality—those participants who accepted arranged marriage did not tend to express dissatisfaction with the practice of marrying the person their parents feel is best for them.

The following exchange between the interviewee #7 and myself highlights the importance of following family decisions:

Participant: The Indian way of life is to… You have to listen to what your parents are telling you; you

have to obey them sometimes. Whether you like or you

don't like you have to—most of the time you have to—

parents, you have to listen to your elders. I think

that's the Indian way of life….

Interviewer: Oh.

Participant: It's like respecting your elders is a

major part of our life. Listening to your parents;

what they're telling you to do. And so that's what I

think. I have listened to my parents all throughout

when I was a kid and older. That is my way of life.

Listen to them and to actually.

Interviewer: Sure, well, I think I understand. It

sounds like for you the way of life has to do a lot

with, like you were saying respecting your elders or

listening to your parents…

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: And maybe the other…

Participant: Sometimes, sometimes you have to choose

for your career what they like you to be. You have to

choose like that. It happens so many times

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. And do you…

Participant: Or the husband they like. It happens in

India.

Centered on Day-to-Day Activities. As opposed to the terms subsumed under, "traditions," the thoughts and experiences noted by participants regarding the Asian Indian way of life tended toward daily or ever-present thoughts, practices and interactions. This differentiation was apparent in the content of the examples provided by participants. However, it should be noted that the thoughts, activities, or experiences that the participants identified did not contain explicit reference to acting in accordance with the Asian Indian way of life, rather these things appear to be associated with the way of life only upon questioning and reflection by the participant. An exchange with interviewee #4 illustrates this. When the interview focused on the phrase, "way of life," interviewee #4 discussed cooking, home maintenance, parties/get-togethers, and the difference between the way Indians divide their time versus Americans. The course and content of the conversation led me to explicate the theme at-hand, which resulted in the following exchange:

Interviewer: Okay. Kind of a way of life is those day-to-day things you do: cooking and home care is more of a…

Participant: Yeah, we are more interested in what we do at home.

These day-to-day thoughts, activities, or experiences are simply conducted by the participant in the course of their lives. It could be much like the Western Christian who prays at night before going to sleep. The Westerner's nightly prayer before bedtime could be, for some, simply a practice that the person engages in without reflection on the significance or oddity of the timing of the action. Only upon direct questioning would these people realize that the nightly prayer might be an artifact of their culture (e.g., as opposed to prayer a set number of times per day, or collective vs. individual prayer).

Activities discussed around day-to-day activities included foci on work or study, taking care of or respecting the family, cooking, and home-maintenance activities. Interviewee #8, incorporates three of these foci as follows:

And otherwise you have to work, you have to study, you have to be…you have to… actually, you have to mix with your relatives well.

Also noted, during the individual interviews and by universal agreement during the group interview, were a

work-week that was somewhat less strictly divided than in

the West, and a different approach to leisure. The

participants noted that they felt differently about the

division of work and home or family life. They expressed a

perspective in which the Asian Indian was both more, "laid

back," but also less focused on leisure for leisure's sake.

In other words, they appeared to feel that Americans in

particular were more extremist than they in dividing their

lives between work and relaxation. Interviewee #4 provides

a good summary statement about the Indian week, as compared

to their perceptions of the American week:

> Here people hang out on weekends, they do work on
>
> weekdays and they really don't want to do anything on
>
> weekends. They just want to enjoy, and things like
>
> that. What do we do in India? We have a weekend in
>
> India, but it's just for things like home maintenance
>
> and things like that. So here also we don't do like
>
> that. We don't have a party on every Friday or we
>
> don't hang out on Saturday, Sundays. Even when we are
>
> here for years, we try to work on weekends and it
>
> doesn't change our schedule whether weekdays or
>
> weekend…. Because in India we have local holidays in-
>
> between [weekends]. It may be a weekday, but then you

have to make up that in the weekend, right? The

government doesn't pay you for that, but it just… So I

think that that could be an example of the way of

life.

