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## Privileged Hybrids: Examining ‘our own’ in the Indian-Australian diaspora

### Introduction

In April, the ‘Indian Wedding Race’ hit television screens across Australia (Cousins 2015). The first segment in a three-part series on multicultural Australia distributed by the SBS, the documentary follows two young Indian-Australians in their quest to get married before the age of thirty.

Twenty-nine year-old Dalvinder Gill-Minhas was born and raised in Melbourne. Dalvinder’s family members are practicing Sikhs from the Indian state of Punjab who migrated to Australia in the 1980s. She describes her childhood as marked by attendance at Punjabi school and the *Gurudwara*, while at the same time “trying to fit into modern Aussie culture”. Her father is adamant that she marries a fellow Sikh – preferably one with a turban, marking his religiosity and deference to the founders of his faith. He leans over her shoulder as she creates an account on a popular Indian matrimonial website, *Shaadi.com*.

“Religion, doesn’t matter”, she says firmly.

“What?” her father replies. “You are a Sikh. It has to be a Sikh”.

“Okay so it obviously matters to you”, she concedes.

The ‘Indian Wedding Race’ is spattered with seemingly innocuous glimpses at religious, caste and cultural background, almost invisible to anyone unfamiliar with marriage in the Indian context. But for many Indians living overseas, it is imperative that we marry one of “our own” (Abraham 2005, p. 433). Our conceptions of ‘our own’ vary, but usually rest on “distinctions of region, class, caste, community, and education...[which] serve as boundaries for identification and mark out self from others” (Gopalkrishnan and Babacan 2007, p. 509).

This paper examines young Indian-Australians’ understandings of ‘their own’, explored through their perspectives on marriage and intimate relationships. Drawing upon the theory of cultural hybridity, I find that diasporans are constantly negotiating their cultural values ‘in-between’ their Indian roots and their existence as an ethnic minority in Australia. In considering what they want in a spouse, diasporans are forced to choose which of their boundaries of identity are most valuable, and which they want to retain and reproduce. I

found that participants in this study had negotiated an essentialised sense of ‘Indianness’, a cohesive ethnic consciousness defined by a homogeneous conception of Indian culture and its difference from the Australian cultural majority. However, upon further interrogation, I found that this sense of ‘Indianness’ was not as cohesive as it initially seemed, and that region, language, caste<sup>1</sup>, class and religion still play a role in shaping the ‘Indianness’ felt and expressed by this diasporic community.

This paper marks an important intervention into the study of the Indian diaspora in Australia. Few studies have explored identity in relation to the specific diasporic community demarcated here. This research holds further value for two reasons. Firstly, I believe that simply producing work on the experiences of non-white immigrants helps, in some small way, to challenge the sometimes-exclusionary cultural framework of the white settler state. Secondly, I am conscious that the mostly privileged young diasporans on whom this study focuses may carry tacitly discriminatory or regressive attitudes that may play out in their most personal decisions. In a study of young users of Indian matrimonial websites in North America, Sharma (2008, p. 137) states, “it is imperative that this group of privileged hybrids be questioned on their identity production in terms of disruptive or productive possibilities and retrogressive practices”. Similarly, I believe that diasporic understandings of religion, caste, class or other divisive boundaries of identity should be publicly articulated, analysed and where necessary, scrutinised. So many of our biases go otherwise unchallenged. I hope this work contributes in some way to recognising and challenging our ingrained prejudices.

#### Data collection and methodology

Data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 22 young Australians of Indian origin, conducted over July-August 2016.<sup>2</sup> All participants were either born in Australia, or had migrated from India to Australia with their parents as very young children.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paper takes ‘caste’ to mean both *varna* and *jati*. While some scholars distinguish between these two categories, I adopt a fluid understanding of caste informed by B eteille’s (1964) finding that these concepts are often conflated, e.g. Tamilians in his fieldwork used the word *jati* to describe many referents of their identities, including *varna*, *jati* and doctrinal identity. My findings in this study were similar. When prompted to identify their own caste, some participants only mentioned their *varna* identity, such as Brahmin or Kshatriya. Some revealed their *jati* identities, such as Rajput or Bania. Caste is therefore understood by these participants as meaning both *varna* and *jati*.

