THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF A COLLECTIVE "INDIAN" ETHNO-RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN A CONTEXT OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY OF AN INDO-CARIBBEAN HINDU TEMPLE IN TORONTO

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Graduate Department of Sociology University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT
The direct face-to-face encounters between Indo-Caribbeans and their estranged ancestral South Asian "cousins" have not only resulted in the gradual transformation of the traditional Indo-Caribbean ethnic identity, but have also created the conditions for the development of a new "Indian" identity in the Canadian diaspora. In this study, I have examined the consequences of this "meeting-up" and the impact that it has had (or is currently having) on ethnic identification among Indo-Caribbeans. The construction of ethnic identity and culture is the result of both convention and innovation - a dialectic played out by ethnic groups for reshaping and redefining ethnic self-conceptions and culture. The Hindu mandir examined in this thesis was characterized by a synchretistic fusion of Indo-Caribbean and South Asian cultural traditions, and this has resulted in the emergence of a new and second diasporic Indo-Caribbean ethnic identity: an identity that takes the form of an imaginary South Asian Indian identity.
For Indo-Caribbeans, the melding together of elements from both the past and present is crucial for redefining who and what they are and wish to be. This new "Indian" identity is tantamount to the creation of "new ethnicity" or ethnic rediscovery. The idea of trying to reconnect with one's ethnic "roots" is not just simply an aspect of ethnic renewal or ethnic rediscovery, but one that represents a significant instance of constructed ethnicity. As such, this study contributes significantly to our understanding of ethnicity as a socially constructed phenomenon.

This sociological ethnographic case study was located within the Social Constructionist approach to ethnicity - a theoretical model that emphasizes the dynamic and fluid nature of ethnic relations. In keeping with the qualitative nature of the case study methodology, this study necessitated the utilization of field research. The rich body of ethnographic data derived from participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews contributed to our understanding of inductive theoretical reformulation made possible through the grounded theory approach.
DEDICATIONS

To my deceased mother, Kowsilia Jaggernathsingh and my deceased high school English teacher and mentor, Miss Sybil Glasgow. May they rest in peace. I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my father, Mr. Jodhan Singh for all his love and support.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their guidance and assistance in making this thesis what it is. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Michal Bodemann for his continued guidance and support in this study and throughout the entire period as a graduate student. After completing his graduate course in Field Methods, he saw the potential for a doctoral dissertation based on my work in that course. With constant encouragement from him, I went back into the field site. After that, there was no looking back. He was not only a mentor, but one who showed genuine interest in my work and progress. I truly appreciate his confidence in me and my scholarly work. I am also indebted to Professor W.W. Isajiw for his contribution to this study. His counsel, advice, and support throughout this study enabled me to improve upon my research skills, both at the theoretical and empirical levels. His admirable personal traits as a scholar and a person created an environment conducive to both intellectual growth and positive personal growth. I was very fortunate to have Professor John Hannigan as one of my thesis committee members. I owe a great deal to him for his unwavering support and dedication to my research. Working with him as a graduate student was, undoubtedly, one of the most intellectually stimulating experiences I have ever had. Under his tutelage, I was able to experience scholastic growth, refinement and improvement; he was a true mentor and role model. I would also like to thank Professor Dennis Magill for all his important suggestions and feedback on my thesis. Lastly, I would like to thank Professor Milton Israel from the Department of History and Professor
Willfried Spohn of the University of Pennsylvania for their constructive criticisms and advice.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Voice of the Vedas Organization for allowing me the opportunity to undertake my research. My heart-felt appreciation goes out to two of its members, namely, Prabhat Sood and Kalawatie Seereeram, alias Bhabhi for their kindness and generosity, and for making my field research experience rewarding and enjoyable. I am also grateful to the Satya Sanatan Dharma Temple for its kindness in warmly welcoming me to its community and for the love and respectability that were meted out to me by its members. I would like to thank, in particular, Pundit Ravi and Amarnath Binda and Family for their hospitality and support. I offer my sincere gratitude and appreciation for all of the other Hindu mandirs that welcomed me to their communities. I would personally like to thank Mr. Deo Kernahan for taking time off from his busy schedule to offer valuable suggestions and insights. Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Jeannette Wright from the Department of Sociology for her continued support and advice, and to a dear friend, Aneesa Mohammed for being one of the most caring and supportive individuals I have ever known.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

A newly emerging collective "Indian"\textsuperscript{1} ethno-religious identity is currently being "constructed" at a unique Hindu mandir\textsuperscript{2} in Toronto, Ontario. This temple is unique in two important ways. First, it has brought together peoples of diverse ethnic backgrounds who take pride in worshipping, socializing, and organizing cultural and religious events in a context of inter-ethnic co-operation. Second, and more importantly, is the fact that this mandir is presently pursuing an agenda that involves the reconstruction of an existing identity, namely, an Indo-Caribbean identity as it is manifested in contemporary Canadian society (For a more detailed description of the mandir's unique characteristics see Methodology chapter). The merging, then, of Indo-Caribbean\textsuperscript{3} Hindus with their estranged ancestral cousins from India, and their diasporic counterparts from East Africa, South Africa, Fiji, and Mauritius has implications for the development of a newly emerging diasporic Canadian "Indian" identity.

At the simplest level, the construction of a diasporic Canadian Indian identity is

\textsuperscript{1} In its strictest usage, the ethnic category Indian refers to East Indians or people who were born in India. Like most other nationality and ethnic groups, the term Indian entails a distinct cultural system that distinguishes it from other ethnic/cultural groups.

\textsuperscript{2} Mandir is the Hindi word for temple or church. Henceforth, the words mandir and temple will be used interchangeably.

\textsuperscript{3} The term Indo-Caribbean refers to peoples of East Indian descent/ancestry who were born in the Caribbean/West Indies.
a distinct possibility given the fact that two very important ethno-cultural ingredients necessary for identity reconstruction, namely, religion and ancestry, are present at the mandir. These two elements are capable of pulling the East Indians/South Asians, Indo-Caribbeans, Indo-Africans, and Indo-Pacific groups together in their attempt to create a new "Indian" identity. At a more complex level, however, the construction of a new identity may entail processes that go beyond cultural commonalities; elements of ethnic dissimilarities may also be instrumental in the forging of an identity. The fact that these groups share a common ancestry and religion is not to deny the contradictory nature of their relationship. Because of their perceived similarities, these groups may see themselves as being alike. Similarly, the awareness of their objective cultural differences (language, diet, dress etc.,) may encourage them to think in terms of a "we" and "they" perspective.

It is within this somewhat contradictory framework that culturally disparate groups with culturally distinct characteristics are using both their similarities and differences to create a new identity in the Canadian diaspora.

This type of "we are related but still fundamentally different" situation is probably the most apt way of characterizing the relationship between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians/East Indians, and this is nowhere more prevalent than it is at the Metro\* mandir where Indo-Caribbeans are, in a sense, trying to recapture their lost "Indianess" by culturally aligning, and ethnically identifying very strongly with their ancestral South Asian identity. This problematic inter-ethnic scenario provides the setting from which the

\*For ethical reasons, the real name of the mandir that is being investigated will be replaced by a pseudonym, namely, the Metro mandir.
central research question of this study is derived.

Given the particularly ambivalent context that characterizes the relationship between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians/East Indians, *how is it possible to foster and construct a collective "Indian" ethno-religious identity in a context of ethnic diversity?* In order to fully understand how this emergent ethno-religious identity is being developed, it is necessary to isolate the factors that would motivate a particular Indo-Caribbean Hindu community to reconnect with its "ethnic roots" i.e., India. Restated, what (if any) are the conditions that promote Indo-Caribbean "ethnic renewal?" The answer to these questions may be attributed to: (i) grassroots activities occurring at the mandir, and (ii) a particular type of ethnic leadership.

First, the collective efforts of the people (i.e., congregation members) involved in this ethnic construction process may help us understand the emergence of such an identity. For example, the fact that the different groups at the temple share the same religion (Hinduism), and are of the same ancestral background (i.e., they can all trace their ancestral/racial origins to India) may be one possible reason for pursuing this collective "Indian" ethno-religious identity. Thus, this newly emerging identity may stem from a process of social learning - a process by which people or groups, because of their perceived cultural commonalities and dissimilarities - may collectively engage in a process that involves the learning and acceptance of cultural/ethnic differences. Inter-cultural social learning, therefore, may not only result in the promotion of more positive attitudes by in-group members toward out-group members, but it may also entail the modification or transformation of particular aspects of an existing ethnic identity. This may culminate
in the formation of renewed ethnic/cultural identities. By learning, accepting (in varying degrees), and adopting some of the "cultural stuff" of another ethnic group, particular ethnic groups are not only capable of embracing the positive aspects of the "other" ethnic group, but they can also incorporate them into their own existing ethnic repertoire.

Second, this newly emerging collective ethno-religious identity may not necessarily be dictated only from the "below" (i.e., the grassroots/the congregation members), but it may also be dictated from the "above" (i.e., the leadership). A charismatic and entrepreneurial leader may be instrumental in the propagation of this emerging collective ethnic identity. As such, the dissemination of a specific type of ethnic ideology by an ambitious and charismatic leader may play a significant role in ethnic identity construction and reconstruction. For the purposes of this research, "charismatic" will be defined as the religious leader's ability to articulate his religious and ethno-cultural views in a forceful, convincing, and eloquent manner.

Two possible factors, then, can be attributed to the rise of this newly emerging identity: i) a charismatic and entrepreneurial type of ethnic leadership; and ii) the collective efforts of the congregation members themselves. Thus, the process of identity construction begs an important empirical question. Is this newly emerging identity being dictated from a) the "above", (b) from the "below", or from both levels? To understand the process of identity construction within the Indo-Caribbean Hindu community under investigation, it is necessary to define the phenomenon of "ethnic renewal".

*Ethnic renewal* is the reconstruction of one's ethnic identity by reclaiming a discarded identity, replacing or amending an identity in an existing ethnic identity
repertoire, or filling a personal ethnic void. Ethnic renewal refers to both individual and collective processes. *Individual ethnic renewal* occurs when an individual acquires or asserts a new identity by amending or replacing an existing identity, or filling a personal ethnic void (Nagel, 1995:947-948). Amending an ethnic identity might involve exploring one's ancestral identity and including that ancestral nationality or ethnicity as part of one's ethnic identity (e.g., the taking on of an Indian/South Asian ethnic identity by Indo-Caribbean Canadians). Filling a personal ethnic void might entail adopting a new ethnic identity for the first time (e.g., Indo-Caribbeans connecting with their ethnic "roots" by embracing particular aspects of their ancestral South Asian culture and participating in ethnic, social, political, religious, and cultural organizations).

*Collective ethnic renewal* involves the reconstruction of an ethnic community by current or new community members who build and rebuild institutions, culture, history, and traditions (Nagel, 1995:948). Based on my field research conducted at the ethno-religious community, there seems to be a very strong tendency by some Indo-Caribbeans to identify with, and subscribe to, a South Asian/East Indian identity. Thus, the view that some Indo-Caribbean Hindus are currently engaged in a process involving the amending of their existing Indo-Caribbean identity, and the re-asserting and reclaiming of their lost "Indianess" by identifying with their ancestral identity seems to suggest that what is happening at the Metro mandir may indeed be a situation of ethnic renewal. That is to say, the reconstruction of an existing Indo-Caribbean identity does not necessarily entail the discarding of that identity, but the *amending* of that particular identity by incorporating elements from both the past and present. In other words, some Indo-Caribbeans are, in
effect, trying to claim a new identity for themselves - an identity that is both diasporic and ancestral in content.

This ethnic renewal process has resulted in a type of syncretism in which Indo-Caribbean Hindus, in addition to maintaining some of their traditional Indo-Caribbean cultural practices, are also embracing and adopting some aspects of their ancestral heritage (e.g. the adoption of a South Asian ethnic identity). Central to the process of ethnic renewal, then, is the idea of "shared orientation" - a phenomenon which people of similar ethnic background can internalize and then utilize for the promotion of communality and ethnic affinity. According to Weber (1968), fellow ethnics "entertain a subjective belief in their common descent" (Weber, 1968:389). They trace their ethnicity through their ancestors, so in many ways ethnicity is oriented toward the "past" (Kivisto 1989b). Thus, an ethnic group's focus on descent in constructing an ethnic identity encourages a look backward in time, creating what Tricarico (1989) calls "a community of memory, a people constituted by their past" (Tricarico, 1989:37).

In the case of Indo-Caribbeans, "looking backward" means remembering the experiences of their indentured forefathers who left India to work on the sugar plantations of the West Indies in the mid-nineteen century (For a more detailed discussion of Indo-Caribbean history see Chapter 4). This recognition of common descent by Indo-Caribbeans can activate ties with the ancestral homeland, India. At the Metro mandir, it is apparent that many Indo-Caribbean Hindus are discovering and developing an attachment to India. But this dual vision towards the past and into the present by Indo-Caribbean Hindus at the mandir stems, in part, from the type of ethnic and religious
ideologies that are being disseminated by the mandir's religious leader - ideologies that are being embraced by the mandir's members. For Indo-Caribbean Hindus, then, ethnic renewal involves an attempt to rekindle their lost "Indianness" by aligning strongly with their South Asians/East Indian counterparts, which, in turn, has resulted in strong efforts to re-establish a sense of spiritual and cultural bond with the so called "motherland", namely, India.

It should be stated here that although the Indo-African groups at the temple are themselves members of the Indian diaspora, they, nonetheless, possess certain characteristics that are distinctly different from their Indo-Caribbean counterparts. For one thing, the population of Indo-African people at the temple is relatively small: they constitute less than three per cent of the entire membership. More important, however, is the fact that the Indo-African members are culturally and linguistically closer to the India-born/South Asian members than they are to the Indo-Caribbean members. The nature and character of Indian migration to Africa, and to a lesser extent, its proximity to India, may provide some explanation for the similarities.

Unlike the Indian migration to the Caribbean which was characterized by a form of unfree labour and deceptive recruitment incentives implemented by a desperate British colonial administration, Indo-African migration was essentially non-colonial and non-coercive in nature. That is, the Indians in these countries were not enticed by a colonial body to emigrate to Africa to fill a labour shortage. Rather, many Indians, mainly from the state of Gujrat, had left India (voluntarily) to pursue business and trade in particular African countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania during the late 19th and early
20th centuries. As a result of their migration to Africa, many Indians eventually became part of the entrepreneurial class. This is why today they are seen as middlemen minorities in their respective adopted African countries. It is precisely their predominance in the business sectors of these countries that led in particular one leader, Idi Amin, to expel the Indians from Uganda. The Indians in Uganda were seen as an economic threat by the African Ugandan majority.

The non-institutionalized and non-coercive character of Indian migration to Africa, combined with the fact that Africa is geographically closer to India, enabled the Indo-African groups to be more culturally attached to India than Indo-Caribbeans. That is to say, there has been some (although not a lot) "going back and forth" to India among the Indo-African groups. This is in stark contrast to the Indo-Caribbeans who have virtually lost all contacts with India. Thus, it is no wonder that the Indo-Africans, by and large, have lost less of their ancestral culture. Many of the Indo-African born members at the temple, in addition to speaking their ancestral Gujrati language, also wear traditional Indian garbs such as the sari, traditional Indian women's dress and shalwaar kameez, a woman's suit comprising of a baggy pants and a knee length blouse. Also, many Indo-African born people tend to identify more with their ancestral Gujrati identity and less with their diasporic identity. For instance, many of them say that they are Gujratis first and Indo-African second. In a sense, then, one can argue that the Indo-African groups are not as "diasporic" as their Indo-Caribbean counterparts for reasons previously discussed.

The Indo-Africans, therefore, are more ethnically South Asian because they are linguistically and culturally closer to India and its culture. In contrast, Indo-Caribbeans,
having lost most of their ancestral customs and heritage such as language, attire and, to some extent, food, are much less ethnically Indian. Given these particularly important attributes of the Indo-African groups at the temple, it is understandable why the notion of an "Indian" identity has to be problematized from an Indo-Caribbean perspective.

**Problematizing the Notion of an "Indian" Ethno-Religious Identity**

In order to fully understand the particular circumstances under which an "Indian" ethno-religious identity is being constructed, it is necessary to employ an analytical framework that stresses the dynamics of identity formation in diasporic contexts. As such, the utilization of an *Indian Diaspora* perspective will provide the basis for an understanding of the particular type of "Indian" ethno-religious identity that is currently being constructed in Toronto. Although overseas Indian communities evolved and related to India in a variety of ways, they, nonetheless, all took an affectionate interest in it and regarded it as their cultural and spiritual home. It is a common practice, for example, for many Indo-Caribbean Hindus to make pilgrimages to holy places in India. In addition to the spiritual connections with India, many overseas/diasporic Indian communities have maintained a sort of symbolic cultural attachment with India through Hindi film and music.

In particular Caribbean countries such as Trinidad and Guyana, Hindi film songs have become part of the popular culture of these countries. In these countries it is very typical to hear Indo-Caribbeans engaged in lively discussions about some of India's legendary playback singers such as Asha Bhosle, Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi,
Mukesh, and Kishore Kumar. In fact, many talented Indo-Caribbean singers tend to imitate the singing styles of the deified playback singers mentioned above. What is most interesting about the Indo-Caribbean cultural attachment to India, via music and songs, is that most of them can neither speak nor understand the Hindi language. The fact that Indo-Caribbeans listen to Hindi film songs, which they do not understand, is quite a perplexing issue for India-born Indians. They ask: how is it possible for West Indians/Indo-Caribbeans to appreciate and listen to Hindi film songs when they do not understand the Hindi language? My answer to this perplexity is as follows.

It seems to me that although the majority of Indo-Caribbeans do not understand the linguistic medium through which Indian film songs are rendered (i.e. Hindi), they are, nonetheless, one with the soul of these songs. That is, because they are familiar with the songs and the movies in which the songs were depicted, they have an almost uncanny ability to emote with the songs. It has been observed time and again that sad or pathos-ridden Hindi film songs have reduced many Indo-Caribbeans to tears. Thus, it may be that the music from Hindi films which most Indo-Caribbeans do not understand may, nevertheless, have had a strong influence in sustaining their Indian identity in Caribbean societies (Parekh, 1993:8). Given the particular type of cultural attachment that Indo-Caribbeans have to India, one can argue that for overseas Indians, interest in India has, and continues to be, largely nostalgic, sentimental, and highly symbolic.

Herbert Gans (1979) defines symbolic ethnicity as "a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for or pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour" (Gans,
Thus, whereas some individuals feel a strong attachment to their ancestral heritage and actively retain selective aspects of their ethnic culture, others' identification does not extend beyond knowing the country (or countries) from which their ancestors emigrated (Gans 1994). According to Gans, then, symbolic ethnicity entails a subjective component in that for particular groups, such as native-born European Americans, ethnicity is voluntary - a label that an individual may chose to project in particular situations (Lyman and Douglas 1976). As such, symbolic ethnicity is selective or intermittent in nature, making few demands on the individual and more closely resembling a leisure pursuit (Kivisto and Nefzger 1993; Waters 1990; Alba 1985).

This notion of ethnicity as being "voluntary" - the view that ethnicity is situationally conditioned - is a perspective which conceptualizes individuals as "knowledgeable agents who make their own history, and who also play an active role in the construction, destruction, and reconstruction of ethnic attachments and identities" (Kivisto, 1989b:16). In a sense, then, the idea that ethnicity is voluntary involves an aspect of ethnic renewal. The fact that individuals can adopt a non-dominant ethnic identity, and can, therefore, move from membership in a dominant group to become part of a minority group (e.g. from "American" to "Irish American" or from "White" to "Indian") suggests that a process of ethnic switching has been occurring among dominant groups (Nagel, 1995:949). For example, ethnic switching is most prevalent among White Americans in that they have a wide menu of "ethnic options" from which they are free to choose (Waters 1990), whereas for people of color, the ability to "ethnically switch" is a more difficult task primarily because of racial barriers. In situations of intermarriage
among whites, however, ethnic switching is quite possible.

Today, many Indo-Caribbeans do not identify with India and its culture. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that Indo-Caribbeans see India as doing nothing for them. The reactions by Indo-Caribbeans toward India's independence in 1948 were indicative of the emotional attachment they once had for their beloved India. The "back to India" movement in the Caribbean in 1947 and 1948 is a case in point. However, when Indo-Caribbeans realized that India, for whatever reasons, was not interested in playing an active role in helping them, they turned inwards, i.e., they began to identify more with their country of birth, and, as a result, their sense of nationalism was no longer India-based, but more Caribbean oriented. This is why Greeley (1974), to paraphrase him, said: identification with India is merely a symbolic one. Similarly, in his writings, the renowned Indo-Trinidadian novelist, V.S. Naipaul, has expressed the symbolic type of relationship that Indo-Caribbeans have with India. He has argued that although the Indo-Caribbean has his/her roots in India, and has a certain affinity and allegiance to India, he/she feels a certain physical and psychological distance from it (Naipaul 1977).

In spite of this distant cultural and spiritual link with India, India's perception of overseas Indian communities is a negative one. Most East Indians/South Asians, therefore, do not consider their overseas Indian counterparts as equal partners, and do not think that overseas Indians are "authentic"/"genuine" Indians. These stereotypes have resulted in a form of labelling wherein for many South Asians, overseas Indians are regarded as "inferior" merely because they were not born in India. Studies on attitudes towards Indo-Caribbeans by South Asians/East Indians in both the United States and the Caribbean
reveal that many South Asians regard Indians from societies of the diaspora (e.g. Indo-Caribbeans) as non-Indians. For example, Gosine (1993) found in his study that many Indo-Caribbeans have indicated that India-born Indians see them as associating more with Blacks and black Caribbean culture (Gosine, 1993:18).

These findings seem to suggest that, from the perspective of India-born Indians/South Asians, Indo-Caribbeans represent a "bastardized" version of "Indianess" and Indian culture. This type of situation, suffice to say, has caused a degree of friction between the two groups. Based on personal experiences as an Indo-Caribbean individual in Canadian society, I have heard people from India say that Indo-Caribbeans have bastardized Indian culture. "Indo-Caribbean" names, for example, provide South Asians/East Indians with the ammunition to launch such attacks. Thus, I am constantly reminded that the name Simboonath is a bastardized version of what ought rightly to be "Shambhoonath".

**Institutionalized Religion as Ethnicity**

It should be stated at the outset that although the construction of an "Indian" ethno-religious identity is being constructed within the context of institutionalized religion, the main focus of this study will be on the *ethnic* dimensions of the problem, and not on the purely religious aspects. Following Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, sociologists have long stressed the interrelated functions of religion and ethnicity. In its broadest sense, the definition of ethnicity include culture, religion, ancestry, and language. Religion has and still remains ethnic in content, and it embodies an ethnic allegiance; hence the term "ethnoreligion". Therefore, the use of churches, temples, mandirs, and synagogues to
promote education and upward mobility, as well as to define, rationalize, and revitalize ethno-religious identity is not unusual, but rather, characteristic of religio-ethnic and immigrant groups. The intertwining of religious feelings with ethnic interests and identities has created a sense of peoplehood that is future-oriented, especially for relatively recent non-white immigrant ethno-religious groups in North America.

Research on new ethnic and immigrant congregations tend to support the view that religious activities reinforce the ethnicity of participants and bind them more closely to the ethnic group (Haddad and Lumis 1987; Herberg 1960; Kivisto 1993). Thus, membership in a church, temple, or synagogue is a prime source of identity and motivation because it is a focus for organizing the social relations of a group (Bankston III and Zhou, 1995:524). Ethnic churches, mandirs, synagogues, and other ethnic organizations often involve a relatively small proportion of any ethnic category, yet their activities can promote awareness of ethnic identity beyond their immediate networks (Stoller, 1996:160). Alba (1990) describes such collective ethnic phenomena as "the supply side of ethnicity", and argues that they serve as a stimulus for ethnic identity by "generating cultural 'supplies' for other group members" (Alba, 1990:60).

Studies of Korean and Vietnamese religious institutions have found that the churches and temples of these new groups of Asian immigrants play a very important role in the maintenance of ethnic identity across generations (Choy 1979; Hurh and Kim 1990; Nash 1992; Rutledge 1985). Similarly, in their studies on ethnicity and religion in America, Barton (1975) and Smith (1978), have argued that ethnic churches and temples, by helping to sustain ethnicity and religious convictions rooted in ethnic religions, have
helped ethnic groups to adapt to American life. To avoid the sense of alienation brought upon by hostile environments, ethnic allegiance assumed both the function and authority of religion among individual immigrant groups. The phenomenon of ethnoreligion, therefore, does not just embody an expression of ethnic allegiance, it is also centred around the immigrant church.

It is reasonable to assume, then, that the ethnic church/temple represents an institution that maintains and perpetuates a strong ethnic allegiance. For many new and old ethnic immigrant communities, the central institution was, and still is, the temple or the church, which served the function of organizing allegiance around the ethnic group. This idea of the church/temple as an organizing principle for ethnic groups led Stout (1975) to conclude that the phenomenon of ethnoreligion finds its clearest expression in the immigrant church. He argues that at the center of an ethnic group is the immigrant church, which supplies the cohesion and insularity necessary for retaining a distinct ethnic community. Based on this assumption, Stout concludes that the immigrant church acts as a network of primary relationships whose function is to mold the members into a united community with a strong ethnic identity (Stout, 1975:208).

Characteristic of many immigrant temples and churches is the functioning of the church or temple as a community, the centrality of the pastor/pundit/minister/rabbi in affirming group solidarity, and the replacement of an evangelical vision by ethnic insularity (Niebuhr 1929). Therefore, temples, churches, sects, and denominations ought to be regarded as symbols of ethnic allegiance. Seen in such a light, the immigrant churches served the allegiance of the ethnic group at the expense of a prophetic message
aimed at all sectors of society. The church service became a symbolic rite of affirmation to one's ethnic association and a vehicle for preserving the ethnic language. Schools were established under the aegis of the church or temple, and efforts were made to inculcate the group with ethnic values and faith in the ethnic heritage (Stout, 1975:207).

The concept of "ethnoreligion", then, is relevant to this study inasmuch as ethnicity functions as the religion of the immigrant temple under investigation. Unlike religions, such as Islam (which does not require one to be of a particular ethnic/racial stock, or from a particular cultural background in order to be a "true" Muslim), Hinduism can draw upon ethnicity and religion i.e., it has the cultural resources necessary for identity construction and reconstruction, namely, ancestry and religion. Given this particular type of orientation—one in which ancestry and religion are inextricably linked - it can therefore be assumed, for the specific purpose of this study, that religion is, in fact, ethnicity.

In this chapter a number of concepts and terms were utilized. These included ethnic renewal, ethnic switching, symbolic ethnicity, voluntary ethnicity, identity construction, identity reconstruction, ethnic rediscovery, to name a few. All of these concepts are in some way related to each other. They are not only useful for understanding and illuminating processes of ethnic and immigrant adaptation in host contexts, but they are also the critical sociological building blocks necessary for the development of new and distinct diasporic cultural communities. The various concepts outlined above can be found in the ethnicity literature, specifically in the literature on constructed ethnicity. These concepts, therefore, can be subsumed under the general area of constructed ethnicity and, as such, their utility in this study is vitally important.
CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter an analysis of the theoretical and empirical literature on constructed ethnicity will be undertaken. The first part of the chapter (Literature Review) is essentially a survey of the empirical research on constructed ethnicity. The second part of the chapter (Theoretical Framework) will deal primarily with conceptual/theoretical arguments and issues related to the social constructionist approach to ethnicity.

Although the social scientific literature about ethnic minorities has generally suggested that they would eventually assimilate, there is, nonetheless, a whole body of research which indicates the opposite i.e., that the assimilation of ethnic and racial minorities in pluralistic societies is not inevitable. For example, Glazer and Moynihan (1975) maintain that in the United States, ethnicity is no longer viewed as a passing phenomenon culminating in assimilation. Like Glazer and Moynihan, Peter Li (1980) argued that Canadian ethnic groups do not lose much of their original culture because they do not move toward total assimilation. He further maintained that ethnic cultures and identities are formed based on the unique historical experience of the group. The failure to assimilate comes from several dimensions of Canadian society which sustains ethnicity (Li, 1980:33). Li found that identification with the "core" culture is inhibited by varying degrees of prejudice and discrimination, and, particularly in Canada, a lack of a simple "Canadian" identity to fix on (Li, 1980:8-9).
Hechter's (1975) contention that the situation of racial and ethnic minorities in advanced societies, rather than desiring assimilation, may seek to retain, reconstruct and revitalize their cultural identity, invalidates the assimilationist approach. According to Hechter, the championing of minority languages, and the promotion of "national" cultures, seek to "legitimate new cultural forms in the guise of old ones" (Hechter, 1975:312-14). Based on these findings, Yinger's (1986) comment that, "the assimilationist thesis is not adequate" (Yinger, 1986:39) is an appropriate one.

Research on the study of identity has fallen short of providing analytical frameworks capable of dealing with the dynamic nature of ethno-religious group identity. In contexts where both ethnicity and religion are significant, the concept of identity has frequently been treated in a mechanistic way, as a static and unidimensional phenomenon rather than as a result of complex interactions. For example, most research has been hampered by the tendency to dichotomize, placing emphasis on "subjective" or "objective" criteria. In studies of ethnicity this manifests itself in the form of the primordialist-circumstantialist debate (Mitchell 1974; Shils 1957). Many studies have also focused on the role of ethnic identity in political mobilization, resource competition, and the formation of nationalist ideologies (Cohen 1969; Depres 1975). While these analyses have yielded important insights into the contextual and collective nature of identity expressions, they have been grounded on exclusively rationalistic conceptions of ethnicity and ethnic identity formations.

The importance of religion as a legitimizing force in ethnic identity formation and re-formation is emphasized by the revelatory nature of most religious doctrines, which
often have a strong influence on prevailing interpretations of group identities. Hans Mol (1979), in subscribing to this view, argues that the Weberian view of religion, as a significant ideological element in social change, is experienced in the context of ethnicity. According to Mol, religion reinforces ethnicity as the "sacrilizer of identity" (Mol, 1979:34-35). Leo Driedger (1980) has also built on the centrality of ethnicity in religious life in his analysis of ethno-religious identity in Canada. According to Driedger, the role of religious ideology in upholding ethnic tradition and community is significant (Driedger 1980).

Recently, however, scholars in ethnic studies have begun to converge in attempts to erase the subjective/objective dichotomy in their efforts to inject a more dynamic element in the study of ethnicity. A number of studies offer promising insights into the process of ethnic and/or religious identity formation and continuity by placing emphasis on inventiveness/reconstruction in the reinterpretation of values and practices associated with identity claims (Gonzales 1989; Isajiw 1992; Migliore 1988; Schutte 1989; Vertovec 1990). For example, Migliore's (1988) study on the role of religion and religious symbols in the maintenance of ethnic and cultural identity demonstrates the centrality of religion in ethnic identity formation.

In his study on the Racalmutese community (Sicilian-Canadians) of Hamilton, Ontario, Migliore outlines some of the strategies that the Sicilian-Canadian community developed in order to identify themselves as part of a particular ethnic community. Migliore found that the Racalmutese community's use of Catholic religious symbols allowed them to express their cultural identity thereby allowing them to identify
themselves as Sicilian-Canadian. Thus, the role of a particular religious feast, the *Feast of the Madonna del Monte*, served as a key symbol in the process of helping individuals maintain strong sentiments towards their native or ancestral community in Sicily. Migliore's study demonstrates how religion and religious symbols are very important in the actual expression of identity. Migliore concluded that the use of key religious symbols allows not only immigrants, but second and third-generation Sicilian-Canadians to identify themselves as part of an ethnic group (Migliore, 1988:91).

The importance of religion in ethnic identity formation can also be seen in the case of "Sikh Identity" in India. Brass (1974), in examining the collective nature of Sikh identity, argues that Sikh "communal consciousness" is based on three sets of symbols: (i) historical symbols, (ii) religious symbols, (iii) linguistic symbols. Of these three sets of symbols, Brass argues that it is religion that define[s] the boundaries between Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab in modern times (Brass, 1974:278). Brass argues that the Akali Dal (the Sikh political party) blatantly exploits the power of religion within the Sikh community and frequently propagates its political ideology in the *gurudwaras* (Sikh temples), never hesitating to revitalize religious fundamentalism and Sikh militancy. Such religious militancy, according to Brass, results in the emergence of a distinct Sikh ethno-religious identity. Brass's framework supports a unique and dynamic Sikh ethnic identity—a distinctive identity based on religion, language, and a shared history that emphasizes militancy (Brass, 1974:110).

Vertovec's (1990) study on *Hindu Trinidad* represents yet another study on the importance of the role of religion and religious ideology in the maintenance of ethnic
identity and community. Vertovec argues that in their attempt to adapt to Caribbean societies, Hindus in Trinidad reconstructed some important Hindu religious practices (e.g. caste rituals) as a way of reinventing themselves as an ethno-religious group in Trinidadian society. This modification and reconstruction of particular Hindu religious practices and ideologies resulted in the emergence of a distinct diasporic Indo-Trinidadian Hindu identity. Vertovec's study throws light on the interaction between religion (Hinduism) and ethnicity (Indo-Trinidadian), and its impact on the reshaping and reformulation of ethnic identity and traditions within the Indo-Trinidadian Hindu community. Both Hinduism and Indo-Trinidadian Hindus are presented as dynamic agents responsible for the invention and reconstruction of a distinct diasporic Indo-Trinidadian ethno-religious identity.

Winland's (1993) study on the quest for a Mennonite identity in Southern Ontario also demonstrates how an ethnic group goes about "constructing" an ethno-religious identity. According to Winland, the Mennonites ability to successfully articulate a distinct ethno-religious identity is based essentially on the selective stressing of particular Mennonite symbols and aspects of their historical past. The current emphasis Mennonites place on their traditional symbols is indicative of the struggle to rekindle/revitalize key Mennonite principles such as peoplehood and community. This process of innovation has largely been initiated by community leaders and academics in their attempts to supply a new or revitalized Mennonite group charter. Winland concluded that a dialectical process (the relationship between convention and innovation) provides the necessary condition for a renewed ethno-religious Mennonite identity. Winland's study points to the degree to
which ethnicity is central to the discussion of religious identity. Indeed, as Kraybill (1988) has argued, a common historical identity is a defining characteristic of an ethnic group, and a group's preoccupation with its history is a measure of its degree of ethnicity (Kraybill 1988).

Similarly, Levine's (1993) study on Jewish ethnicity shows the relationship between ethnicity and religion and its impact on ethnic identity formation. Findings from Levine's interviews provide evidence that an individualization of Jewishness has occurred in New Zealand, where there is little structural, ideational or political content to Jewish solidarity. In other words, some Jews privatize their ethnic identity, lose touch with Jewish organizations, and do seem to fulfil the expectations of assimilationism and symbolic ethnicity. Thus, Jews in New Zealand chose to use some elements of their Jewish tradition and culture, while at the same time eliminating other aspects of their culture. For example, Levine found that Jews in New Zealand employ some themes, concerns, and practices from organized Judaism to construct a more conventional (albeit transformed) type of identification.

For Jewish New Zealanders, then, ethnic identity is a matter of personal choice because of the persistence of different expressions of identity. This points to the subjective importance of ethnic origins (Alba, 1990:xiii), and the voluntary nature of ethnicity - the view that an individual may choose to project certain aspects of his/her ethnicity in particular situations while, at the same time, downplaying other aspects of his/her ethnicity. This type of behaviour is consistent with the view that ethnicity is a situationally conditioned phenomenon. Levine's study demonstrates that Jewish ethnicity can draw upon
ethnicity and religion, and this duality may provide an ethnic group with the cultural resources necessary for identity construction and reconstruction. All of the above studies do not only address the malleable, transformative and reconstructed nature of ethnicity, they also emphasize the emotional power of religious/identity symbols, and the impact they have had on the affective nature of group identities.

The utilization of the dynamic and constructed approaches to ethnicity can also be found in the relatively recent body of research on new ethnic and immigrant groups. For newly forming ethnic and national groups, the construction of community solidarity and shared meanings out of real or putative common history and ancestry involves cultural reconstruction (Nagel, 1994:164). Cultural reconstruction is one of the main indicators of constructed ethnicity and involves the reconstruction of historical culture, and the construction of new culture. Cultural reconstruction techniques include revivals and restorations of historical cultural practices and institutions. New cultural constructions include revisions of current culture and the creation of new cultural forms. Cultural reconstructions are ongoing group tasks in which new and renovated cultural symbols, activities, and materials are continually being added to and removed from existing cultural repertoires (Nagel, 1994:162). The construction and reconstruction of history and culture are major tasks facing all ethnic groups, particularly those that are newly emerging or resurgent.

In constructing culture, the "past" or a sense of "shared memory", is a resource used by groups in the collective quest for meaning and community (Cohen, 1989:99). Smith refers to ethnic groups' "deep nostalgia for the past" that results in efforts to
uncover or invent an earlier ethnic "golden age" (Smith, 1986: 174). For instance, Kelly (1993) discusses the efforts of Lithuanian-Americans to learn the Lithuanian language and to reproduce Lithuanian songs, foods, dances and other customs. This illustrates the process whereby people transform a common ancestry into a common ethnicity (Kelly 1993). This aspect of Lithuanian-American ethnic renewal is what Kelly calls the "ethnic pilgrimage," where Lithuanian-Americans visit Lithuania to learn about their ethnic roots and to participate in building the new independent state and nation (Kelly 1993). In Spain, too, the declining use of the native tongues (Catalan and Euskera) due to immigration, has spurred language education programs and linguistic renewal projects (Johnston 1991; Sullivan 1988).

Similarly, in the United States, the threatened loss of many Native American languages has resulted in the proliferation of linguistic and education programs, as well as the creation of cultural centers, tribal museums, and other cultural programs to preserve and revive tribal cultural traditions (Nagel, 1994: 163). Karner's (1991) description of the reconstruction of Finnish cultural history (songs, music) by Swedish-speaking intellectuals during the mobilization of Finnish independence also points to the construction of community solidarity - a solidarity that is made possible through the recognition of a common history and ancestry. Efforts to revitalize and increase language usage are, therefore, critical elements in cultural constructions and reconstructions. In other words, educational and other study based programs, such as instruction in cultural/ethnic history and language, are important aspects of cultural reconstruction.

Cultural reconstruction is also important to pan-ethnic groups since such groups
are often composed of subgroups with histories of conflict and animosities. For example, Padilla (1985), in his study on Hispanics/Latinos in America, examines some of the challenges facing Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago as they attempt to construct both Latino organizations and an identity underpinned by the assertion of common interests and a shared culture. Such a commonality, as Padilla found, was problematic given the tensions surrounding nationality and cultural differences between both groups. Espiritu (1992), too, documents the tensions surrounding nationality and cultural differences in the attempt to create an Asian-American pan-ethnicity. One strategy used by polyethnic groups to overcome such differences and build a more unified pan-ethnic community is to blend together cultural material from many component group traditions (Nagel, 1994:164). This blending of cultural material from many component group traditions is what Nagel and Snipp call "cultural blending" (Nagel and Snipp, 1993:222).

Cultural blending is an important element in another key indicator of constructed ethnicity, namely, cultural innovation. Cultural innovation occurs when current cultural elements are changed or when new cultural forms or practices are created. As a key element of cultural innovation, cultural blending is most evident in the area of religious practices (Nagel and Snipp, 1993:222). Syncretism or the mixing of two or more religions is widespread in American Indian communities and churches, regardless of denomination (Nagel and Snipp, 1993:223). For example, the blending of Christian symbolism, practices, and beliefs with traditional Indian religious customs has been described among the Mashpees (Clifford 1988), Chippewa-Crees (Fowler 1987), and the Cherokees of
These types of cultural reorganization, revitalization and mixing do not only emphasize the dynamic, constantly evolving character of ethnic/cultural systems, they may also result in what Thomas (1968) refers to as "a new identity, a new ethnic group...a new "nationality" (Thomas, 1968:84). Cultural blending, as an important aspect of cultural innovation, can range from cultural borrowing, where non-indigenous celebrations (e.g. holidays/festivals) or religious practices are adopted into a culture, to a more equal mixing of two cultural systems (Nagel and Snipp, 1993:222-223). For example, Champagne (1990) reports that the Alaska Tlingits revised traditional practices by incorporating them into Russian Orthodox or Protestant ceremonies to hide some forbidden exchanges.

Building a cultural basis for newly emerging ethnic communities is not the only goal prompting cultural reconstruction. Cultural construction does not only entail the blending or amalgamation of cultural material from different cultures, it is also a method for revitalizing ethnic boundaries and redefining the meaning of ethnicity in existing ethnic populations. For example, Eugeen Roosen (1989) describes efforts by Hurons to construct an ethnic culture that would distinguish them from the surrounding Canadians. Similarly, Conzen and colleagues (1990) cite the transformation of St. Patrick's Day from what had been observed as a holy day in Ireland to a secular holiday in the United States as an illustration of cultural construction.