As is illustrated by this excerpt, the notion of the

weekend in which a person simply relaxed or felt the need

to, "hang out," with others seemed to strike some of the

participants as something peculiar. The participants,

instead, expressed an approach to life in which the person

takes care of things as they are needed. Should work

require attention on a Saturday, then so be it. Should

family life require attention during normal business hours,

then so be it.

Gender Differences. Participants talked about

differences in the Asian Indian way of life based on the

sex of the individual in question. Interviewee #4 notes

this sex difference with respect to household maintenance:

Here [in the US] the system is that, usually one of

the partners who has time, he or she will cook. He or

she will do the home maintenance, things like that.

In India, we have a traditional thinking that the

woman does all those things. So, even if my husband

is still here for four years, he hasn't started

following things, which people follow here. In my house, usually I cook, and by usually it gets to 99%. So that's one example.

Even when the participant did not appear to feel as though it was necessary that the genders differ in their roles or actions, gender differences did emerge. Female participants discussed more household activities and child-rearing practices than did their male counterparts. Marriage appeared, as well, to be a more central component of the Asian Indian way of life to the female (whether they saw this as a valuable component, or they saw it as a cultural expectation that they themselves did not hold). During the group interview, both men and women expressed a belief that specific duties associated with a person's gender were becoming less prevalent, though they noted that there were more gender-based differences in expected duties in people from smaller towns or those who held more orthodox beliefs. They noted that while public interactions between the sexes had historically been limited, this too was changing.

Variation. All participants noted, in one fashion or another, that their views or thoughts about the OCIS terms were theirs alone. They took care to note that other Asian

Indians might express very different views, or understandings of the terms we discussed during the interviews. Therefore, it became apparent that variation in the Asian Indian way of life appeared to be for these participants a component of the way of life itself. In other words, the participants thought that other Asian Indians could justifiably express remarkably different understandings of these same terms. If this is the case, then the Asian Indian way of life is not monolithic. Rather, it incorporates a substantial amount of variability. The participants felt that such variation would depend on:

- The region of India from which a person came;

- The State or Territory from which a person came;

- Whether the person was raised in a rural or urban setting;

- The degree of Western influence the person had experienced;

- The customs and beliefs that the person's family had instilled in them during their formative years;

- Whether the person was religiously "Orthodox," or "Liberal;"

- Whether the person belonged to their generation or an older one; and to lesser extent

- The person's caste.

When stating that a person's caste would determine their understanding of the Asian Indian way of life, participants did not appear to be expressing that a person would express some deficiency should they belong to a lower caste. They appeared to believe that, because many in India tended to believe in innate differences between the castes until recently, many people's parents and perhaps many people themselves, would have experienced differential treatment based on their particular caste and might, therefore, have formed differing opinions regarding what constitutes the Asian Indian way of life, as well as how much they might value this way of life. One could assert then, that caste was viewed by the participants as one of several socially constructed reasons for variation in perspective on what would constitute and Asian Indian way of life.

Meanings Associated with the Term, "Success."

The term, "success," to the Asian Indian participants was associated with the following terms and life realms:

karma, family life, education/knowledge, social life, and
practical considerations.

   Karma.   The participants associated karma with
success.   They defined it largely in the same manner as was
discussed in the section about meanings associated with the
phrase, "way of life."   The difference here is that, while
karmic relationships are part of the Asian Indian way of
life, what Westerners might refer to as *good* karma is
associated with success.   Therefore, it could be said, that
success connotes that a person has taken correct actions
along their own personal path in the Asian Indian way of
life in a consistent, positive manner such that their karma
results in positive outcomes.   Karma, and its relationship
to other forms of success, is best illustrated by the
response of interviewee #3.   When discussing education and
financial success, he stated:

>   I guess I am quite successful if you are talking about
>   all those aspects, because I believe in a concept that
>   whatever you do today… you'll have to repay tomorrow.
>   You if you do something good, you'll get something
>   good tomorrow….   I believe in the concept that if you
>   hurt someone's feelings, it comes down to you.   If you
>   are hurting someone's feelings, tomorrow God will hurt

your feelings. Someone else will come who will hurt

your feelings. You will have to pay for it. So,

basically again, it comes down to karma.

