

KINSHIP IN A CHANGING SOCIETY
EXTRA-FAMILIAL KIN RELATIONSHIPS AMONG INDIANS
LIVING ON A SUGAR ESTATE IN NATAL

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PREFACE

This thesis is based on field research, conducted during 1974-76, while I was a graduate student in the Department of African Studies at the University of Natal. Unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, therefore, all the data presented and conclusions reached are my own original work.

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I would like to express my appreciation to Mr Dennis Crookes, now Operations Director of C.G. Smith Sugar Company, for his kind permission to carry out this study. I am grateful also to Mr P. Rungasamy and Mrs Maureen Whitfield for their help and encouragement in this field; also to Dolly Govender and Kogie Naidoo who accompanied me during the census, and to all those men and women, whom I am unable to mention by name, who made this study possible by their willing assistance and co-operation at all times.

I would also like to thank Professor John Argyle, my thesis supervisor, for his patient and constructive criticism; Professor G.C. Oosthuizen for information relating to evangelical Indian Christians in South Africa; Mr Jack Rodgers for kindly drawing Map I for me, and last, but by no means least, my husband. His practical help in assisting me with the tables and figures as well as his support and encouragement throughout the research have been of invaluable benefit to me.

INTRODUCTION

In the comparative study of human societies, with which social anthropology aims to concern itself, the topic of kinship has long been of major interest. Until fairly recently, however, anthropologists had not given much attention to the study of kin relationships in industrial urban societies. Such studies had been left largely to sociologists who tended to concentrate on relationships within the elementary family. In the last decade or so this situation has begun to alter with the appearance of studies by anthropologists dealing with what has come to be known as 'extra-familial' kinship in urban areas, particularly in Britain and the United States. The most prominent British example is the book Families and Their Relatives, by Professor Raymond Firth and his colleagues, which has been the direct inspiration for this thesis.

At first sight the connection of Firth's work to my own study of a South African Indian community may seem quite incongruous, since the middle class British inhabitants of inner London suburbs are far removed geographically and culturally from predominantly working class people, mostly of southern Indian origin, who live on a sugar estate in Natal. However, despite these apparent differences, there are other features of the situation of these Indian South Africans which diminish the contrast. Firstly, my Indian subjects do form part of a rapidly industrializing and increasingly urbanized society. Most of them work in various capacities in the sugar mill on the estate or in associated 'service' jobs. None of these men are employed as agricultural labourers in the cane fields, work which is now done solely by Africans. Some of the children of my subjects and a few of their wives are employed in similar

industrial and service concerns (factories and shops) in a fast developing and largely Indian town near the estate. The estate itself has long been linked by road and railway to the city of Durban (the railway station is only a few hundred metres from the homes of my subjects) and the city is frequently visited by them.

Although the level of education among the older generation is generally low, few of the men over fifty having more than two or three years schooling and the women none at all, the younger generation are achieving considerably higher standards, and education up to High School level is now compulsory. Through the schools and through other influences, such as the radio, newspapers and magazines, the people living on the estate are increasingly exposed to the example of a modern, 'western' way of life.

In the domestic sphere, the physical lay-out of the accommodation provided on the estate for Indians, mostly rows of one and two room 'barracks' dwellings, encourages the tendency towards living in elementary families and discourages the formation of 'extended' ones of the traditional Indian kind. There are other ways too, in which local circumstances have prevented the continuation or reconstruction of traditional Indian institutions which might influence kinship patterns. The system of indentured labour, which brought most of my subjects' forefathers to Natal, did not allow the recreation of a village way of life nor did it encourage the development of unilineal descent groups. Although the indentured labour system did not completely eliminate caste distinctions, it certainly did not permit the operation of caste in the way in which it still operates in Indian and perhaps also, although to a lesser extent, in some other 'overseas' Indian communities.