Recently, ethnic identity construction has been occurring among European Americans too. Increasingly, scholars are conceptualizing ethnicity among European Americans as a multidimensional construct, involving cultural, social, behavioral, and
personal dimensions (Archdeacon 1990). For example, Stoller (1996) in her study on ethnic identity among second and third generation Finnish Americans, uses an ethnographic/grounded theory approach to develop a typography of Finnish American ethnicity. Analysis of qualitative data yielded four (4) dimensions of Finnish American ethnicity: (i) ethnicity and the self, (ii) orientation to Finland, (iii) real world ethnicity, and (iv) ethnicity as a social construction (Stoller 1996). Stoller argues that her multidimensional model of Finnish American ethnicity reflects a constructionist approach to ethnicity.

First, Finnish ethnic identity is part of the self that individuals from particular ethnic backgrounds can consciously construct and present to others, if, when, and how they choose. This "ethnicity and the self" dimension taps the salience of ethnicity in the individual conception of self. Thus, affinity with, and recognition of coethnics, and identity and self-concept are crucial for the conception of the ethnic self. Second, Finnish American ethnicity is grounded within an historical framework in which "shared memory", ancestral homeland, and common descent are key elements in the construction of Finnish ethnicity. Kivisto (1989a) argues that, for Finnish Americans, attachment to the homeland is maintained by establishing familiarity with the Kalevala, Finland's national epic poem, and with the music of Sibelius, the architecture of the Saarinens, handicrafts, and folklore. In other words, the display of ethnicity occurs not only in lived experiences, but it is also manifested in museum-like compartments (Kivisto, 1989a:86). Third, elements of ethnicity that are grounded in everyday life, ethnic infrastructures such as churches, ethnic activities, and the family may promote ethnic creations. Social scientists have identified
dimensions of everyday behaviour in which ethnicity is most evident, including food patterns, language use, and holiday celebrations. Therefore, ethnic creations drawn from Finnish holidays, either reconstructed from memories of the immigrant generation or learned from reading about or visiting Finland, is a major source of ethnic expression among Finnish Americans. Fourth, creating ethnicity among Finnish Americans involves a symbolic component of ethnicity - a situation where individuals can choose those aspects of being Finnish that appeal to them and discard those that are not. In other words, fashioning an ethnic identity is possible for people who have knowledge of their ethnic culture. All of the above dimensions of Finnish American ethnicity are consistent with the constructionist approach to ethnicity.

Similarly, Stavros Constantinou and Milton Harvey (1985), in their study on Greek American ethnicity, identified a two-dimensional structure comprised of (i) internalities or attributes which bind Greek Americans together as a community; and (ii) externalities or attributes which act as a bond between the Greek American and the ancestral land. Drawing on her study on Polish Americans, Rempusheski (1988) identified three (3) components of ethnic identity: (1) an historical focus of "Where are we from?"; (2) an action focus of "What must we do?"; and (3) a differentiation focus of "How are we different?". These studies on European American ethnicity reveal both the individual and collective processes of ethnic identity construction. In addition, these studies add credence to the views espoused by scholars such as Archdeacon (1990), who argued that European American ethnicity is a multi-faceted construct involving historical, cultural, social, and behavioral dimensions.
Another clear example of the creation of new cultural forms by a European American ethnic group, such as Finnish Americans, is the St. Urho's Day celebration observed on March 16. St. Urho's is an American holiday that originated in Minnesota in 1956 as a parody of the Irish celebrations of St. Patrick's Day. St. Urho's Day is an example of a Finnish American invented tradition in that there is little Finnish content in the St. Urho celebrations. This is why Kaups (1986) describes it as an "Americanism" reflecting "exposure to the legend of St. Patrick and residence in the land of such giants as Paul Bunyan" (Kaups, 1986:14). The fact that St. Urho's Day did not originate in Finland, but is celebrated by Finnish Americans who, by interpreting it in Finnish ethnic terms, indicates that authenticity is not always a requirement in ethnic constructions (Blanck 1989). St. Urho's Day represents a collective effort by Finnish Americans to construct a newly minted tradition (Stoller, 1996:167).

The celebration of Kwanzaa by African-Americans is another example of constructed ethnicity. Kwanzaa is a seven-day cultural holiday which combines African and African-American traditions (Copage 1991). It is an Afro-centric holiday based on African agricultural celebration and collective principles which contribute to the unity and development of the African community, and is celebrated during the Christmas season from the 26th of December to the 1st of January. For African-Americans, Kwanzaa is a celebration of family, community and culture; it was created in the 1960s by Professor Maulana Karenga, a Tanzanian-born scholar. Kwanzaa is an example of the dynamic, creative nature of ethnic culture, and reveals the role of ethnic leaders and scholars in encouraging cultural constructions. Nagel (1994) argues that the reconstruction and study
of cultural history is a crucial part of the community construction process and shows the importance of scholars/academics, and institutions in promoting cultural innovation and renewal (Nagel, 1994: 165). Kwanzaa, then, as a form of cultural innovation, points to the ways in which ethnic groups can create and recreate their collective histories, the membership boundaries that define their group, and the content and meaning of their ethnicity. Both the St. Urho’s Day and Kwanzaa celebrations are examples of America’s contributions to ethnic constructions.

The notion of cultural innovation, as it pertains to the social construction of ethnicity and ethnic identity, begs an important sociological question: Does cultural change undermine ethnicity or is cultural change the mechanism of ethnic persistence? The answer to this question lies in the situation surrounding American Indian ethnicity. One way of trying to create unity among a highly diverse, polyethnic group, like American Indians, is to borrow from the various tribal cultures that make up American Indian ethnicity. For example, urban American Indians have borrowed from various tribal cultures and rural Indian culture to construct supratribal or "Indian" cultural forms. Some of these cultural forms include Indian Christian churches, the Indian Center, the powwow, and Indian popular music groups. Thus, cultural, national, and tribal differences and tensions among American Indians are important aspects of cultural construction because they not only provide a basis for community building, but they also result in the creation and building of pan-ethnic communities.

Similarly, Fowler (1987) reports the extensive use of the status of US military veterans by Assiniboine Indians and Gros Ventres Indians on the Fort Belknap reservation
in celebrations and rituals. Fowler observed that during the reservation's Milk River powwow, veterans raise and accompany the American flag, while a drum group sings the Assiniboine Flag Song (Fowler, 1987:163). The integration of military veterans into powwow opening ceremonies by many Indian communities is reported by Whitehorse (1988).

Cultural amalgamation resulting from the blending of cultural practices from many tribes also occurs. A number of researchers have reported the emergence of Plains Indian cultural amalgams in the form of dances, costuming, music, food, most notable at powwows (Hertzberg 1971; Thomas 1968).

Several aspects of cultural innovations have also been observed, and are currently being undertaken at the Metro mandir. For example, the blending and merging of South Asian/East Indian, Indo-Caribbean, and Canadian social and cultural practices can be seen in the ways in which certain religious and cultural festivals are being celebrated. At the annually held Diwali and Holi\textsuperscript{5} celebrations, it is typical to see a mix of eastern (India), diasporic (Indo-Caribbean), and western (Canadian) ethnic and cultural elements such as food, music, and dance. The Canadian influence is manifested in the weekly "Sunday Sermon". No such thing as a Sunday sermon exists in Hindu religious practice given the fact that Hinduism, unlike Christianity, is not a church-based religion; it is very personal in that it is common practice for Hindus to conduct their poojas/worship within the confines of their homes. Many Hindus have their own "pooja room" or religious shrine

\textsuperscript{5}Diwali and Holi are two of the most auspicious religious festivals in the Hindu religious calendar. Diwali, which means the festival of lights, is celebrated by Hindus all over the world to commemorate the arrival of a New Year. Holi, which means rebirth, is celebrated during the Spring season; the time in which Lord Rama returned to the people after being in exile for fourteen years.
located in their homes where daily prayers are conducted. These combinations of eastern, diasporic, and western cultural practices, combined with practices associated with cultural reconstruction, add credence to the view that the Metro temple is indeed engaging in the cultural construction of community.

The other main indicator associated with the constructionist conception of ethnicity is what has been referred to as *ethnic organization*. Ethnic organization is best understood as a survival strategy by which ethnic minority groups attempt to cope with the forces of change. The concept of ethnic organization is consistent with the view that ethnic group boundaries are dynamic and variable (Barth 1969). According to this view, the boundaries dividing ethnic ingroups from outgroups are fluid and malleable, changing over time in response to evolving social conditions inside and outside ethnic groups. In addition, the economic and political organization of an ethnic group are also variable, responding to shifting ethnic definitions and changing incentives and constraint structures (Nagel and Snipp, 1993:205). Thus, pressures for ethnic change can originate within the ethnic group itself, or it can be imposed externally, i.e., by dominant groups.

In locating this notion of ethnic organization in a context of immigration, one can reasonably assume that newly emerging ethnic immigrant groups may engage in some form of "ethnic organization" as a way of coping and surviving in their new environment. For example, within an ethnic group, especially among new immigrant groups, there will be a tendency to choose among alternatives which, in turn, will lead to some degree of decision-making. These attempts to cope and survive in new and potentially hostile environments (as is normally the case with new communities of color and other ethnic
minority groups), will inevitably lead to some form of organizing for survival.

In his study on Sicilian-Canadian identity, for example, Migliore (1988) examines some of the techniques that Sicilian-Canadians employ in their attempt to maintain their ethnic and cultural identity. One such technique is that of ethnic organization. Migliore, after conducting periodic field research on the Sicilian-Canadian community in Hamilton, Ontario, concluded that although Sicilian-Canadians, like most other ethnic minority groups in Canada, have not yet accomplished full "institutional completeness", they have, nonetheless, developed various formal structures and organizations. Migliore argues that it is these formal structures and organizations that serve as a structural basis for helping Sicilian-Canadian maintain their ethnic and cultural identity (Migliore, 1988:79).

In their attempt at ethnic organization, the Sicilian-Canadian community was successful in providing a number of services for its community members. Some of these include: (i) a church where members can celebrate the mass in the Italian language, meet friends, and participate in more traditional Sicilian religious activities; (ii) a mutual-aid society that provided both moral and material support for its members (e.g. the society provided financial assistance as well as employment for community members). In addition to these forms of ethnic organization, the community organizes cultural events, dances, and Christmas parties for all of its members.

Ethnic organization has also been observed in indigenous cultures/peoples in colonized societies. In the case of Aboriginal peoples in both Canada and the United States, pressures for ethnic organization increased considerably as a result of social, economic, demographic, and political changes resulting from the colonization of North
America by European powers and from the emergence of Canadian and American sovereign political authority which exercised jurisdiction over Aboriginal peoples, and which possessed the power to grant Indian tribes recognition as legitimate social institutions. As a result of ethnic organization processes, many Canadian and American Indian communities today are very different socially, economically, culturally, and politically from the societies from which they emerged (Merrell 1989; Nagel 1993; Nagel 1995). The role of ethnic organizations (community centers, churches, ethnic leaders, clubs, voluntary associations, newspapers, neighbourhoods etc.,) in aiding immigrant ethnic groups to adapt to urban life is well documented in the ethnic relations literature (Cohen 1974; Margon 1977; Portes and Manning 1986).

Building a cultural basis for newly emerging ethnic communities is not the only goal prompting cultural reconstruction. The role of politics is also significant in bringing about the reconstruction of individual and collective ethnicity. Studies that focus on the construction and reconstruction of ethnicity and ethnic identity can be found in the mobilization activities of particular ethnic groups. Recent social movements research reflects the increased interest in the nature of social movement culture and the interplay between culture and mobilization. Cultural and ethnic renewal are important aspects of ethnic movements inasmuch as they promote collective mobilization when they serve as a basis for group solidarity, and for the setting of agendas that may result in collective action. The following studies offer insights into the relationship between mobilization activities and ethnic identity reconstruction.

The Civil Rights era in the United States not only demonstrated a renewed interest
in African-American culture and history, but it also challenged prevailing racial hegemony by reframing Black ethnicity through the assertion of Black Pride and Black Power. The leaders of the Black Rebellion movement such as Marcus Garvey (the father of the "Back to Africa Movement") and Frederick Douglas, in their attempt to create awareness of, and pride in, their African past, made a concerted effort to link the African Liberation movement with the Black American movement. African-Americans actively sought to identify themselves in positively evaluated "racial" terms. Thus was born the term "Black is Beautiful", or what has been referred to as "Negritude". This identity concept symbolized to all Blacks that being black was a real and aesthetically beautiful existence, and emerged in a context in which African-Americans were reformulating images and myths of blackness to create a positive identity for themselves (Gilman, 1981). Black nationalism, in the form of mass ethnic mobilization, represented the "turning round" of a powerful process of negative "racial" feelings into a positive group identity (Jenkins, 1994:208). The most extreme examples of positive identity reconstruction is perhaps the ideology of Herrenvolk, as in Nazi Germany and Nationalist South Africa. Something similar, too, can also be discerned in the formation of modern Israeli Jewish identity.

The Black Rebellion Movement, then, was an attempt by African-Americans to articulate a new and positive identity for themselves. To redefine Black ethnic identity, the history of African-Americans history had to be reformulated. Indeed, the importance of an ethnic group's "past" or "shared memory" is key to understanding identity formation. Gilman (1981) concurs with this view by arguing that:

the problem of freedom can be conceived as the "bringing together" of history and identity. The Black man must at once become himself
and reflect on his past. A "history" was the basis for identity (Gilman, 1981:470).

The use of particular cultural material and cultural symbols can be seen in the ways ethnic activists use culture in their protest strategies. The tactics used in ethnic movements rely on the presentation, and sometimes the reconstruction, of cultural themes, symbols, and hopes to demonstrate ethnic unity, and to dramatize injustices (Nagel, 1994:167). Snow et al. (1986) argue that movement leaders and activists use existing culture such as rhetorical devices and various techniques of "frame alignment" to make movement goals and tactics seem reasonable, just, and feasible to participants (Snow et al. 1986). Thus, by drawing on available cultural themes, and the use of a particular type of discourse by ethnic activists and leaders, movements objectives and activism are more likely to recruit members, gain political support, and achieve movement goals. The dissemination of particular types of Afro-centric civil rights discourses resulted in drastic changes in dress, new symbolic themes in art, literature, and music within the African-American community.

Staiano (1980) and Reich (1989) argued that the concept of "soul" as an emotional quality, one which unifies through shared understanding, was one of the many discursive and rhetorical devices that was used by ethnic activists during the civil rights movement; it functioned, they argued, as an action-oriented concept within the African-American community. The concept of "soul" transformed the self image of Blacks, and this and other cultural reformulations helped replace negative identity with "self and group pride" (McComb 1985), leading to the development of unity, leadership and eventually, political
power. Thus, the creation of new symbolic forms and the abandonment of old, discredited symbols, and rhetoric reflected the efforts of African-Americans to create internal solidarity and to challenge the prevailing negative definitions of Black American ethnicity.

Changes in American political culture brought about by the ethnic politics of the Civil Rights Movement led to increased ethnic consciousness among many ethnic groups. One consequence of this rise in ethnic pride was the rise in ethnic mobilization activities among all ethnic groups in America. The federal response to Black protest, such as civil rights legislation and the War on Poverty, sparked similar political agitation by other minority communities. One minority group that was actively mobilizing in the wake of Black insurgency was the American Indians. The result of active American Indian mobilization resulted in what is now known as the "Red Power Movement". "Red Power" Indian political activist movement of the 1960s and 1970s created an atmosphere of ethnic renewal as reservations and urban Indian communities asserted their Indian ethnic pride and encouraged other Indians to claim and assert their "Indianess" (Nagel, 1995:948). Red Power activism during the 1960s and 1970s raised Indian ethnic consciousness by dramatizing long held grievances.

For American Indians ethnic mobilization marked the emergence of supratribal identification, and increased ethnic pride. This rise in ethnic consciousness and action created a powerful image of the "empowered Indian" - an image that contrasted sharply with the traditional cultural depictions of Indians as being powerless and subjugated victims of history. According to Joane Nagel (1995), the impact of Red Power on
American Indian ethnic consciousness revealed the role of human agency in individual and collective redefinition and empowerment i.e., the power of activism to challenge prevailing policies, to encourage ethnic awareness, and to foster ethnic community-building (Nagel, 1995:961). The ethnic militancy of the 1960s and 1970s, specifically the Civil Rights and Red Power Movements, revealed the role which politics play in prompting ethnic identity change, and the reconstruction of collective ethnicity. More importantly, however, is the fact that these movements, as agents of ethnic renewal, contributes to a general understanding of how ethnicity is socially constructed.

The role of politics in engendering identity construction has recently been documented by Nagel (1995). Nagel argues that the resurgence of identity among the American Indian population can be explained by a number of political forces. She argues that the increase in American Indian ethnic identification reflected in the U.S. Census is an instance of ethnic renewal. That is, the increase in American Indian ethnic identification cannot be accounted for by the usual explanations of population growth (increased births, decreased deaths, immigration, etc.). Rather, such increases in the American Indian population must have resulted from "ethnic switching", where individuals who identified their race as non-Indian (e.g. White) in an earlier census, switched to "Indian" in a later census (Nagel, 1995:948).

Nagel, in asking the question: Why does such ethnic switching occur?, contends that the growth in the American Indian population is one instance of ethnic renewal. Nagel concluded that ethnic renewal within the American Indian population resulted from a combination of factors in American politics, namely, (i) federal Indian policy, (ii)
American ethnic politics, and (iii) American Indian political activism. Together, these three political forces provided the rationale and motivation for individual and collective ethnic renewal. Nagel's research clearly demonstrates that politics play an important role in the reconstruction of ethnicity and ethnic identity. More specifically, her research points to the ways in which individuals and groups are capable of reinventing themselves or their communities in politically specific contexts.

The impact of politics on the reconstruction of collective ethnicity can also be found in other studies on ethnic mobilization. For example, in her study on the ethnic mobilization of the Tamilian peoples of South India, Barnett (1974) argued that, in order to reassert a sense of cultural "superiority", the Tamils sought to redefine the meaning of Brahmin as a negative symbol which led to the symmetrically logical category of non-Brahmin (or Dravidianess) as a positive symbol. In their attempt to redefine Tamilian ethnicity, Tamil political leaders used ethnic tactics to dramatize historical injustices that were meted out to them by North Indians. For example, Tamilian political leaders used symbols of Tamil culture such as the preeminent Tamilian language as a way of counteracting the negative connotation that was associated with South Indian ethnic identity.

The political leaders also used the mass media (films, dramas, magazines, radio, literary works etc.,) as a vehicle for propagating ethnic ideology and raising mass ethnic consciousness (Barnett 1974). This "strategy of action", to use Swidler's (1986) term, acted as a mobilization mechanism which caused large numbers of people to reconstruct their conceptions of themselves in ethnic terms. In the process of mobilization, strategies
of action and tactics are often developed by ethnic leaders who often manipulate, for immediate purposes, the symbols of old national allegiances, or invoke new ideologies thereby making notable contributions to ethnic movements (Smith, 1978:1156).

The use of existing culture by movement organizers and activists reveals the role which ethnic movements play in the reconstruction of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Cultural symbols and themes play an important role in creating what Fantasia (1988) calls a "culture of solidarity". Cultures of solidarity refers to the emergence of collective consciousness and shared meaning that develop out of collective action. According to Fantasia (1988), cultural constructions can be found in movements where solidarity/protest is a crucible of culture. For Fantasia, then, a "culture of solidarity" arises out of activism. Ethnic movements are particularly instrumental in redefining ethnic identity and the meaning of ethnicity by challenging prevailing negative images of majority and minority groups towards each other, and cultural materials and representations, reconstructed, effectively dramatize existing injustices, grievances, and demands.

All of the above studies on ethnic mobilization reveal the importance of history, culture, the structure of political opportunity, and patterns of political culture in shaping and reshaping ethnic identity and the reconstruction of collective ethnic identities. Therefore, the interplay between ethnic group actions and the larger social structures within which they interact, is key to understanding how ethnicity, in addition to being a social and cultural construction, can also be politically constructed.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Until recently, theoretical discourse about ethnicity has been limited to the primordialist-circumstantialist debates, the assimilationist, cultural pluralist, situational and the epiphenomenon perspectives. First, ethnicity has been conceptualized as a "primordial" (also called "sentimentalist") phenomenon i.e., as something given, ascribed at birth, and hence more or less fixed and permanent (Blauner 1972; Geertz 1963; Isaacs 1975). The circumstantialist approach, on the other hand, focuses on the instrumental aspects of ethnic identity (Brass 1976; Cohen 1974). Second, the assimilationist or "Anglo-conformity/melting pot" perspective maintains that ethnic minorities adapt to living in new or different settings by putting aside their original national or ethnic allegiances and replacing them with a singular identification with the host country (Gordon 1964). Third, the cultural pluralism perspective argues that ethnic minorities may accept the host nation as their own but also retain strong identification with their own ethnic heritage (Jansen 1971; Isajiw 1975; Yancey et al., 1976; Yinger 1985). Fourth, the logic of the situational approach is based on rational choice theory. According to this approach, ethnicity is something which may be relevant in some situations but not in others (Banton 1983; Bell 1975). In other words, individuals may choose to be regarded as members of an ethnic group if they find it to their advantage. Fifth, the epiphenomenon approach is best represented by Michael Hechter's theory of internal colonialism and the cultural division of labour, and, to a lesser extent, by Edna Bonacich (1972). The basic premise of this approach is that ethnicity is something created and maintained by an uneven economy. As such, ethnicity is seen as something that emerges within a context of economic
exploitation. Implicit in the epiphenomenon approach to ethnicity, then, is the idea that culture is epiphenomenal to class. While there is some merit to these perspectives, I find them less than satisfactory because they do not take into account the dynamic, fluid, and volitional character of ethnic identification, organization and action. The inadequacy of these perspectives requires a rethinking of concepts and methods in the study of ethnic relations.

A more adequate approach is one that emphasizes the non-static, dynamic, and constantly evolving character of ethnicity. Such an approach is premised on the assumption that ethnicity is a socially constructed phenomenon. Researchers increasingly stress the malleability of both collective and individual conceptions of ethnic identity (Gelfand and Barresi 1987). This approach contrasts with earlier conceptions of ethnicity as grounded in traditional ethnic culture (Guttman 1986). Rather than viewing ethnicity as a transplanted sense of nationality, sociologists increasingly interpret the emergence of a particular group's ethnic identity as a cultural construction grounded within specific historical contexts and responding to changes in the lives of both individuals and the group (Blanck 1989).

A number of competing yet complementary models have recently been used to analyze ethnic relations from a constructionist perspective. These approaches include the *invention of ethnicity* and *ethnicity as process* paradigms, both of which can be subsumed under the larger social constructionist approach. Explicit in these models is the idea that ethnicity and ethnic identity appeals to tradition, but that tradition is something that is created, sustained and recreated by people. In other words, they are all premised on the
assumption that ethnicity is constantly being reinvented in response to changing realities. The similarities and complementarity of these perspectives will become clear in the following theoretical analysis. However, before proceeding to discuss these theoretical approaches, it is necessary to offer a definition of ethnicity and ethnic group that is consistent with this study's conception of ethnicity.

**Ethnic Group and Ethnicity Defined**

Ethnicity is a cultural reality in which meanings and symbols are produced, and which serves as a guide to action. According to Migliore (1988), individuals make use of various key symbols to express their cultural identity and to identify themselves as members of a particular ethnic group (Migliore, 1988:79). Similarly, evidence indicates that the persistence of ethnic identity is not necessarily related to the perpetuation of traditional ethnic culture. Rather, it may depend more on the emergence of ethnic "rediscoverers". According to Isajiw (1974), ethnic "rediscoverers" refers to a:

> process by which persons from any consecutive ethnic generation who have been socialized into the culture of the general society but who develop a symbolic relations to the culture of their ancestors (Isajiw, 1974:121).

Therefore, items from the cultural past, such as music and art, can become markers of ethnic identity that interpret and shape individuals' existing realities. The following figure depicts a schematic representation of how ethnic groups, by embracing aspects of their ethno-cultural systems, such as religion and ancestry, can construct a favourable and pragmatically useful identity for themselves.
FIGURE 1

CULTURAL CONTENTS AND IDENTITY BUILDING

ETHNICITY

RELIGION  ANCESTRY

CONSTRUCTED ETHNO-RELIGIOUS IDENTITY
The utilization of culture in the process of identity building (see Figure 1 above) finds support in Nagel's (1994) view that:

Culture dictates the appropriate and inappropriate content of a particular ethnicity and designates the language, religion, belief system, art, music, dress, traditions, and lifeways that constitute an authentic ethnicity (Nagel, 1994: 161).

Thus, the point of departure for our understanding of the nature of ethnicity is the idea of a distinct culture. A distinct culture may include a unique historical group experience, which in turn, may result in the development of a sense of unique peoplehood. An ethnic group's definition of itself in terms of its culture and history constitutes an essential component of a "subjective belief in common descent", which Max Weber (1968) identified as the hallmark of an ethnic group. Isajiw's (1974) definition of ethnicity is similar to Weber's insofar as he defines ethnicity as:

an involuntary group of people who share the same culture or to descendants of such people who identify themselves and/or identified by others as belonging to the same involuntary group (Isajiw, 1994: 122).

However, our emphasis on culture as the point of departure for understanding the nature of ethnicity entails a caveat. This caution in the definition of culture is based on Isajiw's (1992) precise formulation. According to Isajiw,

the emphasis on culture for the understanding of the nature of ethnicity is not intended to mean that members of an ethnic group must always share one and the same culture to the exclusion of any other. Rather, it is intended to mean that persons who include themselves in an ethnicity would have a relation to a group who either now or at some point in the past has shared a unique culture (Isajiw, 1992: 7).

Isajiw's (1992) definition captures accurately what is happening at the Metro
mandir, where people of different ethnic origins share a common religion and racial ancestry, and who are now in the process of creating a new identity based on these similarities. Although Indo-Caribbeans are aware of the differences between them and their South Asian counterparts, they, nonetheless, are embracing and incorporating aspects of their ancestral culture and heritage into their existing identity. This combination has implications for the development of a new "Indian" identity in Canada. Based on this analysis, I can now define an *ethnic group* as a community/group of people who may or may not share the same culture, but who, in recognizing their common descent and ancestry, may opt for an identity that is oriented to both the present and the past.

Ethnicity, then, is a consciously used perspective for interpreting and organizing experience. The fact that racial and ethnic minority groups are defining themselves in new ways has prompted scholars to formulate new definitions of ethnicity. In keeping with the view that ethnicity is a constantly evolving phenomenon, *ethnicity* is defined here as an ethnic construction process in which a similar ethnic heritage or "past", and a sense of "shared memory" (i.e., a common religion and ancestry) are used by ethnic communities to forge new identities, construct ethnic boundaries, and create ethnic solidarity and cohesion. This definition of ethnicity is consistent with Bennett's (1975) view of ethnicity as "something new in the world...the proclivity of people to seize on traditional cultural symbols as a definition of their own identity" (Bennett, 1975:1).

Thus, racial or ethnic groups, in attempting to assert ethnic pride, may opt for a
strategy that emphasizes ancientness of civilization\textsuperscript{6}. For example, the reliance on some type of historical bases of identification (e.g. pride in an ancient religion) can provide a strong impetus to form an ethnocentric positive identity. For racial and ethnic minorities, "pride of past" becomes a significant basis for group formation and ethnic persistence in hostile environments. Glazer (1954) has commented on the effect of migration on the creation, development and maintenance of ethnic "nations" symbolizing redefinition of identities and the development of group unity and solidarity in new environments.

The "past", therefore, becomes a significant symbol of group cohesion in the immigrants' new environment. Thus, the cognitive dimension of culture vis-a-vis the notion of a "relevant past" is important for understanding the emergence of new forms of ethnic identification, organization, and action. The centrality of an ethnic group's "past" is succinctly summed up by Cohen (1985): "in constructing culture, the past is a resource used by groups in the collective quest for meaning and community (Cohen, 1985:99).

**Ethnicity as a Socially Constructed Phenomenon**

The central premise of the constructionist approach is that ethnicity is a socially constructed phenomenon, i.e., how ethnic boundaries, identities and cultures are negotiated, defined and produced through social interaction inside and outside ethnic communities (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Holstein and Miller 1993). According to the constructionist view, the origin, content and form of ethnicity reflect the creative choices of individuals and groups as they define themselves and others in ethnic ways (Nagel, \textsuperscript{6}Religion is a good example of "ancientness of civilization". Religious historians have been unable to locate the exact time period in which Hinduism emerged. This sense of religious ancientness probably explains why many Hindus feel that their religion/culture is great.)
Furthermore, since ethnic groups construct their own ethnic identity and culture, it is reasonable to assume that ethnic groups are constantly reinventing themselves - who they are and what their ethnicity means. For example, ethnic groups engage in the construction of culture by using particular aspects of their culture and history in order to create common meanings, build solidarity, and ultimately to launch social movements. Nagel's (1994) use of a shopping cart metaphor to describe the dynamic character of ethnic culture is insightful here. She says that:

It is important that we discard the notion that culture is simply an historical legacy; culture is not a shopping cart that comes to us already loaded with a set of historical cultural goods. Rather we construct culture by picking and choosing items from the shelves of the past and the present (Nagel, 1994:162).

In a similar vein, Frederik Barth (1969) describes ethnic identity as a vessel that is filled by participants as they select particular elements from their past. In other words, cultures and identities change; they are borrowed, blended, rediscovered and reinterpreted. The creation of entirely new cultural forms is what Nagel and Snipp (1993) have described as "cultural/ethnic reorganization". For a schematic representation of a model of ethnicity as a social construction, see Figure 2 below.
A CONSTRUCTIONIST MODEL OF ETHNICITY

Ethnicity as a Social Construction

Dynamic Process

Cultural Reconstruction  Cultural Innovation  Ethnic Organization

Figure 2 (above) depicts a schematic breakdown of the conceptual dimensions of the social constructionist model of ethnicity. According to the constructionist view of ethnicity, ethnic groups construct their cultures in ways which involve the *reconstruction* of historical culture, and the *construction* of new culture. Cultural reconstruction entails revivals and restorations of historical cultural practices and institutions, and would include the creation of cultural programs such as the creation of cultural centres and educational programs to preserve and revive cultural traditions. For example, many immigrant and ethnic groups, in attempting to revive their ethnic languages which may have fallen into
disuse by particular generations or diasporic communities, have made efforts to restore language use through cultural programs, especially in cultural history. The revival of cultural history is a crucial element in the cultural construction process and shows the role of academics, institutions, and leaders in contributing to ethnic renewal.

In contrast, cultural innovation occurs when current cultural practices are changed or when new cultural forms or practices are created. An example of cultural innovation is the blending of cultural material from many component group traditions. Inherent in this concept of cultural innovation, then, is the idea of "cultural borrowing". Cultural borrowing may be instrumental in forging new identities. As such, cultural innovation is a method for revitalizing ethnic boundaries which, in turn, may result in the redefinition and meaning of ethnicity.

Ethnic organization, lastly, plays a vital role in creating ethnic solidarity amongst immigrant and ethnic groups who, in trying to cope with the forces of change in new environments, may participate in developing survival strategies. Such strategies include the collective mobilization of social, economic and political resources that are deemed important for the survival of an ethnic group. For example, members of a particular ethnic or immigrant community may opt to align themselves with political organizations, parties, and politicians that are sympathetic to their concerns and problems. Similarly, ethnic leaders and activists may develop strong ties with prominent in-group and out-group institutions and individuals who can assist in specific areas of community development such as providing employment opportunities for community members, or providing the necessary social services that are deemed relevant to the community.
Ethnic organization, then, is useful for understanding the renascence and persistence of ethnicity among immigrant groups. As a central mechanism of ethnic change, ethnic organization always involves cultural reorganization. Social, economic, and political goals in ethnic and immigrant groups are the substance of ethnic organization. In Chapter 7 (Discussion and Conclusion) the constructionist model of ethnicity (depicted in Figure 2) will be re-examined to see: (i) if the present study fits that particular model; or (ii) if it modifies it in any way.

Also explicit in the constructionist model is the idea that ethnicity and ethnic identity is closely associated with the issue of boundaries. Ethnic boundaries determine who is a member and who is not and designate which ethnic categories are available for individual identification at a particular time and place (Nagel, 1994:154). Just as cultural constructions are a necessary aspect of ethnicity and ethnic group formation, so is the construction of ethnic boundaries. Ethnic boundaries function to determine identity options, membership composition, and forms of ethnic organization. Boundaries answer the question: Who are we? (Nagel, 1994:162). Fredrik Barth's (1969) understanding of ethnicity as a response to interaction and not isolation implies dynamic qualities inherent in ethnic boundary systems. According to Barth, ethnic boundaries are flexible, fluid, and permeable (Barth 1969).

It is through the construction of culture that ethnic groups reinvent the past and consequently invent the present. Nagel (1994) argues that ethnic groups, in constructing and reconstructing their cultures, utilize "cultural construction techniques". These include revivals and restorations of historical cultural practices, revisions of current culture and
innovations, and renovated cultural symbols and activities. According to Nagel (1994):

Cultural constructions assist in the construction of community when they act to define the boundaries of collective identity, establish membership criteria, generate a shared symbolic vocabulary, and define a common purpose (Nagel, 1994:163).

This type of cultural recreation process falls well into what Hobsbawm (1982) refers to as the "invention of tradition." According to Hobsbawm, invented tradition is:

a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past (Hobsbawm, 1982:1).

Based on the above definition, one can argue that invented traditions establish and symbolize social cohesion or group membership. By this analysis, the invention of tradition is very much akin to what Anderson (1983) calls "imagined communities." According to Anderson, nationality/nationalism is a cultural artefact of a particular kind. He goes on to say that, in order to understand nationality/nationalism, it is important to carefully consider how it has come into historical being, in what ways its meanings have changed over time, and why, today, nationalism commands such profound emotional legitimacy (Anderson, 1983:13-14).

This process of invention is also similar to Edward Said's (1979) concept of Orientalism, which is premised on the assumption that Orientalism, as a national identity, is a political fiction, a mythic idea of the East based on European projections of fear. Said's work points to the invented and manufactured nature of nationality, and to the role of a foreign culture in defining a nation for natives and foreigners alike. Anderson's
Hobsbawm's (1982) and Said's (1979) conceptions of nationality/nationalism as a culturally invented/imagined phenomenon imply a process of cultural construction - a task facing all ethnic groups, particularly those that are newly forming or resurgent.

In a similar vein, Sollors' (1989) "invention of ethnicity" paradigm is grounded in a constructionist conception of ethnicity. Sollors uses this particular term to challenge the primordialist belief that ethnicity is an irrational or preconscious form of cultural attachment that is rooted in blood. Sollors writes that race and ethnicity constitute "collective fictions that are continually reinvented" (Sollors, 1989:xi). Picking up on Sollors's idea of ethnicity as something that is invented, Cozen et al. (1990) argue:

Ethnicity itself is to be understood as a cultural construction accomplished over historical time. Ethnic groups in modern settings are constantly recreating themselves, and ethnicity is constantly being reinvented in response to changing realities within the group and the host society. Ethnic group boundaries, for example, must be renegotiated, while the expressive symbols of ethnicity (ethnic traditions) must be repeatedly reinterpreted (Conzen et al., 1990:38).

Therefore, the invention of ethnicity perspective underscores the importance of paying attention to changing circumstances associated with ethnicity, ethnic identity, and nationality formations and reformations. Implicit in the works of Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm (1982), Said (1979), and Sollors (1989), then, is the idea that the construction of culture supplies the contents for ethnic and national symbolic repositories.

Finally, the ethnicity as process model (Staiano 1980) is similar to the constructionist perspective in that it does not conceive of ethnicity as a static phenomenon. The ethnicity as process model can be summarized as follows. First, ethnicity as process
means ethnicity is an on-going response, a reaction to categorical ascription by others as well as a reaction to the creation and incorporation of symbols into the collective identity (Staiano, 1980:29). In other words, ethnicity is here conceived of as something that is constantly being interpreted and reinterpreted. Second, ethnicity as process involves the search for identity, the formulation of some symbolic description of self (Staiano, 1980:30). This means that any analysis of ethnicity must concern itself with how an ethnic group perceives and defines itself. The following quote by Bennett (1975) sums up this view:

an ethnic self need not be founded on a genuine native tradition at all; it is a "collective representation" imagined out of needs for assertion and defence, for maintaining one's boundaries in a world of competition and usurpation of resources (Bennet, 1975:3-6).

It is possible that the members of the Metro mandir, in spite of their cultural differences, may still regard themselves as having a "collective identity". This collective identity may emerge because of the members' recognition that they belong to a "shared culture" i.e., they share the same religion and ancestry. The tendency for ethnic groups to see themselves as having a "collective identity" and common interests is a phenomenon largely of recent origin, one involving what has been termed ethnogenesis. Singer (1962) describes the ethnogenesis (or the formation of an ethnic group) of African-Americans as a distinctly modern phenomenon. According to Singer, African slaves found themselves in a structurally defined relationship with white Americans. Two of the important features of that relationship were the occupational specialization and the very limited power of African Americans (Singer 1962). This development of group structures, what Weber
called "consciousness of kind", led to the formation of a distinct African-American/Black ethnicity.

A more recent conception of ethnogenesis, one which is particularly relevant to this study, has been given by Cohen (1974). Cohen describes the process of ethnogenesis (although he does not use the term) as the adjustment of a group to a new situation through the reorganization of its own traditional customs or through the development of new customs under traditional symbols, "using traditional norms and ideologies to enhance its distinctiveness within the contemporary situation" (Cohen 1974). The examples given earlier regarding cultural reconstructions and innovations at the Metro mandir provide support to Cohen's argument.

Of equal importance, too, is the centrality of ethnic leadership and its impact on the cultural reconstruction process. Another way of speaking about Breton's (1964) idea of "social entrepreneurs", whose duties are to fulfil the needs of their ethnic "clientele", is to think of them as ethnic leaders. The role of ethnic leaders in cultural reconstruction processes is well documented in the literature (Bodnar 1985; Greene 1987). Ethnic leaders' backgrounds, especially their social class backgrounds, their bases of support, and the resources which they have at their disposal for mobilizing ethnic-based action, may help us to understand the particular character or trajectory that an ethnic community will take.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY/RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter I will outline the methods and procedures of data collection that were employed in this study. First, a discussion of the case study methodology and its relevance to this research were explicated. Following this, I will then discuss the qualitative methods utilized in this study, namely, participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Finally, my choice of qualitative data analytic strategies and sampling strategies are discussed at the end of the chapter.

As was mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this research is to find out how it is possible to construct an "Indian" ethno-religious identity within a context of ethnic diversity. Two factors were given as possible explanations for this newly emerging identity. The first was that the process of constructing an "Indian" ethno-religious identity may entail a collective process i.e., the collective coming together of the people (congregation members) involved. The second was that the charismatic and entrepreneurial qualities of the temple's leader may play a significant role in engendering this emerging identity. Therefore, the question that needs to be asked is, whether this identity is being created from the top down or from the bottom up, or from both directions? To find out which of the above factors contribute to this newly emerging identity, it will be necessary to employ ethnographic methods, specifically, the case study methodology.

The case study in sociology is a study of particular cases, comprising a clinical character in the sense that this method leads to an in-depth study. If it has depth, it is
because this analysis is conducted by "giving special attention to totalizing in the observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under study" (Zonabend, 1992:52). This totalizing consists of capturing the social fact in its entirety, in all its aspects and all its relations with other social facts and "is obtained by the minute detail of the questioning, the multiplicity of sources consulted, and a long time spent in the field" (Zonabend, 1992:52). The case study, therefore, involves the usual methods characterizing field research, namely, participant observation and semi-structured in-depth interviews. As such, the case study methodology involves field research of which ethnography is a key methodological technique.

Also known as "field observation," or "direct observation," participant observation refers to the process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and relatively long-term relationship with a human community in its natural setting for the purpose of developing a scientific understanding of that community (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:12). What distinguishes participant observation from other methodological techniques is that it focuses on people in their own time and space, in their own everyday life. The field researcher, therefore, becomes acquainted with the lived experiences of the people s/he is studying. This is why it has often been referred to as natural sociology, studying subjects in their "natural habitat" (Blumer 1968; Schatzman and Strauss 1973). The advantages of participant observation are assumed to lie not just in direct observation of how people act, but also how they understand and experience those acts (Burawoy et al, 1991:2). Thus, the case study demonstrates the "return of the actor" in sociology (Touraine 1984).
The case study, then, with its emphasis on details as opposed to statistical generalizations - the hallmark of quantitative/survey research - can take into account the viewpoint of the social actors themselves, and the meaning they attribute to their own actions (Hamel, 1993:490). More importantly, the holistic and in-depth character of the case study may stimulate additional research from which more general insights might evolve. That is to say, although the findings from a case study cannot be assumed to be representative, and, as a result, cannot be generalized to formulate general principles and theories, it remains true that theoretical insights and theories have their genesis in the analysis of a single case.

The disadvantages of participant observation lie in its little supposed generalization value, and its presumed lack of representativeness. However, the representativeness of the case stems from the strategic value of the social unit chosen in relation to a precise object of study. In this regard, the case study is characterized by a representativeness that is different from statistical representativeness. Thus, the representativeness ensured in the case study approach comes from the description of an object of study, via an "ideal local unit," with a concern for depth and totality (Hamel, 1993:499). The sociological representativeness of the particular case study is best determined by the generalization value of the study. That is to say, generalization is made possible because it becomes clear in which respects each case is particular. As the French anthropologist, Zonabend, writes:

The case study makes it possible to determine the sociologically relevant conditions of representativeness. It reveals the most important factors and the most crucial points of rapture for those cultures or objects under investigation. It follows that generalization
is made possible because it becomes clear in which respects each
case or social unit is particular (Zonabend, 1992:51).