Family Life. To the participants, family life was an

important aspect of success. Indeed, during both the

individual and group interviews, the participants stressed

that family life was often considered to be more of an

indicator of success than one's career, education, or other

practical considerations that they associated with the

term.

Expressing proper respect for their relatives and

exposing children to their family's traditions were seen as

key aspects of being successful for the participants.

Being respectful to relatives meant treating their elders

with deference, considering the advice and wishes of their

parents, acting courteously, and adhering to cultural

standards for their own particular role in the family.

While the participants varied to some degree about how much

they would expose their children to specific traditions,

they all emphasized that it would be up to their children

to choose to follow the traditions on their own.

The participants reported marriage and properly

rearing children as important aspects of family life. They

further reported that to be a success, they would want to improve their own status as compared to their parents, as well as provide the opportunity that when their children reach adulthood, they in turn might provide for their own family to greater levels than participants themselves were able. Therefore, a generational improvement in family status is seen as an integral part of being a success.

Education/Knowledge. Education, both for the practical benefits it can bring about (e.g., improved income, career potential, amenities), as well as personal growth, was readily associated with success by participants. As interviewee #1 states:

> In a nutshell guess right now [success is] education. How good you are as a well-learned person is considered much more suitable or much more successful than an ordinary person who has just done his high school education. At least in my community, success is measured in terms of education…

Supporting both the importance of education and the importance of generational improvement noted in the previous section on family life, interviewee #4 notes that:

> When you, you are a success or your family is a success, it should be an upgradation—upgradation in

the educational sense. So what your parents have learned—you should be more educated.

Social Life. Success for the participants also contained social features. Specific aspects of these features included: (a) respect and recognition, (b) tolerance, (c) adaptation and maintaining traditions, and (d) keeping interpersonal commitments.

Gaining the respect and recognition of others was perceived to be a sign of success for the participants. Though the respect and recognition referred to by participants could contemporarily be generally garnered through being successful in the other areas referred to in this section (e.g., family life, educational achievement, career), the participants identified respect and recognition as an independent aspect of social life. In other words, being successful in a given area or aspect of life, such as raising one's children well, does not necessarily lead to, nor should it be *expected* to lead to, respect or recognition; respect or recognition is its own independent sign of success. Interviewee #6 illustrates this sentiment when he states:

When you see the way of life being led nowadays in India, then the income and other things govern an

important part of being successful or not. But, the

actual Hinduism way of life, or the old Indian way of

life I am talking about didn't give a lot of emphasis

on the financial strength you had, or stuff like that.

It was just recognition in the society for what you

are, how well you were recognized or respected in the

society…. That's what it was all about.

To the participants, tolerance of other traditions,

lifestyles, religious beliefs, values, etc., was reported

to be an aspect of success as it is manifested socially.

In other words, a requisite of success was seen to be the

ability to accept others as they are. As one participant

stated:

> For some people drinking is right, smoking is right,
>
> eating meat is right. I don't have any objection.
>
> It's right for you; you do it. But don't force me to
>
> do it, because it's not right for me. You know that
>
> drinking is not right for me. "Not right," means that
>
> you know that I don't like drinking. Okay…. According
>
> to me that is not right. You know. I know that you
>
> don't believe in something, and I am forcing you to do
>
> it. That is not right for me. There are a few people
>
> in India who don't believe in a particular God. There

are followers of that God who might want you to

believe in that God and, you know, they are sayings

that, "This is the biggest God," and stuff like that….

You should directly start praying to this God. Stuff

like that. For me that is not right. You're forcing

things on someone else. You know that that person

doesn't believe in that. That is not right.

Interestingly, the participants included both the

maintenance of traditions and the ability to adapt to

change as significations of being successful. For example,

both interviewees #6 and #7 provide similar wording to

express this for their own and their children's success.

Interviewee #6 states:

There are a lot of traditions in the old Indian way of

life, which are wrong and superstitious also…. And I

just try to take the good things then. You have to

reason out why. It's not like following the tradition

blindly. You just have to reason it out. Why am I

doing this, or what good it is for me to do this, or

something like that.