For all these reasons, the cultural distance between my subjects and those of Firth is considerably less than the apparent contrasts between them would suggest. Moreover, the approach adopted by Firth seemed in many ways more relevant to my research than that usually adopted in the anthropological literature on kinship in India itself. For that literature (or such of it as I have been able to consult, e.g. Srinivas 1952, Mayer 1960, Ishwaran 1968) is often concerned with kinship in a more traditional anthropological mode: kinship in connection with the production and distribution of economic resources; the organisation of unilineal descent groups and 'joint' families; forms of preferential or prescriptive marriage alliance; kinship in a still functioning caste system at the local level of village or region. As I have already indicated, most of these institutions are not present at all or only in attenuated form, among the people with whom I am concerned. Therefore, although the literature on India has been occasionally helpful in offering parallels to my field situation (notably in ceremonial and ritual), I have not generally found it feasible or desirable to analyse my own information against the background of that literature. There is, however, one exceptional case where an attempt has been made by Danesh Chekki to apply Firth's approach to Indian material and I must obviously consider its possible relevance to my research.

Chekki (1973) examines kinship networks and the extended family system in two medium-sized cities in western India. In addition to investigating similar kinship themes to those studied by Firth, he also deals with patterns of urbanization and their effects on family and kinship. This study appears to be the only published account dealing with extra-familial kinship networks in India on a fairly intensive level, and Chekki's adoption of this approach does at least suggest that my own use of Firth is less exceptionable, considering that Chekki's

Indians are even more culturally different from middle-class English people than my subjects are. But although Chekki's example is encouraging, his results are not readily comparable with my own, again because of the presence of institutions which do not exist, or at least not in the same form, among South African Indians. For one thing, Chekki worked within the framework of caste. He chose to investigate two high ranking castes, the Brahmans and Lingayats, whom he characterizes as the 'major caste groups in this part of India' (1973: 11) though by major he does not mean numerically predominant, for he also says 'Brahmans form a minority group in the province but play a significant role in the cultural, educational and administrative activities in the province' (*ibid*, 11). In contrast, the Indian community inhabiting the small 'village' which formed the focus for my fieldwork are predominantly descendants of indentured labourers from the Tamil speaking areas of south India and are mostly of lower caste or even out-caste origins. Moreover, the Brahmans whom Chekki studied set great store by elaborate pedigrees and by 'sraddha' or ancestor worship. Although recent ancestors (such as deceased parents) are venerated and remembered by my subjects, such ceremonies are not made a focal point of kin gatherings. Similar considerations apply to questions of marriage. Village exogamy is non-existent in South Africa and caste, although still meaningful in some phases of the life cycle of the individual, does not have the same importance as in India. Neither do institutions like dowry or bride price exist among Indians in South Africa in the same form as in India. Quite apart from these cultural differences, I found Chekki inexplicit about the extent to which he followed Firth's methods in actually collecting his material. I had the impression that Chekki may merely have reanalysed his material along Firthian lines after he had completed his fieldwork. In particular I suspect he may not have collected full, cognatic genealogies and therefore may not have related

his kinship material systematically to the genealogies. Because of these reservations I have chosen not to make a direct comparison between Chekki's work and my own.

Given the inappropriateness of much mainland Indian literature to my field situation, it might still be supposed that I could have found appropriate and useful precedents in the literature on overseas Indian communities. In fact it is not at all easy to make direct comparisons with the available literature on Indian overseas communities. For one thing, the place of origin in India is often a significant element in the contemporary cultural and social characteristics of overseas Indians. Most previous studies of overseas Indian communities deal with those of predominantly north Indian origin, whereas in my community the majority are of South Indian background and there are, of course, marked cultural and linguistic differences between these two broad areas. Secondly, although the pattern of emigration from India led to the initial establishment of similar communities of estate workers in the various overseas areas, these communities have become much more divergent in recent years. Many overseas Indian communities (in Ceylon and Guyana for instance) have tended to remain rural communities, based on small-holdings or plantations, whereas my subjects are essentially industrial workers, increasingly involved in the process of urbanization. All these differences have corresponding effects on kinship patterns and in any case few writers on overseas Indians have paid much attention to extra-familial kinship.