Relevance of Case Study to Research

The case study is particularly relevant to this research for a number of reasons. First, the appropriateness of the case study to this research lies in its ability to focus on a particular case (i.e., a unique Hindu temple). This temple is unique for two reasons. First, it has one of the most, and probably the most ethnically heterogeneous Hindu congregations in Toronto. This present-day heterogeneity is all the more interesting given the fact that the Metro mandir was not only founded by Indo-Caribbeans, but it was formed for the specific purpose of serving and fulfilling the religious and cultural needs/functions of the Indo-Caribbean Hindu community in Toronto. Today, this Indo-Caribbean mandir is undergoing what I would refer to as an "ethnic metamorphosis". By this is meant a transformation not only in the mandir's ethnic composition and ethnocultural practices, but a shift in ethnic identification. That is, in its early stages, the Metro mandir was demonstrably Indo-Caribbean in character i.e., all of the religious and other cultural practices carried out by the mandir were consistent with traditional Indo-Caribbean customs. Today, however, the picture is quite different.

While not denying that certain Indo-Caribbean elements are still present at the mandir, such as the congregation composition and particular religious/ritual practices, it can also be said that with the introduction of India-born Hindus, the full impact of the "Indo-Caribbeaness" that had characterized the temple during its early years, seems to be gradually fading, and is being replaced by a pervasive "Indianness"/"South Asianness".
Being Indo-Caribbean is not the same as being South Asian and vice versa. However, the fact that Indo-Caribbeans can claim an ancestral link with South Asia/India via religion and ancestry, allows them to include into their traditional Indo-Caribbean ethnic repertoire those aspects of their ancestral South Asian heritage that are deemed relevant or useful.

This type of syncretism at the temple i.e., the combination of Indo-Caribbean and South Asian elements, has resulted in a situation in which the Indo-Caribbean members seem to be engaging in a process of ethnic renewal - a process in which there is a strong tendency to identify not only with their traditional diasporic Indo-Caribbean identity, but also with their South Asian/Indian ancestral identity. In so doing, the Indo-Caribbeans at the temple are, in a sense, reconstructing their traditional Indo-Caribbean ethnic identity by amending it in ways that tend to: (i) emphasize their Indo-Caribbeaness, and (ii) re-assert their South Asian/Indian roots.

The second reason why the Metro mandir can be seen as a rather unique situation follows directly from the first: its agenda to construct a collective "Indian" ethno-religious identity. The mandir's agenda to construct an "Indian" ethno-religious identity is in itself a peculiar construction given that the other Hindu temples in the Metro Toronto and Greater Toronto Areas (GTA) are not (at least not at present) pursuing such an agenda. One of the most significant differences between the Metro mandir and the other temples that were examined was the differences in agendas. For instance, the other fifteen Hindu temples that I conducted fieldwork at had entirely different agendas i.e., they were, in the main, preoccupied with matters concerning the purchasing of land to build their own temples, and other issues related to temple expansion and establishment.
Furthermore, all of these mandirs were largely ethnically homogeneous in composition. Thus, it was not uncommon to find temples that were made up entirely of Gujratis, Punjabis, South Indians, Tamilians, and Indo-Caribbeans. Given the ethnic homogeneity of these temples, and their preoccupation with temple building and the like, it is not at all surprising that these temples did not have any "ethnically specific" agendas, such as the need to construct a new identity, or to reconstruct an existing ethnic identity. It is primarily these fundamental differences between the Metro mandir and the other temples that allow for an in-depth investigation of the Metro mandir. As such, the case study methodology becomes the most suitable and adequate data collecting strategy for this study.

The peculiarity of the Metro mandir, then, has been shown to be a particular case that requires an *in-depth* and *holistic* study, hence, the strategic relevance of the case study methodology. Because of the mandir's unique agenda to construct an "Indian" ethno-religious identity within a framework of ethnic and cultural diversity, it has proven impossible to include a comparison group as part of this study. However, an Indo-Caribbean temple, specifically, an all Indo-Trinidadian temple located in the eastern fringe of Toronto, will be used as a marked contrast to that of the Metro temple. This particular Indo-Trinidadian temple is the antithesis of the Metro mandir in that it is not engaged in the construction of a new identity. Instead, it is more involved in maintaining the old traditional Indo-Caribbean ethno-religious identity.

In contrast, the Metro mandir is involved in the construction of a new diasporic Canadian "Indian" identity. Comparative data collected from the Indo-Trinidadian temple
mentioned above will be compared to the data derived from the Metro mandir. The comparative data will be presented in tabular form. This comparison will highlight any similarities and significant differences between the two mandirs. Therefore, the case study being employed in this research can, in some ways, be regarded as an extended case method (See Burawoy 1991) inasmuch as it will compare what is happening at the Metro mandir to that of another ethno-religious institution.

In Chapter Four (4) of this dissertation, an examination of the issues and events that are currently being pursued by the wider political/secular Indo-Caribbean community will be compared to what is occurring at, and being pursued by, the Metro mandir. This research, then, would involve an ethnographic case study of an ethno-religious community, and, as such, will interweave participant observation, and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg (1991) have recently made 'a case for the case study' that identified several virtues inherent in this type of research: permitting the study of people in their natural setting, and allowing for a holistic approach to social action and meaning construction (Feagin et al., 1991). Therefore, in order to accurately pinpoint the factors that are responsible for this newly emerging identity, I had to immerse myself in this community. One way of doing this was to take the role of participant observer.

Participant observation is vitally important to this research because it will allow the researcher to gain a first-hand account of the general structure and organization of the temple. For example, it will allow for the observation of the specific type of social interaction that is occurring amongst the different ethnic groups i.e., who are participating
in, and organizing particular social, religious and/or cultural events and activities; who is marrying whom or issues related to intermarriage or the lack of it; who is socializing with whom and in what types of contexts; and the prevalence of overt or covert conflict amongst the various ethnic groups at the mandir. These and other issues related to social interaction may illuminate issues pertaining to identity construction.

**PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION DATA:**

Methodological Procedures and Empirical Indicators

One way of systematizing and organizing participant observation data is to break it down according to themes, topics or ideas. Once this process of data organization is achieved, the task of the researcher is to specify or isolate a number of indicators or measures that would most adequately represent the phenomenon under investigation. To understand how constructed ethnicity is manifested in empirical terms, it is necessary to isolate a number of qualitative empirical indicators that can adequately capture the constructed dimensions of ethnicity. These indicators were derived from the literature on constructed ethnicity. A very careful and thorough examination of the empirical literature was undertaken, and a checklist of the most important indicators of constructed ethnicity was generated. It should be stated here that there exists a small but growing body of research on constructed ethnicity, the bulk of which is mainly theoretical in nature. Given the paucity of empirical research to date on constructed ethnicity, a strategy for the selection of the most relevant indicators of constructed ethnicity had to be generated.

Basically, the indicators were selected on the basis of :(i) an overall understanding
of what constructed ethnicity is; this was achieved by examining the research on constructed ethnicity and observing what researchers understand by constructed ethnicity; and (ii) their theoretical/conceptual relevance to the research. All of the indicators are essentially theoretical concepts i.e., they represent the conceptual dimensions of the social constructionist model of ethnicity (See discussion of Figure 2 in the Theoretical Framework Section). Research in the area of constructed ethnicity has consistently shown that particular theoretical concepts can, and have been used, as adequate measures of constructed ethnicity. Thus, in keeping with ethnographic social science research, I have made all the relevant theoretical variables operational.

The point here is simply that even the most general ethnography benefits from being informed by theoretical knowledge related to a specific research problem. As such, every ethnography benefits from making the theory underlying the ethnographic problem explicit. On the simplest level this means knowing what has previously been done in the problem area. On a more complex level it means designing a theoretical synthesis from past efforts, testing it through ethnographic data, and, if necessary, revising the theory in light of new knowledge. In other words, an ethnographer must engage in some plan of action involving the confirming, disconfirming, and possibly reformulating theory as the result of ethnography. This is one of the stated methodological aims of this research i.e., ethnographic data as contributing to the advancement of theoretical knowledge. This particular type of strategy will illuminate an ethnography's value as a source of empirical knowledge. A more in-depth discussion on the types of analytic strategies to be used in this research will be dealt with later on in this chapter.
The following, then, are the key elements of constructed ethnicity that will be used in this research. Most of the participant observation data for this study were derived from the mandir's Sunday sermons. The rest of the participant observation data were collected by attending activities and events that were held at the mandir such as some of its religious, social, and cultural festivals and celebrations.

**Empirical Indicator #1:**

*Cultural Reconstruction*

This is one of the most important indicators of constructed ethnicity because it contains a significant attribute of cultural reconstruction, namely, cultural revival/restoration. As mentioned above, cultural reconstruction entails the revival and restoration of historical cultural practices and institutions. Examples of cultural reconstruction include (i) the creation of cultural and educational programs and, (ii) the creation of cultural centres. The former would include the development of educational institutions, and the latter involves the creation of cultural institutions for ethno-cultural artifacts and renovated cultural symbols.

**Empirical Indicator #2:**

*Cultural Innovation*

Cultural innovation occurs when current cultural practices are changed or when new cultural forms or practices are created. Cultural innovation is seen as a method for revitalizing ethnic boundaries and may have implications for the redefinition and meaning
of ethnicity. Thus, cultural blending/borrowing is the most important attribute of this indicator. It entails a wide array of cultural phenomena such as food, music, ethnic literature, and ethnic advertisements.

**Empirical Indicator # 3:**

**Ethnic Organization**

Ethnic organization is a mechanism that facilitates ethnic group survival and involves some form of collective mobilization of economic and political resources that are seen as advantageous to an ethnic group. Its main attributes are: (i) social organization; (ii) economic organization; and (iii) political organization. Social organization would include the formation of community base organizations such as women and youth organizations. Economic organization would include strategies for economic sustenance such as the provision of employment opportunities for community members. Political organization includes political party alignments, and involves the active participation of ethnic leaders and activists in developing strong political ties with political parties that are seen as having "ideologically attractive" political agendas.

**DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION DATA**

The three parameters of constructed ethnicity: cultural reconstruction, cultural innovation, and ethnic organization will be employed in this research. These indicators and their empirical manifestations were organized and displayed in table form. That is, each of the indicators has its own table, and for each one, a list of its empirical
manifestations were listed. For example, under indicator #1 the various manifestations of Cultural Reconstruction were listed. Since cultural reconstruction involves revivals and restorations of historical cultural practices and institutions, this indicator was broken down into two (2) attributes: (i) cultural revivals and restorations; and (ii) new cultural forms. Under the cultural revival/restoration attribute, I have listed the various ethnic and cultural traditions that are currently being revitalized. Examples of this would include specific cultural activities and festivals that are being revitalized at the temple. Under the new cultural forms attribute, a list of the new and renovated cultural forms and activities will be listed. These would include the creation of cultural centres and educational/linguistic renewal programmes, and renovated cultural and religious festivals.

Under indicator #2 the various manifestations of Cultural Innovation were listed. The main attribute of the cultural innovation indicator is cultural blending/borrowing. Some of the manifestations of cultural borrowing/blending include food, music, ethnic literature (newspapers, books, and magazines), and ethnic advertisements. These manifestations entailed subdivisions. For example, the food category was broken down into two (2) categories: (i) Indo-Caribbean and (ii) South Asian. Similar types of breakdowns were applied to the other parameters.

Under indicator #3 the various manifestations of Ethnic Organization were listed. This indicator was broken down into three sub-categories: (i) Social Organization; (ii) Economic Organization; and (iii) Political Organization. The social organization attribute includes the type/s of social services available to the community such as a Women's Group and a Youth Group. The economic organization attribute includes the types of
networking ties the mandir has with prominent business people and institutions in the ethnic and mainstream community, and whether these ties assist in providing employment opportunities for members of the community. The political organization attribute includes the type of political alignments or political party support which the mandir favours (e.g. Liberal, Tory/Conservative, N.D.P., Reform, etc). Also, the type of political and ethnic ideology propagated by the ethnic/religious leader, and the political links with other religious and secular organizations were also included in the political organization category.

**INTERVIEWS:**

**DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGIES**

*Intensive interviewing,* also known as "unstructured/semi-structured interviewing," is a guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee rich, detailed materials (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:12). The semi-structured in-depth interview involves an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry that must be asked in a particular order (Babbie, 1994:289). The semi-structured in-depth interviews to be employed in this study will require the investigator to establish a general direction for conversation. This strategy will require the researcher to employ probes based on the respondent's answer to specific questions. In interview guides, a series of probes are often connected to specific questions in order to remind the interviewer to probe for items that might not be mentioned spontaneously (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:56).
Once the social and cultural dynamics of the mandir are accomplished through participant observation, I will then proceed to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with members from the elite and grassroots levels at the temple. The rationale for this organizational strategy (i.e., the reason for interviewing members from the grassroots and elite levels) was based on the aims of this research: to examine the extent to which the newly emerging collective "Indian" identity is being constructed from the "above", or from the "below", or from both levels? These interviews, then, will enable the researcher to gain a more in-depth account from both the elite and grassroots members on the newly emerging identity. An equal number of Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians were selected for interviewing. A number of interviews were conducted with some of the Indo-African members at the temple as well.

Most of the interview questions required responses from the Indo-Caribbean, South Asian, and Indo-African members at the mandir. These included questions 1-15, and questions 22-27. The first fifteen questions were designed to elicit the views held by both the grassroots and elite members of temple. These questions ranged from issues related to life history/personal background type questions to more general issues related to grassroots and elite participation and involvement in community activities. Questions 16-21, on the other hand, were designed specifically for the leader of the temple, and, as such, will require responses only from him. A number of highly specific questions (22-27) were designed to elicit the views held by the community members regarding certain ethno-cultural norms, practices and values, such as the degree of inter-ethnic "external" socialization and attitude toward inter-ethnic marriage. "External" inter-ethnic socialization
refers to the frequency of social contact among members outside of the temple. The last four (4) questions were administered to the Presidents of the temple's Youth and Women's Groups. All of the interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and coded.

**CODING PROCEDURE: INTERVIEWS**

All of the printed interview transcripts were coded using a particular procedure. The interview data were coded as follows. For the Indo-Caribbean respondents, the code IC was used. To differentiate between the sexes within the Indo-Caribbean group, the interview transcripts were coded as IC 1 = Female and IC 2 = Male. For the South Asian respondents, the code SA was used. For the female South Asian respondents the code SA 1 = Female was used, and for South Asian males the code SA 2 = Male was used. The same coding procedure was used for the Indo-Africa group: IA 1 = Female, IA 2 = Male.

**ANALYTIC STRATEGIES**

The main analytic strategy that will be employed in this study is ethnography's contribution to the testing and verification of existing theories. The contribution of ethnography is not only limited to the phase of theory development; it can also be used to verify, falsify, or test theory. For example, cases that are crucial for a theory - those where it seems most likely to be proved either true or false - may be examined through ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:24). Therefore, the particular character of this ethnographic study (i.e., its logico-deductive nature aimed at theory verification) warrants the use of ethnography as a strategy for verifying and testing theory. Because
this study was approached with a prior, well-formulated theoretical perspective that so accurately describes the phenomenon under investigation, it is understandable why the ethnographic technique of *theory verification* had to be utilized. However, some of the data that were derived from the interviews and field notes necessitated the application of a *grounded theory* approach as well.

One of the main tasks of qualitative research is theory construction. One of the more common analytic strategy for analyzing diverse, non-standardized texts, transcripts or other kinds of qualitative social scientific data is the approach initially described as "grounded theory", which was pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and which has been further developed by Strauss (1987) and others. Grounded theory or "the discovery of theory from data" is perhaps ethnography's most valuable contribution to the development of theory. One of the major goals of qualitative research is the generation of concepts that can form the building blocks of theory (Bryman and Burgess, 1994:219).

The inductive nature of grounded theory entails: (i) the extraction of concepts out of data; and (ii) the use of codes and their role in concept creation. In this study, the conceptualization process involved the development of codes derived from field notes and the interview data. This was achieved by a "cutting and pasting" strategy whereby chunks of data were cut out and then pasted with other items that fit under a particular category. In other words, the conceptualization process entailed the fitting of data into categories.

In analyzing the data requiring a grounded theory approach, conceptual categories were derived from the data that was collected. In deriving the conceptual categories, I developed "a catalogue of ethnic constructs" (one similar to Grant McCracken's (1988)
"catalogue of analytic constructs"). This "catalogue of ethnic constructs" yielded two important conceptual/theoretical categories: (i) *ethnicity as social construction*; and (ii) *ethnic infrastructure*. The former arises from the actions of ethnic leaders and involves the creation of "new ethnicity" and symbolic ethnicity. The latter is grounded in the experiences of immigrant groups in host societies and involves endogamous marriage patterns and inter-ethnic socialization practices.

This grounded theory approach is important for the development of a model of constructed ethnicity among diasporic ethnic groups such as Indo-Caribbeans. More specifically, such a model may highlight the importance of diasporic ethnic leaders in helping to create new identities. It should be stated at the outset that this grounded theory approach (described above) does not lay claim to the creation of a new theory. Rather, it may help in the enhancement and enrichment of the available general theories on constructed ethnicity; theories which do not pay special attention to: (i) the role that ethnic diasporic leaders play in the construction of new identities, and the creation of symbolic ethnicity in host (immigrant) contexts. and (ii) the extent to which patterns of ethnic socialization (such as attitudes toward inter-ethnic marriage and inter-ethnic socialization practices) may or may not contribute to the construction of new ethnic identities. This study's grounded theory approach reflects a constructionist approach to ethnicity.

**Sampling Strategies**

The selection of individuals in field studies normally entails a different procedure from the selection procedures associated with statistical sampling in survey research. One of the best known approaches for working with individuals in field research is "intensive
work with informants" (Conklin 1968). In field research informants are selected for their knowledge of a particular setting which may complement the researcher's observations and point towards further investigation that needs to be done in order to understand social settings, social structures, and social processes (Burgess, 1984:75). The selection of interviewees for this particular study was consistent with Burgess's (1984) aforementioned ethnographic sampling strategy. In terms of accessing respondents for interviewing, my two key informants spoke to members from both the executive and congregation, whom they said were very knowledgeable about the mandir and its organization.

One of the main criteria used for the selection of interviewees was the length of their involvement with the temple. That is, people who have been with the temple since its inception, or who became involved with it in its early development, were chosen by my informants for interviewing. Such interviewees, I believe, would be the most competent given their long experience with, and knowledge of, the mandir in terms of its history, the particular stages of its development, and any changes that the mandir underwent during the last two decades. Also, members who have not been with the mandir since its inception, but who have been with the mandir for the past five to ten years, were also selected for interviewing (See Quota Sample below).

In other words, veterans or "old timers" as well as some "not so old time" members from the congregation were selected for interviewing. Prominent members from the executive branch of the mandir were also singled out for interviewing. A total sample size \(N\) of 30 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with members from both the elite and grassroots levels at the mandir.
In addition to this type of ethnographic sampling strategy, both the snowball and quota samples were also employed for the purpose of accessing respondents. The snowball sample is a technique that begins with a few relevant subjects and expands the sample through referrals (Babbie 1994). Some interviewees, after being interviewed, were asked to recommend others for interviewing, and each of the subsequently interviewed participants were asked for further recommendations. This strategy was especially useful during cultural events and celebrations at the mandir. These events attracted many of the community's members, making it possible for me to access a wide range of potential interviewees who, in turn, recommended others for interviewing.

The other non-probability sampling technique employed was the quota sample. For the quota sample, respondents were selected on the basis of meeting a certain criterion. Instead of having a list of potential respondents, I approached members randomly and asked them how long they were associated with the temple. If they met the criterion for selection i.e., length of involvement with the mandir, then they were asked for an interview. The combination of both the quota and snowball samples will eliminate any potential biases associated with representativeness, specifically as it pertains to the ethnic groups being studied.
CHAPTER IV

The Secular and Political Dimensions of the Indo-Caribbean Community

The main aim of this chapter is to map out the overall Indo-Caribbean context in Toronto. As such, careful attention will be paid to the historical, demographic, political, and secular contexts of the Indo-Caribbean community. Analyses of these dimensions will throw light on what is happening in the wider Indo-Caribbean community vis-a-vis the Metro mandir. In other words, these dimensions will provide a forum from which the wider secular Indo-Caribbean identity can be compared to the specific type of identity that is being constructed at the Metro mandir. Before proceeding to discuss the secular and political dimensions of the Indo-Caribbean community in Canada, an analysis of its socio-historical and demographic profiles in both the Caribbean and Canadian contexts will be discussed. In order to do this, it is necessary to locate the analysis within the "Indian Diaspora" perspective.

The Indian Diaspora

International migration has occurred throughout the history of all nations, and this has resulted in the emergence of many contemporary plural societies. The study of the "Indian Diaspora" is emerging as an important field of sociological investigation and analysis. However, a major problem in the Sociology of Indian Diaspora is the definition of "diasporic Indians." Sociologically, the term diaspora refers to the migration or dispersion and settlement of a group of people that carries with it a socio-cultural
baggage. This baggage may persist with, or be retained by them in varying degrees. It may undergo changes by way of adaptation to the host country's socio-economic and political conditions, and/or through adoption of the host country's socio-cultural beliefs and practices. Normally, people of the diaspora may revive and reconstitute particular aspects of their cultural and ancestral heritage. The revival of cultural traditions by the diasporic community will depend on a number of factors: (i) the conditions under which its members or their ancestors left the homeland; (ii) the distance which the diasporic community is now located in relation to the homeland; (iii) the duration of settlement in the host country; and (iv) the economic and political conditions in the host country (Jayaram, 1995:4).

Between the 1830s and the 1910s, approximately 1,120,000 Indians were transported to different parts of the globe as indentured labourers (Lal, Munro, and Beechert 1993; cf. Northrup, 1995:156, who put the total at 1,333,030). In 1987, an estimated 8.7 million people of South Asian origin were living outside of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka (Clarke, Peach, and Vertovec 1991). They constitute less than one per cent of the current combined population of South Asians (i.e., about 1,000 million). But, the people of Indian origin form more than 40 per cent of the population of Mauritius, Fiji, Guyana, Surinam, and Trinidad. According to the 1990 Population and Housing Census, the people of Indian descent constituted the single largest ethnic group in Trinidad comprising 40.3 per cent of the entire population (Central Statistical Office, 1994:xiv). There are also smaller pockets of Indian minorities in Malaysia, Uganda, South Africa, Canada, the United States, and Britain.
The migration of Indians can be categorized into three broad phases: (a) pre-colonial; (b) colonial; and (c) post-colonial. The pre-colonial period of Indian migration was confined largely to South East Asia, namely, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, and Bali. Traces of Indian culture (e.g. religion and other aspects of cultural life) can still be found in these countries. The nature of migration in this phase is characterized by cultural diffusion, economic exchange, and adventure from as early as the seventh century to the sixteenth century, and lasting until the beginning of the colonial era (Bhat 1995).

The second phase of Indian migration began in the colonial period during the 1830's. In this phase, Indian emigrants were recruited from specific areas of India, mainly Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and lesser numbers from South India, to work as indentured labourers in the sugar plantations of the West Indies/Caribbean, Mauritius, Surinam, and Fiji. Thus began the migration of large numbers of Indians to Mauritius (1834), Guyana (1838), Trinidad (1845), Natal (1860), Surinam (1873), and Fiji (1878). The entire period of Indian indenture to the Caribbean lasted for seventy-nine years, from 1838 to 1917 when the traffic ended. Today, Indo-Caribbeans represent more than twenty per cent of the Caribbean’s nearly five million English-speaking population (Thakur, 1989:207). In Guyana, they number more than fifty-five per cent of the population, while in neighbouring Trinidad and Surinam they account for about forty-two and thirty-eight per cent respectively (Ibid).

Yet despite this demographic and historical presence, the Caribbean still continues to be seen as an Afro/Black cultural zone. Evidence for this assumption can be found in the research literature on Caribbean social structure which, for most part, has been limited
to issues and concerns of Afro-Caribbeans. One reason for this culturally homogeneous image of the Caribbean can be attributed to the way in which the West has constructed the West Indies/Caribbean i.e., as an Afro cultural construct. That is to say, that despite the ethno-cultural heterogeneity of the region, the initial civilization of African slavery has left an indelible mark on subsequent cultural patterns, such as the introduction of thousands of East Indian indentured immigrants.

All immigrants who settled in the French Caribbean islands such as Guadalupe and Martinique originated from South India, and spoke Telugu and Tamil, while most of the Indians who settled in Trinidad and Guyana originated from North India, and spoke a Hindi dialect, namely, Bhojpuri. Although Christians were recorded in the batches reaching the Caribbean, the vast majority of immigrants were Hindus. About 10 per cent were Muslims. During 1838-1917, half a million of indentured workers from India arrived in the Caribbean. The Indians who migrated to these parts are referred to as the PIOs (People of Indian Origin) primarily because their forefathers left India to become indentured labourers and, who, have lost contact with their family roots in India (Motwani 1995).

The third wave of Indian migration is the post-colonial phase. Indian emigration during this period is marked not only by elites of high professional and technical skills, but also the countries of destination, viz. the industrially advanced countries of Western Europe, North America, and Australia. The policy of selective immigration into these industrialized countries during the nineteen sixties, and the limited scope for career advancement under the then existing socio-political context of independent India, gave rise
to large scale emigration of professional and technical/skilled personnel. Most of the
emigrants who succeeded in securing work permits and jobs during this period included
doctors, lawyers, engineers, academics, and other professionals. Today, nine out of ten
Indians emigrating to the United States have professional degrees (Bhat, 1995:4). Indians
who emigrated during the post-colonial phase are referred to as NRIs (Non-Resident
Indians). Unlike the PIOs (People of Indian Origins/Diasporic Indians), NRIs migrated out
of India in the 20th century, and still maintain social contact with India through visits,
family, and/or telecommunication (Motwani 1995).

The Indian Diaspora, then, is distinctive in its diversity. Perhaps no other nation
has such regional, ethnic, and linguistic differentiation as India, and this diversity is also
reflected, to some extent, among the Indian immigrants abroad. Overseas Indians tend to
employ three modes of self-identification, and thus three forms of social organization,
namely, religion, caste, and their region of origin. The latter two have been completely
eroded among Indo-Caribbeans. For example, Parekh (1993) observed that caste had lost
much of its traditional importance among the elderly indentured immigrants. He concluded
that the contexts of their immigration and absorption into plantation life had weakened
their sense of hierarchy (Parekh, 1993:20).

However, research findings from anthropological and historical research indicate
the existence of a pattern of cultural retention based on regionality during the early period
of indenture (Klass 1961; Niehoff 1960). The early period of indenture was characterized
by a cultural connection between the immigrants region of origin in India (i.e. Bihar) and
its culture. In other words, there existed cultural links between Bihari culture and the very
early period of indenture. This cultural link was most apparent in the linguistic arena in that most of the indentured Indians communicated entirely in the Bhojpuri dialect - the language of the state of Bihar (Ibid.).

However, it is in the area of religion that Indian culture in the Caribbean has remained the strongest, and around which Indo-Caribbeans are culturally organized today. The prominence of Hinduism and Islam, the two religions which the vast majority of Indian immigrants brought to the Caribbean was, and continues to be, vigorously practiced and expressed. This strong commitment to their religious traditions led to the establishment of many mandirs and mosques throughout the Caribbean. Arguably, then, one can assume that in the area of ethnic retention, Indo-Caribbean "Indianness" is most visible in the religious realm. The Indo-Caribbean practice of Hinduism has been discussed among India-born Hindus in Toronto in awe-inspiring ways. In the Analysis of Data Chapter (See Chapter Five), data derived from interviews will be presented that will support the aforementioned contention.

**General Character of Indo-Caribbean History: From India to the Caribbean**

European imperialist expansion during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries created conditions for the emigration of large numbers of Indians to many countries around the world. In the case of the Caribbean, the abolition of slavery and the consequent emancipation of African slaves resulted in a chronic labour shortage in the sugar plantations of the West Indies. Large numbers of Indian indentured workers were
brought to the Caribbean under a system of indentureship to work on the sugar plantations.

Indenture was a special form of labour mobilization, a system which Hugh Tinker (1974) aptly described as "a new system of slavery", introduced under colonial rule in 1838. Like slavery, the system of indentureship was an unfree form of labour, although the lack of freedom in these two systems was not identical. Indian labour was intended to support the lucrative sugar industry and other types of plantation agriculture during and after indenture, although the permanence of settlement was problematic. The principal beneficiaries of this system of labour were the British planter class and the corporate interests which increasingly invested in plantation production.

The emigration of Indians to the Caribbean was far from haphazard. Under an organized system of recruitment incentives directed by the British colonial state, certain categories of rural populations in the United Provinces such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in Northern India, and Madras in South India, were encouraged to emigrate to the Caribbean. Under the system of indenture, Indians were obligated to complete five years of labour - a stipulation of the indentureship contract - after which the Indians were free to return to India. With the possible exception of diasporic Jews, diasporic communities rarely ever return to their original home countries. The indentured Indians of the Caribbean were no exception to this rule.

Whereas some of the indentured Indians had returned to India after their contracts expired, the majority of them remained in the Caribbean as a result of the granting of Crown Lands. Crown lands were owned by the colonial government and was offered to
the Indians as an incentive to remain in the Caribbean. Many Indians took advantage of this, and as result, some of them were able to acquire land legitimately (Brereton 1981). Given the particularly bleak and dire economic situation that plagued the economy of the United Provinces and Bihar, which the indentured Indians were only too familiar with, it is not surprising that the bulk of Indian indentured workers chose to remain in the Caribbean. The stage was now set for the development of the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean.

Indenture was a process which resulted in the disruption and even destruction of kin, community and culture, reducing the emigrants from a community of people to a commodity of production. In order to survive as social beings, the indentured emigrants had to make yet another transition, i.e., from a commodity to a community by forging new ties and developing new cultural norms. Which aspects of the home (India) culture were lost and which were retained? The caste system, for instance, which was so important in the social, economic, and political life of India was eroded as the principal social institution, whereas kinship and religious practices were retained in modified forms.

Schwartz's (1967) seminal work on caste in overseas Indian communities revealed the almost non-existent role that caste played in the social organization of Indian communities in the Caribbean. He pointed out that "it is not the caste structure that has survived among the Indians in the Caribbean, but rather certain aspects of caste ideology, its effects and sentiments, that condition to a decreasing degree particular areas of marital behaviour and kinship" (Schwartz, 1967:93-97). Today, caste and caste relations have
become extinct among Indo-Caribbeans. Caste no longer plays a role in the social and cultural organization of Indo-Caribbean life in the contemporary Caribbean.

It can also be argued that changes to traditional Indian culture may have begun with the experience of passage (from India to the Caribbean) itself. For example, it has been well documented (Brereton 1981; Singh 1974; Tinker 1974; Weller 1968; Wood 1968) that the passage from India to the Caribbean was horrific in nature. That is, the ships that brought the indentured Indians to the Caribbean were always overcrowded, with cramped-like conditions being the norm - a situation very similar to the transportation of African slaves to the Americas. Maintaining particular aspects of the caste system such as strict social distancing between members of different castes may have been impossible given the cramped/overcrowded conditions on the ships that transported the Indians to the Caribbean. This social distance mechanism - a major characteristic of caste relations - is grounded in the idea that lower caste occupations, which normally involve the use of leather and animal based products, have a potentially "polluting" effect. To avoid being "polluted", the upper castes must maintain its distance from the lower castes, hence, the idea of "untouchability."

It is conceivable, therefore, that the barriers of the rigid caste system were broken down as a result of the experience of passage from India to the Caribbean. The caste system began to break down when both higher and lower castes individuals were huddled into the same ship for a four-month journey to the Caribbean. This "rubbing of shoulders" under particularly trying circumstances may have caused the Indian emigrants to find
strength in each other. As a result, caste impurities were conceivably broken down resulting in different types of caste conditions.

Thus, it is possible that inter-caste interactions on these ships were widespread, thereby creating the conditions for the breakdown of caste barriers that the indentured Indian were accustomed to in India. In other words, the prevalence of inter-caste dynamics on the ships may have started the initial transformations of one of the fundamental cornerstones of Hinduism, namely, caste arrangements. Some have argued that caste affiliation in the ships may have given way to a new and lasting association and brotherhood, or what has been referred to as "jahaji".

This notion of *Jahajibhai/Jahajibahin* (literally meaning ship brothers/sisters) refers to a type of camaraderie/fraternity on the ship that may have cut across caste and religious lines. In other words, the jahajibhai/jahajibahin bondage may have strengthened the psyche of the bound "coolies" (a pejorative expression used to denote the people of Indian origin in the Caribbean). Also, plantation life with its attendant barrack-like living conditions may have also forced the Indian emigrants to give solace to each other. The late Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Williams, in his book *A History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (1962), underscored one of the many brutalities of imperialist history which the indentured Indians were subjected to, namely, the particularly demoralizing and degrading experience of barrack life.

Other spheres of Indian cultural and social life in the Caribbean were also subjected to modifications and transformations. For example, the extended/joint family structure that the Indian emigrants brought to the Caribbean was difficult to maintain
given the conditions of barrack life and the impact that acculturation had on such cultural norms. As Nevadomsky (1982) found in his research: "in some areas of community life the cultural content is probably traditional (e.g., religion), but the organizational form is "new" i.e., the erosion of caste and the declining authority of the household head in the extended family" (Nevadomsky, 1982:114). Changes to other "old" (India) country cultural norms such as diet, attire, and attitudes towards arranged marriages have also occurred.

The dislocating effects which indenture and colonialism had on Indian social organization in the Caribbean cannot be doubted. However, other processes operating within Caribbean societies were also responsible for the modifications of the indentured Indians home (India) culture. One such process is creolization. Stuart Hall (1977) argues that in the New World the most profound alternative process of cultural identification to colonial hegemony is creolization (Hall, 1977:164). This process began with slave-plantation experience and after the abolition of slavery, it also embraced the system of indentureship in countries where significant numbers of Indians were incorporated into colonial economies such as Trinidad, Guyana, and Surinam.

Creole culture is difficult to define. The word "creole" is derived from the Spanish word *criar* which means to breed or procreate. Initially, the word creole was used in the Caribbean to refer to the offsprings of European parentage, who were either born or raised in the colonies (Allahar, 1994:125). Others such as Braithwaite (1971) have defined creole in a way which seems to accurately capture what it actually is. He refers to it as "a committed settler, one identified with the area of settlement, one native to the settlement though not ancestrally indigenous to it" (Braithwaite, 1971:xiv-xv). In this study,
creolization or "creole culture" is defined as the cultural mainstream of Caribbean societies. A creole Caribbean structure is generated out of the Afro-centric engagement with Euro-centric colonization. This axis has come to define the Caribbean mainstream. Today, the term "creole" is used to describe anyone, irrespective of ethnicity, born in the Caribbean region.

Undoubtedly, there exists an empirical reality that has come to be known as creole Caribbean society. All ethnic groups in Caribbean societies, including Indo-Caribbeans, have all been absorbed into the wider creole reality. Creolization, then, is a process that includes the elimination of particular aspects of an indigenous culture, and the adoption of new cultural norms in specific host contexts. The impact of creolization on traditional Indian culture in the Caribbean resulted in the emergence of a distinct diasporic Indo-Caribbean ethnicity - one that is markedly different from its ancestral South Asian (i.e. East Indian) identity. That is why today Indo-Caribbeans can no longer afford to root themselves in memories and ideas since "Mother India" has long disappeared.

This context of isolation and alienation also allowed for a creole society to evolve as cultural choices had to be made, either deliberately or by a process of loss over time. Inevitably, India faded, and this gave rise to exile, alienation, and displacement. Frank Birbalsingh, Professor of English at York University, Toronto, described the stereotypical image of the Indian in the West Indies as: ignorant, miserly, superstitious, impoverished, living at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, and isolated from other ethnic groups such as Blacks, Whites, and Coloureds primarily as a result of their indentured contracts which kept them isolated from the wider society, and tied to their plantations - a situation
that was consistent with "coolie" labour (Birbalsingh 1989). These, then, are some of the characteristics that have come to define not only Indian life in the Caribbean, but the Indo-Caribbean psyche as well. There is now more than a million people of Indian ancestry living in the Caribbean region, and with no "real" connections with India, Indo-Caribbeans continue to mold their still evolving distinctive diasporic identity.

The process of creolization, therefore, has had a profound impact on the reshaping of Indo-Caribbean cultural identities. That is to say, creolization has resulted in the formation of new cultures and identities. Indo-Caribbeans have participated to a significant extent in the creole. For example, Indo-Caribbeans are participants in the Afro-creole process of cultural affirmation as seen in Carnival (Sankeralli, 1995:15). They have also shared in the process of resistance to the forces of colonization. The involvement and participation of Indo-Trinidadians in particular anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movements, such as the Black Power Movement and the Butler Riots, are cases in point. Indo-Trinidadians were also involved in their own struggle for cultural affirmation, for which many gave their lives, in the bloody Hoosay Riots of 1884. In addition, Indians in the Caribbean have also participated in the struggle for political determination which culminated in independence.

The degree of participation in the creole varies, however. In Trinidad, for example, the impact of creolization has been the strongest in that the Indo-Trinidadian community has encountered strong forces pulling it toward assimilation into the cultural mainstream. For instance, the recent rise of the new musical genre, namely, chutney-soca is indicative of the progressive creolization and the blending of Afro and Indo-creole popular culture
in Trinidad. The introduction of the chutney-soca genre into mainstream Caribbean culture, specifically, Trinidadian culture, has opened up the doors for talented Indo-Caribbean singers/artistes and musicians to express their talent. Many of these performers can be seen and heard at concerts that are held in North American cities such as Toronto and New York. The very popular *Lotay La* chutney number, sung by one of the most famous chutney-soca singer in Trinidad today, Sonny Man, has solidified the commonly held view that chutney is calypso's main rival. Other popular Indo-Caribbean chutney singers/artistes include Drupati, Ricki Jai, Curtis Garcia, to name a few.

Similarly, there are other ways in which the diaspora can get incorporated into a particular culture. For instance, Indian diasporic elements have been incorporated into the Afro-Caribbean *calypso* musical genre. The hybridization of cultural forms from both African and Indian traditions in the Caribbean can be found in many calypsos. For example, the popular calypso entitled, *Anytime I Passing Gyul Yuh [sic] Grinding Masala*, is a classic example of this hybridization. In this calypso, the singer/calypsonian, who is himself Afro-Caribbean, tells of his admiration for an Indo-Caribbean woman who, as it were, is always engaged in a typical Indo-Caribbean activity whenever he passes by her house, i.e., she is always "grinding masala." The grinding of masala (or spices) is a traditional Indo-Caribbean domestic activity involving the grinding of different spices for the purposes of food preparation.

The Indian diasporic element can also be seen in the eating habits of most Indian diasporic groups. For example, a uniform pattern of eating has been observed over time by Indians in the diaspora. The word *talkari* (vegetables), for example, though indigenous
to the eastern part of India, has become an integral part of the diasporic Indian diet and culinary vocabulary. In contrast, *sabzi* (vegetables) is the commonly word used by India-born Indians for vegetables. Diasporic Indian dishes such as *bhaji* (spinach), *chokha* (roasted vegetables), *roti* (bread), *dhal-bhat* (rice and split peas) are part of the staple diet of Indians in Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Mauritius, South Africa, and East Africa. Also, diasporic foods such as the *dhalpuri roti* (very popular in Trinidad), and the *paratha roti* (colloquially known as "bussup shot"), are also indicative of the linguistic contributions of diasporic Indians throughout the global Indian diaspora.

Creolization, therefore, entails both cultural change and exchange. The fact that creole Caribbean culture has had a profound impact on Indian social organization and culture is not to deny the retention of particular cultural traditions. The Indians that settled in Trinidad and Guyana, by carefully nurturing and retaining particular aspects of their Indian ancestral identity, such as their religions, were able to preserve and maintain some aspects of their "Indianness."

There is hardly any doubt that Indians in Caribbean societies share with other groups some of the dominant societal values. In other words, they have been "creolized". Nevadomsky (1982), in his research on social change within the Indian community in Trinidad, concluded that: "in a society like Trinidad the Indians by and large identify with the dominant material and ideal symbols and participate in the prevalent patterns of prestige, aspirations, and consumption" (Nevadomsky, 1982:102). However, the fact that creolization resulted in the progressive assimilation and participation of Indians in all
spheres of life in West Indian societies does not imply the non-existence of ethnic conflict (overt or covert) between Indo-Caribbeans and their Afro-Caribbean counterparts.

The argument that plural societies, like the Caribbean, are characterized by normative consensus - which Parsonian structural functionalism sees as the precondition for social stability- has long been considered untenable (Kuper and Smith 1971; Smith 1965). Given their institutional diversity and the differential incorporation of particular ethnic groups, plural societies are characterized by the salience of racial/ethnic politics. This has had a significant impact on national integration in both the pre and post-colonial periods.