Interviewee #7, in turn, states:

I would certainly like to instill some values into my

children. But I don't think it's possible that what

we follow—what we have followed—that the children
might remember and follow those things…. What is good
and bad and—what I think is good and what I think is
bad—and ultimately try to make the children follow
th[ose] things. So I wouldn't tell them just, "get up
every day and do puja," and all that, what you think
as our traditions. I wouldn't tell them to do that.
I would like them to follow what is good and what is
right.

The key here for the participants is the *balance*
between tradition and adaptation: success is in the ability
to balance stability and change. Some activities and
traditions are expressed as being intrinsically valuable,
and therefore to be maintained. However, the maintaining
activity need not remain the same through the generations
regardless of the *zeitgeist*. Rather, the activity can (and
sometimes should) be modified to meet the current situation
in which the person finds him or herself. Therefore, the
key to success here is the ability to identify the
underlying meaning or value a tradition has for society and
to work to maintain this value, even though the manifest
activities of the tradition may require adaptation.

The last social aspect of success identified by the participants was keeping interpersonal commitments. As will be discussed in the section on the terms found in the anchors of items on the OCIS, the ability to keep interpersonal commitments tended to be viewed in an all-or-nothing fashion: either one does, or does not, keep commitments. As interviewee #3 states:

> I…generally, I don't believe in the concept of just giving it a shot…. You come to me for some help, I say, "Okay, I'll do it." And then, you know, I end up that I don't have time and I don't do your stuff, I won't do that.

If one is not able to keep a commitment, excuses or explanations of extenuating circumstances are generally kept to a minimum, and there is an expectation of responsibility to notify the other person that one cannot keep the commitment.

Practical Considerations. Success to the participants also referred to the practicalities of life. This group of connotations included high-status employment (with lesser degrees manual labor than other types of employment), and sufficient income to afford a relatively high standard of living and the ability to afford luxuries (such as travel,

household fineries, etc.). The participants also stressed

that success to them is a process that unfolds as one ages:

with greater age comes a greater possibility of increased

success. It is not necessarily an absolute final status.

Rather, it is something that can be continually improved

and depends on the background and perspective of the person

in question. Therefore, one person's "success," depends in

part on their age, the socioeconomic status into which they

were born, and their own personal values and beliefs, as

interviewee #7 sums it:

> But then, at my age—I'm only [states age] so—I can't
>
> explain what is success, because at [age]-years-old
>
> you can't be very successful in your life…. It might
>
> come later in your life. And it's very different what
>
> different persons will think success as a different
>
> thing. Like, so if I don't consider myself very
>
> successful, someone in my position will consider
>
> himself or herself very successful. So it's very
>
> different.

What Within-Group Meanings are Applied to the Participant's

own Categorical Placement on the OCIS?

The meanings that participants applied to their own

categorical placement on the OCIS (High, Medium, and Low

cultural identification) are best understood by inspection

of the anchors supplied for each individual item as these

relate to the overall categorical placement. This is due

to both: (a) participants viewed the categorical placement

on the OCIS as a logical extension of scores for the

individual items, and (b) participants believed that the

individual items could be summed to come to an estimate of

a given person's overall degree of cultural identification.

Their primary means of differentiating both categorical

placements (e.g., High, Medium, and Low) and individual

item anchors, (e.g., *A Lot, Some, A Few, None at All*) was

quantitative. They posited that those who were placed in

the High category or those that selected *A Lot* for a given

item would present as engaging in traditions, following the

Asian Indian way of life, or being a success, in

quantitatively different manner than those that were placed

in the Low category or those that selected *None at All* for

a given item.

Interestingly, the participants indicated that the

number of divisions found in the categorical placements

(three) was more meaningful than the number of divisions

found in the anchors to the individual items (four). As a

group, they believed that the difference between the anchor

A Lot and the other anchors was the most easily

discernable, while the least readily discernable difference

was between the middle two choices (*Some,* and *A Few;*

indeed, they suggested that these two anchors be combined).