For example, Adrian Mayer (1961) has written a full-length study of several Indian immigrant villages on Fiji, where the economy is mainly dependent on cane sugar growing. Although Mayer does discuss the implications of kin links at some length, his work is in respects

similar to those of village India in that the Indian communities on Fiji which he describes were not wholly involved in an industrial, urban milieu, but remained tied to the land, many of the villagers actually owning or renting a plot from which they partly or wholly made their living. Benedict's description (1961) of Indian family life on Mauritius, where Indians were also imported to work in the cane fields, centres on the household and 'joint family' and on intra-familial rather than extra-familial kin links. In a similar, though more systematic fashion, Jayawardena (1963) presents a detailed account of family organisation on two Guyanese sugar plantations. In many respects the family life and household organisation which he describes are similar to my field situation; that is, the typical household consists of an elementary family partly as a result of the housing policies of the company running the estates. Although Jayawardena's analysis of the resulting family structure is thorough, he does not discuss in any detail the implications of extra-familial kinship, but merely states 'the kin group represents a potential field from which persons are recruited for co-operation and intimate social intercourse in daily life and domestic ceremonies.' (1963: 62). Rauf (1974) also discusses the pluralist society of Guyana with specific reference to the Indian communities of two villages, but his main interest lies in the conflict between past and present generations of 'East Indians' and in the various cultural forms and symbols which have been retained or discarded by the community. Rauf limits his discussion of kinship to a brief analysis only of marriage and its concomitants and of caste. Similarly, Morris (1968) who has written about Indian immigrant communities in East Africa has directed his attention to topics such as ethnicity and class and says very little about kinship on the whole. Thus, although these studies have been useful on occasions, the literature on overseas Indians was not necessarily more helpful than

Firth's approach for my purposes.

Moreover, using Firth as an example has led me to collect much more detailed material than is presently available on Indian South African families. The major published work by an anthropologist on Indian South Africans is, of course, that by Professor Hilda Kuper, Indian People in Natal. As the title suggests, the book covers a wide variety of subject matter, though Kuper does say that her 'field-work was slanted towards the family, its structure and values' (1960: XVI, my italics). The second part of Professor Kuper's book is indeed concerned with kinship structure, behaviour and ritual, but much of her material is descriptive rather than analytical and extensive rather than intensive in character, as the scope of the book necessarily entails. Other subsequent major studies have been provided by Mrs. Fatima Meer and Mrs. Sabitha Jithoo, who are themselves Indian South Africans. Mrs. Meer's study of suicide in Durban and her informative, entertaining Portrait of South African Indians are well known, but they are not much concerned with kinship. Mrs. Jithoo has produced a Master's thesis on the Hindu joint family in Durban (1970) and has recently published an article based on it (1978). Although her works are more specifically devoted to kinship topics than any other existing work on Indian South Africans, they are also limited in scope to a consideration of intra-familial kin ties and in that respect resemble so many other studies of Indian kinship already mentioned. I may therefore claim that the adoption of Firth's approach has led me in directions which have been relatively little explored by my predecessors here.

In addition to the novelty of this approach in this context, another factor that predisposed me in favour of it was my own fieldwork situation which tended to be like that of Firth and his colleagues. Opportunities

for full participant observation in the sense of taking up residence in the field were largely absent in the London study, given its nature, and were non-existent for me in South Africa where residential segregation of race groups is imposed by law. I did, nevertheless, take many opportunities to attend ceremonies and family gatherings, as did the London researchers. In the circumstances however, intensive interviewing during visits to subjects homes necessarily formed the bulk of my fieldwork. Since the Firth study had already been published and I had access also to the original fieldwork report of the study (Hubert, Forge and Firth 1968) and since the Department of African Studies at the University of Natal had already begun similar work among whites in Durban, it was possible to follow quite closely the field procedures used in the London study. Nevertheless, my time and finances were limited and since I was working on my own, it was impossible to reproduce the scale of the London study. However, despite these limitations the use of Firth's method does allow for comparisons to be made, both with the London study and eventually perhaps, with the Durban study. The need for anthropology to be a comparative social science has often been stated in the past, but it is still not very often that individual pieces of research are constructed with direct comparisons in mind. Although I have not myself attempted wide-ranging comparisons in this thesis, I may make the further claim that by adopting Firth's approach, such comparisons do become possible in principle.