*The Guyana Crisis:*

India's independence has had an historical importance for people of Indian origin in the Caribbean. For example, India's independence took on added meaning in the Caribbean when Dr. Cheddi Jagan (Guyana's Prime Minister) returned from his studies in the United States and started a political movement. Jagan's political activism was sparked by his awareness of rampant racism and oppression against Indo-Guyanese. His hero was India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Due to the profound impact of Nehruism, Jagan emulated Nehru's leadership qualities to lead the movement for the freedom of Guyana. Jagan's struggle would galvanize other Caribbean leaders to start political movement in their respective colonies to seek their independence from Britain. However, the desire for India to become a free nation propelled Indians in the Caribbean to identify with the "Quit India" movement and the struggle to free India of British rule.
Later the freedom of India from colonial rule would pave the way for their own freedom as the colonies of the Caribbean would also obtain their freedom.

The onset of decolonization in Guyana led to increased racial/ethnic polarization between Indo and Afro-Guyanese. For example, in the 1950s, the Indo-Guyanese leader, Cheddi Jagan and the Afro-Guyanese leader, Forbes Burnham, created a coalition that came to be known as the People's Progressive Party (PPP). This inter-ethnic coalition did not last very long; it disintegrated in the early 1960s. As a result of this fall out, race relations in Guyana became dangerously politicized as Afro and Indo Guyanese sought to support their respective "Black" and "Indian" political parties. As a result, the "vote for your own race" political behaviour became the dominant slogan of both the Indian dominated Marxist-Socialist PPP party and the Afro-Guyanese dominated PNC (People's National Congress) party.

From 1961 onwards, Guyanese politics took on increasingly racial overtones. Cheddi Jagan's pro-socialist rhetoric and his sympathy for the Cuban government under Fidel Castro created tension between Guyana and the British and American governments. Both the United States and Britain created conditions to destabilize Guyana, with the intention of toppling the Jagan regime. What followed was the Georgetown Riots of 1963 and the defeat of Cheddi Jagan's government. During the period 1962-1964, overt conflict between Afro and Indo-Guyanese erupted in which 135 people were killed and 450 injured. In the year 1964, an estimated 160 people were killed in other race related violence in Guyana. The demise of the Jagan government resulted in a feeling of Indo-Guyanese insecurity. Post-independence Guyana, under the Burnham regime, saw the
introduction of a system that was repressive to the Indo-Guyanese majority. The victory of Burnham's Afro-based PNC party, coupled with its repressive anti-Indo-Guyanese platform, resulted in the exodus of many Indo-Guyanese from Guyana. Many of them emigrated to some of the western industrialized countries such as the United States, Britain, and Canada.

Although Indo-Caribbeans have been far removed from their ancestral homeland, India, (spatially, culturally, and otherwise), many of them take pride in referring to themselves as "Indians" and celebrating such an identity. This may explain their fervent participation in the India Day Parade in New York City. Many Indo-Guyanese took pride in participating in the first India Day Parade in 1981 in New York City. The Caribbean participants were City College students trying to inform the world of the brutal mistreatment of Indo-Caribbean peoples by Caribbean governments, especially in Guyana and Trinidad at that time. More and more Indo-Caribbean groups joined in later parades such as the Arya Samajists, the Indian Seva Sangh, the Conservative Party of Guyana, the Association of Concerned Guyanese, the Indo-Caribbean Federation, to name a few. These groups were in one way or another trying to raise political consciousness among Indo-Caribbeans about human rights abuses in Guyana. They pleaded with India to intervene to put an end to the Guyana crisis.
The Trinidad Scenario:

The declining importance of India among Indo-Trinidadians was part and parcel of the devolution of power and the rise of local party politics. The emergence of such politics and the threat of independence forced Indo-Trinidadians to think in terms of local destiny (i.e., Trinidad and not India). It forced them inexorably into a consideration of their relationship with the Afro-Trinidadian community, and this led to the formation of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and later the DLP or Democratic Labour Party (La Guerre, 1974:55). The DLP was led by Basdeo Panday (a prominent trade union activist and politician, and who, incidentally, is currently the first ever Indo-Trinidadian Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago). Thus, the Indo-Trinidadian political disposition since independence has been one of reaction.

When it became clear that the late Dr. Eric Williams (Prime Minister of Trinidad for thirty years, and leader of the movement for independence) was leading the pro-Black People's National Movement (PNM) party, Indo-Trinidadians, who saw themselves as neither black nor nationalist, reacted in self-defense. From then on, the social bases of the PNM and the DLP parties remained characteristically Afro and Indo based. Paradoxically, the political structure based on parliamentary democracy, and fashioned on the Westminster model of political development, provided a ready-made base for the two party system - Indo-Trinidadians on one side and Afro-Trinidadians on the other. Consolidation of political power in the hands of the PNM created extreme apprehension in the Indo-Trinidadian electorate. One of the most important fears expressed by the Indo-Trinidadian electorate was that the policies of the PNM government would not benefit
them. Indo-Trinidadians quickly realized that their fears were confirmed. In the area of public appointments, judicial appointments, opportunities for employment in the state sector, such as in the civil and public services, the military, the police force, and government sponsored scholarships, Indo-Trinidadians were severely underrepresented.

Research on clientelism and racial patronage under the PNM government support the above contention. For example, Hentzen (1989) argues that the typical manner in which direct patronage was distributed in Trinidad was through direct allocation of jobs, services, facilities, loans, and housing to individuals on a massive scale. He goes on to argue that under the PNM government, the beneficiaries of these allocations were primarily the Afro urban-based lower classes who constituted the majority of its supporters (Hentzen, 1989). The manifestation of this type of racial patronage was most obvious in one of the Special Works Programs implemented by the PNM government, namely, the Development and Environmental Works Division (DEWD). Most of the employees in this program were overwhelmingly Afro-Trinidadians.

Like Guyana, too, the "vote for your own race" scenario was prevalent in Trinidad, though the form of ethnic conflict there was not of the overt/violent type. The polarization of Indo and Afro-Trinidadians was further heightened after the victory of the PNM party which was seen by Indo-Trinidadians as the "Negro" party. Indo-Trinidadians felt that the PNM catered only to the needs of the Afro-Trinidadian community, hence, the idea that it was a pro-Black party, with an unequivocal Afro-based agenda. The idea that the PNM party was anti-Indo-Trinidadian was fuelled by the observation that Indo-Trinidadians were generally excluded from State employment such as the civil service, the public
service, and the military. Their underrepresentation in state sector employment, coupled with their lack of access to political power, led to the development of a "we" versus "they" inter-ethnic context in Trinidad.

Particular events such as the attempt at a West Indian Federation crystallized this division. For instance, the consensus among non-Indo-Caribbean politicians that Federation with the rest of the Caribbean offered the best post-colonial political arrangement for the Caribbean region inflamed the passions of the Indo-Caribbean community and its political representatives who were already sensitive to the possibility of Afro-Caribbean domination (Lowenthal 1961). Indo-Caribbean leaders were strong in the belief that a federalist constitution would have the effect of relegating Indo-Caribbeans to an insignificant and permanent political minority. Conscious of their status as "second class citizens", coupled with the development of racial cleavages in both Trinidad and Guyana from the colonial period to the present, many Indo-Caribbeans and Indo-Caribbean leaders were against federating with the other West Indian islands.

The increasing insecurity expressed by many Indo-Trinidadians was seen in the recent mass exodus to Canada, a situation that has been referred to as the "refugee scam". Many Indo-Trinidadians reported to Canadian Immigration authorities that they were being persecuted by Afro-Trinidadians, hence their reason for emigrating to Canada. Immigration Canada later found out that the problem in Trinidad was, in fact, an economic and not an ethnic problem: high unemployment etc. As a result, Canadian Immigration declared that since Trinidad was not a "refugee producing country" that the majority of people claiming refugee status would face deportation.
The Guyana troubles (discussed earlier on), too, had coincided with Canadian immigration reform in 1967. Many Indo-Guyanese took advantage of this opportunity to emigrate to Canada. Thousands of Indo-Guyanese migrated to Canada - some as professionals and a large number in skilled trade. Unofficial estimates indicate that there are approximately 60,000 Indo-Caribbean residents in Ontario. In conclusion, one can argue that the migration of Indo-Caribbean people to Canada was a result of a number of "push" factors: (i) lack of political power; (ii) economic and political insecurity; and (iii) the prevalence of racial/ethnic tensions in the Caribbean.

**The Second Migration: From the Caribbean to Canada - Indo-Caribbeans in Canada**

It is no secret that until 1962 the process of immigration control in Canada was explicitly racist. Academic commentators, regardless of their theoretical assumptions, have readily acknowledged that the Canadian state discriminated against non-white groups in terms of their recruitment and entry to Canada (See for example, Bolaria and Li's *Racial Oppression in Canada*, 1988). In summarizing Canada's immigration policy until 1967, one can say that the policy divided the world's population into two sections: (i) preferred immigrants (or immigrants who were of British or European stock i.e., Whites), and (ii) the "Others" (i.e. communities of colour). The Canadian government's discriminatory immigration policy was premised on the idea that Asians and other people of colour were "unassimilable," that is, they possessed genetic, cultural, and social traits that made them both inferior and unadaptable (Bolaria and Li 1988).
In 1967 a series of radical reforms in immigration policy was implemented, largely as a result of changing demographics and economic pressure to replenish the labour supply (Henry et al, 1995). Canada could no longer rely on Europe to provide her with immigrants as post-war Europe began to prosper. Rapid industrialization in Canada required workers with high levels of skills and education. No longer able to rely on her traditional sources of labour (i.e. Europe), Canada had no other choice but to drop her racially discriminatory immigration policies. During the 1960s, a new Immigration Act introduced a point system whereby immigrants, regardless of ethnic origin, country of birth, or skin colour were given points based on job training, experience, skills, level of education, knowledge of English or French, and job offers.

The post 1967 period of Canadian immigration saw a marked increase in the number of non-European immigrant groups. Between 1978 and 1986, 40 percent of all immigrants came from Asia, 15 percent from the Caribbean, Central and South America, and 8 percent from Africa and the Middle East. In the decade 1981-1991, the Asian population increased to 48 percent and the percentage share of the other ethnic categories declined. Those of Indian origin/descent could be counted within all of these geographical groupings. Sixty percent of Canada's East Indian population arrived in the decade 1967-1977. Sixty percent of these came directly from India or another Asian country such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Sri-Lanka, 15 percent from Africa, 20 percent from the Caribbean and Latin America, and 15 percent from Europe, mainly from Britain (Israel, 1994:xii-xxiii).
The year 1967, therefore, marked an important watershed in Canada's immigration policy as the doors were now opened to immigrants from areas that for the past 200 years had been largely excluded - the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Consequently, Canada has become much more multicultural and multiracial. Until 1967, the presence of Indo-Caribbeans in Canada has been infinitesimal. However, changes to Canadian immigration policies resulted in the influx of thousands of immigrants from the Caribbean, mainly, Afro and Indo-Caribbean peoples.

**Demographic Profile of Indo-Caribbeans in Canada**

The categorization of immigrants from the Caribbean by Census Canada has tended to obscure the ethnic identities of the various ethnic groups from that geographical region. For instance, there exists no Indo-Caribbean ethnic category in the Canadian census. In the collection of data, Census Canada has, and continues to lump all immigrants from the Caribbean into the "Caribbean/Black" category. Such a categorization can be rendered problematical for social scientists and demographers interested in pursuing research on Indo-Caribbeans. According to Census authorities, the reason for not having an Indo-Caribbean category in the Canadian census is primarily because the group is demographically too small (From a Lecture given by Pam White of Statistic Canada, 1995). In trying to include the Indo-Caribbean category into the census, Census Canada decided to include this group into two categories: either the "Caribbean/Black" category, or the "South Asian Multiple" category. The reason for this dual categorization is as follows.
According to Census Canada, people of South Asian origins from the Caribbean seem to opt for different ethnic categories based on how they see themselves ethnically and possibly, politically. Thus, for some Indo-Caribbeans, the category "Caribbean/Black" is seen to be the most accurate categorization because they are, after all, from the Caribbean. Other Indo-Caribbeans, however, seem to think that the category "Caribbean/Black" is not an accurate reflection of "who they are" ethnically. In responding to this multiple identification, Census Canada created a category entitled "South Asian Multiple" to accommodate those Indo-Caribbeans, and other Indian diasporic groups who may opt for a South Asian identity.

There are, therefore, two South Asian categories. The first is titled "South Asian Single" and the second is "South Asian Multiple." The former refers to any person who was born in the Indian subcontinents such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. People in this category say they are East Indian only. The latter refers to any person who has "roots" in South Asia. People in this category say they are of South Asian extraction and another origin. This category would include people of Indian origin from countries such as the Caribbean and Latin America, and East Africa.

In order to assess the population of Indo-Caribbeans in Toronto, it was necessary to examine some of the ethnic origin tables from Statistics Canada. Given the fact that there is no such category as "Indo-Caribbean" in census reports, and that when it comes to reporting their ethnic identity Indo-Caribbeans are not consistent (some opt for the South Asian ethnic category while others prefer the Caribbean/Black ethnic category), it becomes very difficult to ascertain the precise numbers of Indo-Caribbeans in Toronto,
let alone Canada. One way of assessing the demographic profile of Indo-Caribbeans in Toronto was to access data based on ethnic origin and place of birth.

Using the 1991 Public Use Sample (CMA of Toronto), I decided to employ the most logical procedure for assessing the number of Indo-Caribbeans in Toronto. I cross tabulated the South Asian Ethnic Origin data by Place of Birth. This cross tabulation revealed the following statistics. In the South Asian Single category (or people born in the Indian subcontinent), the total number of cases reported here was 190,033. In the South Asian Multiple category (people who claim a South Asian ethnic origin from the Caribbean or Latin America), the total number of cases reported was 31,967 (1991 Public Use Sample Individual File, CMA of Toronto: Census Metropolitan Area). This final total (31,967) should be treated with extreme caution since it includes only those Indo-Caribbeans who claim a South Asian origin identity. This total does not include those Indo-Caribbeans who opt for the "Caribbean/Black" category.

Because of these complexities surrounding the ethnic categorizations of Indo-Caribbeans in the census data, it is very difficult to determine the exact number of Indo-Caribbeans in Toronto. What has been presented here, therefore, is merely an estimate, or a partial percentage of the Indo-Caribbean population of Toronto, and should be so regarded. It has been estimated that there is approximately 200,000 people in Ontario whose ancestral homeland is in the South Asian region; Indo-Caribbeans comprise a percentage of this 200,000. However, the manner in which demographic data has been compiled for the Indo-Caribbean group has made it difficult to estimate the exact numbers
of Indo-Caribbeans in Canada. Estimates of Indo-Caribbeans in the Toronto and Greater Toronto areas range anywhere from 40,000 to 60,000.

First Encounters: Relations Between South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans in Canada

As a result of immigration to the United States, Canada, and Britain, Indo-Caribbeans, for the first time, encountered their estranged cousins from India, i.e., South Asians. The interaction between South Asians and diasporic Indians constitutes an important facet of the Sociology of Indian Diaspora. Previous to the meeting of each other, both South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans had known each other in a very distant way i.e., through the media (film, radio, television and the print media), as well as the narratives of personal experience of individuals either through travel or other encounters. Whatever stereotypes the groups had of each other were now put to the test as a result of direct face-to-face encounters. It is this type of encounter that facilitates the social construction of the "Other" Indian by both the Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians.

Understanding the social construction of the "Other" Indian is important insofar as it is capable of illuminating the socio-cultural dynamics of the Indian diaspora. On the one hand, it elucidates the process of socio-cultural reconstitution among diasporic Indians and their orientation to social patterns and cultural traditions of contemporary India. On the other hand, it throws light on the attitude and behaviour of Indian nationals/South Asians vis-a-vis diasporic Indians (Jayaram, 1995:2). The course of interaction between South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans is determined by the image of the "other" Indian respectively held by each other. One of the major tenets of the symbolic interactionist
perspective is that human interaction depends on symbolic functioning in that one acts on the basis of the meaning ascribed to the behaviour of the other (Blumer 1962). In other words, the mutual images which both groups have toward each other is, in a sense, mediated through some form of symbolic process which is located in the respective consciousness of the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian.

As was mentioned earlier on, the interaction between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians entails a form of mutual perception and interpretation of each other's socio-cultural beliefs and practices. Invariably, evaluations and assessments of each group toward the other is interpreted using the principle of ethnocentrism i.e., each uses its own society and culture as the standard from which broad generalizations, perceptions, interpretations, and misinterpretations are derived. That is, not only is the socio-cultural complex of the "Other" Indian viewed as different from one's own, but it is also regarded as either superior or inferior to one's own. Research findings from a study conducted by Jayaram (1995) in Trinidad on the encounters between the Indian nationals there and Indo-Trinidadians tend to support the above contention. Jayaram found that open expressions of negative evaluations by one group toward the other often results in unpleasantness in interaction: it may even terminate the interaction itself.

Jayaram's findings confirm one of the most commonly held stereotypes that South Asians have of Indo-Caribbeans: South Asians/Indian nationals tend to view the socio-cultural complex of Indo-Caribbeans as imitative and poor, and that Indo-Caribbean "Indianness" represents a corrupt version of the "original" or "authentic" Indian culture.
The findings from this study prompted Jayaram to make a rather interesting and insightful comment. According to Jayaram:

What is regrettable is that Indian nationals who view Indo-Trinidadian socio-cultural complex as poor imitations of that which is "Indian," fails to recognize and appreciate a critical point about it. That is, what exists as a socio-cultural complex among Indo-Trinidadians toady is not just a case of survival or persistence in the anthropological sense. It is a case of conscious cultural retention and survival against great odds, which carries with it a stamp of ingenuity and creativity of the diasporic Indians (Jayaram, 1995:14).

Given the inter-ethnic dynamics at the Metro mandir, especially between Indo-Caribbeans and its India-born members, coupled with an emerging "Indian" identity in a context involving primarily these two culturally diverse groups, the logic of the social construction of the "Other" Indian is clearly an important area of analysis for this particular study. Some of the inter-cultural perceptions, interpretations, and evaluations that both Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians have of each other were discussed earlier on (See Introduction Chapter). One way of contextualizing the relational and the interactional dynamics that emerge from their encounters with each other is to examine issues pertaining to identity and differentiation.

**Identity and Differentiation**

To date, there exists very little (possibly none) research on the relations between South Asians and diasporic Indians in the Canadian context. When Indo-Caribbeans first arrived in Canada, they quickly learned something: they were a very different "brand" of Indians. In their first encounters, it was apparent to both Indo-Caribbeans and their South
Asian counterparts that they were different from each other. On the one hand, it may have been a feeling of meeting, for the first time in Toronto, a distant relative. On the other hand, they were probably instantly conscious of their objective differences. For Indo-Caribbeans, their language was English and their values were "western", whereas for South Asians, their mode of communication, in addition to English, included a plurality of Indian languages and dialects, and by and large, their value system is essentially "eastern". The one commonality that both groups shared, and were probably conscious of, was the fact that they were brown and "racially" Indian.

Indo-Caribbeans, who had been historically referred to as "Indian" in Caribbean societies, and who were labelled as having an "Indian" identity (just as Blacks in the Caribbean were labelled with an "African" identity), were now faced with a profound disappointment i.e., they were no longer Indian in Canadian society. This "identity crisis" may have had three possible effects. The first is that some of them, in accepting their distinctive identity, may have gravitated to other Indo-Caribbeans who shared a similar orientation. As well, their inability to communicate in an Indian language, as well as the differences in diet etc., may have encouraged them to develop their own ethno-social networks. The second is that some of them may have opted for a middle position i.e., neither East Indian nor West Indian. Individuals in this "middle position" may opt for an ethnically neutral category such as Caribbean. The third possible option was to associate with their India-born counterparts. In joining forces with their ancestral South Asian cousins, Indo-Caribbeans could assert their diasporic Indo-Caribbean identity while simultaneously adopting some of the South Asian elements into their existing identity. The
merging of these identities may result in the development of a new diasporic Canadian "Indian" identity - an identity that tries to incorporate both the diasporic (Indo-Caribbean) and ancestral (South Asian) cultural elements necessary for identity reconstruction. This multiple identity configuration has implications for the development of a distinct Indo-Caribbean Canadian identity.

The adoption of any of the above options will depend on one's ideological, political, religious, or cultural orientation. For example, the fact that many Indo-Caribbeans share some similar characteristics with the India-born/South Asians (e.g., religion and racial ancestry) may be a sufficient justification for them to adopt an identity that is both Indo-Caribbean and South Asian. But for other Indo-Caribbeans, choosing an identity that ranges from Caribbean, West Indian, Trinidadian or Guyanese, to East Indian, Indo-Trinidadian, Indo-Guyanese, Trinidadian Indian, Guyanese Indian, Indian Vincentian, Jamaican-Indian or even Black, is certainly a daunting task. Such an ethnic identification complex is reflected in the constant need for hyphenation within the Indo-Caribbean community in contemporary Canadian society (e.g., Indo-Caribbean, Indo-Canadian, Indo-Trinidadian, Indo-Guyanese, West Indian-Indian, Caribbean-Indian, etc.). This type of multiple ethnic identification system entails the incorporation of two (2) very important components necessary for diasporic identity construction, namely, (i) the cultural and (ii) the political.

At the cultural level of identity construction, Indo-Caribbeans, in asserting an ethnic identity in Canadian society, must project an identity that is not only unequivocally Caribbean, but one that is also "Indo" in content. Thus, in order to construct an Indo-
Caribbean identity, it is necessary to emphasize the cultural components associated with such an identity. Emphasizing the cultural content of an identity legitimizes that identity, especially one that is as multi-faceted and complex as an identity that is both Caribbean and diasporically Indian.

The political level of identity construction entails the need for hyphenation. Given the complexities surrounding the construction of an Indo-Caribbean identity, Indo-Caribbeans must necessarily engage in the *politics of hyphenation*. That is to say, in order to claim some political space in Canadian society, diasporic Indians from the Caribbean must, out of necessity, organize themselves around some type of identity construct, be it Indo-Caribbean, South Asian, West Indian, or Black/Caribbean.

**In Search of a Political Identity in the Wider Secular Indo-Caribbean Community**

One way of establishing both a cultural and political identity is to organize formally or informally. This would involve the creation of ethnic organizations, institutions, and associations. The evolution of patterns of social organizations within the Indo-Caribbean community in Toronto has already begun. This is manifested in the growth of ethnic associations and organizations whose specific aims are to cater to the social, economic, and political needs of the community. Ethnic cohesion among diasporic Indians, or immigrants groups in general, is based on various factors such as the nature and attitude of the host society, as well as the politico-economic situation of the host society.
A number of broad trends could be identified regarding the nature of social organization of diasporic Indians in divergent contexts of immigration and settlement. The first trend can be discerned in the rise of ethnic associations which normally emerge as pressure groups, in addition to being cultural in nature, in situations where the particular diasporic community is small. The second trend is noticeable in the case of recent immigrants to the western industrialized countries (U.S., Canada, U.K., and Australia) where associations and organizations are formed in order to satisfy their socio-cultural needs.

These associations generally offer (i) cultural services specific to the immigrant group, and (ii) assistance in promoting adjustment and adaptation of the immigrant group to the socio-economic and political environment of the host society (Bhat 1993). More importantly, however, is the fact that ethnic organizations and associations emerge as a result of an ethnic group's awareness of its marginalization, or its continuing sense of marginalization in an alien and sometimes hostile host society. Ethnic associations and organizations, therefore, are vitally important forms of social organizations because they act as platforms from which issues and problems occurring within the ethnic groups can be discussed and addressed. This tendency to organize will inevitably lead to the construction of a diasporic life in the country of settlement. For Indo-Caribbeans in Canada, the construction of a second diasporic identity is clearly in the making.

A number of organizations and associations have already been established within the Indo-Caribbean community in Canada. Some of these include the Ontario Society for Services to Indo-Caribbean Canadians (OSSICC), the Coalition of Indo-Caribbean
Canadians (CICC), the Canadian Indo-Caribbean Alliance (CICA), the Association of Concerned Guyanese (ACG), and the Indo-Caribbean Community Development Association (ICCDA). Other organizations such as the Coalition of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) and Desh Pardesh, though not explicitly Indo-Caribbean in character, provide services to people of South Asian origin, or diasporic South Asians. The Desh Pardesh Organization is probably the most progressive association serving diasporic Indians in that it is anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-caste/classist, lesbian and gay positive, and feminist. In comparison, some of the other organizations, based on their orientation and agenda, can be described as reactionary. Some of these organizations/associations (mentioned above) also provide a variety of services (social, cultural, political, and economic) to the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian communities.

Other smaller based associations such as the Indo-Caribbean Students Association and "Unity" at the University of Toronto are student bodies formed with the aim of providing cultural and academic support for Indo-Caribbean students. The Unity student organization, for example, is presently trying to set up an Indo-Caribbean Scholarship fund at the University of Toronto for students (regardless of nationality or ethnicity) who are interested in pursuing research in the area of Indo-Caribbean studies. Recently, the Indo-Caribbean Student Association (ICSA) at the University of Toronto, and the Guyanese Social Club (GSU) of York University held a leadership forum in which Indo-Caribbean identity issues were discussed and debated. The dilemma of ethnic identity among Indo-Caribbeans was the main topic of the discussion at this event: whether people of Indian origin from the Caribbean should see themselves as South Asians or Indians,
or as Indo-Caribbeans. This forum highlighted the on-going "identity crisis" occurring within the Indo-Caribbean community in Canada.

In addition to these organizations and associations, there exists a number of media-based organizations in the Indo-Caribbean community. For example, the *Indo-Caribbean World, Equality, and the Guyana Times* are currently the major Indo-Caribbean ethnic newspapers in the Toronto area. These papers also cover general Caribbean news items as well. In trying to find out what has been happening in the wider secular/political Indo-Caribbean community in Toronto, I decided to do a very basic content analysis of the first, and currently the most popular Indo-Caribbean ethnic newspaper, namely, the *Indo-Caribbean World*. This paper came into being in the early 1980's. By accessing some of its earlier issues and comparing them to some of its later issues, I was able to compare what types of news coverage and issues (political and cultural) were being covered by the newspaper.

In examining earlier issues, dating back from 1982 to 1987, a particularly consistent pattern emerged. Throughout the 1980s and up until 1987, it was apparent that much of the paper's coverage was much more South Asian in content than it was Indo-Caribbean. That is, most of the headlines during this period was on some South Asian topic. For instance, headlines such as the following confirms this observation: (a) "Toronto Pays Homage to Indira Gandhi" (1984), (b) "Mrs. Gandhi's Assassination - A Most Inglorious Act" (1984), (c) "Canadian Council of Hindus Aid Bhopal Victims" (1985), (d) "India Rocked by New Wave of Violence" (1985), (e) "Indian Test (Cricket) Team to
Tour Toronto" (1985), (f) "Historic South Asian Conference" (1986), and (g) "South Asians Discuss Their Political Impact on Society" (1986).

To add to this strong South Asian emphasis, there were other sections in the paper that dealt with news from India/South Asia. For example, there were particular sections entitled "South Asian News" and "Film Focus." The former dealt with social, economic, and political issues in India, whereas the latter dealt with cultural issues such as news about Hindi films and celebrities. Headlines that can be subsumed under South Asian cultural news coverage include: "Lata To Sing In Toronto For The United Way" (1985), "Asha Bhonsle Into English Music" (1985), and "The Trauma That's Telling on Sanjeev Kumar's Heart!" In addition, a section entitled "Film Focus" profiled famous Indian actors and actresses of the Bombay film industry, now referred to as "Bollywood".

This overwhelmingly South Asian focus, coupled with the many articles on the ethnic identity/ties of Indo-Caribbeans (Indo-Caribbean community members tend to write about the nature of their ethnicity and ethnic identity), seems to suggest that the ethnic identity of Indo-Caribbeans is perceived of as an "identity crisis" by the members themselves. This "identity crisis" theme is manifested in articles, editorials, and some advertisements, and they all point to an increasing desire to "embrace our ancestral Indian ethnic roots and cultural heritage." This strong South Asian focus, however, is not to deny the existence of some Caribbean news. Sections such as "The Caribbean Today" and "View From My Window" were geared not only to the Indo-Caribbean community, but to the general Caribbean community.
By 1988, however, the structure and content of the *Indo-Caribbean World* newspaper had changed dramatically. The overwhelming emphasis on South Asian news (political and cultural) was no longer noticeable, and this trend continues till today. Most of the news items today are Indo-Caribbean in content. Headlines such as "Indian Migration To The Caribbean" (1988), "Celebration of 3rd Heritage Day For Indo-Caribbeans" (1990), "Indo-Caribbeans and Phagwa:A Rich Legacy for Indo-Caribbeans" (1992), "155 Years Later: Are We South Asians?" (1993), and "Indo-Caribbean Women Today" (1994) seem to be the norm today. The shift in coverage content is obvious. Whereas South Asian was the operative word in the earlier issues of the paper, the key word now is "Indo-Caribbean." Even the structure of the paper (after 1987) is different. There is no longer a "Film Focus" or a "South Asian News" section. What one finds instead are a "Guyana Section", a "Trinidad Section", a "Cricket Extra", a "Guyana Extra", a section on news from different Caribbean countries, a "Caribbean Business Matters" section, and many Indo-Caribbean commercial and business advertisements.

What, then, are the implications of these changes for identity construction in the Indo-Caribbean community? These changes seem to suggest that a form of identity shift is occurring in the Indo-Caribbean community in Canada. The feeling of being South Asian by some Indo-Caribbeans is gradually being replaced by the diasporic category, namely, Indo-Caribbean. The rise of new ethnic organizations and associations within the Indo-Caribbean community, and their emphasis on the category "Indo-Caribbean", may be partly responsible for this identity shift. Also, the preponderance of Indo-Caribbean
events such as academic conferences in Trinidad and Toronto, as well as other cultural events may be instrumental in bringing about this shift.

The number of media based sources: television, radio, and newspapers may all be contributors too. There presently exists a number of Indo-Caribbean television programs such as *Indo-Caribbean Visions*, and *West Indians United*. Both programs highlight Indo-Caribbean political, social, economic, and cultural issues. These programs provide the Indo-Caribbean community with news from Trinidad, Guyana, and the rest of the Caribbean. In addition, they provide the community with Indo-Caribbean entertainment such as Chutney-soca, Hindi film music, and dances.

Although the *South Asian Newsweek* television program is not an Indo-Caribbean program - it caters specifically for the South Asian community - it has recently started to focus on the achievements of prominent people of South Asian origins in the Indian diaspora. One such country that is currently being profiled is Trinidad. The reason for choosing Trinidad is probably because of particular events that have occurred there recently. First, the recently concluded *Fifth World Hindi Conference* held in Trinidad was seen as an event that could bring together (in a networking capacity) people from the global Indian diaspora to achieve specific goals/aims. In watching the South Asian Newsweek coverage of this event, a number of significant observations were made.

For example, this event (based on my observations of it, via the television, and the way it was talked about and discussed) represented an instance of ethnic renewal, specifically, an attempt at linguistic renewal in the Indian diaspora. In the interviews that were broadcasted on the television program *South Asian Newsweek*, it was obvious that
the event sparked off what I would described as a form of "Indian revival in the Indo-Caribbean diaspora." Indo-Trinidadians who were interviewed felt a profound sense of "who they are." Some of them felt that having a major conference on Hindi (the language of their ancestors) in Trinidad resurrected deep emotional feelings. That is, many of them felt that the conference brought them closer to their "ethnic/ancestral roots" (i.e., India). Basdeo Panday, the current Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, declared that such an event marked the beginning of Indian cultural revivalism in Trinidad. One of the stated goals of the conference was to recognize Hindi as an official language of Trinidad.

The second reason for profiling an Indo-Trinidadian by the South Asian Newsweek program was to highlight the achievements of Indians in the diaspora. Recently, two prominent persons from Trinidad were profiled. The first was the contributions made by business tycoon, D. Rampersad, to the economy of Trinidad. The second was an exclusive interview with the Prime Minister of Trinidad, Basdeo Panday. The title of this coverage was: "First South Asian Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago." The most recent coverage was on a young Indo-Trinidadian businessman for his contribution in the area of food, specifically, roti dishes. Roti is one of the most visible markers of diasporic culture in the Caribbean. In this coverage, the making of roti in Trinidad was highlighted, probably to show the contributions that Indo-Caribbeans have made to the culinary life of the Caribbean.

The obvious question then is: Why would a South Asian news station display an interest in Indo-Caribbean personalities? One could argue that since one of the main anchors of this television program is Indo-Trinidadian, it would seem only appropriate to
engage in "politically correct" behaviour by including events occurring in the global Indian diaspora as part of its programming. By focusing on diasporic Indians, the South Asian Newsweek program is able to create awareness about Indo-Caribbean social, cultural, economic, and political life - areas of life that Indians from India or other diasporic Indians may be blissfully unaware of. Therefore, the profiling of prominent Indo-Caribbeans and Indo-Caribbean life in the Caribbean diaspora by a South Asian program is a step in the right direction. By doing this, myths, misconceptions, stereotypes, and truths about Indo-Caribbeans may lead to more objective and less prejudicial assessments of Indo-Caribbeans by non-Indo-Caribbeans, especially in terms of their contributions to Caribbean society and culture.

All of the above organizations, associations, and services are important for a number of reasons. First, they are the building blocks of a distinctive Indo-Caribbean community in Canada. Second, they are the vehicles through which the construction and development of a political identity can emerge. That is, newly emerging ethnic and immigrant groups, in their quest for cultural and political recognition, use their organizations and associations as forums for the articulation of demands and concerns affecting their respective communities. One of the consequences of this type of mobilization of organizational resources is the cultural and political recognition of an ethno-cultural group at both the provincial and federal levels of government. Thus, the inclination to participate in the political processes of the host society remains strong amongst immigrant groups; participation in the political process via organizations and associations helps to promote and safeguard immigrant/minority groups interests.
Linking the Metro Mandir with the Wider Secular Indo-Caribbean Community in Toronto

What is currently happening in the wider secular/political Indo-Caribbean community in Toronto can now be compared to the types of activities that are being undertaken at the Metro mandir. Are the agendas being pursued by both the religious and secular communities the same or different? Is the wider secular Indo-Caribbean community in Canada in favour of identifying with its ancestral "South Asian" identity, or is it opting for the Indo-Caribbean category? That is, is the wider secular Indo-Caribbean community engaged in a process of ethnic renewal, i.e., are they reaching out to their "ethnic/ancestral roots", or are they more Caribbean focused?

Field research conducted at a number of Indo-Caribbean religious institutions in the Toronto and Greater Toronto areas seem to indicate that Indo-Caribbean Hindu communities are actively trying to maintain their traditional Indo-Caribbean ethno-religious identity (See Comparative Data Section in Chapter 6). Most of the temples/mandirs visited, to date, seem to be continuing in the "old" mold (i.e. their current religious and cultural practices are being carried out in the typical Indo-Caribbean fashion). This pattern, for example, can be observed in the way in which ritual practices, cultural events, and other ethno-cultural festivals and activities are carried out. To be sure, this evidence points to a continuation of the traditional Indo-Caribbean ethno-cultural system that was left behind in the Caribbean. However, there is one exception to this general rule: the Metro mandir.

As an Indo-Caribbean mandir, the Metro mandir is undoubtedly a unique phenomenon. The fact that it is in the process of constructing an "Indian" identity -
identity comprising both diasporic (e.g. Indo-Caribbean and Indo-African) and non-diasporic ethno-cultural elements (e.g., South Asian) - indicates a radical shift/departure when compared to other Indo-Caribbean and South Asian mandirs. Any attempt to merge Indo-Caribbean and South Asian cultural elements will inevitably lead to the emergence of a new diasporic "Indian" identity, specifically a diasporic Canadian Indian identity.

What has been observed in the wider secular/political Indo-Caribbean community in Canada viz. ethnic institutions, associations, and the media (print and visual) seems to indicate a desire to promote an "Indo-Caribbean" and not a South Asian identity. The fact that many Indo-Caribbean organizations such as the Indo-Caribbean Community Development Association (ICCDA), and other similar associations and individuals have been organizing activities and events to benefit Indo-Caribbeans in both Canada and the Caribbean, suggests that there is a strong effort to build and develop an Indo-Caribbean identity in Canada.

The assertion of a South Asian identity by Indo-Caribbeans may have been the norm earlier on (possibly during the late 1970s and early 1980s). The present scenario seems a bit different. The recent coming together of Indo-Caribbeans in Toronto to support Indo-Caribbean politicians and political parties in Trinidad and Guyana attests to a strong "back home in the Caribbean" focus. Events and activities occurring within the wider political/secular Indo-Caribbean community in Canada do not point to ancestral ethnic renewal, i.e., a back to India movement. This type of ancestral sentiment (i.e. India-focus) by Indo-Caribbeans may have been true at one point in time.
The current sentiments being expressed by Indo-Caribbeans in Canada seem to indicate that the focus is Caribbean-based and not India-based. This Caribbean focus by the wider Indo-Caribbean community contrasts sharply with that of the Metro mandir. This mandir is certainly an exception to the rule in that one of its fundamental characteristics is (to use Israel's (1994) expression) its *Bharat Mata Ki Jai* (victory to Mother India) perspective - a sentiment that at present the wider Indo-Caribbean community does not seem to embrace or share.
CHAPTER V

A HISTORY OF THE METRO MANDIR AND ITS LEADER

The purpose of this chapter is to offer: (i) a historical sketch of the Metro mandir and; (ii) a biographical/character profile of the leader of the temple. I will begin by offering a description of the field site and its setting. This will be followed by a comprehensive biographical sketch of the leader of the Metro mandir. Here, a discussion of the leader's early religious and educational socialization in his native country, Guyana, to his experiences in Canada (both as an immigrant religious leader and a medical doctor) will be outlined. Also, some of the personality traits of the leader such as his entrepreneurial and charismatic qualities are discussed in the context of both the leader and the mandir's overall success. The final part of this chapter will deal with the demographic and ethnic make-up of the Metro mandir as well as with its organizational infrastructure.

THE SETTING

The Metro mandir is a three storied structure consisting of a huge and spacious auditorium located on the main level, and an equally large and spacious basement located on the lower level of the building. The upper or main floor consists of a fairly large vestibule. Located on the left hand side of the lobby is the Metro mandir's gift shop. This shop offers a variety of religious items such as books on Hinduism, tapes and CD's containing Hindu religious songs, materials for pujas (prayers), and other religious items.
The mandir's main administrative office/reception area is located next to the gift shop. The coat and shoe storage section is located at the far right hand corner of the foyer. Recently, the women's group at the temple has set up a table at the far left hand corner of the foyer where a number of food items are sold almost every Sunday. This was started by the mandir's women's group for fund-raising purposes. The walls in the lobby area are decorated with large wooden wall plaques. These plaques are rectangular in shape and are painted in a dark varnish. Each plaque is engraved with a passage from the Hindu scriptures, the *Bhagavat Gita*. The passages are written in Hindi and are accompanied by their respective English translations. The main entrance to the mandir's auditorium is located in the middle of lobby.

The mandir's religious services and prayers are conducted in the auditorium. It is here also where the congregation gathers for the Sunday service. The auditorium is carpeted from wall to wall and the middle portion of the ceiling is covered with glass. The pattern of the glass section of the ceiling is diamond-shaped. On both sides of the auditorium there are approximately five or six beautifully decorated pillars. The decorations are wooden carvings, presumably representing different types of Indian motif. The deity platform is located at the eastern corner of the auditorium. Everyone faces the deity platform for prayer and congregational worship. The deity platform houses some of the major Hindu deities/idols. For example, there is a large Lord Ganesh (the elephant God) deity, and a large Durga deity, to name a few. At the very back of the auditorium there is a huge Hanuman (the monkey God) idol. There are other Hindu deities located at the back and the front of the auditorium.
Centrally located near the deity platform is a large money container. This container is essentially a large box that is covered with white paper and has been strategically placed just in front of the deity platform. After offering their prayers to the various deities, devotees would normally put money into the container as a form of donation. The donation of money, like in many other religions, is a common ritual practice in Hinduism - ritual known as *aarti* (offerings). The practice of *aarti* in Hinduism involves two aspects: (i) the offering of flowers and/or fruits by the devotees to the various deities; and (ii) the offering of money by devotees. The monetary contributions are used for temple expenses. To the right of the deity platform is the miniature shrine where the religious leader sits and delivers his sermons. This shrine is basically a platform about three feet high and is covered with a brightly coloured (usually blazing red) canopy. The canopy symbolizes the high rank of the mandir’s pundit. In contrast, the majority of the congregation members sit on the carpeted floor during the services. Those who do not sit on the floor (for physical or other reasons) sit on chairs that are placed on each side of the auditorium. These seats are normally reserved for the older members of the congregation.

The mandir’s washrooms, laundry room, kitchen, library, and dining area are all located in the basement. The kitchen is fairly large and is used every Sunday for the preparation of *preeti bhoj* (communal meal) - a meal that is served every Sunday. The library is located next to the kitchen. In addition to the books and magazines, the library is fully carpeted and has a photo copying machine, a television, a VCR, a computer, a large reading table, and a few pieces of furniture. The dining area is located in the middle
of the basement and consists of approximately six very long tables where people have their Sunday meals. At the very front of the dining area is a stage where dance classes are taught. This stage is also used for cultural celebrations and religious activities. For example, during the Diwali and Holi celebrations at the mandir, live bands/orchestras, singers, guests, dancers etc., perform on this stage. Currently, the mandir is using the basement's dining area to conduct its Bal Vihar (Sunday school) and Hindi language classes. Unlike the mandir's auditorium, the basement is not carpeted.