By consensus during the group interview, they decided that

the anchor *A Lot* would equal the 80th percentile of a given

item, while *None at All* would equate to comparative

rankings at or below the 40th percentile.

Participants could not identify specific life areas or

other aspects of Asian Indian cultural identity that would

need to be added to the OCIS for it to properly assess the

degree of cultural identification in a particular person.

However, they did note that while quantitative division of

identification as is found on the OCIS is acceptable, they

believed a richer portrait of the person could be derived

by assessing for personal satisfaction in and with Asian

Indian culture, as well as more qualitative information,

such as how well a person balances the different aspects of

Asian Indian identity.

In sum, then, the participants understood the

categorical placement they received on the OCIS as being a

quantitative estimate of cultural identification that was

sufficiently comprehensive to encapsulate the main aspects

of Asian Indian cultural identification, though with the
caveat that the scale might be amended to include
satisfaction and ability to balance aspects of their lives
in order to understand their degree of cultural
identification to even greater extent.

Chapter 9 Discussion

Quantitative results from the participants' completion

of the OCIS revealed a rather homogenous performance in

which most participants expressed High levels of cultural

identification with the Asian Indian cultural identity and

Low levels of identification with White or Anglo cultural

identity. Collected demographic information did not appear

to significantly relate to performance on the OCIS, while

levels of cultural identification between the Asian Indian

and White or Anglo cultural identifications were

significantly positively correlated. Good internal

consistency (as measured by Cronbach's alpha) was present

for each of the Asian Indian and White or Anglo cultural

identification subscales. While the participants had some

suggestions for improvement of the scale concerning

measurement (e.g, adding satisfaction and qualitative

measures), they did also report that categorical placement

of cultural identification on the OCIS was a logical

extension of performance on the individual items and they

could not identify areas of cultural identification that

were not assessed. It is believed, therefore, that the

OCIS: (a) operated in this sample in a manner consistent

with its performance in other, previously cited

populations, and (b) provided a measure of cultural

identification that was both appropriate and acceptable to

this sample.

The specific meanings ascribed to terms and phrases

from the items on the OCIS revealed patterns found in the

extant literature. The terms subsumed under the gloss,

"traditions," included festivals, family, puja, and special

foods. The phrase, "way of life," was associated with

Hinduism, was family-centered, largely concerned day-to-day

activities, and brought out discussion regarding gender

differences and variation within the Asian Indian culture.

Finally, the term, "success," connoted karma, family life,

education/knowledge, social life, and practical

considerations.

Comparison of the findings regarding these terms to

Sinha's (1998) summary article reveals similarities

including that both my dissertation and Sinha's article

report success (or achievement in Sinha's terms) as being

defined in not only personal terms, but also social and

familial success. Indian self-concept is interdependent

(rather than independent or dependent) and involves greater

emphasis on group or social identity and roles than that of Euro-Americans.

The associations and connotations of the terms on the OCIS as found in my project also coincide with some of the conclusions of Das and Kemp (1997), including (using Das & Kemp's terms): moderation in behaviors, devaluation of individualism, harmony between hierarchical roles, structured family roles and relationships, obedience, high regard for learning, marrying within verses outside ethnic group, and importance attached to preserving the original religion.

Finally, the themes concerning cultural identification in general that ran through the interviews with participants were: (a) family, (b) karma, (c) tolerance of diversity, giving to others and getting along, (d) life is a process, (e) personal choice should be balanced by sense of respectful duty and obligation, and (f) cultural change is normal (i.e., one should try to keep basic philosophy alive through the generations, but specific practices can change). While the connotations and associations with specific terms on the OCIS appeared to relate to the article by Das and Kemp (1997), these themes appear to relate better to those patterns noted in the previously

cited article by Ibrahim, Ohnishi and Sandhu (1997).

Overlap between the findings of this dissertation and that

article include (in their terms):

- self-respect, dignity, and self-control,

- respect for the family/filial piety,

- respect for age,

- awareness and respect for community,

- fatalism, and

- humility,

(Cultural Identity and Worldview section, ¶ 3).