In this thesis, I have concentrated on selecting from Firth's topics a few of what seem to be the more central issues. Among these is an examination of the structures of some 'kin universes' of individual informants. In the chapter dealing with them I examine the 'regularities' which, according to Firth, can be distinguished in all kinship behaviour in industrial society. These regularities include quantitative estimates

of the number and sorts of kin known and kept in touch with, the quality of these recognitions of kin and the contact made with them. Following on from this, in chapter five I look at the 'effective' kin sets of my informants, comprising those kin with whom Ego is in regular contact, and the variety of contacts made, by visiting, exchange of services, correspondence, telephone or common attendance at family gatherings. I examine variations in the number and size of informants' effective kin sets, both the average and extremes, and I note differences in the effective kin sets of men and women, husbands and wives. In chapter six, I examine kinship ritual with reference to the roles of extra-familial kin, in particular the major life cycle ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death, while in chapter seven I try to look in a detailed way at the particular quality of individual kin relationships. Associated with each type of relationship, 'mother', 'father', 'uncle', 'aunt', or 'cousin' are stereotyped concepts in the minds of many people about how these kin behave, or should behave, to Ego. My concern here was to try to find out to what extent such stereotypes existed among my informants and the degree to which actual behaviour of kin in these categories conformed to or differed from, these concepts. All these topics are examined against the background of the physical and general setting of the research which I outline in the first chapter and then continue in the same chapter to describe in some detail the actual fieldwork methods used. My intention has thus been to provide an account of the full range and operation of kinship in its widest sense for a small number of persons in a community that is in some ways peculiar, but in others comparable with many others in different parts of the modern world.