<sup>2</sup> Note that this research was originally completed as part of an 8-month honours thesis project and was thus subject to considerable time and resource constraints. Participants were recruited in three main ways: through advertisements circulated through Indian community organisations, through social media, and through the researcher’s own informal personal networks.

Although these boundaries were not identified in the inclusion criteria, all participants ultimately deemed eligible for the study were, like myself, Hindu, upper middle-class and upper-caste. The majority of Indian migrants within the second-wave are upper-caste and class (Bilimoria and Voigt-Graf 2001). The demographic of this sample universe has undoubtedly influenced the findings of this study, which are specific to this privileged group's experiences.<sup>4</sup>

Of the final 22 interviewees, 15 were female and 7 were male. All participants were aged between 18 and 31, and none were married, though some were in long-term relationships and one was undergoing the process of introductions to find a spouse. Like most studies of marriage in the Indian context, this study focuses exclusively on heterosexual intimacy.

#### The Indian diaspora in Australia: navigating 'Indianness' and 'Australianness'

The subjects of this study are situated within the second major wave of Indian migration, the "new diaspora of late capital", which emerged from the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Mishra 1996, p. 422). This movement is mostly composed of skilled professionals seeking economic opportunities in industrialised countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia (Rangaswamy 2000; Bilimoria and Voigt-Graf 2001; Voigt-Graf 2004; Bhatia 2007). In Australia, this movement accelerated with the relaxation of the 'White Australia' Policy in 1966, and its abolition in 1971.<sup>5</sup>

These migrants:

belonged to various religious, linguistic and cultural groups. They were not, however, a typical cross-section of Indian society, being far better educated, more urbanised, more proficient in English and much less likely to be Hindus or Muslims than those in India (Bilimoria and Voigt-Graf 2001, p. 428)

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<sup>3</sup> In keeping with literature on migration, participants born in Australia are classified as members of the second-generation, and those who migrated under the age of 12 are classified as the '1.5 generation' (Bartley and Spoonley 2012).

<sup>4</sup> It is likely that my own background and networks impacted upon my access to participants. Additionally, the original advertisement for this study outlined its focus on caste: it is possible that, even if made aware of the study, lower castes, Dalits or Adivasis may not wish to speak about caste, due to past trauma or negative experiences.

<sup>5</sup> The 'White Australia' policy refers to various policies that comprised Australia's approach to immigration until the latter-20<sup>th</sup> century, which restricted immigration to people of European descent.

Many of these migrants are Anglo-Indians; people of mixed European and Indian descent, whose experiences of migration and settlement are distinct from many other second-wave Indians (Bilimoria and Voigt-Graf 2001).<sup>6</sup> Further, many of Australia's 'Indians' are actually descended from groups who have migrated again from countries such as Fiji and Malaysia (Voigt-Graf 2004). Smaller migrations from India to Australia that cannot be comfortably accommodated within either of these waves have also occurred.<sup>7</sup> Each of these groups has a distinct history; and is considered outside the scope of this study (Bilimoria and Voigt-Graf 2001; Voigt-Graf 2004).<sup>8</sup>

This group is analytically comparable to diasporic communities in other Western contexts, characterised by the voluntary nature of their migration, contact with kinship networks in India and the maintenance of a fluid relationship with their homeland and counterparts in other parts of the world (Mishra 1996; Tölölyan 1996; Bhatia and Ram 2004; Voigt-Graf 2004; Rangaswamy 2005). In keeping with the literature on second-wave diasporic communities, I found that participants' experiences were characterised by 'in-betweenness'. They exhibited a strong sense of being 'in-between' two worlds, straddling multiple "hyphenated selves" (Bhatia and Ram 2004, p. 226). Ruma, who attends university in regional Australia, states, "when I'm in India, I feel like I'm too Australian, and when I'm in country Australia, I feel like I'm too Indian and not Aussie enough". Aparna's experience is similar. She states, "I just feel like I'm constantly in this place where I'm trying to figure out the place between the two...I feel like my views have changed over time, even go back and forth". Caught in an "ethnographic performance" between two cultural systems, they are constantly negotiating their own cultural values, which often intensifies through critical experiences such as marriage and intimacy (Ibrahim 2008, p. 239).