These previous studies then, when compared to this

dissertation, support the assertion that this dissertation

project complements the existing literature. However, and

as is probably apparent, the respondents for this project

provided both similar and dissimilar responses to those

found in the literature. Dissimilar information includes

greater apparent emphasis on adaptation and change, more

information about specific customs and events, and more

discussion about variation within Asian Indian identity.

Similar information is, however, presented in both meaning

units (e.g., "karma," as a meaning unit it my project vs.

"fatalism" as a meaning unit in the Ibrahim, et al., 1997,

article) and schematic arrangements that differ from those found in the existing literature. For example, Ibrahim, et al. (1997) discuss family-related aspects of Asian Indian identity separately from other aspects of identity, while in this project the participants included discussions of family in multiple aspects of cultural identification. Whether this is an artifact of the scale itself, or a difference in the way the participants actually responded warrants further investigation.

One particular finding from my project, which warrants attention if replicated in future projects, is the particular manner in which the participants differentiated between the terms, "traditions," and, "way of life." The term, "traditions, (and the items that measured it on the OCIS) tended, in my opinion, toward what Eliade (1959) referred to as the sacred: they concerned special times and gatherings (festivals) family, puja, and special foods. The phrase, "way of life," however, tended to evoke life-realms that could be grouped into the, "profane," aspects of Eliade's (1959) view of existence (e.g., family-centered, day-to-day activities, gender differences, and variation). Because cultural identification (as measured by the OCIS) is based on both of these factors, those

conducting community-building projects in psychology or planning for culturally-responsive mental health treatment, might need to ensure that both of these aspects of culture are addressed in program evaluation/assessment, intervention, and support.

One final result worth noting is the meaning the participants ascribed to the *None at All* anchor. As discussed in the results chapter, participants felt that someone who selected this anchor on a given item would express identification with the topic of the item or participate in the activities associated with that item at levels up to the 40th percentile and 40% of the time (they used the same number for both the percentile and the percentage). I did not expect that such relatively high levels of identification or percentage of participation would be associated with an anchor designated *None at All*. Rather, I expected that such an anchor would represent a person who did not express any identification, or participate in any activities, related to a given item. I would speculate that other researchers might make assumptions similar to mine in the course of their research. Given, however, that these participants did ascribe very different meanings to this anchor than I had,

inspecting the meanings that participants ascribe to anchors on the OCIS (or other similar scales used in cross-cultural/multicultural populations) would appear to be a necessary component to continued use of the scale in cross-cultural/multicultural populations.

There are, of course, limitations to the project conducted for this dissertation. The primary limitation is the restricted ability to generalize results to larger Asian Indian populations brought about by the sampling method. The sample size, as well, makes it difficult to rule out the possibility that there may indeed be significant relationships between demographic variables and performance on the OCIS in larger Asian Indian populations. There may also be changes in patterns in the relationship between OCIS subscales.

This dissertation project adds to the literature base by providing an initial indication of the meanings Asian Indian foreign exchange students applied to items on the OCIS. This is the first investigation involving Asian Indians and the OCIS. It provides a base of data on which future projects can be built that provide a greater understanding of Asian Indian populations in the United State. As such, it also serves as an initial indication of

underlying meaning systems involved in cultural

identification for practitioners working with Asian Indian

foreign exchange students. In both of these ways, this

project begins the effort to increase the cultural

competency of those who work with Asian Indians in the

United States. Finally, because qualitative investigation

regarding the meanings participants ascribe to the OCIS in

any culture has not been published to-date, this

investigation can serve as a model for future, similar

investigations in other cultures.

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APPENDIX A:

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER OF APPROVAL

University of Alaska Fairbanks

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Teresa Lyons, Research Committee Coordinator
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P.O. Box 757270
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April 13, 2005

Subject: IRB review of Human Subjects Application form IRB # 05-29

Dear Dr. Mohatt,

The Human Subjects Application for *The Orthongonal Cultural Identification Scale in Asian Indian International Exchange Students* has received administrative review. This protocol was approved as exempted per CFR Title 45 §46.101 (2) (b)(5), Exemption 2: Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