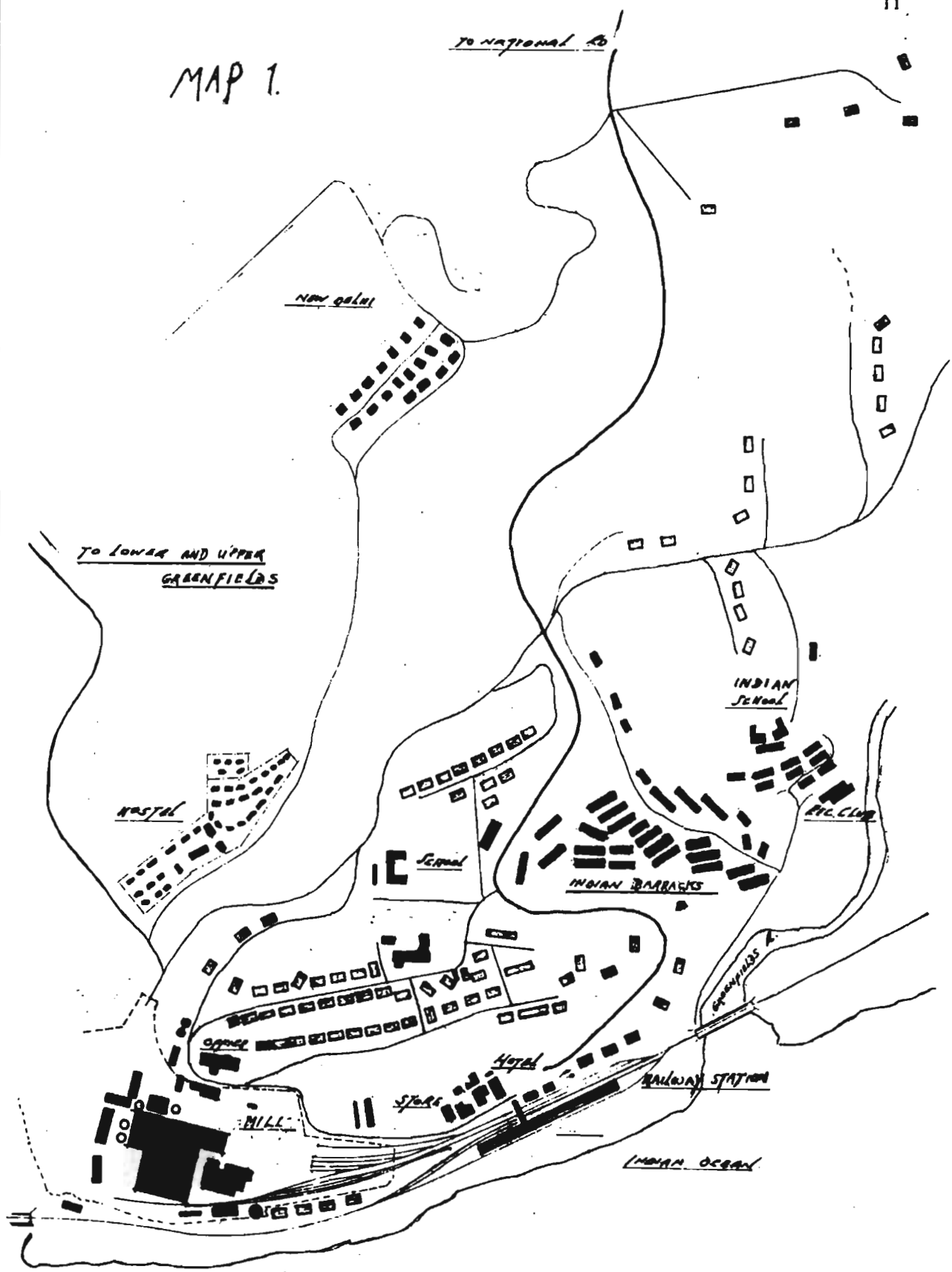
Chapter One

'GREENFIELDS' : THE FIELDWORK SETTING AND RESEARCH METHODS

The sugar industry in Natal, on the east coast of South Africa, has been established for about 120 years and now plays a major role in the economy of the province. The industry is today dominated by several large concerns in Natal which have absorbed smaller, previously autonomous sugar companies. It was one of these small companies which in 1882 began to develop the sugar plantation on which the village that I call 'Greenfields' eventually came to be situated. The village itself grew up around the plantation sugar mill which began operating in 1915.

In Greenfields village live White, Coloured, Indian and African workers, employed by the company to work on the sugar plantation, which includes both the mill and the surrounding cane fields. As one would expect in South Africa, the village is divided into different housing areas for the different racial groups and the one where most of the Indian population live is therefore labelled in this thesis 'the Greenfields barracks'. Following the local usage, I also distinguish these main barracks from the 'Upper' and the 'Lower' Greenfields barracks which lie about four kilometres from Greenfields proper and also house Indian employees of the company and their families. The accompanying Map 1 shows the layout of Greenfields barracks and its position relative to the rest of the village. Other sections of the sugar plantation and the sugar mill itself are referred to in the thesis only when they impinge on the lives of barracks residents.

MAP 1.



SKETCH plan
GREEN FIELDS
Scale 1:8000

I also need to explain that the present Greenfields village and the surrounding areas of cane fields were not part of the original estate developed by the founders of the present sugar company. The first land they bought lay some twelve kilometres to the north-west of Greenfields, near the town which I call 'Northlands' and which today has a predominantly Indian population. The enterprising pioneers who bought this land prospered in the early years of the sugar industry and built what was then a large sugar mill at 'Fidelia' a couple of kilometres from Northlands. An Indian barracks was built at Fidelia in 1882 when the mill there began to crush sugar cane, to provide housing for the indentured labourers who were working in the mill and cane fields. Problems were encountered, however, at Fidelia with the hilly topography of the area which created difficulties in the transport of cane to the mill. At the turn of the century the further acquisition of 11 000 acres of cane land belonging to a local farming family near Greenfields, suggested to the owners of Fidelia the need to erect a new and larger mill in the Greenfields area to process the increasing amounts of cane available. Greenfields was a particularly suitable site for a new mill, because it was on the main railway line running parallel to the coast which meant that the sugar could easily be transported to Durban for sale. In addition, the Greenfields river flows out to the sea at this point, providing water to feed the steam turbines of the factory.