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<sup>6</sup> Anglo-Indians were classified as 'Eurasians' and were permitted to migrate to the West before while restrictive immigration laws were still in place. As they generally have European names, speak English as their first language and practice Christianity, their experiences of settlement have been distinct from those of Indians from other religious and linguistic backgrounds. Anglo-Indians may have a troublesome relationship with their Indian ancestry due to experiences of exclusion and discrimination in India and in some cases, have demonstrated a desire for distance from their Indian roots. They have also demonstrated a preference for marrying Christian spouses from various ethnic backgrounds; their conception of 'their own' therefore varies significantly from that of other Indian diasporans (Bilimoria and Voigt-Graf 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Smaller migrations from India to Australia include: small groups of male labourers accompanying British subjects settling in India in 1800-1860; followed by waves of agricultural labourers, hawkers and pedlars, mainly from Punjabi Sikh and Muslim backgrounds, who settled in small towns and rural settlements in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland in 1860s-1901. This latter wave ended with the passage of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (Bilimoria and Voigt-Graf 2001; Voigt-Graf 2004)

<sup>8</sup> Note that one of my participants has one Indo-Fijian parent, and one Indian-born parent (see Appendix A). As he had been raised within a second-wave community, I decided that fulfilled the criteria.

Madan (2000, p. 25) states that “Australia’s diasporic Indians...are more likely to use terms such as *the community*, *our people*, and the national label of the homeland, *Indian*, as opposed to the nation of citizenship, *Australian*”. Interestingly, in this study, participants’ affiliations with their ‘Indianness’ or ‘Australianness’ varied. Ashima’s reflection on her identity acknowledges the intergenerational difference between herself and her parents, as she states, “I’m much more Australian than my parents are”. Pranab differs, stating, “I identify more as an Indian than an Australian even though I’ve lived here most of my life”.

Still, others felt the need to emphasise their ‘Indianness’ even while identifying as ‘Australian’. Rahul’s take on his identity is blunt: “when people look at you, they see an Indian person. And then when you turn around and say well no I’m actually Australian, that’s disingenuous, because you’re not, you know what I mean”. Bhatia (2007, p. 12) notes a similar moment with a participant, whose description of American culture was, “it’s the majority white culture...So either you’re part of it, or you’re not part of it. If you’re white, you’re part of it. If you’re not white, then you’re not part of it”. Similarly, in a study of Gujaratis in New Zealand, Gilbertson (2008, p. 45) finds that “some...were more explicit in suggesting they were unable to be full New Zealanders because they were not White/European/Pakeha New Zealanders”. Participants seemed wholly aware that they could not escape their Indianness due to their visible racial and ethnic difference.<sup>9</sup>

#### Diasporic marriage and intimacy

Participants’ perspectives on marriage and intimate relationships keenly illustrated their ambivalent state of in-betweenness. They often struggled to negotiate large and seemingly irreconcilable differences between ‘Indian’ and ‘Western’ conceptions of marriage and intimate relationships. The ‘Indian’ view was represented by their parents’ expectations, which emphasised marriage to someone from a similar cultural background, having children and reproducing an Indian home. The ‘Western’ was represented in the views of their friends and acquaintances from the majority society, which emphasised romantic attraction, independence, dating and sexual freedom.

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<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that no participants attempted to define ‘Australian culture’ or explain what it was to be ‘Aussie’. I noted that they often used ‘Australian’ and ‘Western’ interchangeably. In similar studies in New Zealand, Bernau (2006) and Gilbertson (2008) find that their participants find no meaningful differences between the cultures of New Zealand and of other Western countries.

Most participants intended or desired to be married in the future. All participants agreed that they were raised expecting that they would get married. Rahul questioned whether this was a necessarily Indian attitude, stating, “everyone expects you to do that stuff”. Similarly, Usha took the view that marriage was important in many cultures, but believed that its importance in Indian culture stems from its position as one of the 16 *samskaras*, or rites of passage, in the Hindu life-cycle. Ashima believes marriage is highly valued among Indians, stating that in her family, “it’s always been a when, not an if”.