IRB Protocol Number:	05-29
Investigator/Instructor:	Gerald Mohatt, EdD
Title of Project/Course:	*The Orthongonal Cultural Identification Scale in Asian Indian International Exchange Students*
Date Approved:	April 13, 2005
Education Requirements:	CITI training has been competed by Dr. Mohatt

Teresa Lyons
Research Committee Coordinator

Attached *Request for Modification Application*

University of Alaska Fairbanks

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Request for Modification: IRB #:_____

Principal Investigator: _____

Study Title: _____

_____

1. **Modification Type:**

   _____ Modification to currently approved Human Subjects Application.

   _____ Modification to currently approved informed consent/assent form.(Please attach copy of revised form)

   _____ Other (Modification to advertisement, interview/survey questions).

2. **Check one:** _____ This modification **does not** increase the risk to current or future participants.

   _____ This modification **does** increase the risks to current or future participants.

3. **Description of Modification:**

Principal Investigator Assurance:

On behalf of my co-investigators, associated students, staff and myself, I agree: To perform the research according to the ethical principles of the Belmont Report*, requirements of 45 CFR 46*, and the Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic*; to strictly adhere to the research protocol as it relates to human subjects, and to ensure that no changes will be made in the activity without obtaining prior IRB approval (except that a change may be made to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject); to comply with any contingencies upon which approval may be granted; to promptly notify any member of the IRB verbally (with written confirmation) of unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others and of any other adverse circumstances or reactions affecting the subjects that arise from the research.(*Available on request.)

Principal Investigator: _____   _____

                                                      Signature   **Date**

APPENDIX B:

INSTRUMENTS

Demographic Information

In order to better understand and interpret the results of my study, I am asking that each participant complete the following questions regarding demographic information. As with all the information you provide to me, this information will be kept in the strictest of confidence and in accordance with those regulations adopted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks. As with the other portions of this study, your participation is solely voluntary and you may choose to stop at anytime. Please ask me if you have any questions. You may do so in person at this time, or by emailing me at: tim.lower@uaf.edu. Please also feel free to contact my faculty advisor at: ffgvm@uaf.edu. Thanks again for your participation.

1.   How many years have you lived in the United States? _____

2.   How old are you?

3.   What gender/sex are you (circle one):

      male   female   hijra/ali

4.   Which religious faith best matches your own (circle one):

      Hinduism   Buddhism   Islam

      Christianity   Sikh   Other:_____

5.   From what state or union territory in India did you come?_____

6.   Please answer this question by circling the one choice that best completes the

      following statement as it relates to you. Compared to the average Indian family in

      India, your family of origin is financially _____.

      below average   average   above average

7.   What ethnicity best describes you? _____

8.   Are you married (circle one):

            yes   no

9. If you were asked to select one of the following as the Varna that best represents your family of origin, which would it be (circle one)?

Dalit/Harijan   Adivasi/Scheduled Tribe   Kshatriya   None

Brahmin   Sudra   Vaisya   Other:_____

APPENDIX C:

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

ID: _____   **Date:**_____

   Thanks for meeting me today. As you know, I've been doing research with Indian exchange students. You and others completed some written questions a few days ago [*or other approximate time-period between the completion of the OCIS and demographic questionnaire, and this interview*]. I've been looking at the data and have selected a few people to talk to about their results so that I can get a better understanding of what certain types of answers to this form [*show the participant a blank OCIS form*] means for Indian exchange students such as you.
   I'm going to ask you to tell me what you were thinking about or feeling for several of these questions. There are no right or wrong answers; any information I can get from you about this form is helpful to me. While we're talking, I'm going to be taking some notes and audio-taping our conversation, so that I can go back and double-check myself later without taking up more of your time. As with your written responses, my notes and the audiotapes of this interview will be kept in the strictest of confidence. This interview should take about 30-45 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin? [*Answer any questions the participant has*]. Alright, let's begin. [*Provide open-ended prompts to begin and continue discussion for each question*]

OCIS Q#___: prompt:_____
Response:_____

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Notes:_____

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OCIS Q#___: prompt:_____
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Follow-up question:_____
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Response:_____

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Follow-up question:_____

Response:_____

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