A PROFILE OF THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF THE METRO MANDIR

The spiritual leader of the Metro mandir, from its inception to the present, was born into a highly religious Hindu family in Guyana, and was socialized in a poojari (priestly) type of environment. He received his early education (both primary and secondary) in Guyana. He successfully completed his GCE (General Certificate of Education) examinations obtaining passes in both the Ordinary and Advanced levels subjects from Guyana's prestigious Queen's College. After completing his secondary school education, he went to Jamaica where he studied Medicine at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. While studying in Jamaica, he encouraged other Hindu students on campus to come together (as a group) to pray and celebrate Hindu festivals and occasions. Taking on the task of mobilizing his fellow Hindu brothers and sisters in an environment, like Jamaica, where Indians were seen as third class citizens was an indication of the leader's tenacity and his undying devotion to his religion and culture at a very young age.
Today, this strong commitment to his religion, a person firmly entrenched in strong Hindu religious values and beliefs (he is a strict vegetarian), has led to the admiration and adoration of this man by many Hindus. In a sense, the leader was seen as a role model to many Hindus who, apparently, were ashamed of their religious identity. The immigrant experience may have encouraged the development of a negative conception of cultural-self inasmuch as Westerners saw Hinduism as a form of paganism - a religion that embraced idol worship and the like. Similarly, what also contributed to the leader's respectability in the community was the fact that he was a highly educated individual. Being a doctor and an educator, and one who was committed to the principles and ideals of his religion may have, in some ways, contributed to his awe-inspiring reputation in the Canadian Hindu community.

After receiving his M.D. from the University of the West Indies, the leader returned to Guyana where he practiced medicine for a while. In 1976 he migrated to Canada from Guyana where he had to re-do his M.D. in order to meet the "Canadian experience" requirement for employment purposes - a situation that applies to many professional immigrants wanting to work/practice in their specific vocation in Canada. His first internship was at the Toronto General Hospital. Finding it difficult to find a job in Toronto after graduating, he went to Hamilton Ontario where secured a job at the St. Joseph Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario. He is currently a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, Scotland and Canada and is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Surgery at McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario. He is also the Head of Vascular surgery at Hamilton Civic Hospital. A pioneer in the treatment of immigrants who
experience cultural dislocation and depression, the mandir's leader has arranged culturally appropriate counselling services and often personally provides them himself. In 1993, he was the recipient of the Order of Ontario - a prestigious award that was bestowed upon him for his contribution to Indian community life in Ontario. He is a past President of the Canadian Council of Hindus (CCH), an umbrella organization made up of different Hindu organizations and associations. He has also been honoured by several organizations all over the world, and has been profiled in the Toronto Life Magazine.

The Metro mandir was the first Hindu temple built in Ontario and it was founded by its present religious leader. When the leader came to Canada in 1976, he saw that Hindus were divided into many groups. There were West Indians/Indo-Caribbeans, East Indians/South Asians, and other Hindu groups, but there was no proper place of worship for these Hindus. Most of the temples were in the basements of people's home. In 1977, the religious leader of the Metro mandir offered regular Sunday morning religious services in rented space at the David and Mary Thompson Collegiate in Scarborough. In an interview with one of the founding members of the temple, and currently the temple's treasurer, it was revealed that the majority of the congregation then was Guyanese (roughly 90%). Later, the leader of the mandir caused an upsurge in the Hindu community when, on his initiative, an organization called the "Voice of the Vedas" was developed in order create awareness in the Hindu community in Canada. In 1980, he became the President of the Voice of the Vedas organization. This organization was seen as a particularly important venture in view of the fact that the younger generation of Hindus, at this period in time, was perceived as being influenced by western values.
In an attempt to counteract the prevailing western influences on the younger generation of Hindus, the President and leader of the Voice of the Vedas Organization/Metro mandir started a cable television program in Toronto. The format of the program was based on questions and answers. This program was broadcast on channel 10 and provided discussions on Hindu philosophy and Hinduism. It was directed to Indo-Caribbean Hindus, specifically, the Trinidadian and Guyanese communities in Toronto. Presently, the Metro mandir still has its own television program, now called, "Voice of Hinduism". This program airs every Saturday at 10 a.m. on Vision TV. The leader himself is the host of this show. In it, he discusses aspects of Hinduism such as Hindu spirituality, philosophy, and teachings. He also advertises events and activities being held at the temple such as Ramayan Yagnas (Hindu prayers) and other related religious events. In addition, most of the commercials during the program tend to highlight particular services offered by the temple such as a marriage bureau, a vibrant Youth Group, a Women's Group, and the like.

An enthusiastic response from the viewers encouraged the leader of the Metro mandir to begin a more ambitious project. In 1981, the Voice of the Vedas, with its then majority Indo-Caribbean congregation, bought an acre of land on Yonge Street with a house already on it at the cost of $250,000. With the help and co-operation of eight Indo-Caribbean families, mainly Guyanese and Trinidadians, $50,000 had been raised and were used as the downpayment. A mortgage was taken for the balance of payments. The house that came with the plot on Yonge Street was used as the temple. According to a key informant at the mandir, the mortgage payments were $3,000 a month, and which at that
period, was an enormous amount of money for the temple to pay. Because of some of the early financial difficulties which the mandir experienced, many Hindus did not support the project because they were dubious about its success. Of course, as time went on, such pessimism gradually faded and renewed optimism within the Hindu community began to emerge as other events began to take shape.

The changing ethnic composition of the temple came when a pundit and scholar from India began working in the temple as a full time priest and astrologer. According to Israel (1994), this legitimation by the mother country (India) for the efforts of one of her exiles attracted South Asians/India-born Hindus to the temple (Israel, 1994:53). The celebration of Diwali at the Roy Thompson Hall in Toronto in 1982 attracted more South Asians to the temple primarily because of the participation of invited entertainers from India. And, although most of the finances for this event came mainly Indo-Caribbean sources, it was felt that the temple's move into a mainstream venue for a major Indian occasion resulted in more support from the South Asian community, specifically, from Gujratis and North Indians, mainly Punjabis. The success of this event, and the shared enterprise stimulated a campaign to build a better and bigger temple. As a result, participation in the Sunday services increased. In his drive to build a better temple, the leader of the Metro mandir acted as the chief fund-raiser, and in 1983, the congregation began building the new temple. The temple was consecrated by Swami Chidanandji Maharaj of the Divine Life Society in June 1984.
CHARISMATIC AND ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS

The dynamism of this leader became apparent as many Hindus who, as was mentioned earlier on, was apprehensive about the successful building of a Hindu mandir (possibly because of the divisive nature of the Hindu community in Ontario), felt that a major dream had actually become reality. That is to say, many Hindus felt that if it was not for the efforts of the leader of the Metro mandir, they would not have had a temple today. Many Hindus began to trust in his leadership and consequently saw him as a proactive community leader. This is probably why, today, members from the Indo-Caribbean, South Asian, and Indo-African Hindu communities look to him for not only religious/spiritual leadership, but for social and political leadership as well. The leader of the Metro mandir is one who never hesitates to bring controversial issues to the public forum. He is never afraid to publicly criticize things that he thinks are wrong. For example, in the Jag Bhaduria controversy (discussed in Chapter 6), he was very outspoken about racism against South Asians in Canada. He is particularly sensitive to issues that deny fairness and equity to disadvantaged groups in Canadian society; he is committed to social justice issues, and is outspoken and fearless. This type of dynamic leadership catapulted him into national presence in Canada.

These strong personality characteristics coupled with his ability to speak in a very authoritative tone of voice have made him into a charismatic figure. His tall towering physical stature and the presence he commands also add to the charismatic aura that emanates from him. What also makes the leader a person of high stature, and to a lesser extent charismatic, is his ability to literally "beg" for financial donations for the Hindu
community. He is constantly appealing to his community members, politicians, and businesses to support his temple. He applies a pragmatic approach to community development in that he constantly reminds all potential donors that religious and cultural programs depend on money for their success and implementations. His ability to succeed where others have failed lies in his ability to successfully "sell" his wares to his community and its members. He does this by playing on their emotional sensibilities, reminding them of their "minority status" both as a religious and ethno-racial group in Canadian society.

By employing his "begging" strategy, he is able to successfully embark on some of his community-based projects. A few years ago he headed a team to sell raffle tickets at various malls in Toronto as a way of raising funds. Thereafter, people started seeing him as a successful heart specialist and Hindu priest; a person of his stature raising funds in such a pragmatic and aggressive manner. These types of attributes probably made him stand out as a committed and concerned leader. More importantly, these traits make him an "ethnic entrepreneur", one who is capable of raising funds and mobilizing resources and people for purposes of community building and development.

The Metro mandir remained largely Indo-Caribbean in composition until the new temple opened in February 1984. This was when many South Asians/India-born members started coming in larger numbers. The increasing participation of India-born members, however, saw a decline in the participation of Indo-Caribbeans at the temple. Some Indo-Caribbeans felt that they had built the temple and it was now being taken away from them. Also, the fact that the regular Sunday congregational service environment, which
was conducted largely in English - the language which Indo-Caribbeans were accustomed to - was, at one point in time, challenged by "traditionalist" from India who had never been required to accept compromise in the ancient rituals of their religion (Israel, 1994:53). At present, however, such problems do not seem to be particularly detrimental to anyone one group since the regular Sunday services are still conducted in English. Sanskrit and Hindi are used when the leader quotes from, or has to read something from the Bhagavat Gita. These short interludes of spoken Hindi or Sanskrit are also translated into English.

By the end of 1984, however, the congregation had increased so much that there was often little room/space in the auditorium/prayer hall for congregation members. This prompted discussions for more temple expansion. The temple was torn down and a bigger and brander extended facility with 27,000 square feet was opened in 1990. This increase in the numbers of people attending the mandir, specifically, in regard to the steady increase in the number of India-born participants, could also be attributed to the installation of a large Mahatma Gandhi (the leader of the Indian nationalist movement and advocate of the principle of non-violence) statue. This statue is located outside of the mandir.

It can be argued that a Gandhi statue may have also "pulled" many of the India-born Hindus to the mandir. Gandhi has been, and continues to be, revered as one of the most respected figures in Indian social and political history. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the installation of a Gandhi statue may have acted as a "motivating factor" in attracting some India-born Hindus to the mandir. In other words, this "gesture of
symbolic ethnicity" (i.e., the installation of a Gandhi statue) by an Indo-Caribbean leader may have attracted some of the India-born Hindus to the mandir. In a similar vein, Gandhi, of all Indian leaders, represented the epitome of leadership for most Indo-Caribbeans because, among other things, he was seen as the overseas Indians' contribution to India and an eloquent bridge between India and her overseas cousins. Gandhi's undying struggle for India's independence restored Indo-Caribbean peoples' pride and dignity (Parekh, 1993:8).

In May 1988, the statue of Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled on the grounds of the Metro mandir. It was presented as a gift by a Hindu family to the Canadian people, and not to the temple, as an act of gratitude from Hindu newcomers to Canada. Prior to the unveiling of the Gandhi statue at the Metro mandir, a controversy surrounding Gandhi saw the active involvement of the leader of the Metro mandir. The controversy started when, in 1987, the Scarborough School Board was asked to consider naming a school after Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. A member of the School Board, in clear disagreement of such a consideration, described Gandhi as a "crank", and suggested that Indians who lived in Canada should assimilate by leaving their culture and home grown heroes behind. Needless to say, such remarks were perceived as racist by the wider South Asian community, and, as a result, a protest demonstration was organized.

From his base at the Metro mandir, the leader was able to mobilize approximately 2,500 to 3,000 people, both from within and outside of the community, to rally against a racist attack on all Indians. The protesters rallied from Toronto City Hall to the Ontario Legislature at Queen's Park. This mobilization of such a large following, or what was
referred to as a *yatra* (a journey in support of an objective), clearly indicated that an institutional base had been created whereby members of the Hindu and Indian communities in Toronto could respond to challenges. Undoubtedly, the religious leader of the Metro mandir was instrumental in creating this institutional base. This type of leadership demonstrates the importance of religious institutions and ethnic leaders and their contribution to the building and creation of mobilizing centres.

**DEMOGRAPHIC AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE METRO MANDIR**

At present, approximately 400-500 devotees participate in the Sunday prayer. However, at special Hindu functions such as Shivratri and Diwali, the attendance at the temple can double, and sometimes triple. Based on field observations, I have seen (in my estimation) as many as two to three thousand people in attendance during a Shivratri or a Diwali function. Recently, thousands of Hindus and non-Hindus alike, came to the temple in droves to witness the drinking of consecrated milk by the Lord Ganesh\(^1\) deity (the elephant God). There are presently four (4) priests, two of them are Indo-Caribbean, one of which is the temple's leader, and the other two (2) are India-born priests. The Sunday services/sermons are normally followed by *Preeti Bhoj* (communal meal) which is a weekly lunch/meal that is sponsored by a family or groups of families from the

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\(^1\)Recently, the Ganesh deity at the Metro mandir was actually drinking/absorbing (via its husks) the milk that devotees (as part of a ritual practice) offer it. This occurrence was witnessed in places such as Toronto, India, Trinidad, to name a few, and was regarded as a miracle by Hindus the world over.
congregation. These meals reflect the important social functions of community religious observance in Ontario (Israel 1994).

According to the religious leader, everyone, including visitors, irrespective of their ethnic or religious affiliations, are invited to partake in the Sunday lunch. This "all is welcome" attitude is also reflected in the leader's view that the mandir is one religious place where no one is prohibited from entering the altar for prayers, or just to look around. People of all creed and religions, be they Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Jains are all welcome like any Hindu devotee coming to the mandir. Reflecting the leader's experience and the mixed nature of his congregation, a variety of murthis (Hindu deities/statues) can be seen in the mandir's altar. The major deities in the Hindu pantheon such as Durga (a Hindu Goddess), Hanuman (the monkey God), Ganesh (the elephant God), and Ram (God) share a single altar at the front of the mandir's auditorium. It has been rumoured that there are plans to include a statue of Lord Mahavir, revered by Jains, and a statue of the Buddha.

Surprisingly, orthodox Hindus have not taken objection (at least to date) to the leader's eclecticism, who is himself a poojari (pundit/priest). The leader quotes from not only the Hindu scriptures such as the Vaidas and Upanishads, but also from the Koran (Muslim Bible), the Bible, the Tora (Jewish Bible), the Granth Sahib (Sikh Holy Scriptures), and other religious books during his weekly sermons. This religious eclecticism could have created a serious controversy at some other religious institution. The manifestation of eclectic elements was recently observed at the mandir. While I was conducting field research, I was given a wallet-size/pocket calendar card of the Metro
mandir by one of its members. In addition to the regular listings of the various months of 1996 on the calendar (as is the case with most calendars), there is also a listing of Holidays.

What I found interesting about this list was that the holidays were not limited to Hindu religious holidays (as would normally be expected from any religiously specific organizations engaged in the distribution of its religious calendars), but it also included a list of other non-Hindu holidays. For example, it listed some well known Muslim festivals such as *Id-Ul-Fitar*, *Id-Ul-Zuha*, and *Id-Ul-Milad*; the Sikhs holy day, namely, *Guru Nanak's Birthday*; Buddhist festivals such a *Buddha Purnima*; and other Christian and Catholic religious events such as Christmas and Good Friday. A rather interesting observation about the holiday listings in the calendar was the fact that Indian holidays (i.e., holidays celebrated in India) were also included such as India's Independence Day and Republic Day Holidays. On the other hand, Caribbean or Indo-Caribbean holidays such as Indian Arrival Day, which is celebrated in both Trinidad and Guyana, were not listed. Other mainstream Caribbean holidays such as Independence Day and Republic Day were not included in the holiday listings either.

When asked why some of the major Caribbean holidays were not included in the calendar, a member from the executive responded by saying that since the calendars are pre-printed and used in India it is only understandable why most of the holidays listed in the calendar would be Indian holidays. He went on to say that it is cheaper to print the calendar in India than it is to print it in North America. This, he said, is probably why there is no Caribbean or Indo-Caribbean holidays in the calendar.
The leader's eclectic ism is also reflected in his view that caste affiliation (a central element in Hinduism) and other divisive religious elements should not be tolerated or espoused (Sunday Service, October, 1993). This, too, could have caused an uproar at another place. However, the fact that there has not been any real protest against such views is not all that surprising given the fact that most of the Hindus (mainly India-born Hindus) who emigrated to Canada tend to come from the educated, middle or upper classes, and, therefore, are not inhibited by the rigid caste system of India. For Indo-Caribbean Hindus in both the Caribbean and Canada, caste plays no role in the practice of Hinduism, hence, their indifference to such views. Also, as part of his religious activities, the leader of the mandir has visited India several times. He recently took members of the temple to a pilgrimage in India. In an earlier visit to New Delhi, the Dalamias of India gave the leader a murthi (statue) of the Goddess Durga for his temple.

I was informed by one of my informants that a significant proportion of the mandir's members are successful and professional people. The informant went on to say that the average level of education among congregation members is at least a first degree. I was then told that this was true for the South Asian and Indo-African groups at the temple. The situation, apparently, was different for the Indo-Caribbean group at the temple. The informant said that while there was some successful Indo-Caribbeans in business and professional positions, their percentage, overall, was not as high when compared to the non-Indo-Caribbean segments at the temple.

Five per cent of Canada's 100,000 Hindus are now actively supporting the temple. The temple weekly services include Shiva Pooja (prayer) on Mondays, Hanuman Pooja
on Tuesdays, Aarti (offerings) on Wednesdays, Sai Bhajans (religious songs) on Thursdays, Durga Pooja on Fridays, Navgrah Pooja on Saturdays, and the main service on Sunday mornings. All of the above poojas are named after particular Hindu Gods, and to whom prayers are offered. Also, Bhagvati Chowki and Jagrans (night singing rituals dedicated to the Goddess Durga by North Indians specifically, Punjabis) are performed at the temple, as well as weddings, and other types of Hindu samskaras (Hindu sacraments), such as Upanananams and Namkarana. Upanananams is a ceremony in which a thread is tied around the body, from the shoulders to the waist, of male Brahmins (upper caste Hindus). Namkarana, on the other hand, is the equivalent of the Judeo-Christian practice of "christening". These are only two of the many samskaras in Hindu religious traditions.

The mandir also provides special services to person/s who would like to have poojas done in their homes or in the temple. All of the pundits are trained to do pooja for all religious occasions. Along with the regular ritual work, a great amount of spiritual, social, and human services are also being conducted by the temple's Women's group. According to its President, The Culture Circle Community Services Inc., (the official name of the Women's group at the mandir), is an independent non-profit organization that is dedicated to addressing the needs of Women, elders and youths of the South Asian community. It is sponsored by the Metro mandir in its attempt to promote awareness among members of the South Asian community in Canada. One of its stated goals is that although the frame of reference is from the South Asian perspective, it will include and assist anyone in need.
Some of the objectives of the Women's Group are to promote cultural understanding and co-operation among members of the South Asian community; to advocate for needed improvement to existing legislation, policies, and resources to better meet the needs of the South Asian community; to promote cultural awareness for the South Asian community through cultural events, organizing and participating in multicultural shows, fairs, and religious activities; to provide a culturally sensitive, caring, and supportive environment for members in the South Asian community; and lastly, to provide assistance to all individuals free of discrimination based on caste, class, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, age, marital or family status, and disability.

The mission of the Culture Circle is to provide free of charge, job creation and training, health promotion and education, community information and referral services, referrals for dealing with domestic violence, culture specific support for senior citizens, ongoing workshops aimed at empowering members from the South Asian community, and providing tutoring, mentoring, and counselling services for community members. Some of the women's group fund-raising programs include catering services, clothing and gift sales, and music and dance lessons. All of these programs are conducted and carried out at the Metro mandir. The President of the Women's group told me that the organization has created a place where women can obtain assistance after having lived with an abusive partner, where an elder can connect with other elders thereby reducing their isolation, where youths can share their experiences of living in a multicultural society, and where new immigrants can find out about services being offered, and where they can obtain language training or job information. The Women's Group is also involved in the Blood
Donor Clinics, Food and Clothing Share Drives, seminars for battered women, and organizing various fund raising events such as summer excursions, boat cruises, summer bazaars, and trips for the elderly (Excerpts from Interview with President of the Women's group).

The Metro's Youth Group was formed by the mandir's youths and is primarily concerned with the organization of cultural activities for youths at the mandir. Its mandate is to address the cultural needs of South Asian youths. Its objective is to explore different cultural facets of Indian culture. These would include music, dance, language, clothing, etc. To date, the Youth Group has organized a few cultural shows such as a fashion show, and a cultural variety show. It has also been involved in charity and sponsorship work. Recently, the Youth Group was successful in sponsoring a child in India. A sufficient amount of funds was raised, and everyone at the mandir was informed, via a notice, that the sponsored child has already begun to use the funds sent to him to pursue his education. The Youth Group was also responsible for creating the "Sewak Committee" - a co-operative committee made up of members from the Youth Group who are responsible for cleaning up the mandir an the like. The group is presently trying to organize a conference on leadership and South Asian youths. Most of the youths at the temple are also involved in the Bal Vihar (or kids education) classes which includes participating in Sunday school activities and learning Hindi.

Today, the Metro mandir is one of the biggest, and probably the most established Hindu mandir in Toronto. It has given an impetus to other Hindu organizations all over North America and Europe. The recent opening of the Ganesh temple (a South Indian
temple) is a case in point. At present, Metro's congregation is comprised of approximately 60-65 per cent of Indo-Caribbeans, and the remaining 35-40 per cent of the congregation is made up of South Asians/India-born. Approximately 3 or 4 per cent of the temple's membership is made up of the Indo-African-born Hindus. This would include the following groups: East African, Ugandans and South Africans. The majority of the India-born and Indo-African-born members are mainly Gujaratis and Punjabis. This ethnically diverse following has resulted in the emergence of a number of unique activities.

Fieldwork conducted at the Metro mandir evidences the strong role of the religious leader in using the Hindu religion as an active agent in reconstructing the supposedly lost "Indianness" of Indo-Caribbean peoples. There are strong efforts to re-establish a sense of spiritual bond with the "motherland" (India). Some of the strategies that are being used to rekindle the Indo-Caribbean lost "Indianness" include Hindi language classes, annual pilgrimages to India, classes in classical Indian dance and music, religious teachings on Hinduism and Hindu philosophy, and Bal Vihar (Sunday school) classes for the benefit of children of all ages.

In addition to the above programs and activities, the Metro mandir's library (the first of its kind in Canada), was opened in February 1993 with the aim of providing its members with the resources and materials necessary for spiritual and religious knowledge. Thousands of books are available on Hindu religion, philosophy, and history. Also available are periodicals, newspapers and tourist information about India. Books are in Hindi, English and Gujarati. An audio and video section is soon to be implemented. Future projects include a senior citizen home, a co-operative bank to support the needy, a
crematorium, a cultural center, and an Ayurvedic (Hindu based medical practices) center. At present, the mandir is being extended to accommodate the building of a Museum of Hinduism, and possibly (if space permits) an elementary school (from grades 1 to 5).

Another clear pattern that emerges from my field notes is the leader's attempts to merge Indo-Caribbean and South Asian cultural practices. The blending of these different cultural traditions and practices is evident at the Diwali, Holi, and other religious festivals held at the mandir. This has resulted in a type of inter-cultural accommodation and adaptation which most of its members have accepted, but which still attracts critics. For the critics, especially orthodox Hindus, the main problem is the degree of adaptation at the temple. That is, how far could one bend in order to accommodate all interested Hindus while, at the same time, retaining the commitment of traditionalist and orthodox religious practices. Examples of inter-cultural accommodation and adaptation include: (i) the merging of western/Judeo-Christian practices such as the regular Sunday services which, (as was explained earlier), is not a common phenomenon in traditional Hindu practice/customs; and (ii) the conducting of religious sermons in English. These attempts at ethnic transformations point to the importance of the mandir's leader in promoting and encouraging cultural innovations. Thus, the idea of ethnic groups "reinventing" themselves may be attributed, in part, to the goals and objectives of ethnic leaders.

In terms of the formal organization of the mandir, there are two levels of organizations: (i) the Executive/Administrative level; and (ii) the congregational level. The former has some distinct formal categories while the latter does not. At the congregational level, members are not grouped into particular categories as is the case with the executive
level. However, although members of the congregation are not placed into formal categories, there are a number of areas at the congregational level where members are engaged in particular tasks and duties. For example, particular members of the congregation participate in, and help in the organization of certain social activities at the mandir. Such activities include the Metro mandir's Youth Group, the Women's Group, the mandir's librarian, cooks, and teachers (which includes language, music, religious, and dance instructors/teachers). All of these activities were created and are organized by members of the congregation. In addition, congregational participation in activities are purely voluntary in nature.

Unlike the congregational level of organization, the executive level of organization is somewhat different. At this level, there are a number of formal categories where particular members are placed. These categories entail some highly specific bureaucratic and managerial functions. The structure of the mandir's Executive is depicted in the flow chart below (See Figure 3).
As can be seen from the above diagram, the temple's general administration/organization is broken down into three sections: trustees, board of directors, and executive committee. The specific functions of the trustees are separate and distinct from the other two sections; there are some overlaps in terms of functions and individual representations in both the board of directors and executive committee. The role of the
trustees, for example, is to look after the day to day management and affairs of the temple. This includes ensuring the continuity of the temple, the well being of the congregation, as well as the financial aspects of the temple. The trustees are elected for a seven term period and are generally regarded as the custodians of the mandir.

The Board of Directors is the second most important section of the mandir's administration. This category consists of the Chairman and nine directors. The executive committee, on the other hand, consists of fifteen members. Some of these include the President, Religious Advisor, Vice Presidents for different categories, General Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Women's Group President, and Musical co-ordinator, to name a few. As was previously mentioned, there are a lot of overlap with regards to representation in both the Board of Directors and Executive Committee branches i.e., most of the members who are on the Board of Directors are also on the Executive Committee.

In terms of the ethnic breakdown at the Executive levels of organization, Indo-Caribbeans are disproportionately represented in all areas of elite organization. For example, of the forty-five (45) members on the Executive and Board of Directors, there are approximately eight to ten South Asian members; the rest of the members are Indo-Caribbean. At present, there are ten Directors, three of which are South Asians (two Punjabis, and one Gujaratis), and the remaining seven are Indo-Caribbeans.
CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter the data derived from the Metro mandir, the Contrast temple, and the other Hindu temples and organizations investigated will be presented, analyzed and discussed. First, participant observation and semi-structured interviews from the Metro mandir will be presented and analyzed. As was discussed in the Methodology Chapter, the participant observation data were derived from the Sunday sermons, cultural events, and religious festivals at the Metro mandir. The participant observation data from the Metro mandir will presented in tabular form (see Tables 1, 2 and 3) and then analyzed. Second, data derived from the thirty interviews that were conducted with members from the Metro mandir will be presented, analyzed, and interpreted. In analyzing the interviews a number of themes were derived from the data (See Interview Data Section). Third, the comparative data obtained from the other Hindu temples where field work was conducted (See Comparative Data Section) will be presented and discussed. Here, I will present an overview of all the Hindu temples visited and some of their particular characteristics such as their demographic, ethnic, and cultural make-ups will be highlighted. Finally, data from the Contrast Temple will be presented in tabular form (See Tables 4-6 in Comparative Data Section). This data will highlight some of the essential differences between the Contrast temple and the Metro mandir. The participant observation data from the Metro mandir will be presented first.
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION DATA: METRO MANDIR

The following are the three (3) main empirical indicators of constructed ethnicity most relevant to this study. Each indicator will entail a number of empirical manifestations and these will be listed under the indicator to which they belong.

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TABLE 1

INDICATOR #1

CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

**Cultural Revivals/Restorations**

Hindi Language Programs  
Bal Vihar (Sunday School) Classes  
Instructions in Yoga  
Training in Classical Indian Dance  
(e.g. Bharat Natyam and Kathak)

South Asian Heart Health Fair  
Workshops on Vedic culture, heritage, history and education  
Ayurvedic Medicine Seminars  
Workshops on Homeopathy

**New Cultural Forms**

Sunday Religious Sermons  
A Museum of Hinduism  
An Elementary Hindu School  
A Hindu Youth Scholarship  
Renovated inter-ethnic festivals and celebrations (e.g. Chowtal, Mehindi, and Rangoli during Diwali and Holi).

Future Projects:  
A Senior Citizen's Home  
A Crematorium  
An Orphanage
### Table 2

#### Indicator #2

**Cultural Innovation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indo-Caribbean</th>
<th>South Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhalpuri Roti</td>
<td>Naan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paratha Roti</td>
<td>Channa-Daal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channa and Aloo</td>
<td>Masalai Channa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dhal and Kharheee</td>
<td>Matar Paneer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fried Rice and Chow Mein</td>
<td>Chaat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potato Balls</td>
<td>Samosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin Talkari</td>
<td>Aloo Gobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mango Talkari</td>
<td>Vegetable Pakoras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pholourie and Chutney</td>
<td>Methai: Gulab Jamun, Ras Malai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Cakes</td>
<td>Prasad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar Bread</td>
<td>Amchar and other South Asian condiments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preserved Mangoes</td>
<td>Prasad</td>
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<td>Methai (Dessert):Jelibi, Kurma</td>
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<td>Prasad</td>
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<td>Kheer (Sweet Rice)</td>
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**Music**

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<th>Indo-Caribbean</th>
<th>South Asian</th>
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<td>Chutney</td>
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<td>Classical songs (Bhojpuri tradition)</td>
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<td>Bhajans and Kirtans</td>
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<td>Chowtal</td>
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<td>Local Indo-Caribbean songs</td>
<td>Classical Indian Music                (e.g. Khathak and Bharat Natyam)</td>
</tr>
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ETHNIC LITERATURE

**INDO-CARIBBEAN**

Indo-Caribbean World Newspaper
Where It Is Business Caribbean Directory
Indian Arrival Day in Trinidad 1994: Towards
150 Years (Commemorative Publication)
Hindu Trinidad (Book)
Promoted and sold a book on Race and
Politics in Trinidad by prominent Indo-Trinidadian
Scholar and Politician, Trevor Sudama

**SOUTH ASIAN**

India Times
Illustrated Weekly of India
Business India
India Today
India Journal
News India Times
Times of India (Bombay)
Nav Bharat Times (Delhi)
Indian Express (Delhi)
The Tribune (Chandigar,Punjab)
India Abroad
Savy Magazine
Stardust (Film Magazine)
Darshan*
Frontline
Sri Lanka Abroad
South Asian Guide (Business Directory)
East Meets West Connection
(Business Directory)
Comic Books on Hinduism
(Produced in India)
Ayurvedic Medicine Literature
Homeopathy Literature
Yoga Literature
Vedic Heritage Literature
Compilation of Great Indian
Achievements.**
Promoted and sold Milton
Israel's book, entitled:
"In the Further Soil: Indo-
Canadians in Ontario" (TOPIC)***

* This is the Metro Mandir's Newsletter. Darshan is Hindi for "View of the Lord".

**This is a listing of the contributions made by India and Indians in the Arts and Sciences. The information in this document was compiled by members of the Metro Mandir.

***TOPIC (Toronto Organization for the Promotion of Indian Culture) is an organization of the Metro mandir and was responsible for the publication of the above mentioned book on South Asian Canadians in Ontario. N.B. The book was dedicated to the victims of the Air-India Flight 182 June 23, 1985
ETHNIC ADVERTISEMENTS

INDO-CARIBBEAN

Meera Pooja Centre
Ramayan Yagnas Invitations
Chutney Extravaganzas/Concerts
Diwali Melas
Homeland West Indian Foods
East and West Indian Supermarkets
Phagwa Celebrations
Diwali Nagars
Invitations to Trinidadian and Guyanese Poojas and Kathas
Janet Naipaul's Dance School

SOUTH ASIAN

Homeopathy Consultants
(World Renowned, India)
Yoga with Swami Srinivasananda
Handa Travels Air-India Agent
Sangam Indian Restaurant
Lohana Cultural Association
Risham Collections (Fashion)
Toronto Kalibari
Minar Inc. Wedding Preparations
South Asian Family Support Services
Tour South India
Nimmy Fabric and Fashions
Saican (Tamil Devotional Songs,
Sai Bhajans and South Indian Music)
South Asian Social Services Organization
"Sewa Bharat" (India Development Relief Fund)
"Asha Jyoti" Scholarship for Needy/Underprivileged children in India
"Rathayatra" (Canadian Festival of India).
Support for a Ram Temple in Ayodhya, India
Worldwide Express Delivery to India
Metro Mandir's Marriage Services
Mandaps for rent
Indo-Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Annual Awards and Gala Night
A Gujarati Play "Bhai"
South Asian Family Physicians
Chowkis and Jagrans (Punjabi pujas)
TABLE 3

INDICATOR #3

ETHNIC ORGANIZATION

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

1. Women's Group: Projects include:
   - a Resource Centre for Women in the South Asian Community
   - an Elders Program for purposes of trips/excursions for senior citizens in the South Asian community
   - organizing seminars and conferences on women's issues such as wife abuse and other workshops on empowering South Asian women
   - organizing events such as the selling of food for fund-raising purposes

2. Youth Group: Activities include:
   - organizing cultural and fashion shows
   - planning and organizing summer camps
   - participating in Bal Vihar (Sunday school) classes
   - assisting in fund-raising events (e.g. the sponsoring of needy children in India)
   - participating in Hindu Youth Conferences

3. Other Social and Cultural Services:
   - a Marriage service for prospective brides and grooms
   - Health Seminars (Ayurvedic, Homeopathy, Heart Disease etc)
   - promoting secular South Asian musical events such as the Asha Bhosle Toronto concert, the Vinod Patel, Pundit Jasraj, Zakhhir Hussein, and Bhupinder and Mitali shows.
   - the holding of the Anup Jalota concert at the temple
   - Elementary Hindi language programs for adults and kids
   - the holding of Auctions at the mandir
1. **ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION**

   - **Employment Opportunities for Members from the South Asian Community:**
     - London Life Insurance Company seeking young people for training and employment in the insurance industry
     - Garment Company willing to hire South Asians who can sew at home
     - Accounting Company looking for South Asian accountants in the community for placements
     - North York Board of Education looking for a Hindi teacher at the mandir
     - Networking ties with prominent South Asian businesses/companies and entrepreneurs as well as mainstream business organizations

2. **POLITICAL ORGANIZATION**

   - **Political Party Alignments and Support:**
     - the mandir does not support any particular political party but it will support any political body that can offer assistance in the area of community development projects
     - supports South Asian politicians (e.g. organized a rally in support of the controversial South Asian Liberal politician, Jag Bhaduria)

   - **Political Ideology:**
     - Ghetto ideology (e.g. advocates separate education and health systems for community members)
     - also a combination of conservative, liberal, and egalitarian philosophies and ideologies (e.g. embraces ethno-cultural diversity and subscribes to some progressive viewpoints such as women's issues)

   - **Ethno-Political Ideology:**
     - strong pro-"Indian" or South Asian orientation
     - very strong pro-Hindu perspective
     - anti-racism perspective
     - fully supportive of multicultural programs

   - **Affiliations/Links with other Religious and Secular Organizations:**
     - the mandir is a single, independent unit with no equivalent branches or affiliations both locally and internationally
ANALYSIS (Indicator #1):

A closer examination of Indicator #1 (Cultural Reconstruction) reveals the presence of cultural revivals/restorations practices at the Metro mandir. For example, the implementation of Hindi language programs, Ayurvedic medicine seminars, workshops on Homeopathy, and Vedic Heritage programs points to the reconstruction of historical South Asian/Indian cultural practices and traditions. Also, observable manifestations of the other dimension of cultural reconstruction, namely, new cultural forms can be found at the mandir. For instance, the Sunday religious services/sermons is a classic example of a new cultural form. This is because in traditional Hindu customs no such thing as sermons exist in the sense that collective forms of worship is an uncommon phenomenon; Hindu worship is highly personal in character. That is, most Hindus tend to have their own private shrines (pooja rooms) in their homes where prayers can be performed everyday, not only on Sundays.

Given this scenario, one can conclude that the emergence of "Sunday sermons" is clearly a new cultural form in the practice of Hinduism - a new cultural form that is modelled on the western (Judeo-Christian) pattern of collective worship. The exigencies of life in North America coupled with the immigrant experience of isolation and alienation in host environments may be partly responsible for the rise of new cultural forms in emerging ethno-cultural communities.

Other new cultural forms include the building of a museum of Hinduism, an elementary Hindu school, and renovated religious/cultural festivals. At the Metro mandir, for example, it is common to see a combination of South Asian and Indo-Caribbean
cultural practices at particular festivals. For instance, the making of Rangoli (designs made with coloured rice) by Gujrati and Punjabi members at the annually held Diwali celebrations is an example of the renovation of cultural festivals. It is a renovation primarily because Rangoli making is not an Indo-Caribbean practice. Similarly, the practice of Mehindi (hand painting) is another South Asian custom that is non-existent in Indo-Caribbean cultural festivals. At the annually held Holi celebrations the Indo-Caribbean musical form, namely, chowtal, (religious songs sung in a fast paced tempo) is an integral part of the festivities. Therefore the combination of Chowtal, Mehindi, and Rangoli noticeable during the Diwali and Holi celebrations at the temple has resulted in a process of cultural renovation whereby cultural practices from different cultural systems have produced new cultural forms.

The data presented in the cultural reconstruction indicator is consistent with the research on constructed ethnicity. Groups construct their cultures in ways which involve the reconstruction of historical culture, and the construction of new culture. Cultural reconstruction techniques include revivals and restorations of historical cultural practices and institutions, and would entail revisions of current culture and new cultural forms. Cultural revivals and restorations occur when lost or forgotten cultural forms or practices are excavated and reintroduced, for example, the loss of Indo-Caribbean peoples' ancestral language, Hindi. Teaching children their ancestral language and religious philosophy fosters a sense of uniqueness and continuity with the past (Danielson 1991; Waters 1990). Thus, cultural reconstruction techniques are important insofar as they are capable of reviving and restoring particular ethnic/ancestral customs and traditions that have been lost.
or forgotten by Indo-Caribbeans. Cultural reconstructions are ongoing group tasks in which new and renovated cultural symbols, activities, and materials are continually being added to and removed from existing cultural repertoires (Nagel, 1994:162).

**ANALYSIS (Indicator #2):**

In looking at Indicator #2 (Cultural Innovation), it is clear that the main attribute of this indicator, namely, cultural blending is prevalent at the mandir in particular areas such as food, music, ethnic literature, and ethnic advertisements. For each of these categories, the blending/mixing of elements from both the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian cultures can be found. However, in respect to the ethnic literature and ethnic advertisement categories, there is a disproportionate amount of South Asian materials. For example, there is much more South Asian ethnic literature and advertisements at the mandir when compared to the Indo-Caribbean categories. It is clear from the ethnic literature category that there is very little literature on the history and heritage of the people of the West Indies/Caribbean, or even works by Indo-Caribbean writers/authors in the mandir's library. Rather, what one finds is many books on Vedic culture and life, yoga, interpretations of the "Mahabharat" and "Ramayana" (Hindu religious scriptures), Hindi film magazines from the Bombay film industry, and many India-based and other South Asian newspapers and business magazines. I asked the librarian why there was a disproportionate amount of South Asian literature in the library and she responded by saying that most of the books that people donate to the library are from India - books on Hindu philosophy, Hinduism and all the different types of India newspapers. She went on
to say that if people donated books on the West Indies, or on Indo-Caribbean literature, that the library would gladly accept them.

An even more surprising observation was that there were a number of books (in the library) on particular South Asian personalities such as the late Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, and other well known Indian personalities and politicians. No equivalent works on famous Indo-Caribbean personalities and politicians such as Shridath Ramphal or V.S. Naipaul are to be found in the mandir's library. Also, advertisements such as the mandir's marriage services and the *mandap* (wedding tent) for rent (see ethnic advertisements category) are particularly surprising since such customs are foreign to Indo-Caribbeans. Marriage services and mandap are integral aspects of South Asian/Indian culture. These observations are quite interesting given the fact that the Metro mandir is an Indo-Caribbean mandir. Again, these findings point to the mandir's strong South Asian focus. The obvious question thus arises: Is this an Indo-Caribbean or South Asian temple, and is it catering more to the needs of the South Asian community and less to the Indo-Caribbean community?

The findings from the cultural innovation indicator is consistent with the literature on ethnic renewal. According to the ethnic renewal perspective, individuals or groups may acquire or assert a new ethnic identity by reclaiming a discarded identity, replacing or amending an identity in an existing ethnic repertoire, or filling a personal ethnic void (Nagel 1995). Filling a personal ethnic void might entail the adoption of a new ethnic identity for the first time. For example, Indo-Caribbeans at the Metro mandir are trying to reconnect with their ethnic "roots", i.e. India. Thus, the process of ethnic renewal
involves cultural innovation inasmuch as it entails the reconstruction of an ethnic community by current or new community members who build and rebuild institutions, culture, history, and traditions (Nagel 1995).