Similarly, Laxmi states that marriage is:

*kind of ingrained in our culture...since young, it’s been like...you know, learn about the customs, tradition, learn about the food...all things kind of pointing to, you need to do this when you get married.*

For Indians living overseas, marriage provides a further opportunity to maintain and reproduce Indian culture abroad. I thus frame marriage as a juncture at which diasporans are forced to make critical decisions in their processes of identity negotiation. Below, I discuss the impact of specific boundaries of identity on these processes.

#### Towards ‘Indianness’: the gradual dissolution of regional/linguistic identity

Very few participants seemed to strongly identify with their regional heritage. An exception was Shoba, who states, “when people ask me where are you from, I always say ‘South India’, I make that assertion”. On the other hand, Ruma actively rejects identification with her Punjabi heritage. She states:

*the stereotype of Punjabis is...very loud and boisterous and they eat meat and they drink alcohol and just very...blingy. And that’s just not my personality, at all. Not only have I not been brought up that way, it’s just not who I am.*

Several participants mentioned socialising mainly with other people of Indian or South Asian descent from diverse backgrounds. Sudha, who is from a Tamilian background, speaks of having Bengali friends. Ashima has a wide network of South Asian friends, including Pakistanis. She states, “I personally see no difference between all of us...we eat similar food, have the same morals, values...it’s just the language that’s different”. For some, these

friendships were the result of conscious choice. Kaushik joined the Hindu society to meet other Indians. He states, “you kind of feel comfortable amongst your own people...that’s my personal opinion”. Hema concurs that she is generally inclined towards Indians, stating, “it’s just natural”. Ashima notes that it is no coincidence that all her friends at university are South Asian, as “when it comes to curfews and what restrictions we have on our social life, we all have the same ones”.

However, this identification is not consistently inclusive, and varies between individuals. Usha states that “Fiji Indian culture is very different to Indian culture...the Hindi language is different...it’s not the same”. Others recognised that there were large differences between North and South Indian cultures, even while having mixed friends.

Many participants agreed that their friendship circles reflected their preferences in partners. Pranab agrees that he is mostly attracted to other South Asians, stating, “most of my friends are brown, it just turns out that way”. Roopa states that she is primarily physically attracted to Indians, which she similarly attributes to being in a mainly Indian social circle. She notes that her Indian friends with more diverse social circles generally date outside their cultural group. Kaushik’s experience differs. Despite his preference for Indian friends, he has never dated any Indians. In fact, his longest relationship was with a Muslim international student from Indonesia. When I point out this inconsistency, he pauses and laughs, before agreeing, “it’s a good point...it’s just the way things happened”. He notes that some of his friends were confused by his relationship, and that most of them date other Indians.

Some participants identified language as an important aspect of their identity. Ruma prioritises finding a Hindi-speaking spouse so they will integrate more easily into her family, as her mother is far more comfortable in Hindi than in English. Shoba, Sonia and Rohin all wish to teach their children their mothertongues. All of these participants were however willing to compromise on linguistic identity in a spouse.

#### ‘Hinduness’ and ‘Indianness’

Religion had a more explicit impact on participants’ conception of ‘their own’ with respect to potential partners. These perspectives at times reflected some elements of *Hindutva* ideology, which is notorious for the ‘Othering’ of other religious communities, opposition to conversion to other religions and a deep fear of interreligious marriage (Gupta 2009;



Mohammad-Arif 2007). Several participants, both female and male, stated that their parents would not accept Muslim partners, due to longstanding prejudice against Muslims and Hindu-Muslim tension in India. Ruma states:

*My parents would not accept a Muslim. 100% would not. That's never, ever, ever going to happen...I think that's just an Indian thing. I think it's wrong, I don't think it's fair. But it is what it is. Unfortunately.*

Hema and Aparna both believe that their parents would be accepting of a Christian partner so long as they were Indian, but would not approve of a Muslim. Still, Aparna notes her discomfort when her former partner, who was from an Italian Catholic background, spoke about baptising their future children. In contrast, Bela, who has a long-term boyfriend from an Indian Christian background, “if he wants to baptise his kids, they can...I don't think that'll be a big deal”.

In some instances, participants' families had accepted their children's non-Hindu South Asian partners. Gauri's long-term boyfriend is Buddhist and has been warmly accepted by her family. Gauri mentions that her mother continually states that her boyfriend's family is “just like us”. Gauri is sceptical, stating, “I think she's trying to convince herself a little bit”. She nonetheless concedes that despite their religious differences, their families' value systems are similar due to their common South Asian heritage.

#### A model minority

I found that participants' sense of ‘their own’ was similarly affected by their class bias. All participants in this study were from highly educated backgrounds (see **Appendix A**). Most placed a high value on education, for both themselves and for potential partners. Meenakshi summarises her parents' criteria for her partner in: “Education. Indian. Looks. Vegetarian”. Meanwhile, Kaushik underscores “putting education first” as an “Indian value” that is important to both himself and his parents.

For Gauri, “being smart” is important. She states:

*I think there's always caste...if it's not fully determined like Brahmins, Kshatriyas...it's university students, vs TAFE<sup>10</sup> students, vs unemployed non-educated people. People are always putting people into boxes.*

She explains that much of her identity is about being educated and studying her Masters degree, and that she personally wouldn't date anyone who didn't have a university degree. Similarly, Sonia explicitly links education and social class, and believes her parents would not approve of her marrying someone without a university degree.

When asked to describe an ideal spouse from their parents' perspectives, several participants used phrases such as "good job" and "good income". Ruma notes that her parents value socioeconomic status, as "for them, money is one way to ensure a good life". Meanwhile, Bela explains that both she and her parents have respect for people who want to work hard, more so than a high income. Similarly, Rohin states that he sees "work ethic being an inherently Indian thing", and wants to pass this to any future children. Meenakshi also values hard work, and wants a partner who is driven and ambitious. She states, "I think work ethic comes from an Indian background, definitely". Interestingly, the notion of a good work ethic is important to the identities of 'model minority' migrants. Bhatia (2007, p. 20) notes that the "model minority discourse...reifies the idea that through hard work, family values, and educational qualifications, some migrant communities are able to rise above others". Participants' perspectives on hard work are perhaps fitting with their positioning within the second wave.

#### Unpacking caste: the privilege of 'unseeing'

Participants' views on caste were largely marked by indifference, and a general lack of depth of knowledge. In some cases, they exhibited anger or outright rejection towards caste. Words commonly used to describe caste included 'primitive', 'dated', 'outdated', 'irrelevant', or of 'no relevance'.

Most participants were adamant that caste did not feature in *their* conceptions of 'their own'; though many acknowledge that it mattered to their parents, or their peers. Sudha mentions that her sister's husband, who is not Brahmin, had a difficult time gaining her Brahmin

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<sup>10</sup> Technical and Further Education, or 'TAFE' Institutions provide mostly vocational tertiary education courses in Australia.

family's acceptance. She notes that caste has since become less of an issue for her parents. She nonetheless believes that Tamil Brahmins are particularly "obsessed" with their caste identity and believe strongly in a racialised narrative of caste that sees them lay claim to an "Aryan" identity.<sup>11</sup> Hema notes that her parents would "want me to marry someone Brahmin, I think", although her family are not "practicing Brahmins" in the sense that they eat meat and do not adhere to many Brahminical practices. In contrast, Usha notes that while marrying within the Brahmin caste was once important to her parents, they have now become more "lax" after being exposed to family friends whose children have married into other cultures.

Others carried the perception that caste mattered to their peers' conceptions of 'their own'. While Roopa is from a Vaishya background, she notes that marrying within caste only seems to be important to her Brahmin friends. This is largely because they don't want to eat meat at home, which she deems "understandable". Meenakshi and Aparna, both from Telugu Brahmin backgrounds, agree that they would want to marry either vegetarians or partners who were accepting of their vegetarianism and would not cook meat in the house. Others also carried the perception that marrying within caste was more important for Brahmins. Subhash tells a story of attempting to "set up" two Indian friends, without knowing their castes. The set up did not proceed, as one friend was a Brahmin, and mentioned it important for him to marry within his caste to uphold certain practices and religious traditions.