Similarly, cultural blending as an aspect of constructed ethnicity is a form of cultural reorganization most closely resembling ethnic amalgamation or mixing. Cultural blending can range from cultural "borrowing" where particular aspects from an ethnic culture (e.g. ethnic food and holidays/festivals) are adopted into a culture, to a more equal mixing of two cultural systems, as is the case with the Metro mandir. At its recently held annual Diwali dinner, the mandir's Youth Group put on a program depicting Hindu marriage in three different cultural contexts. The three couples: a Punjabi, a Gujrati, and an Indo-Caribbean, were dressed in their own traditional matrimonial ethnic attire. As the couples displayed their ethnic wedding attire, they were accompanied by the wedding music common to their own culture. Thus, the typical Indo-Caribbean musical form, tassa (drums), normally performed at Hindu weddings in the Caribbean, was played as the Indo-Caribbean couple modelled an aspect of their ethnic tradition.

What I found to be really interesting at the Diwali dinner was the fact that the food served was almost entirely South Asian. There was really only one item that was Indo-Caribbean, and that was the dhalpouri roti. This observation is all the more interesting since, for the most part, the food served during the mandir's Sunday services, is usually a good blend of Indo-Caribbean and South Asian. Some researchers identify cultural blending as a strategy for protecting particular religions (mainly non-western
religions) from Christian and assimilationist assault, as well as for strengthening ethnic communities (See Herring 1988; Clifford 1988).

**ANALYSIS**: (Indicator #3):

Data from the social organization attribute of the Ethnic Organization indicator reveal once again the very strong South Asian focus in the social organization of the community. For example, the marriage services, the promotion and advertising of South Asian (India-based) artists/performers, fund-raising programs for needy children in India, the signing of petitions against terrorists attacks on Air-India (recall the crash of Air-India Flight 182 in Ireland), and other related relief assistance to communities in India are examples of the pro-South Asian flavour observable at the mandir. In contrast, very little, by way of assistance to the Caribbean, is noticeable at the mandir. The mandir recently held an Anup Jalota concert on its premises. Anup Jalota is a singer from India.

The idea of a mandir being the location for a concert is, in and of itself, an aspect of cultural innovation. Also, the auctioning of items at the mandir may indicate the prevalence of cultural innovation. In addition, these business oriented projects point to the "entrepreneurial" personality of the mandir's leader. Social organization involves the modification, addition, or elimination of social structural norms and arrangements governing group membership, social relations, and the like. These would include the reorganization of rules regulating marriage, the reorganization of community boundaries, and possibly the reorganization of an ethnic identity (Nagel and Snipp 1993).
The data from the economic organization attribute of the Ethnic Organization indicator reveal the various types of economic activities undertaken by the mandir. Most of these activities involve the provision of employment for members in the community. As an aspect of the construction of ethnic identity, economic organization includes the organization of community economic base and the organization of economic activities. Economic organization is often a route to other forms of ethnic organization, and, is thus sometimes seen as a mechanism of social, political, and cultural organization (Nagel and Snipp 1993).

Similarly, data from the political organization attribute of the Ethnic Organization indicator reveal the prevalence of political organization at the mandir. For instance, the mandir supports any political party that offers it financial assistance for purposes of community development. In terms of garnering support for community members, or creating awareness about issues or concerns affecting the community, the leader employs "politicization" tactics as a way of mobilizing community support. The recent Jag Bhaduria\(^1\) controversy is a case in point. In mobilizing support for Jag Bhaduria, the leader instilled in the minds of his congregation that Jag was a prominent figure that had fought against racism, and was himself now being persecuted because of his race. He went on to say that although Jag apologized to Prime Minister Jean Chretien for what he

\(^1\) Jag Bhaduria was the Liberal politician who came under attack for writing supposed "hate" letters to certain members of the Toronto Board of Education. In his letter, Mr. Bhaduria expressed his disappointment with the Board’s decision to deny him promotion within the teaching field. The denial of a promotion led Mr. Bhaduria to articulate a view that was regarded as highly controversial. He advocated the "shooting" of certain members from the Board of Education. This incident had clear racial overtones.
had said, people within the community (even members from his Markham riding) were bent on putting him (Jag) to the political stake (Excerpt from a Sunday sermon, January 1994).

Other types of political and ethno-racial ideologies are disseminated by the leader from time to time, especially during the Sunday services. The politicization of the congregation by the leader ranges from highly emotionally charged rhetoric, especially in regard to ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural issues affecting the community, to a "we" versus "them" focus. Thus, words and expressions such as "our culture", "our people", "we are all Hindus", "we are all Indians", "we must support our people", "we must stand up against oppression and racism", "we Indians have contributed significantly to human civilization", "we Indians are the greatest scientists and mathematicians", "we will transform Richmond Hill\(^2\) into our own Bharat (India)", to name a few, are commonly heard ethnic rhetoric at the mandir. The propagation of political ideologies by the leader is akin to ethnic activism in terms of style and tone of voice (e.g. very forceful presentations that are expressed in an invariably emotionally ridden tone of voice).

For the leader of the mandir (as an Indo-Caribbean and not a South Asian) to be propagating ideas such as "wanting to create Bharat or India at the mandir", is a rather peculiar but significant behavioral dimension. For Indo-Caribbeans, participation in a South Asian infrastructure or ethnic subculture is not an everyday experience. Therefore, their involvement in a South Asian ethnic subculture more closely resembles the symbolic

\(^2\) The Metro mandir is located in the town of Richmond Hill - a suburban district in the city of Toronto.
ethnicity described by Herbert Gans (1979): "a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour" (Gans, 1979:9).

Symbolic ethnicity is selective or intermittent in nature, making few demands on the individual and more closely resembling a leisure pursuit (Alba 1985; Kivisto and Nefzger; Waters 1990). This idea of symbolic ethnicity entails an emergent component and, as such, adds credence to the view that ethnicity is indeed a social construction. That is to say, ethnic identity is situationally variable and involves both revivals and creative constructions (Nagel 1994). In addition, the voluntary nature of symbolic ethnicity acknowledges the active role people play in constructing their own version of ethnic identities (Stoller 1996). With symbolic ethnicity, the leader of the Metro mandir can choose those aspects of his South Asian ancestry that appeals to him (and possibly) his congregation, and discard those that do not.

Ethnic organization, then, is a crucial part of the community construction process and shows the importance of ethnic leaders, academics, and institutions in promoting cultural renewal. Thus, by drawing on available cultural themes, ethnic discourses, and cultural symbols and meanings, the leader of the Metro mandir is able to instill in the minds of his congregation members an awareness of their subordinate and marginal position as an ethnic minority group in Canadian society. This, in turn, may result in more support (financial, political etc.,) for the leader and the community, and may also lead to the achievement of specific community goals. In other words, ethnic organization is key to community building, be it social, economic or political.
INTERVIEW DATA: METRO MANDIR

From the interviews three major themes related to ethnic identity emerged. The themes were: (i) the importance of ethnic leadership in the construction of ethnic identity; (ii) the role of collective organization (grassroots and elite input) and its contribution to particular aspects of constructed ethnicity such as cultural innovation and ethnic organization; and (iii) attitudes toward inter-ethnic marriage and inter-ethnic external socialization. The interviews reveal the prevalence of cultural innovation, specifically as it pertains to cultural diversity and the blending/mixing of cultures, and their impact on inter-ethnic cultural understanding and social learning. The interviews also reveal the impact that ethnic organization, specifically social organization, has on the creation of ethno-cultural institutions, attitudes towards inter-ethnic marriage, and "external" inter-ethnic socialization. "External" inter-ethnic socialization refers to the frequency/level of inter-ethnic socialization among community members that occurs beyond the confines of the ethno-religious institution. Other aspects pertaining to the cultural construction of community such as respondents' life history/personal history, reasons for joining and supporting the mandir, and respondents' views on the future outlook of the mandir provide a framework for understanding both individual and collective conceptions of ethnic identity.
Ethnic Leadership in the Process of Identity Construction

Building a cultural basis for new ethnic and national communities is one of the major goals of ethnic leaders in prompting cultural reconstruction. The reconstruction and study of cultural history is also a crucial part of the community construction process and again shows the importance of ethnic/immigrant churches, academicians, and institutions in bringing about cultural renewal (Nagel 1994; Cohen 1974; Portes and Manning 1986).

The majority of respondents felt that the leader of the mandir was instrumental in propagating their culture, ethnic identity, and religion. As one man commented, "the culture of Hinduism comes first for the leader.....and his ultimate goal is to the development of Hindu culture in North America and even the world"(IC 2). Another respondent felt that: "he (the leader) wants to make Hinduism one of the recognized religions.... he tells us that certain things belong to us, I mean to Hindus and Indians, and that other people have taken these things away from us.....he is bringing us back to our roots"(SA 1). Other respondents made similar remarks regarding the role of the mandir's leader in the upkeep of their culture:

I think he has good foresight and his visions are good. He is therefore a good leader; he represents the future of our race (my emphasis) and our religion and dharma....our future will be protected (IC 1).

He (the leader) is the pillar of our community. He plays an exemplary role in promoting and maintaining our culture and religion. He is a far-sighted person and he is talking the language of the community and he will have the backings from the community (IA 2).

Because of his visions we have the Metro mandir. Without him I don't think we can operate well - he is the guiding force. He has a very strong personality and most people look up to him. Because of his visions and ambitions, most of the stuff he wants to do will become a reality. His visions are always successful (IC 1).
Some of the respondents felt that the "intellectual" abilities of the leader were instrumental to cultural maintenance:

I think our leader is an intelligent man...I see him as an intellectual. There is so much you can learn from him. He is a major representative of our religion. I think he is the one person in the Hindu community who has aspirations for accommodating all Hindus. The Metro mandir is starting a lot of things up and it is because of our leader (IC 1).

He got vision to really uplift our culture and religion in North America. When you come here in North America you start to lose a lot of stuff....he wants to pass on our traditions to the kids, for example, we come from Guyana to here and our great grand parents came from India to Guyana, so we need someone to carry on the traditions of our forefathers. He has the intelligence and knowledge to do that (IC 2).

He constantly tells us how much he cares for our community and how involved he is in addressing the needs of our community. He is so dedicated to the upkeepment [sic] of the Hindu Dharma (religion) in Canada. And with his knowledge and wisdom, I know he is going to achieve his goal to keep our culture alive here in Canada (IC 2).

In addition to the temple being in close proximity to my home (the temple is five minutes away from my home), I also like the priest, Dr. X. and the people here. It is hard for me to stay away on a Sunday morning. I like it so much. I think Dr. X. is a very knowledgeable, intelligent man, and because of the knowledge he departs to the devotees, he is an intellectual. There is too much to learn from him (IC 2).

A few respondents saw the leader's political outlook as contributing to positive community development and recognition:

His leadership is most important. One thing he is politically aware of is the disadvantages Hindus face in this society. If you look at him on his T.V. program you will realize that he tries to create a positive image of Hindus. I think this is crucial in helping to change the perceptions people have about Hindus...the incorrect or stereotypical perceptions people have about us (SA 1).
He is an ambitious visionary who knows the needs of the community. He is like a politician who wants to honestly look after his constituency. The question remains is the sustaining capacity of that organization (meaning the Metro mandir - my inclusion) when he is not there. In other words, we are looking at the structure of the organization and without the present leadership, I don't know if that structure can stand on its own (IC 2).

He is definitely very ambitious. He wants to see our dharma (religion) and temple as a big institution to accommodate all South Asian communities. He plays a vital role, not only a cultural one, but a political one too. Without his role there wouldn't be a temple (SA 1).

The overwhelming emphasis on the leader's visions and personality (as can be discerned from the above data) regarding cultural preservation is also reflected in responses made by other members: "He has far-reaching visions and it is wonderful. If it wasn't for Dr. X's leadership we would not have had a temple" (IC 1). "He is very ambitious, and he is very sincere to the community; he wants to help the people in the community. He has a lot of energy and wants to do this for the community" (SA 1). "He is trying to preserve the Hindu culture and to Hindus who were possibly lost" (IC 2). "His personality is very strong and this is probably so because of his position in the community, as a religious leader...the respect he commands, and to get a bit more specific, his attitude toward accomplishing goals is a very positive one. His attitude is similar to what one of the actors in the movie, Apollo 13 said, and I quote: 'failure is not an option'" (IC 2). "He is familiar with the long term needs of the community. He recognizes the needs of our organization, culture, and community" (IC 2). One particular response pertaining to the leader from a South Asian congregation member is rather interesting:

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3 To maintain complete anonymity, the real name of the mandir's leader will not be used. Henceforth, the leader will be referred to as Dr. X.
I think he is providing good leadership. He is knowledgeable about Indian culture and scriptures. Being a West Indian may have prompted him to learn about his own religion, to find his roots, to find the culture of his ancestors. This is probably what makes him want to pursue his knowledge about Indian culture. For me, I am from India, therefore it is different, there is no need for me to find my roots. He (the leader) does not know a lot about his own culture and this is why he may be wanting to learn more......prompting him to find out more about his roots (SA 2).

The above quote about the leader may have some merit to it. The respondent surmised that because the leader himself is not from India may have motivated him to reconnect with his ethnic/ancestral "roots". This statement communicates a process of *individual ethnic renewal* on the part of the leader. According to Nagel (1995), individual ethnic renewal occurs when an individual acquires or asserts a new ethnic identity by reclaiming a discarded identity, or filling a personal ethnic void. The fact that the leader of the Metro mandir is Indo-Caribbean and not South Asian, coupled with the fact that he is a religious leader, may prompt him to identify strongly with the culture of his ancestors, namely, South Asia/India.

Also, his diasporic status and origin may further accelerate the need for ethnic/ancestral uprooting. The literature on ethnic renewal indicates the prevalence of both individual and collective ethnic renewal by particular ethnic groups. For example, European-Americans, American Indians, and African-Americans reconnecting with their "ethnic roots", and joining social, political and religious organizations (See Nagel 1995). One can also argue that the importance which is attached to the leader by members of the congregation regarding cultural revival and preservation, reflects a desire to engage in collective ethnic renewal.
In responding to interview question #12 (What characteristics best describe the leader's personality?), the majority of respondents chose the "ambitious" category as the number one characteristic to describe the leader's personality. The "charismatic" category was the second most chosen trait that many of the respondents felt best described the leader's personality. The "aggressive", "entrepreneurial", and "accommodating" characteristics came in third as the most chosen personality trait of the leader.

Collective Organization and the Cultural Construction of Community

The interviews unequivocally point to the pivotal role that the leader plays in promoting ethnic organization (i.e., the cultural construction of community) and ethnic identity. However, the interviews also indicate the importance of collective organization, i.e. activities at both the congregational level (grassroots) as well as the executive levels (elites) in the forging of a distinct ethno-cultural community. This collective spirit is most visible in the interviewees responses to questions pertaining to cultural diversity. All of the respondents agreed that cultural diversity was a necessary ingredient for the upliftment, promotion, and maintenance of Hindu and Indian culture in Canada. The following are just a few of the respondents' views on inter-ethnic collective organization:

I feel great about this (referring to cultural diversity - my inclusion) because that is what Hinduism is about....it encompasses everything in human life: race, colour, creed....Hinduism accepts this diversity. It is a positive and energizing force which creates an atmosphere of growth and development and the enhancement of Hindu culture in North America (IC 2).

It (cultural diversity) is good. It complements the mandir; it gives people the idea of how other (my emphasis) Indians have different traditions and it is nice to see how all of them come together and worship together at
Metro mandir....all of the differences (linguistic, food, clothes etc.,) are put aside here. What is first is that we are all Hindus. I think this is because of Dr. X....he is a very good example.....This is a fact of life. Indians from all nationalities, this is the uniqueness of this temple. Here there is no separation between the ethnic groups. This is good for the growth of the temple (SA 1).

Diversity is good. It gives people a sense of other people's culture and to worship together, to learn about other people's culture. One thing is common and that is understanding that people come together: we worship the same God, at the same time, we have different habits (e.g. we perform different rituals, Punjabis worship a little different from Gujratis and West Indians, yet the meaning is the same). We eat different food, and have different customs, but we could still come together and worship together. This diversity will enable people to learn from each other, it is healthy for the community....good for collective goals such as the building of community and institutions (IC 1).

Some of the respondents felt that cultural diversity would be good for the temple. As the following quotes illustrate:

I think that is the way the temple should be. This is the only temple in the entire world where we have all the murthis (idols of Hindu Gods). In India there is only one murthis in a temple (e.g. Hanuman murthi). Here we have a "one stop system" where everybody can come. The leader has been very open - he attracts everybody. The cultural diversity of this temple gives it a good platform to project the community to the outside community as one unit which is very, very, important economically and politically (IA 2).

I feel very good about this diversity. People who come here could see that their roots are similar. It enlightens each group as to the background of the other. It also brings out similarities and differences. The differences are slight modifications of the same thing (e.g. we West Indians might use a particular leaf for a function and they, the East Indians might use a similar leaf. Because we come from different territories we have evolved differently. Our differences may benefit everybody at this mandir (IC 2).

I think it is very good because it brings the community together. We don't have to be only from India to be Indian. Although we come from different Indian origins, we bring differences which are very interesting and good. Also, the plus point is how the West Indians have kept up with their
religion. I feel that even though they were not born in India, they have really kept up with their religion and culture. I am impressed by the way the West Indians have kept up with their culture. This is impressive. It also shows how strong our culture is. We don't have to be from India to be a Hindu (SA 1).

Others were more inclined to believe that cultural diversity was an asset to the community because it promoted inter-cultural learning:

I love it in the sense that we are exposed to people from different countries, their dances, food, dress. And our children from the West Indies copy a lot of the Indian ways and the East Indian kids also copy some of the West Indian ways. Apart from the kids learning about other cultures, the adults too adopt some of our ways of thinking and lifestyles (e.g. some East Indians enjoy our food for one thing). They (referring to East Indians) allow their children to be a little more free. Dr. X never makes the East Indian members feel left out although the West Indians founded the temple. Everyone here has equal opportunities (IC 1).

I love it. I think it's great. I am from a West Indian background and we weren't exposed to Indians from India. Indians from India always thought they were better than us. We West Indians are showing them that we have come a long way, and that we are good or even better than them. Plus we can mix with other people from other cultures. Diversity is positive and we can learn something from each other (IC 1).

I think it is very healthy for the community. Within the Asian Hindu population there are vast differences in their various cultures....this is like a melting pot, it is slowly resulting in the blending and forming into oneness e.g. the different types of dishes. The Gujratis never knew about West Indian food. Food helps to unite (IC 2).

It is obvious from the above data that diversity was embraced by many of the respondents. Most of the respondents saw cultural diversity as a process of social learning. As well, they felt cultural diversity was beneficial to their children and the younger generation of Hindus. However, responses from other respondents indicate the potential
for conflict among members as a result of the mandir’s diversity. But, according to the following respondents, any potential conflicts are quickly quelled by the leader:

I think this diversity is good. Dr. X has been able to cut the negative aspects of this diversity. He has adopted the positive aspects from the diversity and used it in such a way as to create oneness and understanding among the different cultures. Our children will get a more balanced outlook rather than getting a tainted outlook (SA 2).

This is one of the few temples that have this kind of mix (e.g. Maharastrians have their own temples, Gujratis have their own, Bengalis too, South Indians have their own temples too, many of these groups have their own temples). Although the diversity at this temple is positive and unique, it can also create hardships (e.g. specific groups at the temple would prefer that other groups such as East Indians, for example, stay out. For example, some West Indians would say that if you don't like West Indians then you should get out of here. They want to keep it West Indian. They do create problems from time to time, but it is just because of Dr. X that we are still united. He patches things up quickly. Dr. X. has a big influence from India (e.g. he knows big time Hindu personalities from India). He has interests in India, he reads books etc., from India. He has a big affinity for India. He would like to bring Bharat/India (my emphasis) here (SA 2).

The leader's "India perspective" mentioned above can also be discerned from another member of the mandir who said that:"Dr. X’s India perspective is religious and cultural, but not political. To him, India does not mean anything political, but it is the spiritual homeland. He gets good financial support from the non-Indo-Caribbean members at this temple" (IC 2). Continuing with the potential conflicts that can arise from the temple's diversity, one member responded by saying that:

I think it is a good thing - an opportunity to learn, to expand your horizons. But there are difficulties with this diversity (e.g. there is a tendency to be cliquish). It is only natural to cling to someone who you feel more comfortable with. Cliquishness is not a bad thing, but in the final analysis, when the cliques don't get in the way, things get done. One good thing about this temple is that if there is any in-fighting, one does not see it. This has to do with the leadership. I don't know what would happen if
Dr. X. is not around. He is a strong leader. I don't know if a second leader is being groomed. If you remove the personality of Dr. X. as leader, I don't see a second person or leader being able to accomplish what he has. This is probably where the cabal occurs and the politicking. Cliquishness could lead to real problems (IC 2).

Other respondents use interesting metaphors and analogies to describe cultural diversity at the mandir. One respondent commented: "It establishes uniqueness in the sense that one old man (possibly referring to India - my inclusion) with many children, because of a lack of food had to send his children away, some to Punjab, others to Gujrat, and others to the West Indies etc. Today, these children are in Canada and because of Dr. X., they are now realizing they are really from one seed. Because of our leadership, we have this active participation of members in society. Without the leadership, people would not come" (IC 2). Another respondent remarked: "It enhances our culture whereby we can blend ours with theirs. It is like adding sugar to milk to make it richer" (IC 2). One respondent said: "This diversity is wonderful, absolutely! It is the one building block of our religion which is to try to take from others. If we don't we will not benefit. I particularly like this diversity because I am not interested in segregation. This temple is anti-caste and this is one of the key reasons why I come to this temple" (IA 2). Others claimed that the temple was like a community centre and that the diversity will improve its overall status. One respondent made an insightful response regarding cultural diversity: "It exposes members to the history of the Indian diaspora. In this way we share the commonalities of the Hindu faith while at the same time respecting cultural differences" (IC 2).
For the majority of the respondents, cultural diversity fosters inter-ethnic understanding, an aspect of Hindu dharma (religion) that they all seem to accept and embrace. More importantly, however, is that this degree of acceptance for cultural diversity has also led to the collective "coming together" of the mandir's members in promoting and constructing a new "Indian" identity. This finding is consistent with the literature on constructed ethnicity. Cultural diversity a la cultural blending and cultural innovation is an important aspect of the constructionist process because it allows for the cultural construction of community (Nagel and Snipp 1993; Nagel 1994).

It is important to note here that almost all of the respondents felt that there was no one specific group at the mandir that was responsible for organizing activities and events. That is, they did not attribute the planning of events and their success only to the executive. Many believed that everything at the temple was based on teamwork, i.e., both the executive and the congregation members played equally important roles in making events at the temple possible, and successful. As one member from the executive branch commented: "We believe a team effort is more superior to individualism. Most of the members here are like a big family that you wouldn't find anywhere else" (IC 2). Continuing on with the "big family" theme, another respondent said: "What we have here is a temple family now...it is like an extended family" (SA 1). One of the auxiliary pundits at the mandir said: "Here it is like one big family. This is the only temple that is like this" (IC 2).

The emphasis on collective organization is further enhanced when respondents were asked who they would pick to be on the organizing committees at the mandir. The
overwhelming majority of respondents felt certain criteria such as "know how", "willingness", "competence", "reliance", "skills", "expertise", "dedication", "the right people", "ability", to a name a few, were the most important criteria for the selection of committee members. One woman felt that having business/entrepreneurial skills should be an important criterion for the selection of committee members. These findings are particularly interesting since most of the respondents did not use ethnicity/cultural background as a criterion for choosing committee members.

Two Indo-Caribbean respondents, however, felt that ethnicity was important in the selection of committee members. One woman said: "I would prefer to have my own West Indian people but at the same time you want some of the South Asian members too" (IC 1). Another man responded in the following way: "Most of the time we try to pick our own. you know like Guyanese and Trinidadians....we feel more comfortable with our people. But South Asians, because of their know-how, are asked to join in. The Indians from India know more than us about the religious aspects. We don't really segregate. What is most important is choosing competent people"(IC 2). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the downplaying of ethnicity as a criterion for the selection of committee members provides more evidence for the strong collective orientation by all and sundry at the mandir. That is, collective organization (teamwork) from both the elite and grassroots levels seems to be the social and organizational norm at the Metro mandir.

When the leader himself was asked: To whom or what do you attribute the success of the temple?, he responded by saying:

It just happens. We make everybody feel welcome. West Indians started this temple and now we have other groups. They are all
mixed up....they all mix together. West Indians make East Indians feel welcome and vice versa. It is one big family here (Dr. X).

When I asked him whether he attributed anything to his own actions, the leader, in a very modest tone of voice, remarked:

No. I attribute it to the executive of the temple and the people who take part in the running of the temple. People in the community are important and they come from various backgrounds. The executive comprises of many groups, two members are from India, one from South Africa, I am from the West Indies. This mixture helps. I am sure you yourself (referring to me - my inclusion) have noticed the mix of people who come to this temple. You can see so many West Indians, Gujratis, Punjabis, East Africans, and even some South Indians at our Sunday services (Dr. X).

These responses by the leader are consistent with the responses made by members of the mandir. Like the majority of the mandir's members, the leader, too, believed that the success of the temple had a lot to do with the team effort made by the executive, congregation members, and people in the community. The leader's comment on the cultural mix at the temple (see quote above) allowed me to probe further into the ethnic dynamics at the temple. So, I asked him why he referred to everyone at the temple as "Indians" when many of the members were Indo-Caribbeans. He replied in the following way:

We want everybody to feel that they are Indians and Hindus. We don't want people to feel they are West Indians or Punjabis. I want people to feel it is a Hindu temple - to satisfy all the diverse cultures of India. This diversity....as you look around....you can see our West Indian women are now wearing saris (traditional Indian dress - my inclusion) and beautiful dresses. When this temple first started, West Indians used to dress ordinary, you know wearing ordinary West Indian clothes. Now it is salwaar kameez (another traditional Indian dress worn by Indian women - my inclusion) (Dr. X).
This response by the leader is indicative of his pro-South Asian/pro-India perspective seen earlier on. This is why the leader constantly reminds the congregation that he wants to create "Bharat" (or India) and Ayodhya (a sacred place in India where the Hindu God Ram lived) at the temple. When I asked whether it was possible to create "Bharat" here given the ethnic make-up of the temple, the leader responded in the following way:

Yes, it is made up of these various groups at the temple - Punjabis, Maharastrians, Gujratis, West Indians etc. We even have some South Indians (Tamils) here too. It is this uniqueness that we hope would create an India here. We have a Hindi school to help in the language. It is important that our children learn their heritage language. We have tried to build our altar like those in India....you can see the traditional Indian columns in the murthis (idols). You may have also noticed the paintings from India to depict India and sceneries from India so everybody could have a bird's eye view of what India is like (Dr. X).

This quote unequivocally illustrates the leader's very strong India focus. The fact that he wants to bring his ancestral homeland (i.e., India) to the temple by implementing Hindi language and other ethno-cultural programs is a clear indication of ethnic renewal. For diasporic groups, reaching out to their ancestral origins and ethnic roots is not an uncommon phenomenon. Ethnic leaders play an important role in bringing about ethnic renewal in their specific ethnic communities.

The image of ethnicity emerging in research on native-born European Americans, for example, places emphasis on ancestry as a mechanism of either social allocation or social organization. According to the constructionist perspective, European American ethnicity is a variable with differing modes of expression and levels of intensity. Whereas some individuals feel a strong attachment to their ancestral heritage and actively retain
selective aspects of their ethnic culture, others' identification does not extend beyond knowing the country from which their ancestors emigrated (Gans 1994).

The symbolic attachment that the leader of the Metro mandir has toward his ancestral homeland (India) and heritage is consistent with Stanford Lyman and William Douglas' (1976) view that ethnicity is situationally conditioned, a perspective which conceptualizes individuals as "knowledgeable agents who make their own history, and, as such, play an active role in the construction, destruction, and reconstruction of ethnic attachments and identities" (Kivisto, 1989:16). Thus, in his efforts to rekindle his lost "Indianness", the leader of the Metro mandir is trying to align himself very strongly with India and his South Asian ancestral roots. This effort at cultural revivalism/renewal buttresses Nagel's (1994) assumption that: "culture and history are often intertwined in cultural construction activities".

**Ethnic Organization and the Cultural Construction of Community and Ethnic Identity**

As was mentioned earlier, ethnic organization is an important process necessary for the maintenance and reconstruction of ethnic identity. Ethnic organization is useful for understanding the survival of ethnic groups, as well as illuminating processes of ethnic renascence among immigrant groups (Nagel and Snipp 1993). Ethnic organization involves the creation of ethno-cultural institutions for community growth and development. As was seen earlier on, most of the respondents felt that the leader should pursue his plans to build particular institutions such as a school, a crematorium, a museum
of Hinduism, and a senior citizen home. Some felt that the creation of cultural institutions was important for the cultural development of their children:

If our children have to be brought up in an environment where their ethnic traditions are strong, then these institutions are necessary (SA 2).

Yes, the leader should pursue his plans to create these institutions. We need them. We need them for our old people and we need them for our kids. Many people don't understand what the kids are doing, so we need a museum of Hinduism so they would know what they are doing because the kids are the ones who would be carrying out the traditions (IC 2).

I think it is very important because it is an extension of the community. There is a social (my emphasis) component to this temple. Dr. X is not only fulfilling a religious need, but a social and educational need. He is thinking about our future and our children. It is a reflection of the community....the needs of the community. He is trying to make it like the West Indian religion - building temples, congregation, schools etc. I feel it is a building process modelled on West Indian Hindu community development (SA 1).

Yes, it is important because we need to get these kids organized. We need to bridge the gulf between the community at large and the community at the mandir. It is important for both kids and parents (IC 2).

Others felt that the building of cultural institutions was important for the development of social support systems:

I feel the building of institutions is very important for the community. A senior citizen home is the most important one. People of the same ethnic background would prefer to be together because of similar characteristics. I mean, if there is an Indian senior citizen home, why should I go to a home where there is only white people? (IC 1).

These things are very much needed for the community. A crematorium is important; a place where we can do our services, the final rites....when you go to these Canadian places there are certain things you cannot do e.g. burning incense, doing rituals such as hawans (prayers) etc. (IC 1).
Quite a number of the respondents felt the building of cultural institutions is necessary, especially for the benefit of their children. Transmitting their ethnic culture to their children was seen as a priority for community members. This is not an altogether surprising finding since many immigrant groups living in host countries tend to make a concerted effort to transmit an ethnic identity to their children, perhaps because they perceive the ethnicity of their children as more precarious. A few respondents, however, were not in favour of the creation of ethno-cultural institutions. As some respondents commented:

The building of a cultural centre maybe somewhat redundant. It is not a necessity because we have a lot of facilities here [in the basement of this temple] to conduct cultural events. A crematorium is needed since it is an important function of our religion. If particular things are close to home, then it is good e.g. marriage, births etc. I am somewhat against the school. Again it is segregation....wouldn't give our children a realistic point of view. This could lead to a great lack of understanding because of their limited, law abiding Hindu perspective that they will get from such a school. This is not the real world (IA 2).

I feel most of these plans to create institutions are not important. The only thing that is important is a cultural centre. The other projects like the crematorium, senior citizen's home etc., is total crap [sic] (SA 2).

I don't think these plans are important. I think it is important to have people, that is what religion is about - helping people in distress, giving liberal scholarships to our children in education. You have to take the religion to the people. Sharing is important. You want to help starving people, battered women etc. We should be caring. If we build our own school, our children wouldn't mix in mainstream society. This would not be good for our children. They must compete with Canadians. We should build on our diversity...take the good from all to the benefit of oneself and one's community. And, by the way, I don't agree with the leader's aim to create "Bharat" here. I don't want my children to have accents. I want them to be Canadians first and then Indian. I don't want a little India here. I don't want ghettos. I want mosaic. The leader's plans to build all these
things sounds more like a business agenda than a religious one. This is a religious institution not a business institution (SA 2).

The leader's response regarding his plans to create ethno-cultural institutions was as follows: "These things have not yet been achieved. Presently we are extending the temple where the museum of Hinduism is currently being constructed. We may be able to include a school from grades 1 to 5 there too. I think they are necessary, and we should do it. I don't know if it is a breakthrough, though. It is a necessity. It would be very good to have our own senior citizen home. I also want to see our own nursing home here too. Our people don't feel at home in the mainstream institutions e.g. particular types of food and religious things are prohibited in these institutions. They would not be able to get their food and to practice their religion at mainstream places. It is important for us to have our own institutions" (Dr. X).

The overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the leader should pursue his plans to build particular ethno-cultural institutions such as a senior citizen's home, an elementary Hindu school, a crematorium for Hindus, a museum of Hinduism, to name a few. The claims made by the majority of respondents reveal the importance of the leader in attempting to construct a new Canadian "Indian" identity. This is manifested in the leader's attempts to build institutions, culture, history, and traditions. Efforts to build and re-build cultural institutions are often major cultural reconstruction projects. Educational programs, as well as the creation of cultural centers, ethnic and tribal museums, and instructions in cultural history are often a central part of cultural reconstruction (Nagel 1994).
However, not all of the respondents viewed the leader's plans and visions in a positive light. One member commented: "I think his visions are sort of government funding visions....if we don't get government funding for projects such as the building of an elementary school, crematorium etc., then everything is dead" (SA 2). Another member remarked: "The leader's plans to build institutions indicate that his religious orientation goes against his religious principles. It is more self-serving....an ego problem. This is the leader's personal agenda and very few people would stand up to him. I would like to see him use our limited funds in a better way" (SA 2).

The leader's commitment to institution building and creation was also noticeable at one of the recently held South Asian women's conferences entitled "Samaj", which was organized by the Metro mandir's Women's Group. In his address to the participants of this conference, the leader articulated his political views on his visions for the South Asian community. He said: "Unity is what we need to create a stronger South Asian community. Whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Ismaili, etc., the basic culture of South Asians is the same. We eat some of the same food such as dhal and kitchri. I would like to see all South Asians coming together irrespective of religion or creed" (Dr.X).

On his views on South Asian women, he said: "The days of wife battery and to be barefoot and pregnant are gone. We must think about the contributions made by great South Asian women leaders such as Indira Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto. They should be your role models. By bringing all of our brothers and sisters together, we can create a united South Asian community in Canada. We need more of these women's conferences because they will create greater awareness within our South Asian community" (Dr.X).
Here again we see the leader's strong South Asian perspective. Some of the examples he uses are South Asians or people from the Indian subcontinent. No mention is made of any Indo-Caribbeans, or achievements made by Indo-Caribbeans. It is possible that the leader uses the term "South Asian" as an inclusive category i.e., anyone who can trace their origins to India or the Indian subcontinent are regarded as "South Asian". As a matter of general ethnic categorization, however, the term South Asian is an ethnic designation for people who were born either in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka. Indo-Caribbeans, by and large, are not included in this broad ethnic category.

The seemingly progressive views espoused by the leader, as seen in his speech on South Asian women, is somewhat consistent with the view that the Metro mandir is not only a religious institution, but also a political and economic institution. As one member commented:

The Metro temple is one of the few temples that is making an impact as a progressive (my emphasis) religious institution. It is addressing social issues relevant to the community and being aware of the political realities in Canada. There is a strong social and political element at the mandir and this is because of the character of the leader who has a sense of political responsibility to the Hindu community. The temple initiates programs that go beyond the religious contexts and is involved in the secular as well, e.g. being aware of drugs, Aids, the role of women, senior citizens, youths etc. Its involvement in religious broadcasting in reaching out to the wider community explains the need it sees for exposure of Hindu religious thought and practices. Its library is also a symbol of its commitment to the education (my emphasis) of its membership. Because the congregation is solidly middle-class and even upper middle class, especially those members who are outside of the Indo-Caribbean community, resources are made available for particular educational and social projects (IC 2).

Another respondent made similar comments regarding the social, economic, and political character of the Metro mandir:
This temple today is not only a temple; it is a social institution. More needs to be done on the social side e.g. the social upliftment of the community....a place for socialization, a good centre for our people. Politically, we should do some more political outreach in the community. We need to get more political leaders here. People started looking at this temple as a viable political place.....seeing this temple as a major political force. Politicians saw that this temple had a strong leadership and following, so they want to support it in order to get the votes. We are very much involved in getting funding for particular projects from the government. We got funding from the government for publishing Milton Israel's book "In the Further Soil". The publisher of this book is TOPIC (the Toronto Organization for the Promotion of Indian Culture) and Dr. X. is the Chairman and I am the President. TOPIC was instituted by this temple. This temple can play a political role...we should be playing a role in the political arena. We should take stands on political issues, especially during election time. This temple should be seen as a centre to bring political awareness among South Asians. I think it can fulfil this role. MPs and politicians see this temple as a foci for votes and they come and represent our perspectives. The temple can also a play a strong economic role. I initiated the temple to have our own credit union but the government messed it up by handling it amateurishly. Now the credit union is a dead issue. But we could have our own credit union, we have the resources to create our own credit union (IA 2).

These quotes affirm the many roles, other than the religious one, that the immigrant church plays in the construction of ethnic identity and community. What emerges from the data is how the mandir and its leadership are building the community as a religiously-based ethnic group. The obvious example here is the plans concerning the building of a senior citizen home. Jews started this in Toronto, the Italians continued, and it is a clear signal that this group is reaching a level of maturity. But many other things relate to this ethnic consolidation: the recruitment via the mandir in terms of recruitment of candidates for training as insurance agents, the provision of employment to members in the community (refer to the participant observation data section), the building of an elementary school, relations with local politicians., etc. All of this seems to suggest that
this particular ethno-religious community is modelling itself (either consciously or unconsciously) along the lines of other ethnic groups such as the Jews and Italians.

Research on new ethnic and immigrant groups consistently support the view that religious activities reinforce the ethnicity of participants and bind them more closely to the ethnic group (See Haddad and Lumis 1987; Kivisto 1993). Therefore, the immigrant/ethnic church can promote awareness of ethnic identity beyond the religious dimensions. That is to say, many immigrant churches-temples function as a community for the purpose of social, economic, and political organization. The centrality of the religious/ethnic leader in affirming group solidarity and ethnic insularity is key in the social organization of the immigrant church. Thus, the immigrant/ethnic church, via the leader, acts as a vehicle for the preservation of the ethnic heritage of a community. Ethno-religious leaders inculcate the religious group with ethnic values and faith in the ethnic heritage of the group (Stout 1975).

In terms of personal history (i.e., reasons for joining the mandir), the respondents attributed a number of factors for joining the Metro mandir. One of the most common reasons given was the "peaceful" nature of the mandir. The following are some of the responses:

I come to this temple because of the appeal of the service, the people and the distance. Mainly because of the service, the way they are conducted. It is done very authentic, the priest is very learned, the atmosphere is very peaceful. The West Indian people are very loving and friendly to me; they love me all and I like them a lot (SA 1).

This is the only mandir that was half-decent. It is comfortable and there is a feeling of peacefulness. The service is in English. I have learnt a lot. I would come to different religious functions and I would learn from them. I have become more knowledgeable by coming to this mandir; I felt
comfortable with the people. I lived in Trinidad for two years and I know how to move with them. I feel more comfortable with Trinidadians than with my own people from India. This is another reason for coming here. I feel very comfortable with West Indians. We do puja the way they do it in Trinidad. Deep down inside I admire how West Indians have kept up with their culture and religion. Although they might look different from outside e.g. they would wear a skirt etc., but they are better because their feelings and devotion are deeper than ours. We Indians from India took devotion for granted, but for West Indians, they had to cling on to it. West Indians did not take it for granted (SA 1).

Others came to the temple for different reasons:

I came here because I was West Indian and I felt much more comfortable here and am still very comfortable here (IC 1).

I come to this temple because there is no in-fighting and because it is close to my home. At other temples there is a lot of in-fighting. The atmosphere here is nice, the service and meditation are nice. There is a peaceful atmosphere here (SA 2).

I am very much against segregation or organization by caste. This does not exist at this temple. Here you will get Kenyans, West Indians and other groups. I prefer this non-segregationist system. Also, the service is conducted in English which is very good. It is great that we learn other languages, but the operating language in this country is English. This is my definition of the Melting Pot; we have to take some of the things that this country has to offer (IA 1).

These findings indicate that for some respondents, specifically the South Asian ones, a peaceful atmosphere as well as the "loving" nature of West Indian people were the main reasons for joining the temple. This finding reinforces the view that cultural diversity is embraced by different ethnic groups at the temple. Close proximity to the temple was another reason for joining the temple. Other respondents joined the temple because of their kids. One respondent said: "It offers something for my kids, e.g. the Youth Group and Bal Vihar classes are good because they can learn Hindi, the arts etc."
They can learn from their culture, and role models are important for our community” (SA 1). Another respondent commented: "The main motive for coming here is my children. They can learn from the pundit's discourses and the other activities at this temple" (IC 1).

A few respondents felt that the character of the religious leader attracted them to the mandir:

The service here on Sunday mornings are the most meaningful and well organized. Dr. X, when he talks from that seat, he talks a lot of sense. He tries to relate religion to everyday life. The Indo-Caribbeans picked up everything good e.g. West Indians have adopted Jagrans, Chowkis (Punjabi religious customs - my inclusion) and they, the West Indians, have adopted shloks (passages from the Gita) from South Indians. Dr. X. has learnt from Gujratis and has used some of their discourses and even bhajans (hymns). So, I think West Indians have benefitted from the differences (SA 2).

One thing that attracted me to this temple is the leadership of Dr. X. I saw that he was going in the right direction. I see him as a true leader of the community. Whatever he does, he does it in an exemplary manner. This was what attracted me here (IA 1).

We have our priest Dr. X. - he is my drawing card, I love him. He is superb and so is his leadership. He is totally committed to this temple. I have seen this temple grown from 50 to 1,500 devotees on Sundays (IC 2)

Here again, we see the centrality of the leader in attracting some people to the temple. In addition to close proximity to the temple, many of the respondents felt that it was important for their children to learn about their culture, hence the reason for joining the temple. In terms of the events/circumstances in life (life history component) that led people to the temple, the majority of respondents claimed that religious socialization during their childhood encouraged them to continue with their religion in Canada. Many of the respondents also said that they had an obligation to pass on their Hindu religious traditions and culture to their children.
With regards to attitudes toward inter-ethnic marriage, the majority of respondents did not seem to have a problem with it. Many of them said that they would accept inter-ethnic marriage with some conditions, however. Most of the respondents felt that inter-ethnic marriage would be desirable if the person their son or daughter was getting married to was also Hindu. As one South Asian respondent said: "As long as the person is Hindu. We should not get into stereotypes about other Hindus from other countries. This will prevent us from appreciating each other. If, for example, my son wants to marry a West Indian girl and if she is good (my emphasis) I wouldn't mind" (SA 1). One woman declared: "To tell you the truth, I don't mind anybody of Indian origin, but they must be Hindu. Place and background is no problem. I wouldn't take a fit if my daughter brings a non-Indian home, but I would like him to be a Hindu. But, I would still have to accept it. I wouldn't kill myself though. I won't throw her out of the house" (SA 1). Another respondent said: "I have no problem with inter-ethnic marriage. I totally approve of it if members are from the Hindu community. I am one-hundred per cent in favour of inter-ethnic Hindu marriages. However, I don't personally believe in inter-racial marriages. I don' think they are workable; they lead to problems"(IA 2). One respondent commented: "To me, as long as the person is Indian, I don't care. Whether it is a Muslim Indian or whatever, I can agree with that. But not non-Indians.....no Blacks definitely. Maybe a White man but not a Black man, my children know that" (IC 1).

This anti-inter-racial perspective, especially toward Blacks was evident in another respondent's attitude toward marriage: " I am neutral....our kids are free to choose. We will accept their choice. I think so. Our religion is based on mankind. I am a little
opposed to inter-racial marriages, especially when it comes to marrying a black. My daughter married a white man; my sister is also married to a white man. I approve of inter-racial marriage except for blacks" (IC 2). Interestingly, most of the respondents said that inter-ethnic marriages among temple members were infrequent. Some said that where there is inter-ethnic marriage, it is normally between Trinidadians and Guyanese. Others said that there were inter-ethnic couples at the mandir (i.e. Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians), but that such unions were rare.

It is a well known fact that in South Asian culture marriage is a very important "rite of passage". Not only is it important for South Asians to marry within their own ethnic group (i.e. other South Asians), it is also important for them to marrying someone from their own ethnic subgroup/community. For example, it would be much more desirable for a Sindhi person to marry someone within that same ethnic subgroup than it would be to marry outside of that group. In other words, marriage in South Asian culture tends to be highly ethnically and sub-ethnically specific. Marrying outside of the South Asian community, therefore, normally leads to parental disapproval. Arguably, the fact that there are very little inter-ethnic marriages between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians at the temple may not be simply a function of the newness of the temple, but culturally entrenched beliefs about endogamy, especially in South Asian culture.

Most of the respondents agreed that inter-ethnic socialization outside of the mandir was common. Many of the respondents said that socialization amongst members outside of the mandir went beyond invitations for religious occasions. Many of the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian respondents said they both invited each other for birthday
parties, anniversaries, weddings etc. Others said that they had very little time to socialize outside of the temple with anybody.

When respondents were asked about the "future outlook" of the temple, many felt that it would be bigger and better. As one respondent remarked: "I hope it will look bigger and better. I see more and more people coming everyday. Right now we are "flying high", we are the #1 organization in Ontario, if not in Canada. I see it growing bigger and better" (IC 2). Others felt that it may remain the same: "It would be the same. I hope it would be better. I hope the kids and the next generation could do the same....somebody will have to run the temple, hopefully our kids. The responsibility for the future of this temple lies in the hands of our kids" (SA 2). One respondent felt that "this temple and its leadership seem to be a trendsetter in terms of bringing the religion and culture to the forefront. Other temples come to this temple and take patterns...they come and take pictures and pattern it to their own temples. Other temples see the Metro temple as a role model" (IC 2). Another respondent said: "I think ten years from now, you may see branches of this temple, meaning there is a capacity limit to this location; it may have to have branches to accommodate more and more people. In general, though, it is hard to predict what will happen in the future" (IC 2). One respondents said: "This temple would be one of the best in North America "(IC 1).

One respondent felt that the future of the temple was contingent upon the leadership: "As long as Dr. X is there or someone similar to his style, with the same values, I think it will be an organization that Hindus will be proud of "(IC 1). Another respondent felt that "It would look positive but very similar to what it is right now. It
would look very cosmopolitan which is a reflection of Dr. X." (SA 1). One respondent claimed that the temple will go beyond the religious dimensions: "It will fulfil the religious needs of the community. It will meet the social (my emphasis) needs of the community. It could act as a base for developing the community economically (my emphasis) in a co-operative basis" (IA 1). Another respondent described the future of the temple as follows: "It would not be like a temple anymore; it would be like a Centre of Hinduism. Any South Asian communities will be welcome to join and participate in activities of this institution. It will go beyond the religious aspects. And based on the importance of our cultural values, this temple will grow. It will be one of the biggest institutions in North America. I can see this coming" (SA 1). Others felt that the temple will have a bright future.
COMPARATIVE DATA

As was mentioned earlier on, the main reason for utilizing the case study approach was primarily because the Metro mandir represented a more syncretic case when compared to the other mandirs where field research was conducted. In total, fifteen mandirs were visited for the purposes of data collection, and of these fifteen temples, none were actively engaged in pursuing agendas that were related to ethnic identity construction. In addition, most of these temples, with the possible exception of the Metro mandir, had ethnically homogeneous congregations. The one temple (other than the Metro mandir) that had an ethnically heterogeneous following was the Hare Krishna Temple (ISKCON). The ISKCON temples, commonly known as the Hare Rama Hare Krishna movement, generally attract devotees that are racially, ethnically, and culturally heterogeneous; it has historically attracted many non-Indian members such as Europeans and white North Americans.

OVERVIEW OF OTHER HINDU TEMPLES

Although the ISKCON (Toronto Branch) temple where field research was conducted had an ethnically heterogeneous following, its organizational format (it houses Ashrams or residential religious shrines where some of its devout followers live) and agenda were quite different from the Metro mandir. For one thing, there were no observable ethnic identity construction elements at the temple. To paraphrase a comment made by one of the leaders of the ISKCON temple: Hare Krishna philosophy is based on
oneness with the Supreme Godhead or Lord Krishna with our guru Shrila Prabhupada. Krishna consciousness embraces diversity but such diversity is never used as a political tool for creating rifts or divisions within our international multicultural following. Krishna consciousness is based on pure spirituality and nothing else (Excerpt from an Interview with an ISKCON leader). Both the interview and participant observation data collected at the ISKCON temple did not at all indicate the prevalence of any identity construction elements.

Of the fifteen temples examined, eight of them were comprised overwhelmingly of South Asians or India-born Hindus and were, therefore, categorized as South Asian Hindu temples. These mandirs were either Punjabi, Gujarati, or South Indian/Tamilian temples. At these temples, ritual practices, religious and cultural observances, food, and other activities and events were carried out in their traditional ethnic or regional manner. In many of the Punjabi temples, for example, the sermons were carried out entirely in the Punjabi language. Similarly, the biggest and best known South Indian/Tamilian temple in Toronto carries out its religious/ritual practices and activities in the orthodox South Indian Hindu tradition. At this temple, it is common for devotees to pay a pundit to perform their pujas. South Indian Hindu practices dictate that a devotee should maintain a certain distance from deities, hence the reason for paying poojaris (priests) to perform pujas. This phenomenon is uncommon at both North Indian and Indo-Caribbean mandirs where the practice of Hinduism is based on North Indian religious customs. In the North Indian Hindu tradition, close physical proximity to deities is not prohibited.

4 Lord Krishna is one of the major deities in the Hindu pantheon.
Fieldwork, specifically participant observation, conducted at one of the South Asian temples revealed aspects of rigidity in its practice of Hinduism. At this temple, women and men were segregated. During the sermons women sat on one side and men sat on the other side. Even during the bhojans (meals), women ate separately from men. Such segregative practices are still common in the practice of Hinduism in India today. Even more surprising was the fact that at another South Asian mandir, caste apparently seemed to be one of the criteria for membership. In my informal discussions with some of this mandir’s members it was "hinted" that people from higher caste backgrounds (such as Hindu Brahmins) were seen as more desirable participants. Other temples such as the Brahmin Society of Toronto, the Arya Samaj of Toronto, as well as the Sanatinist temples are just a few of the sectarian oriented mandirs that can be found in Canada today. At all of these mandirs, no observable agendas related to ethnic constructions were visible. For most part, the agendas of these temples revolved more or less around fund-raising appeals and events for the purposes of temple expansion and the like.

Five of the fifteen temples investigated were comprised mainly of Indo-Caribbean Hindus, specifically Indo-Trinidadians and Indo-Guyanese. Like most of the South Asian mandirs, the majority of Indo-Caribbean temples were preoccupied with temple expansion. What I found particularly noteworthy at both the South Asian and Indo-Caribbean temples was the leaders emphasis on building temples that would not only serve as places of worship, but would also cater to the social and cultural needs of their communities. For example, the mandir would act as a community center, a banquet hall, a Hindi language school, a Senior Citizens Club, Day Care center, a library of Hinduism, and other
recreational facilities. These intended objectives and goals are themselves forms of ethnic constructions out of religion.

All of these future plans are in some way modelled on the Metro mandir which has already implemented some of the above programs (e.g. Hindi language programs, a library of Hinduism, a senior citizen club, and a youth group). Given the aims and goals of many of the South Asian and Indo-Caribbean temples where field research was conducted, it is reasonable to assume that the Metro mandir is setting a trend - a model to other religious institutions that are in the process of cultural and spiritual community building. In terms of ritual practices and other religious and cultural activities, all of the Indo-Caribbean temples did not deviate drastically from the traditional Indo-Caribbean practice of Hinduism. For a more visible breakdown of the temples visited, a catalogue of the various temples and their ethnic, ritualistic, and cultural characteristics were created and are listed below. To maintain the anonymity of these temples the actual names of the temples will not be used; they will be referred to as temple #1, temple #2, etc.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF HINDU TEMPLES INVESTIGATED**

**Temple 1:**
- South Asian (Gujarati) Temple
- Ethnic composition: Congregation is more than 95% Gujarati
- Sermons: Conducted in Gujarati language
- Ritual practices (including food): Performed in traditional Gujarati traditions
- Spiritual leader: Gujarati Brahmin
Temple 2:
- South Asian (Punjabi) Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Over 90% Punjabi Hindus; remaining 10% made up of other South Asian groups e.g. some Mahararstrians, Gujaratis, and Bengalis
- Sermons: Conducted in Punjabi and Hindi languages
- Ritual Practices (including food): Performed in traditional Punjabi practices
- Spiritual Leader: Punjabi Brahmin

Temple 3:
- Indo-Caribbean Temple
- Ethnic Composition: 70% Indo-Guyanese; 30% Indo-Trinidadian
- Sermons: Conducted in English with occasional readings in Sanskrit from the Gita
- Ritual Practices (including food): Typically Indo-Caribbean
- Spiritual Leader: Indo-Guyanese

Temple 4:
- South Asian (Tamil) Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Comprised entirely of South Indians e.g Madrasis and other Tamil speaking Indians
- Sermons: Conducted in Tamil
- Ritual Practices: Traditional South Indian religious customs and practices
- Spiritual Leaders: South Indian Brahmins

Temple 5:
- Indo-Caribbean Temple
- Ethnic Composition: 90% Indo-Trinidadian and 10% Indo-Guyanese
- Sermons: Conducted in English
- Ritual Practices (including food): Performed in the traditional Indo-Caribbean customs
- Spiritual Leader: Indo-Trinidadian
Temple 6:

- Indo-Caribbean Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Predominantly Indo-Trinidadian
- Sermons: Conducted in English with Sanskrit readings (translated) from the Gita
- Ritual Practices (including food): Performed in typical Indo-Trinidadian tradition
- Spiritual Leader: Indo-Trinidadian

Temple 7:

- South Asian (Bengali) Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Predominantly Bengalis
- Sermons: Conducted entirely in Bengali
- Ritual Practices (including food): Performed in typical Bengali tradition
- Spiritual Leader: Bengali (from Calcutta) Brahmin

Temple 8:

- South Asian (Maharastrian/Marathi) Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Predominantly Maharastrian congregation
- Sermons: Conducted in Marathi Language
- Ritual Practices (including food): Performed in the Marathi tradition
- Spiritual Leader: Marathi Brahmin

Temple 9:

- Indo-Caribbean Temple
- Ethnic Composition: 60% Indo-Trinidadians; 40% Indo-Guyanese
- Sermons: Conducted in English
- Ritual Practices (including food): Performed in typical Indo-Caribbean manner
- Spiritual Leader: Indo-Trinidadian

Temple 10:

- Indo-Caribbean Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Predominantly Indo-Guyanese
- Sermons: Conducted in English
- Ritual Practices (including food): Performed in typical Indo-Caribbean manner
- Spiritual Leader: Indo-Guyanese
Temple 11:

- South Asian (Punjabi) Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Predominantly Punjabi congregation
- Sermons: Conducted in Punjabi
- Ritual Practices (including food): Performed in typical North Indian tradition
- Spiritual Leader: Punjabi Brahmin

Temple 12:

- South Asian (Mixed) Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Combination of Gujaratis, Punjabis and other North Indian groups
- Sermons: Conducted in Hindi, Punjabi and Gujarati
- Ritual Practices: Performed in the North Indian Hindu tradition
- Spiritual Leaders: Punjabi and Gujarati Brahmins

Temple 13:

- South Asian (Telugo) Temple
- Ethnic Composition: Entirely Telugo (South Indian) congregation
- Sermons: Conducted in Telugo
- Ritual Practices: Performed in typical South Indian manner
- Spiritual Leader: A number of Brahmin priests/pundits

All of the above temples, because of their largely ethnically homogeneous congregations, were dissimilar to the Metro mandir inasmuch as they did not display any visible signs of ethnic innovations such as the blending of two or more ethno-religious traditions, or the borrowing of traditions and customs from other cultures and the like. However, there is one Indo-Caribbean mandir that seems to be attempting (consciously or unconsciously) to recreate and maintain, possibly in its entirety, the traditional Indo-Caribbean ethnic, cultural, and religious customs and traditions.
THE CONTRAST TEMPLE

Unlike the Metro mandir, this particular temple (referred to here as the Contrast temple) is made up almost entirely (99 per cent) of Indo-Trinidadians. According to one of my informants from the Contrast temple, there are only a few Indo-Guyanese and South Asian Hindu members at the temple, both groups representing less than one per cent of the entire congregation. The temple's composition at the elite level is predominantly Indo-Trinidadian. For example, its Board of Directors is comprised entirely of Indo-Trinidadians. It was also founded by Indo-Trinidadian Hindu immigrants in 1988 and is now located on the eastern fringe of Toronto.

Because of its particularly Indo-Trinidadian character and the fact that it is unequivocally maintaining and retaining aspects of the "old country", namely, Trinidad, it became an ideal contrast to that of the Metro mandir. The Contrast temple represents the antithesis of the Metro mandir. First, both are Indo-Caribbean temples but they represent fundamentally different agendas. For instance, Indo-Caribbean members at the Metro mandir make a conscious effort to embrace their South Asian ethnic ancestral identity. This attempt at "re-Indianization" at the Metro mandir is manifested in its strong South Asian focus/orientation.

In comparison, the Contrast temple is actively engaged in maintaining the traditional Indo-Trinidadian ethno-religious identity. At this temple, there does not exists a Bharat Mata Ki Jai (victory to Mother India) mentality, but a Trinidad Mata Ki Jai (victory to Mother Trinidad) ideology. It seems to me that the main focus of this temple is on the preservation of the diasporic Indo-Caribbean Hindu identity, specifically the
Trinidadian ethnic/Hindu identity. This perception can be corroborated not only by the ethnic character of the temple or the types of ethnic activities that are held at the temple, but also by the temple's connections. The Contrast temple has strong ties with prominent members from various political, cultural, and religious (mainly Hindu) organizations in Trinidad. For example, on his recent visit to Toronto, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Basdeo Panday, visited the Contrast temple.

Based on my observations, it is apparent that the Contrast temple's agenda is not geared towards the transformation of an existing ethnic identity (as is the case of the Metro mandir), but is more concerned with preserving and propagating a distinctive Indo-Caribbean ethnol-religious identity. The analysis below, drawn from participant observation and interviews from the Contrast temple, will reveal how prevalent traditional ethnic identity there really is. Cultural and religious festivals held at the temple and some of its Sunday sermons were my main sources in this respect.

At the Contrast temple, for example, only one aspect of cultural reconstruction is observable, namely, the Sunday sermons. Most of the Hindu mandirs in the Toronto and Greater Toronto areas have adopted the western concept of the Sunday religious sermons/congregational gatherings. One of the members of the Contrast temple mentioned that Hindi language classes, dance classes and other culturally-based programs will be implemented once the temple "gets off the road". The congregation is currently building a brand new temple and all efforts are presently geared toward that project. He went on to say that after the new temple is built and everyone has settled in, there would be a
concerted effort to try to implement social and cultural programs for community members.\textsuperscript{5}

Similarly, forms of cultural innovation at the Contrast mandir are almost non-existent (See Table 4 below). For example, there currently exists no cultural blending practices (e.g. food, music, ethnic literature, and ethnic advertisements) at the Contrast temple. At the Diwali and Holi melas, and the annually held \textit{Diwali Nagar} (City of Lights) celebrations at the Contrast mandir, it is common to find the following Indo-Caribbean cultural traditions and practices, as shown in Table 4.

\textsuperscript{5} Excerpts from an interview with a member from the Contrast temple, November 19, 1995.
### TABLE 4

**CULTURAL INNOVATION**
*(CONTRAST TEMPLE)*

**ASPECTS OF CULTURAL BLENDING**

**FOOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>INDO-CARIBBEAN</strong></th>
<th><strong>SOUTH ASIAN</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baiganee (appetizer made with eggplant)</td>
<td>Vegetable Samosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahena (appetizer made with peas)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoolowree (flour balls)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubles (chick peas sandwich)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fried Channa (Chick Peas)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconut Pone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurma (fried dessert)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponge Cakes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Bread</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mango Chutney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhalpuri Roti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channa and Aloo (potato and chickpeas)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paratha (Buss-up Shot) Roti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuchella and anchaar (hot pickles)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconut Ice Cream</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karahi (Dhal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Cakes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin Talkari (vegetable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Cones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karhee (savoury soup of gram flour)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**MUSIC**

**INDO-CARIBBEAN**

- Chutney
- Chowtal
- Tassa (Drum Beating)
- Classical Indo-Trinidadian Singing
- Hindi Film Songs (Caribbean renditions)

**SOUTH ASIAN**

- Hindi Film Songs*

*Although Hindi film songs and music are India-based art forms, they have, and continue to be very popular in Caribbean societies. Therefore, the playing of Hindi film songs at Indo-Caribbean temples should not be seen as a particularly unique aspect of cultural innovation.*

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**ETHNIC ADVERTISEMENT**

**INDO-CARIBBEAN**

- Caribbean Restaurants and Roti Shops
- Indo-Caribbean Lawyers
- Caribbean Travel Agencies
  (e.g. Guyana Airways and BWIA)
- East and West Indian Grocery Stores
- Caribbean Real Estate Representatives
- Indo-Caribbean Musical Concerts (Chutney-Soca)
- Seven Nights Bhagawat Yagnas (Prayers)
- Bazaars and Yard Sales

**SOUTH ASIAN**

- Musical instruments from India
  (an advertisement)
Unlike the Metro mandir, the Contrast temple does not have its own library. Therefore, it was impossible to have an ethnic literature category for the Contrast temple. The data presented in Table 4 (the cultural innovation category) clearly demonstrate the lack of cultural innovation at the Contrast mandir. In the areas of cultural blending (food, music, and ethnic advertisements) there is very little South Asian material. Aspects of cultural innovation is limited to Indo-Caribbean/Indo-Trinidadian practices and traditions. In each of the above categories there is only one South Asian inclusion.

In comparison, the Metro mandir exhibits both Indo-Caribbean and South Asian cultural materials in the area of cultural innovation. With the exception of the food and music categories (see data on Metro mandir's cultural innovation tables) where there is an equal balance of Indo-Caribbean food and music, the ethnic literature and ethnic advertisements at the Metro mandir is overwhelmingly South Asian in content. At the Contrast temple the reverse is true: much more Indo-Caribbean content than South Asian. This predominantly Indo-Caribbean flavour adds credence to the view that the Contrast temple is indeed engaging in the preservation and promotion of the traditional Indo-Caribbean ethnic identity. Table 5 below is a list of some Indo-Caribbean ritual and cultural practices that are displayed at cultural and religious celebrations held at the Contrast temple.
TABLE 5

RITUAL PRACTICES
(CONTRAST TEMPLE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Description</th>
<th>Temple</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghantaal</td>
<td>Contrast Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shankh</td>
<td>Contrast Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaha</td>
<td>Contrast Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jai</td>
<td>Contrast Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om Shanti Shanti Om</td>
<td>Contrast Temple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these practices are carried out and performed in the typical Indo-Trinidadian Hindu tradition at the Contrast temple. The beating of the ghantaal, the blowing of the shankh, the chanting of the words swaha, jai, and Om Shanti are reminiscent of Ramayan Yagnas (prayers from the Hindu holy scriptures), hawans, and other types of pujas in Hindu Trinidad. At the Metro mandir, on the other hand, the use of the shankh (the blowing of the conch) during prayers and worship is rare. When I asked members at the Metro mandir why the shankh was not used there I was told: "We have the shankh here but it is rarely used because we don't have an expert to blow it....but the blowing of the shankh is done during the final aarti/ offering" (Excerpt from an Interview with a member from the Metro mandir).
The beating of the ghantaal (round piece of brass) at the Metro mandir is completely non-existent. This is surprising given the fact that it is an Indo-Caribbean temple. The beating of the ghantaal is one of the most common ritual practices at Indo-Caribbean Hindu poojas, yet the Metro mandir does not carry on this tradition. When I asked why the ghantaal was not used at the mandir the response was a simple: "we don't have one" (Interview with an informant). Similarly, the chanting of the word "swaha", observable during any Indo-Caribbean Hindu religious occasions such as poojas, hawans, and yagnas, is also absent at the Metro mandir.

Other religious and cultural practices that are distinctively Indo-Caribbean in character can also be found at the Contrast temple. For example, at its annually held Diwali Nagar celebrations, it is common to see some Indo-Caribbean cultural artifacts on display. It should be noted here that the Diwali Nagars held at the Contrast temple is modelled on the Diwali Nagar held in Trinidad every year. Table 6 (below) contains some of the most popular Indo-Caribbean cultural artifacts found at the Contrast temple's Diwali Nagar celebrations.
**TABLE 6**

**INDO-CARIBBEAN CULTURAL ARTIFACTS**
**(CONTRAST TEMPLE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jharoo</td>
<td>(a broom made from coconut branches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soop</td>
<td>(a utensil used for sifting rice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckrig aur Moosar</td>
<td>(mortar and pestle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choolhaa</td>
<td>(earthen stove/fireplace used for cooking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phooknee</td>
<td>(a piece of iron used to blow fire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karahie</td>
<td>(iron pot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chowki</td>
<td>(breadboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chima</td>
<td>(steel iron used to fix coals in choolhaa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loorhaa</td>
<td>(round stone used for grinding) and Sil (grinding stone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belnaa</td>
<td>(rolling pin)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the above cultural artifacts are just some of the many the Indo-Trinidadian cultural and ethnic paraphernalia that can be found at the Contrast temple during major cultural and religious festivals. These artifacts are synonymous with East Indian life and presence in Caribbean societies. When the Indians came to the Caribbean they brought with them these (and many more) artifacts, and had continued to use them for more than one hundred years after their arrival to the West Indies. Today, these artifacts represent some of the ethnic characteristics of Indo-Caribbean peoples and their culture; they have not only supplied Indo-Caribbeans with a distinctive ethnic identity, but have also laid the foundation for the development of a diasporic Indo-Caribbean ethnic identity. These artifacts represent the rich legacy of Indo-Caribbean culture and heritage.
In comparison, the Metro mandir does not display such artifacts during its cultural and religious festivals. In all my time as a field researcher at the Metro mandir, I never once saw a display of Indo-Caribbean cultural artifacts. The data from the Metro mandir reveal the blending of both Indo-Caribbean and South Asian cultural practices and material, with the South Asian aspects being dominant at times. At the Metro mandir, for example, it is common to hear the leader using Hindi words and expressions (albeit sparsely) during his sermons. Some of these Hindi expressions include: "Ab kya hoga" (what will happen now?), "mujhe mav karo baba" (forgive me father!), "sharam nahin ati" (don't you have any shame?), to name a few. This linguistic strategy is important since almost half of the Metro mandir's congregation is South Asian. In contrast, very little Hindi (with the exception of the reading of Sanskrit from the Bhagavat Gita) expressions are used at the Contrast temple primarily because there are very few South Asian members there.

In terms of ethnic organization, the Contrast temple lacks a solid base/infrastructure from which community projects could be undertaken. One possible reason for the absence of a system of social, economic, and political organization at the temple has to do with the fact that it is a relatively new temple that has not achieved a level of maturity comparable to that of the Metro mandir. That is, the temple is at a stage where its main preoccupation is building a new temple and raising funds. Once these aims are achieved, it may then be possible to engage in stronger community building and the development of community based projects. Its status as a relatively "young" temple impedes rapid efforts at broader community expansion. I predict that in another few years
the Contrast temple will be one of the most prominent and established Indo-Caribbean Hindu mandirs in Toronto.

Data from the Metro mandir indicate the strong presence of a community-based infrastructure. For example, it has implemented programs that can benefit members of the community. It currently has a system of ethnic organization that caters to the social, economic, and political needs of its community members (See Ethnic Organization Data from the Metro mandir). Some of these organizations range from Women and Youth Groups to employment opportunities, and other related social and cultural support systems.

The differences between the Metro mandir and the Contrast temple are obvious. At the Metro mandir there exists unambiguous elements of cultural construction. At the Contrast temple, however, such cultural construction is absent. The comparative data indicate the lack of cultural reconstruction, cultural innovation, and ethnic organization at the Contrast temple. The display of Indo-Caribbean cultural heritage at the Contrast temple coupled with its overall Indo-Trinidadian flavour indicates a desire to preserve and maintain the customs of the "old country" i.e., Trinidad, and more generally, the Caribbean. These observations tend to support the claim that the Contrast temple is not in any way pursuing an agenda that is based on ethnic identity construction, but one that is geared toward maintaining the traditional Indo-Caribbean ethnic/Hindu identity.

But the fact that the Contrast temple is trying to maintain aspects of the "old country" is, in itself, an aspect of cultural reconstruction. By using particular aspects of the Hindu religion (such as ritual practices etc.,) and trying to organize their religious, cultural, and social lives in the tradition of the "old country", the members of the Contrast
temple are, in essence, engaging in a form of cultural reconstruction. Unlike the type of cultural reconstruction process occurring at the Metro mandir, specifically the incorporation of new cultural forms into its social, religious and cultural activities, the Contrast temple, on the other hand, is undertaking a different kind of cultural reconstruction. At the Contrast temple, aspects of cultural reconstruction are manifested in its attempts to revive cultural practices from the past - a distinctly Indo-Caribbean diasporic past. At the Metro mandir, the cultural reconstruction process is being pursued in such a way as to reconnect not with a diasporic past, but with a lost ancestral one. In other words, both temples are trying to reconstruct a different "past" - one that is Indo-Caribbean and the other South Asian/Indian.
CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I will summarize the overall findings of this study and will then discuss those findings. The discussion will be related to both the theoretical and empirical aspects of the research. More specifically, it will highlight the ethnographic and grounded theory components and their contributions to theoretical advancement in the area of ethnic relations. I will end with a discussion of this study's contribution to the field of ethnic relations, and will offer some possible future research suggestions.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study support the contention that ethnicity is indeed a social construction. Findings derived from both the participant observation and the interview data unequivocally point to aspects of identity construction and the cultural construction of community. These aspects include cultural reconstruction, cultural innovation, and ethnic organization. The Metro mandir has implemented a number of programs/activities that clearly indicate how cultural resources necessary for ethnic renewal and identity construction are being utilized. The Metro mandir has been able to revive/restore historical and cultural practices that were heretofore lost to Indo-Caribbeans. Thus, the restoration of Hindi, teaching Vedic culture and history to children, and training in Indian classical dance and music are just some of the activities that are being used to fuel the "re-Indianization" process that is currently being undertaken at the mandir. For Indo-Caribbean Hindus, learning their ancestral language and history and participating in
cultural activities that were destroyed as a result of colonial transplantations are seen as crucial for the reconstruction of their traditional ethnic identity.

Similarly, it has been shown that the implementation of cultural innovation practices such as cultural blending are important for inter-cultural learning, sharing and understanding. By embracing some aspects of their ancestral South Asian culture (e.g. food and music), Indo-Caribbeans demonstrate that they are willing to adopt and regain some of their lost ethnic heritage. Even in the area of ethnic organization, Indo-Caribbeans at the Metro mandir are participating in programs and events that are oriented more to South Asians than they are to Indo-Caribbeans. All of this demonstrates how a diasporic group is trying to reinvent the "past" - aspects of an ancestral culture that were lost and possibly forgotten. In trying to rekindle their lost "Indianness", Indo-Caribbeans must, out of necessity, engage in cultural reconstruction, cultural innovation, and ethnic organization.

An ethnic group's links to its past is central to our understanding of the persistence of ethnicity. For Indo-Caribbeans at the Metro mandir, searching for an identity involves a turn to the past. Thus, the search for identity among Indo-Caribbean Hindus entails a process of ethnic rediscovery, or what has also been referred to as the "new ethnicity". According to Isajiw (1977), the "new ethnicity" is not a total culture: it is a phenomenon of identity articulating with selected ethnic cultural patterns. The essential consideration here is that there are people whose feeling of identity with their ancestral group has actually developed rather than decreased (Isajiw, 1977:82). For diasporic groups, adopting
an ancestral identity means turning to the past - a symbolic past. As Isajiw (1977) states:

The turn to the past is symbolic. Ethnic patterns, even if completely torn out of their original social and cultural context, become symbols of one's roots. Such symbols are necessary for the support of one's identity. Hence, in any search for identity, one's ethnicity becomes relevant because through its ancestral time dimension one can, at least symbolically, experience belonging. Some elements of the heritage come to be known, practiced, or glorified (1977:82).

In other words, items from the cultural past can become symbols of ethnic identity.

Daniel Bell argues that the resurgence of ethnicity is "best understood not as a primordial phenomenon in which deeply held identities have to re-emerge, but as a strategic choice by individuals who, in other circumstances, would choose other group membership as a means of gaining some power and privilege" (Bell, 1975:171). Bell's assumption may account for the persistence or rediscovery of ethnicity, but the idea that the rediscovery of ethnicity is based only on a rational strategic choice is a bit misleading. The phenomenon of ethnic rediscovery must certainly entail some positive affective dimensions (Isajiw, 1977:80). Rose et al., states that:

It involves not only a recognition that because of one's ancestry one is a member of a racial or religious group....it involves a positive desire to identify oneself as a member of a group and a feeling of pleasure when one does so (Rose and Rose, 1965:247).

The attempts at cultural innovation, cultural reconstruction, and ethnic organization indicate that a dialectical process is at work at the Metro mandir. This process, involving the relationship between convention and innovation, provides the conditions for Indo-Caribbean identity continuity and change. The need to define a "worthy Indo-Caribbean identity" is characterized by efforts to revitalize traditional symbols of unity and purpose.
This point has been illustrated by focusing on a cardinal facet of identity, namely, continuity. History is necessary insofar as it provides an "authentic" record of what actually happened in former times. More importantly, however, is the fact that history provides people with a perception about, or a series of perceptions about their past, enabling them through the selective stressing and negotiation of certain values to make positive identifications with their forebears (Hobsbawm, 1983).

For Indo-Caribbean Hindus, then, the selective stressing of particular aspects of their ancestral culture has, in a sense, allowed them to identify emotionally with a common history. The results of my research with Indo-Caribbean Hindus at the Metro mandir have revealed the presence of: (i) a dialectical process involving the rediscovery of ethnicity or the forging of a new identity; and (ii) a dynamic process which provides the conditions for identity continuity and change.

In view of this study's findings, one can conclude that at the Metro mandir, Indo-Caribbean Hindus commitment to their ancestral culture is largely symbolic, hence the idea that they are ethnic "rediscoverers". In comparison, members at the Contrast temple, because of their commitment to the traditional Indo-Caribbean culture, are not engaged in a process of rediscovery. As such, their practice of traditional Indo-Caribbean culture is essentially non-symbolic in nature.

In asking questions about collective identities, it is important that we take into account the role that ethnic leaders play in engendering such processes. The particular character of the leadership at the Metro mandir can be likened to the kinds of strategies and tactics activists use in ethnic movements. Ethnic movements tend to reinforce a strong
interplay between culture and mobilization (Nagel 1994). In addition to playing a key role in the construction of cultural communities and new identities, cultural construction can also be placed in the service of ethnic mobilization. Cultural claims, imagery, and icons are used by activists in the mobilization process (Ibid:165). Snow and Benford (1988) argue that social movement organizers and activists use existing culture (e.g. cultural symbols, meanings, and rhetorical devices) to make movement goals seem reasonable. Such techniques are what Snow and Benford call "frame alignment".

At the Metro mandir, it is apparent that the leader is trying to connect his particular appeals to a particular set of concerns. In sensing the direction in which his congregation members are moving toward or thinking about, the leader can skilfully connect his visions to the particular mind-set(s) of his congregation. Recognizing that his congregation is dedicated to preserving their religion and culture in North America, the leader can "frame" his visions in ways that reflect the concerns of the community. Thus, he is able to "sell" his vision by going in the same direction as his congregation members: (i) the preservation of the Hindu religion and culture in Canada; and (ii) the re-discovery (as is the case with the Indo-Caribbean members) of a lost ancestral culture and heritage.

The leader's experimentation with new ventures such as the building of ethnocultural institutions indicates his awareness of his community's concerns. This awareness may ultimately lead to the implementation of projects that could satisfy the cultural needs of his community. For example, the fact that a majority of the mandir's members are in favour of preserving the Hindu religion in Canada may have had something to do with the leader's plans to build and create specific cultural institutions (e.g. the building of a
museum of Hinduism). In other words, the leader is able to satisfy the cultural demands of his community by constantly reminding them of his desire to put the Hindu religion on the world map. Thus, by drawing on cultural themes and ethnically and culturally specific types of discourses, the leader of the Metro mandir is more likely to recruit members, gain credibility among Hindus, and achieve community aspirations and goals.

Framing his visions based on the mind-set of his congregation members, coupled with his ability to be both ambitious and charismatic, may enable the leader to create a "culture of solidarity" (to use Fantasia's, 1988, concept) among Hindus. This may foster collective consciousness among community members, and may ultimately lead to collective action necessary for community building. The findings from the interviews have already demonstrated the leader's desire to create ethnic and cultural renewal in the Canadian Hindu community. The leader of the Metro mandir is, in essence, trying to bring back all Hindus to their "roots". His perceived knowledge of, and visions for the Hindu religion and Hindus in Canada, have resulted in the widespread belief (among his following) that he may indeed be the purveyor of a new Canadian Hindu identity.

The emergence of a new Hindu "Indian" identity in Canada cannot only be attributed to the leadership or activities from the "above". Data from the interviews also point to the role that grassroots members at the mandir play in the process of identity construction. Collective organization from the "below" has also been instrumental in forging cultural renewal in both the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian Hindu community. The embracing of cultural diversity, inter-ethnic co-operation, attitudes toward inter-ethnic socialization, and spirited teamwork by members of the congregation have created
conditions necessary for identity construction and cultural renewal. The construction of a new identity, therefore, involves a collective process wherein elements from both the top and bottom are instrumental in initiating such a process. Elements from both the top and bottom levels are co-ordinated in such a way that activities from both levels do not happen independent of one another, but are more or less meshed together.

The findings also suggest that not everything at the Metro mandir is based on peaceful co-existence between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians. The presence of a number of contradictory elements in the data suggests that all may not be well at the mandir. On the one hand, the majority of Indo-Caribbean and South Asian respondents seem to want to genuinely embrace cultural diversity and multiculturalism, and a willingness to want to learn about each other's culture. On the other hand, there seems to be a clash of ideologies, especially in the area of inter-ethnic marriage. Indo-Caribbeans, in general, seem to adopt a more liberal view toward inter-ethnic marriage, specifically between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians although they were not liberal in their views regarding inter-racial marriage.

In comparison, the South Asian respondents seemed to be more conservative in their attitudes toward inter-ethnic marriage. Many of them displayed a "stay within your own group" attitude toward marriage. When they were in favour of inter-ethnic marriage, it was based on a number of conditions. The following quotes illustrate particular reservations regarding inter-ethnic marriages:

If the potential spouses are approved by families and if they have good jobs, well-established and good education etc, then inter-ethnic marriage is ok (SA 2).
If my daughter wants to marry a Hindu that is not from India I could live with that, but I will make sure the person she will be marrying is from a good background. If he is good I wouldn't mind (SA 1).

I have no problem with inter-ethnic marriage....totally approve of it if members are from the Hindu community (SA 2).

These quotes indicate a willingness to accept inter-ethnic marriage, but that willingness is contingent upon a number of cultural factors such as religious background. For the South Asian respondents, being Hindu was an important criterion in approving inter-ethnic marriage. But, in spite of these differences, both the South Asian and Indo-Caribbean groups still seem intent on embracing cultural diversity and cultural renewal.

What, then, do these differences in ideologies tell us about both groups? As was discussed in an earlier chapter, such differences are not a function of the newness of the Metro mandir, but more a function of the marked cultural differences between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians. The differences in ideologies can be explained by the cultural systems that spawn both groups. For Indo-Caribbeans, living in the western hemisphere and the subsequent adoption of western values and creole culture have, to some degree, structured their perception of the world - a perception that is at odds with the South Asian cultural orientation. Since culture shapes one's behaviour it is understandable why people from different cultural systems experience the world in different ways.

There also exist elements of competition between the two groups. Findings from the interviews reveal the articulation of notions of "superiority" by some members from the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian communities. Given the somewhat negative
perceptions that South Asians have toward Indo-Caribbeans and vice versa, it is not surprising that underlying suspicions and mutual antagonisms are often resurrected during interactions with in-group members about the "other" group. Thus, the fact that Indo-Caribbeans must constantly prove their "Indianness" in their interactions with their South Asian counterparts attests to the mutual perceptions and stereotypes that define the relationship between the groups. In attempting to defend one's culture/ethnic group, the employment of particular defensive strategies such as "you are not really Indian" or "we are a more open-minded people" are often used as a way of counteracting negative stereotypes. This scenario raises the very important issue as to whether or not Indo-Caribbeans are "genuine" Indians.

The notion of "genuine" Indian is significant because it throws light on the nature of the interaction that characterizes the relationship between diasporic and non-diasporic groups. The nature of the interaction between such groups is what facilitates the social construction of the "Other" Indian. Interaction between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians necessarily implies mutual perception and interpretation of each other's socio-cultural practices, beliefs, values, and norms. Invariably the evaluation of one group by another is premised on ethnocentric perceptions and interpretations. In other words, evaluations are based on one's own society and culture as the standard from which other cultures are judged. Not only is the socio-cultural complex of the "other" Indian viewed as different from one's own, but it is also regarded as either "superior" or "inferior" to one's own.

The fact that Indo-Caribbeans and their culture are seen as representing a poor imitation of the "original" or "genuine/authentic" (the idea that the "genuine" Indian and
Indian cultural system are to be found only in India) version of Indian culture attests to the perceptual dynamics that come into play in the socio-cultural encounters between Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians. This type of negative inter-cultural perception may ultimately lead to a low sense of ethnic-self, especially among Indo-Caribbeans who must continue to defend who they are and what they represent.