Caste-based marriage was not only important to Brahmin participants. Chitra, who is from a Kamma background, was also raised expecting that she would be married within caste. Pranab, also from the Kamma caste, notes that caste is important to his parents with respect to his long-term relationships, mainly due to a preoccupation with what the community would say and think. Rahul states that his parents would not care about caste in most cases, but that he might face disapproval if he married a Dalit. Here, it is worth noting that even in South Asia, not all inter-caste marriages may disapproval, and some inter-caste unions are more acceptable than others. Corbridge et. al. (2013, p. 254) note, "for higher-caste parents, the variations between Brahmin habits and Kshatriya ones can be a matter of somewhat light-hearted reflection, in a way that the differences between Brahmin and Dalit cultures cannot".

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<sup>11</sup> Figueira (2002) writes on the construction of an Aryan racial identity through the articulation of Vedic authority in the Brahminical tradition. This glorified Aryan past is a core element of the *Hindutva* ideology.

I accept that participants do not consciously evoke caste in their understandings of ‘their own’. Nonetheless, I suggest that participants’ very conception of ‘Indianness’ is shaped by their caste identities. By virtue of their physical removal from the consequences of caste in South Asia, I argue that participants may not be able to ‘see’ the impacts of caste in their lives as being related to caste. This ‘caste-blindness’ may be compounded by the privilege effected by their upper caste backgrounds. Soundararajan and Varatharajah (2015) use the concept of “caste privilege”<sup>12</sup> to explain the effects of upper caste bias. Like ‘white’ or ‘male’ privilege, they state that:

Privilege provides you the opportunity to unsee caste and with it also your own caste heritage. It is in fact the very privilege of unknowing and the ignorance begotten by that silence which indicates that you have already benefited from the caste system.

Many features associated with diasporic South Asian identity, such as vegetarianism, are associated with caste; though this may be invisible to many diasporans. For example, most Brahmin participants were raised as vegetarians,<sup>13</sup> though they may not see their vegetarianism as linked to caste. Others were more transparent about their potential caste bias. Laxmi concedes that her Brahmin background may impact on some aspects of her family’s daily life, but that she would not be able to identify them as Brahmin practices. Similarly, Aparna states:

I do want to carry on certain traditions or values or whatever that connect me to being Indian, but none of those carry something to do with being of a certain caste. Or not in my eyes anyway, maybe for my grandma certain things that I do are, you know, have some relation to being a certain caste, but for me it has nothing to do with it.

Participants may therefore value and uphold caste-based traditions, without recognising their relationship with caste.

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<sup>12</sup> I find “caste privilege” very helpful in understanding the systemic disadvantage and privilege caused by caste. It is however an emerging concept that is not yet discussed widely in scholarly literature. Much of my discussion is therefore based on this article.

<sup>13</sup> Brahmins, and some other upper castes, are traditionally vegetarian. Meat is considered ‘polluting’.

There were some notable exceptions to this overall lack of ‘seeing’. Sudha describes some aspects of the “*Brahmin* tradition”, including vegetarianism, wearing a *poonal*<sup>14</sup>, speaking a slightly different version of Tamil and involvement in singing and dancing and the art forms. Gauri also identifies vegetarianism, *poonal* wearing, involvement in art forms and a sentiment of being “from this line of incredible, smart, business people that studied this spiritual book, studied the texts, incredibly intelligent” as elements of her Brahminical upbringing, which she nonetheless describes as “elitist”.

At first glance, caste does not seem to feature in participants’ conceptions of ‘their own’. However, participants’ distance from the impacts of caste in India, and their upper-caste bias, have effectively inhibited their ability to ‘see’ the impacts of caste in the diaspora.

### Conclusion

By the end of the ‘Indian Wedding Race’, we learn what becomes of our young protagonist. Dalvinder marries Shamsher, a Punjabi Sikh who has been living in Melbourne for seven years. Her father is satisfied that he is a Sikh, although he does not wear a turban. Dalvinder concedes that he “fits into the family”.

The diasporic experience is strongly characterised by a sense of ‘in-betweenness’, a condition that keenly shapes young diasporans’ negotiation of identity. Young Indian-Australians find themselves constantly evaluating their cultural values between ‘push’ and ‘pull’ of their Indian heritage and their Western reality. Their response is uttered in the articulation of an ‘Indianness’; an essentialising consciousness supposed to override the specificities of South Asian identity boundaries. This sense of ‘Indianness’ does, in some respects, carry the imprint of some of these boundaries, though their carriers may not always be wholly conscious of their influence.

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<sup>14</sup> The Tamil term for *upanayana*, a sacred thread that men from the three twice-born castes are required to wear around their torsos from adolescence, marking their initiation into spiritual life (Olson 1977).

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## Appendix A: Participant Data

Name	Age range	Gender	Religious identity	Regional identity	Indian languages spoken	Caste identity	Level of education	Marital status	Date of interview
<b>Sonia</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	North India/Punjab	Hindi	Brahmin	Master's student	Single	4 July 2016
<b>Roopa</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	Andhra Pradesh	Telugu	Vaishya	Bachelor's student	Single	7 July 2016
<b>Ashok</b>	30-35	Male	Hindu	Indo-Fijian (mother) and Rajasthan (father)	Hindi	Kshatriya/Rajput	Bachelor's degree	In a relationship	8 July 2016
<b>Kaushik</b>	25-29	Male	Hindu	Karnataka	Hindi/Kannada	Brahmin	Bachelor's degree	Single	9 July 2016
<b>Sudha</b>	25-29	Female	Hindu	Tamil Nadu	Tamil/Hindi	Brahmin	Master's degree	In a relationship	10 July 2016
<b>Ashima</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	North India/Punjab	Hindi	Kshatriya	Bachelor's student	Single	10 July 2016
<b>Bela</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	Madhya Pradesh/Uttar Pradesh	Hindi	Bania	Honours student	In a relationship	14 July 2016
<b>Usha</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	North India/New Delhi	Hindi	Brahmin	Bachelor's degree	Single	16 July 2016
<b>Subhash</b>	30-35	Male	Hindu	North India/Punjab	Hindi, some Punjabi	Vaishya	Master's student	Single	16 July 2016
<b>Laxmi</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	Karnataka	Santhi, Kannada	Brahmin/Sanke	Bachelor's degree	In a relationship	17 July 2016



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<b>Chitra</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	Andhra Pradesh	Telugu	Kamma	Master student	Single	18 July 2016	
<b>Pranab</b>	18-24	Male	Hindu	Andhra Pradesh	Telugu	Kamma	Bachelors student	Single	20 July 2016	
<b>Ruma</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	North India/Punjab	Hindi	Kshatriya	Bachelors student	Single	23 July 2016	
<b>Rohin</b>	25-29	Male	Hindu	Kerala (mother) and North India/Haryana (father)	Hindi, some Malayalam	Father is Kshatriya, mother is Brahmin	Bachelors degree	Single	23 July 2016	
<b>Sanjeev</b>	25-29	Male	Hindu	Haryana	Hindi	Father is Kshatriya, mother a different caste, unsure which.	Bachelors degree	Single	24 July 2016	
<b>Meena kshi</b>	25-29	Female	Hindu	Andhra Pradesh	Telugu	Brahmin	Bachelors degree	Single	24 July 2016	
<b>Aparna</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	Andhra Pradesh	Telugu	Brahmin	Bachelors degree	Single	24 July 2016	
<b>Hema</b>	18-24	Female	Hindu	Tamil Nadu/Kerala (both parents Tamil-speaking)	Tamil	Brahmin	Bachelors student	Single	25 July 2016	
<b>Rahul</b>	18-	Male	Hindu	Punjab	Hindi	Brahmin	Bachelors	Single	25	

	24					in	ors studen t		July 2016
<b>Shoba</b>	25- 29	Fem ale	Hindu	Karnat aka	Sanke thi/ Kanna da	Brahm in/ Sanke thi	Bachel ors degree	In a relatio nship	27 July 2016
<b>Gauri</b>	25- 29	Fem ale	Hindu	Tamil Nadu	Tamil and some Hindi	Brahm in	Master s studen t	In a relatio nship	1 Augu st 2016
<b>Sange eta</b>	25- 29	Fem ale	Hindu	Gujarat	Gujar ati	Brahm in	Bachel ors degree	In a relatio nship	1 Augu st 2016