Any attempts at understanding the concept of the "genuine" Indian would require the utilization of the Indian Diaspora perspective. The socio-cultural dynamics of the Indian diaspora is distinctly different from its "homeland" counterpart. First, the Indian diaspora elucidates the process of social change. The migration of East Indians to many parts of the globe has resulted in the transformation of the "original" culture. Placed in their new environments, diasporic Indians had no other choice but to engage in a process of socio-cultural reconstitution and adaptation. This process entailed a reorientation to the social, cultural, and political patterns of the host societies into which they were placed.

In addition, the cultural patterns and traditions associated with the ancestral homeland (India) could no longer be maintained in its traditional or "genuine" form. In the Caribbean, for instance, the process of creolization (discussed in Chapter 4) radically altered those cultural traits that were regarded as "authentically" Indian. Cultural traditions such as language, arranged marriage, diet, and clothes were some of the "old" country traditions that were subject to modification and transformation. Also, the conditions of barrack-life during the period of indentureship were not conducive to the preservation and retention of cultural practices (e.g. caste) of the ancestral homeland.
The result of such changes was the development of a diasporic identity with its own distinctive socio-cultural baggage. This new and distinctive socio-cultural baggage emerged in a context of the Indians' adaptation to the host society's socio-economic and political conditions, as well as its socio-cultural beliefs and practices. In other words, what happens to the cultural kit of a diasporic community is determined by a host of social and historical conditions. What has been retained by diasporic groups is essentially a combination of some of the "old" country's traditions (e.g. religion) and the "new" or host country's norms, values, attitudes, and traditions. This dual socio-cultural context that characterizes the Indian diaspora is, therefore, based not only on conscious cultural retention and revival, but also on the invention of new traditions. As such, the cultural reorientation experienced by all diasporic/overseas Indian communities carries with it a stamp of creativity.

From this perspective, it can be argued that the diasporic Indian culture in the contemporary Caribbean is not so much a variant of the original Indian culture, but a culture and identity that are uniquely Indo-Caribbean. Thus, Indo-Caribbeans can take pride in laying claims to their own identity, namely, a diasporic Indo-Caribbean identity without having to grapple with the all too common dilemma: Are Indo-Caribbeans "genuine" Indians or "bastardized" Indians? I would argue that the answer to this seemingly puzzling question can be summed up as follows: Indo-Caribbeans are neither; they are simply diasporic Indians.

What is currently happening at the Metro mandir may be a first step in resolving some of the misconceptions and stereotypes that Indo-Caribbeans and South Asians have
toward each other. At this temple, the embracing of cultural diversity coupled with the
desire to engage in inter-cultural participation and sharing may provide a framework from
which more positive dialogue between the groups can be fostered. For Indo-Caribbeans
at the Metro mandir, learning about their ancestral culture and heritage means ignoring,
to some degree, the negative stereotypes that South Asians have of them and vice versa.
In other words, it can be argued that at the Metro mandir, Indo-Caribbean Hindus are
making a concerted effort to reach out and find their ethnic "roots".

This effort is all the more feasible since the leader himself is Indo-Caribbean, and
one who is not only committed to maintaining active ties with the "ancestral homeland"
(i.e. India), but who is also largely responsible for instilling in the minds of his Indo-
Caribbean followers an awareness of a lost "past" that needs to be excavated. It is my
contention that the idea of going back to one's ethnic "roots" is not merely an instance of
ethnic re-discovery or ethnic renewal, but one that represents the strongest aspect of
constructed ethnicity. This is why I have maintained throughout this study that the
activities occurring at the Metro mandir contribute significantly to our understanding of
the construction process.

The aforementioned discussion on the "genuine" Indian leads us now to the more
important issue of defining what is meant by "Indian" as it is used in this study. The fact
that two culturally disparate groups have come together to create an awareness of who
they are may, at first glance, seem contradictory. The contradiction becomes less obvious
as both groups, in selectively choosing those aspects that bind them together, namely,
religion and ancestry, try to create a new identity for themselves in Canadian society. But,
in asking the question: how is it possible for an ethnically diverse community to create an identity that is "Indian"\(^1\), where one group is objectively East Indian/South Asian and the other Indo-Caribbean, would certainly require a re-definition of what it means to be "Indian".

In Chapter 4 it was argued that Indo-Caribbeans have, at their disposal, a number of ethnic identity options from which to choose. Three types of identity options were isolated. Some Indo-Caribbeans may opt for the diasporic Indo-Caribbean category based on personal and/or cultural criteria. Others may opt for a middle position, i.e. neither East Indian nor West Indian. Individuals in this category may opt for the ethnically neutral category, namely, Caribbean. And, finally, some Indo-Caribbeans may opt for a more ancestral ethnic category such as South Asian. The question, therefore, is under which of the above categories can the Indo-Caribbeans at the Metro mandir be subsumed? The answer is: none of the above.

The findings from both participant observations and interviews unequivocally indicate that Indo-Caribbeans are opting for a fourth ethnic category, namely, a diasporic-ancestral ethnic identity. By melding together elements from their ancestral "past" and diasporic "present", Indo-Caribbean Hindus are, in effect, engaging in a process of ethnic rediscovery, that is, re-defining who and what they are. The fact that Indo-Caribbeans are attempting to incorporate their lost Indian culture with their diasporic culture also suggests that they are engaging in process of identity reconstruction. For Indo-Caribbeans, this process of identity reconstruction means going back into their displaced ancestral cultural

\(^1\) The use of the word "Indian" here refers to the ancestral identity, namely, South Asian.
toolkit and searching for those discarded tools that can help them re-build their new "Indian" identity. The combination of diasporic and ancestral cultural elements has resulted in the emergence of a second diasporic Indo-Caribbean identity. It is within this dual cultural context that the notion of an "Indian" identity is to be understood.

In joining forces with their South Asian counterparts, Indo-Caribbeans can continue to assert their diasporic Indo-Caribbean identity while simultaneously adopting some of their ancestral South Asian cultural elements into their existing diasporic identity. The result of this combination is an identity that is neither fully diasporic nor fully ancestral, but one that is diasporically and ancestrally based. Such an identity is, therefore, oriented to both the past and present. Given their orientation to both the past and present, Indo-Caribbean Hindus at the Metro mandir could now lay claim to a new identity, namely, a diasporic-ancestral Indo-Caribbean Canadian identity.

Questions pertaining to the adjustment of the South Asian members to this new identity still remain. My observations in the field coupled with the interviews tend to suggest a partial willingness among the South Asian members to embrace particular aspects of Indo-Caribbean culture. Many of the South Asian members are impressed with the way in which Indo-Caribbean Hindus have kept up with their religion and culture. The fact that people who were not born in India (e.g. Indo-Caribbeans) are capable of retaining particular aspects of their religion and culture is, for South Asians, nothing short of amazing. For the South Asian members, this may lead to a stronger sense of ethnic self-esteem and pride in their culture. As one member remarked: "I am impressed by the
way West Indians have kept up with their culture. It also shows how strong our culture is" (SA 1).

In other areas of Indo-Caribbean culture such as music, dance and food, some of the South Asian members have shown a willingness to experiment (and at times actually like) with some of these cultural artforms. For example, it is typical to see South Asian members dancing to chutney music at the mandir. Similarly, some of them like Indo-Caribbean foods, such as the dhalpuri rotis and channa and aloo (chickpeas and potatoes in a curried base), to name a few. In spite of the acceptance of some of the Indo-Caribbean traditions, the South Asians, by and large, still seem to want to hold on strongly to traditional South Asian cultural practices. We have already seen that the South Asian members, when compared to the Indo-Caribbeans, are less inclined to accept inter-ethnic marriage. Many of them, for example, are still in favour of arranged marriages for their children.

Given the scenario surrounding the South Asian members at the mandir, I would argue that while they are embracing some of the Indo-Caribbean culture, they are not, however, feeling the full impact of an identity transformation that their Indo-Caribbean counterparts have been experiencing. South Asians do not have to try to recover cultural elements of a lost ancestral past. Unlike Indo-Caribbeans, too, their agenda is not based on a commitment to reembrace a lost ancestral identity. Their presence and participation at the mandir may be seen as an asset because it is they (South Asians) who have the resources (e.g. ancestral language etc.,) that Indo-Caribbeans need in order to undertake ethnic identity reconstruction.
THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS

*Ethnographic Component*

The theoretical model that has been utilized in this study (i.e. the social constructionist model of ethnicity) will now be examined in relation to the data that have been generated. One of the central aims of this study was to demonstrate ethnography's contribution to the testing and verification of existing theories. The data in this study support the social constructionist approach to ethnicity. Figure 2 (refer to the Constructionist Model of Ethnicity in the Conceptual Framework chapter) depicted a schematic breakdown of the conceptual dimensions of the constructionist model of ethnicity. The three main conceptual categories isolated in the model were: (i) cultural reconstruction; (ii) cultural innovation; (iii) ethnic organization.

In the area of cultural reconstruction, we have seen how particular activities at the Metro mandir involve aspects of cultural revivals/restorations and new cultural forms. The implementation of ethnic language classes, the teaching of cultural history, the building of cultural institutions such as museums, schools, and other ethno-cultural institutions are consistent with the cultural reconstruction indicator. According to the constructionist approach, cultural reconstruction entails the restoration of historical and cultural practices, and the creation of cultural centers and educational programs for the purpose of preserving and reviving cultural traditions. For diasporic groups, such as Indo-Caribbeans, particular cultural traditions have been lost or have fallen into disuse, hence the reason for attempting to restore those aspects of their ancestral heritage. Aspects of cultural
reconstruction at the Metro mandir are, therefore, critical building blocks for ethnic and cultural renewal.

In terms of cultural innovation, a number of transformations were apparent. One of the main aspects of the cultural innovation indicator is cultural blending. At the Metro mandir, various aspects of cultural blending were discernible. Some of these included the blending of different ethnic foods, music, ethnic literature, and ethnic advertisements. As we saw earlier on, cultural blending at the Metro mandir was not unidirectional but multidimensional. That is to say, aspects of cultural blending involved the use of Indo-Caribbean, South Asian and, to a lesser extent, Canadian cultural material. Cultural blending/borrowing, therefore, is key to understanding cultural innovation. The blending/merging of cultural elements from many component group traditions attests to the prevalence of cultural innovation at the Metro mandir.

Similarly, in terms of ethnic organization, the constructionist model of ethnicity was supported as well. Aspects of ethnic organization such as social, economic and political organizations have already been implemented at the Metro mandir. The creation of community-based projects and other programs related to ethno-cultural community development are seen as important survival strategies for ethnic and immigrant groups in host societies. Thus, the collective mobilization of resources by ethnic groups is a crucial mechanism for ethnic survival and organization in new ethnic and immigrant communities.

All three conceptual dimensions (cultural reconstruction, cultural innovation, and ethnic organization) are, in some ways, related to each other because they provide the necessary tools for the development of new and revived ethno-cultural communities in
host contexts. They are particularly important inasmuch as they illuminate processes of ethnic transformation among ethnic and immigrant groups (specifically communities of colour), and are especially useful in accounting for the persistence and transformation of ethnicity and ethnic identity. In addition, the three dimensions of constructed ethnicity provide an organizational framework/base from which cultural reorganization can be undertaken. The cultural reconstruction, cultural innovation, and ethnic organization indicators of constructed ethnicity are, therefore, not mutually exclusive categories.

**Grounded Theory Component**

Whereas the present study fits the social constructionist model of ethnicity, it has also modified it in some ways. Particular findings from the interviews have led to the modification of the original constructionist model of ethnicity (See Figure 2). In analyzing the interviews, particular conceptual categories emerged. My "catalogue of ethnic constructs" (discussed earlier on) yielded two new conceptual categories: (i) *ethnicity as social construction*; and (ii) *ethnic infrastructure*. The former is related to the actions of ethnic leaders and involves the creation of symbols of identity, and the latter is related to the experiences of immigrant groups in host societies, and involves issues related to endogamous marriage patterns and dynamics of inter-ethnic socialization.

The interviews revealed the creation of both individual and collective symbols of identity by the leader of the Metro mandir. This notion of creating symbols of identity by an ethnic leader highlights the critical role that diasporic ethnic leaders play in constructing new forms of ethnicity. For diasporic leaders such as the Metro's leader, the
focus on descent in constructing an ethnic identity encourages a look backward in time, creating what Dag Blanck (1989) calls a "usable past". By capitalizing on his ancestral past, the leader of the Metro mandir is capable of instilling in the minds of his Indo-Caribbean followers the need to resurrect aspects of their lost ancestral heritage.

This resurrection of a "lost past" may allow diasporic groups to embrace (albeit in symbolic ways) their ancestral culture. It is within this context that "ethnicity as social construction" should be understood. It is an important aspect of constructed ethnicity - an aspect that the original model of constructed ethnicity does not take into account. The "ethnicity as social construction" category ought to be seen as a key indicator of constructed ethnicity, hence the inclusion of it in the modified model of constructed ethnicity (See Figure 4).

The other important dimension of constructed ethnicity that is absent from the original model is what has been referred to in this study as *ethnic infrastructure*. As was mentioned earlier on, ethnic infrastructure is being assessed through attitudes toward inter-marriage and inter-ethnic socialization. Findings from the interviews reveal the prevalence of inter-ethnic socialization between the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian members at the Metro mandir. However, findings based on attitudes toward inter-ethnic marriage seem to indicate "a stay within your own group" type of scenario - an attitude that is more prevalent among the South Asian respondents.

Since the original constructionist model of ethnicity does not really take into account processes associated with "ethnic infrastructure", and the fact that such processes are critical aspects of constructed ethnicity, they ought to be included in the
constructionist model of ethnicity. Attitudes toward inter-ethnic socialization and inter-ethnic marriage can significantly affect the process of ethnic identity construction, specifically in a context of ethnic diversity. Given the importance of the "ethnic infrastructure" category, I have incorporated it into the constructionist model of ethnicity.

The derivation of these two new concepts from the data is consistent with this study's qualitative grounded theory approach. One important aspect of qualitative research is the generation of concepts that can form the building blocks of theory (Bryman and Burgess, 1994:219). The inductive nature of the grounded theory approach is based on the extraction of concepts out of data - concepts that contribute to theory building and theory enhancement. Both the "ethnicity as social construction" and the "ethnic infrastructure" categories/concepts throw light on particular aspects shaping constructed ethnicity that were hitherto ignored in the constructionist conceptualization of ethnicity. As such, this study's grounded theory approach refines and enhances the original constructionist model of ethnicity.
FIGURE 4

A MODIFIED VERSION OF THE CONSTRUCTIONIST MODEL OF ETHNICITY

ETNICITY

Dynamic Process

Cultural Reconstruction
  Cultural Revival and New Cultural Forms

Ethnicity as Social Construction
  Symbolic Ethnicity

Cultural Innovation
  Cultural Blending

Ethnic Organization
  Social, Economic and Political Forms of Organization

Ethnic Infrastructure
  Inter-Ethnic Socialization and Inter-Marriage
CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine ethnic identity construction in a context of ethnic diversity. More specifically, it demonstrated how, in a context of institutionalized religion, a diasporic group, namely, Indo-Caribbean Hindus, were able to reconstruct their traditional ethno-religious identity. The reconstruction of an Indo-Caribbean identity was feasible for a number of reasons. First, Indo-Caribbean Hindus had at their disposal two factors related to ethnicity that were deemed important for identity reconstruction: (i) religion; and (ii) racial ancestry. The fact that Indo-Caribbean Hindus could lay claim to a Hindu religious identity, as well as a South Asian "racial" ancestry, provided them with the basic tools for undertaking identity reconstruction. By accepting their estranged South Asian cousins into their temple, and the subsequent embracing of certain aspects of that culture, Indo-Caribbean Hindus were able to get "closer" to their lost "Indianness" - something which they seem to want to embrace.

But just being Hindu and of East Indian/South Asian origin were not entirely responsible for the emergence of a new "Indian" identity. The role of the mandir's leader was also instrumental in forging this newly emerging identity. The leader's ambitious visions for the Hindu culture and community in Canadian society coupled with his charismatic and entrepreneurial traits contributed significantly to the rise of a newly emerging "Indian" identity - an identity that is part diasporic and part ancestral. However, it has been shown that the process of identity reconstruction was not only limited to the input of the elites, but to grassroots activities by members of the congregation as well. The enthusiasm displayed by both the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian members at the
mandir regarding cultural diversity and inter-cultural social learning has, to large extent, created conditions conducive for identity construction and ethnic renewal.

The attempt at identity reconstruction among Indo-Caribbean Hindus does not mean that they have discarded that identity, but have amended it in ways that resulted in the incorporation of some South Asian cultural elements into their existing diasporic identity. This type of scenario is associated with a process known as ethnic renewal. According to this perspective, individuals reconstruct their ethnic identity by reclaiming a discarded identity and/or amending an existing identity. For Indo-Caribbeans, a look backwards means embracing those aspects of their culture that have been lost, hence the reason for wanting to reclaim their lost ancestral culture. At the same time, the reclaiming of a forgotten ancestral culture does not necessarily mean the complete replacement of the "old" country identity. Indo-Caribbeans at the Metro mandir have not completely discarded their old diasporic identity, but are incorporating into that identity some of the cultural elements from their ancestral culture that were either discarded or lost.

The process of identity construction that has been examined thus far is currently being undertaken at a Hindu mandir in Toronto, namely, the Metro mandir. This mandir represents a syncretic case insofar as it is trying to unite and harmonize elements from two different cultural groups in order to create a brand new ethno-religious identity and cultural community. Its uniqueness was further enhanced when an examination of other mandirs/temples were used as comparisons. Our comparative data revealed some of the peculiar characteristics of the Metro mandir. None of the other mandirs examined displayed any discernible agendas that were geared toward identity construction. One
temple, however, represented the antithesis of the Metro mandir. Whereas the Metro mandir was pursuing an agenda based on the construction of a "new" identity, the Contrast temple, on the other hand, was more involved in the maintenance of the "old" diasporic Indo-Caribbean ethnic identity. Because of this essential difference, the Contrast temple was singled out as a marked contrast to the Metro mandir.

The peculiarity of the Metro mandir was further confirmed when a comparison was made between it and the wider secular/political Indo-Caribbean community. This comparison was necessary because it highlighted the differences in ethnic identification (or the type of ethnic identity that was being promoted) in the two communities. My analysis revealed that while the members from the wider secular Indo-Caribbean community seem to be opting for their old diasporic Indo-Caribbean identity, the Indo-Caribbean Hindus at the Metro mandir were more inclined to opt for the new "Indian" identity.

This difference in ethnic identification may have implications for the development of two distinct types of Indo-Caribbean identities in Canadian society: (i) an ethno-religious identity that is geared toward both the past and present (the type that is being constructed at the Metro mandir); and (ii) a political identity that is based more on a group's consciousness of its position in Canadian society, and the assertion of that identity for the purposes of (a) identity recognition; and (b) accessing state largesse for the development of a distinct ethno-cultural community in Canadian society. The recognition of an ethnic group by the Canadian state is not only an indication of its growing maturity (cultural as well as political), but also its potential contribution in fostering cultural
diversity in Canadian society - an objective deemed important in the multiculturalism policy.

Given its distinctive character, the Metro mandir ought to be seen as a template - a unique entity that future and current temples might want to follow. Its trailblazing character was captured quite nicely in the interviews as many claimed that the Metro mandir is not only a religious institution, but also a political, social, cultural, and even an economically viable institution. Add to this the fact that it is probably the only temple in Toronto that is attempting to create a new Canadian ethno-religious identity for both Indo-Caribbean and South Asian Hindus. In recognizing its contribution to the building of a distinct ethno-cultural community, other mandirs may eventually see the Metro mandir as a trendsetter.

At the same time, the Metro mandir, as a newly emerging cultural community, may see itself as having created an "ethnic revolution" in Canadian society. That is to say, in recognizing its successful attempt at reorganizing reality, the Metro mandir may create a new world view for itself and its members. In affirming its new "Indian" identity, the Metro mandir would, in essence, have created a unique place for itself and its members in the Canadian diaspora.

In conclusion, a fuller understanding of constructed ethnicity has been achieved as a result of this study. For me, constructed ethnicity is a process that involves ethnic re-discovery, ethnic renewal, ethnic identity formation, identity reconstruction, and the social, political, and cultural construction of community. It is very useful for understanding the dynamics involved in the creation of new identities both in diasporic and host contexts.
More importantly, the constructionist process, in allowing ethnic groups to either create new identities or reconstruct old ones, may also provide them with an identity that is not specifically unidimensional (e.g. not just Indo-Caribbean or South Asian), but one that is multidimensional. This multidimensional identity, consisting of ancestral, diasporic, and host elements, may be used by ethnic groups as the central identity in defining who and what they are and wish to be.

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF STUDY**

This study has demonstrated the pivotal role that religious agencies play in the construction of ethnic identities. More specifically, it has addressed an important sociological question: What motivates groups to construct and reconstruct their identity and culture? This study demonstrated the critical role that ethnic leaders play in the forging of new ethnic identities. By adhering to the subjective importance of ethnic origins (e.g. having a strong attachment to one's ancestral heritage), ethnic leaders can capitalize on particular aspects of ethnicity such as ancestry. Awareness of one's own ancestry remains a basic mechanism in the ethnic rediscovery process (Isajiw, 1975:135).

In a more concrete sense, constructed ethnicity is not, or should not be viewed as an arbitrary phenomenon. That is to say, the notion of ethnicity as a social construction is not simply a theoretical construct, but one that is grounded in reality. The idea that ethnicity is a social construction is, in some ways, akin to a discovery of ethnicity - a situation involving the use of symbolic and cultural resources by particular ethnic groups to rediscover their ethnic "roots".
In this study, ancestry was used by the leader of the Metro mandir as a mechanism for social and cultural organization. More importantly, the leader's attachment to his ancestral homeland more closely resembles what Herbert Gans (1979) called symbolic ethnicity, or the "nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation" (Gans, 1979). In the case of the Metro mandir, symbolic ethnicity refers to the nostalgic allegiance that diasporic groups, such as the Indo-Caribbean group, may have toward their lost ancestral culture. The findings from this study are consistent with Nagel's (1994) emphasis on ethnicity as a social construction, Nagel's (1995) conceptualization of ethnicity as a form of ethnic renewal, Gans's (1979) notion of symbolic ethnicity, Kivisto's (1989) and Stoller's (1996) emphases on ethnic identity construction among European-Americans, and Winland's (1993) conception of constructed ethnicity as a dialectical process (the relationship between convention and innovation) - a process that can create conditions for the renewal of ethno-religious identities.

The literature on constructed ethnicity has consistently conceptualized symbolic ethnicity within the context of the immigrant generation with little or no reference to diasporic groups. This represents a serious limitation in the ethnicity literature, specifically as it pertains to discussions about symbolic ethnicity among newly emerging groups. My study has not only demonstrated the importance of understanding symbolic ethnicity from a social constructionist perspective, but has also placed the social constructionist approach in the context of a diasporic community. A reconceptualization of constructed ethnicity - one that focuses on diasporic groups in host contexts - is urgently required.
I hope that this study's constructionist approach to ethnicity, specifically the symbolic ethnicity component, and the grounded theory approach will be relevant to studying ethnicity among other diasporic groups. Finally, I also hope that this study will fill a significant theoretical and empirical void in the literature on new ethnic and immigrant groups in Canada. It will not only add to the relatively small body of research in the area of the Sociology of Indian Diaspora, but it will also offer fresh insights and new discussions on Canadian ethnicity. The idea of Indo-Caribbeans in Toronto as "twice immigrant", engaged in a re-discovery or the invention of a new ethnic identity will tell us as much about Toronto and Canada and the adaptation of immigrant groups, as about the experiences of this new and fast-growing community in Canada's largest city.

**DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future research in the area of constructed ethnicity should focus on the impact that non-religious agencies, such as the wider secular ethnic subcommunities, particularly voluntary associations and other ethno-racial organizations and institutions, may have on the construction of new identities. The social construction processes undertaken by external social, political, and economic agencies should also be examined to see if and how they may or may not be able to shape the definition of the Indo-Caribbean group in Canada. For example, does the government and/or state play a role in the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of ethnicity? Bodemann (1990), for example, has already examined the role of the German state in the construction of a Jewish ethnic consciousness and "ideological labour".
An intriguing question that needs urgent investigation is: Has the Canadian state imposed a group-definition on the Indo-Caribbean group in Canada? Assessing the reasons and/or causes for such an imposition (if they exist at all), should also be included in the agenda for future research. Also, the impact of federal and provincial political policies on Indo-Caribbean ethnic renewal may represent an instance of the political construction of ethnicity, i.e. the ways in which the structure of political opportunity and political policies shape ethnic boundaries in Canadian society.

Questions about the social construction of ethnic identity and ethnic renewal do not only bring new ideas to bear on the field of ethnic relations, they may also bring important new insights in the area of sociology of social movements, specifically in the areas of ethnic movements and ethno-political mobilization. History has shown that ethnic movements play a critical role in promoting new and revived ethnic identities. In ethnic movements, the use of cultural material and representations in a symbolic struggle over rights and resources acts as a cultural resource base from which efforts at cultural construction of community and identity reconstruction can be undertaken. Aspects of cultural constructions confirm that protest *a la* social and ethnic movements is indeed a crucible of culture. As such, social and ethnic movements contribute to our understanding of how ethnicity is socially constructed. The subversion of negative hegemonic ethnic definitions and images is an important way that culture is used in ethnic and social movements throughout the world (Nagel, 1994).

One of the more perplexing questions surrounding the constructionist explanation of ethnicity is its ability to deal with some of the invidious dimensions of race and
ethnicity, such as racism and other forms of prejudice and discrimination. For example, how would the constructionist model of ethnicity deal with structural determinants of discrimination such as systemic racism, specifically, institutionalized racism? Similarly, to the extent that the constructionist model emphasizes change, how would it deal with societies that have ethnic and racial stratification systems? Also, how would it deal with other forms of structural inequalities such as ethnic and racial antagonisms that arise from entrenched inequities in labour market contexts?
APPENDICES
IN THE FIELD: ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCES

In this section I shall discuss my experiences in the field: my trials and tribulations, ups and downs, frustrations, positive and pleasant moments, and other personal experiences I encountered while doing my field work. In Appendix (B) I will enumerate some of the limitations of this study, specifically, methodological limitations associated with the sociological case study approach.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE

One of ethnography's most valuable contributions to sociological research lies in its ability to capture a set of social processes that are not necessarily found in other methodological approaches (e.g. surveys and secondary data analysis). This notion of "social process" is a key aspect of ethnographic research because it can draw on the interpretive, intuitive, interactive, and emergent nature of human lived experience. On the other hand, ethnographic research, specifically fieldwork, is a demanding process involving experiences that are, for the most part, uncommon in other forms of scientific research. Some of the major activities that are germane to field research include negotiating access, gaining entry, achieving rapport, surviving, and, finally, the field researcher getting out more or less intact. According to Glazer (1972), the experiences of field research are bound together with satisfactions, embarrassments, challenges, pains, triumphs, ambiguities and agonies, all of which blend into what has been described as the field research adventure. Numerous accounts of field research experiences are available
testifying to the anxiety and uncertainty experienced by researchers both prior to, and even after, entering the field. E.C. Hughes, for example, admits that "I have usually been hesitant in entering the field myself and have perhaps walked around the block getting up my courage to knock on doors more often than almost any of my students" (Hughes, 1960:iv).

I, too, quickly learned of some of the "ups and downs" associated with field research. For one thing, no one can really teach you how to do fieldwork without your being in the field. This personal experience of mine adds credence to the generally accepted view that there is no single best way of conducting field research. As such, the situational and volatile character of fieldwork roles and relationships, in some ways, mitigates the development of exact procedures. Add to this the fact that, as a "rookie" ethnographer, I could not predict what was awaiting me "in the field". To be sure, in the initial phases of my field research, I was meandering around the site quite aimlessly, not knowing what I was looking for. The only thing of value that I had with me (and this was probably the main reason for choosing the temple as a potential field site) was that the Indo-Caribbean temple I was studying had an ethnically heterogeneous following. This "wandering" phase led to feelings of self-doubts, uncertainty, and frustrations - emotions inherent in field research. This emotionally stressful experience finds support in Shaffir et al (1980) view that:

Fieldwork must certainly rank with the more disagreeable activities that humanity has fashioned for itself. It is usually inconvenient, to say the least, sometimes physically uncomfortable, frequently embarrassing, and to a degree, always tense (Shaffir et al., 1980:3).

Ethnographers are often concerned with establishing social bonds with community
members in order to alleviate tensions caused by barriers. Some of the barriers that exist between ethnographer and community members may include race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, to name a few. Despite unwarranted expectations that research settings are equally accessible, successful entry is influenced by the possible combinations of "investigator relationship to the setting, the ascriptive categories of the researcher and the researched, and the specific nature of the setting" (Lofland and Lofland 1984). Based on field research accounts, access is often shaped by the cultural and ascriptive differences or similarities between the field researcher and the researched. Where these differences are minimal, access and even acceptance are likely to be enhanced, but where the differences are large, participation opportunities may be severely constrained and even eliminated (Dietz, Shaffir, and Stebbins, 1994).

In spite of the obvious cultural similarities between myself and the religious community, I chose to be an "outsider" researcher. Whereas full participation may allow accessibility to certain situations and information that the "insider" researcher is privy to, it is also true that the insider status can lead to problems concerning objectivity. That is to say, "going native" normally entails a high degree of emotionalism or sympathy by the field worker toward the community under study - conditions which could very well lead to distorted research outcomes. Being too close or too involved in the community can lead to a high degree of subjectivity on the part of the field researcher. As a result, maintaining objectivity becomes difficult - a problem which normally entails bias, and which would call into question the study's findings. Also, my status as a graduate student would not have allowed me to "go native". However, my "outsider" status did not prevent me from
attending, and at times participating, in cultural and social events that the mandir organized.

Being an Indo-Caribbean myself, and having a distinctively Hindu name were, in my opinion, the main reasons why I did not experience barriers to access. In other words, similar ascriptive and cultural characteristics between myself and the community under investigation may have been largely responsible for the smooth and fluid entry into the community. The position of the ethnographer *vis-a-vis* the community under study is, therefore, a critical first step in "getting in" and being accepted by community members.

This, in turn, allowed me to explore my own relation to the community. That is, my background as an Indo-Caribbean Hindu led me to realize and recognize that I was, in more ways than one, part of the community I was studying. Thus, the fact that I was part of the social community I was studying entailed a fundamental aspect of *reflexivity*. This reflexive understanding enabled me to rely on my own common sense knowledge of the cultural setting, and to reflect upon the actions of community members, as well as my own actions, *vis-a-vis* the community and its members. I was able to experience reflectivity by developing a sense of self-awareness through a process of interacting with others and taking the viewpoint of the others with respect to myself.

In addition, the very idea of someone conducting a study on their temple may have had a "flattering effect" on particular members of the community. Two of the gatekeepers - those individuals in the community/organization who have the power to grant or to withhold access to people or situations for purposes of research (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984) - seemed enthusiastic about my research interests in their temple. This enthusiasm,
coupled (possibly) with my ethnic/cultural appearance, may have created the necessary conditions for successful entry. There were, however, a few people who, I felt, did not feel the same way.

Throughout my entire period in the field, I felt that certain male members in the community were always suspicious of my presence. One of these men was a prominent member of the executive. I had spoken to him once (during my initial entry) about my research interest in the temple. I remembered quite vividly that in our short discussion he came across as being uninterested in what I was doing. This lack of enthusiasm probably explained his unco-operative behaviour. When I told him how important it was for me to talk to him, he quickly suggested that I speak to other members from the executive. His main reason for not wanting to participate in a discussion with me was a hectic schedule, i.e. he was too busy and did not have anytime to spare. As time went on, and I became a noticeable participant at the mandir, this same individual, and possibly a few others, never really acknowledged my presence.

In addition, I felt, at times, that I was being monitored. These feeling and suspicions were sometimes confirmed when, in my interaction with particular members of the mandir (e.g. the librarian), certain members would aggressively intervene and would ask whoever I was speaking to if everything was all right or "are you having a problem here"? In other words, the obvious display of insecurity by such members made it clear to me that I was seen as someone who should be treated in a suspicious manner. The monitoring aspects were further confirmed when certain things were brought to my attention such as the questioning of other members as to why I was hanging around the
library, or why I was inside of the kitchen etc.

These "monitoring" individuals invariably never greeted me with a "hello" or a "goodbye", and they never displayed any amicable traits when they were in my presence. Instead, I would normally be welcomed with hostile glances, and at times, with downright "dirty" looks, or I would just be completely ignored. Notwithstanding some of the negative aspects of being in the field, my overall experience in the field was, by and large, positive and non-conflictual. Naturally, I befriended those individuals who, as it were, embraced me and my interest in their mandir. Some of these enthusiastic and cooperative individuals became my gatekeepers and informants. These individuals facilitated the necessary access and permission that allowed me to conduct research at the mandir.

Once I was granted official permission to conduct the research, the next most important objective was to achieve rapport with the members from the community. Rapport sometimes becomes the basis for deeper friendships or attaining stronger identification with the group under study. The cultivation of rapport and sound relations requires some attention to commonsensical practices of sociability. In this way, maintaining relations through sustained rapport involves keeping the goals of the study in mind while pursuing them in ways that gain subject co-operation and trust (Shaffir, Dietz and Stebbins, 1994:47). I found out very quickly that achieving rapport and working with members in the community required some intensive networking with informants. Throughout the entire period of fieldwork, I managed to secure two key informants in the community. Both were prominent members of the mandir, and were undoubtedly quite knowledgeable about the community and other relevant facts pertaining to the
organizational, social, and historical aspects of the temple.

With these types of attributes, I decided to retain these two members as my informants. In reflecting on her work in Social Anthropology, Mead (1953) argues that the selection of an informant demands that the researcher has a knowledge of the situation that is to be studied in order to evaluate the individual's position in a particular setting and their knowledge of that setting. Van Maanen (1981) indicates that informants that are used by sociologists may be selected on the basis of race, age, sex, size, socio-economic background and appearance as these factors will influence relationships. The selection of informants should, therefore, be based on the researcher's good judgement: seeking out those individuals who have knowledge about specialized interests and concerns of the social setting, and who are acquainted with all aspects of the cultural setting. In this way, informants play an important role in bringing to the attention of the researcher the important social, cultural, and political aspects of the setting/field site. Indeed, sociologists studying industrial societies have followed the same strategy. For example, in Street Corner Society (1955), Whyte's key informant was "Doc"; in Tally's Corner (1967), Tally himself had introduced Elliot Liebow to a group of black street corner men.
APPENDIX B

A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Limitations of Study

After being in the field for approximately three years, I have had the opportunity to reflect not only the importance and usefulness of field research, but also on some of its inherent limitations. In the months since completing my field research I have reflected on some of this study's shortcomings.

Some have argued that "going native" should be avoided because of the potentially harmful effect it can have on research outcomes. That is, by becoming a complete participant the researcher can lose the sense of the research purpose by becoming too emotionally attached to the community or its members. This could lead to a lack of objectivity. While there may be some truth to this assumption, it is my contention that being intimately close to a community or its members may have the advantage of providing the "insider" researcher with important information that the "outsider" researcher is not privy to. Adopting the "outsider" perspective provided me with only some of the "juicy" information related to controversial events that have occurred at the mandir in the past, and possibly the present. As such, I may have lost out on potentially rich and relevant information. Many things that may have helped me in better understanding the constructionist process may have been hidden from me because of my "outsider" status.

I chose the "outsider" perspective primarily because of its convenience in terms of time. As a graduate student it would have been virtually impossible for me to dedicate all my time and energy to daily fieldwork. In addition, I do not think that the mandir
would have granted me the "insider" status since it is very likely that the mandir's members, and possibly the leader too, saw me as a non-member with a very specific agenda.

Add to this limitation the fact that the degree of participation in the community was limited to the Sunday sermons and the cultural and religious festivals/celebrations that were held at the mandir. Participation in other key areas of community organization such as attending Board meetings and the like may have provided me with more valuable data. In summation, my "outsider" status did not allow me to become as intimately involved with the community as an "insider" status would have allowed.

Although single case studies may provide interesting results, they do not provide a strong degree of generalizability. The face-to-face interaction that characterizes the case study has implications for its lack of generalizability to the larger society, hence the view that it is inherently micro and ahistorical - a commonly held view among positivists. Obviously, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to other Hindu mandirs, but they can be compared to what is occurring in the wider political/secular Indo-Caribbean community in terms of ethnic identification. However, comparisons were made with other Hindu mandirs to ascertain any similarities and differences. These comparisons not only confirmed the particular uniqueness of the Metro mandir, they also added a macro dimension to the research. The idea that the case study approach is inherently ahistorical is true only if such an assumption is contextualized in the broadest macro sociological sense. I would argue that the particular characteristics of any case study are themselves unique little historical entities. The peculiarities of the Metro mandir have, in some ways,
made it an historical cultural entity; its ability to create a new ethnic identity is itself historical.

Cross-cultural and cross-religious research are still needed to ascertain the impact that religious and non-religious agencies may or may not have on the creation of new forms of ethnic/racial and political identities. The uniqueness and peculiarity of the Metro mandir may be more rigorously confirmed (or even questioned) only when comparative cross-cultural research are undertaken.
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Were there any particular events or circumstances in your life that may have led you to the mandir? (PROBE for respondent's background).

2. What is your position at the Metro mandir? (E.g. congregation member, member of the executive etc.).

3. Why did you join the Metro mandir given the fact that there are approximately twenty-five temples in the Metro Toronto and the Greater Toronto areas? (E.g. what does this mandir offer that other mandirs do not?).

4. One of the major characteristics of the Metro mandir is its ethnically diverse population. How do you feel about this diversity?

5. What, in your opinion, does this type of cultural diversity do for the temple? (PROBE for respondent's attitude towards inter-cultural practices and activities at the temple).

6. Do you play a role in organizing events at the mandir? If yes, what types of events do you help organize e.g. Diwali, Holi, etc.

7. Who would you pick from members of the congregation to help in organizing the Diwali and Holi celebrations?

8. If you were on the organizing committee, who would you recommend/chose to be on the committee?

9. What sort of role, if any, do you think the congregation members play in organizing particular events held at the temple e.g. Diwali and Holi celebrations, the temple's annual dinners etc?
10. What role do you think the leader of the temple play in organizing events?

11. What, in your opinion, are some of the strategies and tactics that the leader uses in organizing events at the temple?

12. Which of the following characteristics, in your opinion, best describes the leader's personality? Please choose, in order of preference, one or more of the following characteristics:

   a) aggressive
   b) accommodating/compromising
   c) ambitious
   d) charismatic
   e) egalitarian/believes in equality
   f) cosmopolitan
   g) entrepreneurial/business like

13. Do you think the leader should pursue his plans to build a senior citizen home; a museum of Hinduism; a school; a crematorium; a banquet hall; and a cultural centre? Which of the above undertakings, in your opinion, are the most important ones, and the least important ones?

14. What do these undertakings tell you about the leader, and his visions for the temple?

**Question 15 will be administered to both the elite and grassroots members.**

15. If you were to look at this temple ten years down the road, how do you think it would look?

**Questions 16-21 are to be answered only by the mandir's leader.**

16. Could you talk about your plans to build a school, a senior citizen home, a museum of Hinduism, a cultural centre, a crematorium, and a banquet hall?
17. Is it possible to create "Bharat" (India) here given the ethnic make up of the temple?

18. Do you think what you are trying to do (i.e. create all these cultural institutions - those stated in question #16) has not already been done/achieved in the Canadian Hindu community, and do you see this as a breakthrough? Please elaborate.

19. To whom or what do you attribute the prevalence of inter-ethnic solidarity at the temple?

20. Do you attribute anything to your own actions (e.g. your personality etc.)?

21. In your sermons, you consistently refer to everyone as "Indians" and not as East Indians or West Indians/Indo-Caribbeans. What is the reason for this?

Each of the following questions will be administered to both Indo-Caribbean and South Asian members.

(For these questions, substitute ethnic categorizations for South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans will be used. The reason for this is because members from both groups may not be very familiar with such ethnic categorizations. The more common categories will, therefore, be used here. East Indians will be substituted for South Asian, and West Indians will be substituted for Indo-Caribbean).

22. To your knowledge, are there many inter-ethnic marriages between East Indians and West Indians at the temple?

23. How do you feel about inter-ethnic marriage? (PROBE for the respondent's views on inter-ethnic marriages e.g. whether he/she is in favour of, or against inter-ethnic marriage between South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans).
24. With the exception of the Diwali and Holi Melas, and the annual Diwali dinners, how often would you say that you socialize (outside of the temple) with East Indians/or West Indians?

   a) very often
   b) somewhat often
   c) rarely
   d) never

25. Do you ever invite East Indian/or West Indian members to your home for dinner?

26. Has an East Indian/or West Indian member ever invited you to his/her home?

27. Do you know of other East Indians at the temple who invite West Indians and vice versa to their homes?

Questions 28-31 will be administered to the Presidents of the mandir's Youth and Women's Groups.

28. What are some of the aims of the Metro mandir's Youth Group?

29. What type(s) of activities do you organize? (PROBE for type of cultural activities e.g. Indo-Caribbean or South Asian cultural activities e.g. chutney singing and dancing or garba and bhangra)?

30. What are the aims of the Metro mandir's Women's Group?

31. What type(s) of activities do you undertake? (PROBE for type of social and ethno-cultural agendas being pursued).
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