Initially, much of the labour force which was needed in the cane fields at Greenfields came from nearby plantations and farms. Many of the small sugar plantations and mills which had been established by individuals in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Natal turned out to be unsuccessful. Lack of the necessary capital and slumps in the world sugar market had forced many small

sugar plantation owners to sell out to their more successful rivals who incorporated these plantations in their own larger concerns. When the mill at Greenfields began operating in 1915, it was therefore able to draw on such labour from amongst the Indian population of the original, smaller plantations. These Indians had not, of course, originally been brought to South Africa to work in sugar mills, but had been recruited to work in the fields. For Natal, with its hilly terrain, sugar cane is an especially labour intensive crop, particularly at planting and harvesting time. Since the pioneer sugar farmers found the indigenous African population a very unsatisfactory source of agricultural labour, they followed the example of sugar growing colonists in other parts of the world and appealed to the colonial government of Natal to allow the importation of 'coolie' indentured labour from India. The application for indentured labour met with some resistance initially, notably from the British government to whom the memory of anti-slavery legislation was still recent, and from a few prominent settlers in Natal.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless the settlers' view that the future of industry in the colony depended on the importation of labour triumphed and by the time the mill at Greenfields started operating in 1915 there were over 133 000 Indians living in Natal.

Unlike those Indians who went to the Caribbean and to Fiji, who were of largely northern Indian origin and mainly Hindi speaking, the majority of the indentured Indians who came to South Africa were

(1) This resistance and other aspects of the origins of indentured labour in South Africa have been well documented in histories such as that of Calpin (1949) and Ferguson-Davie (1952). H. Tinker (1974) also refers to the Indian immigration to Natal in his recent, broader work.

Tamil or Telegu speakers from Madras or Andhra in southern India. Although a certain number did emigrate to Natal from Bihar and the United Provinces via Calcutta, the present day distribution of the vernacular language groups in Greenfields and elsewhere in Natal confirms the largely southern origin of the immigrants. Once the indentured labourers had arrived in Durban, they were contracted to various employers, mainly as agricultural workers, though some went as labourers to concerns like the railways and harbours.

The main provisions of the initial contracts between employers and the indentured included free transport from India, an agreement to work for ten shillings a month for three years (this was later extended to five years), free food, housing and medical attention. When their contracts expired at the end of three years, they were given the choice of a free passage home to India, or their freedom and the opportunity to acquire crown land at two shillings and sixpence an acre. The impression given by some informants is that their grandfathers took advantage of this latter offer, since they said that their parents were born on 'farms' (small-holdings) in various parts of Natal and that they themselves only came to Greenfields as teenagers with their parents. While a few families managed to retain possession of their plots over the years, others may have found it impossible to pay the annual 'licence' fee of £3 per head which the government imposed in 1896 on each 'free' Indian as the price of remaining in Natal. This annual 'licence' was not the only measure passed by the colonial government to encourage the 'free' Indians to return to India; others such as the withdrawal of subsidised immigration followed. However, these measures were not particularly successful in effecting repatriation. Only one of my seventeen major informants could remember any of her

relatives returning to India to live and few immigrants appeared to have kept in touch with their families in India. Genealogies were taken from seventeen informants in Greenfields and in only one case was contact still kept, via letters, with relatives in India.

My informants' forebears therefore seem to have wanted to remain in South Africa, after having served one or two terms of indenture, as independent small-holders or market gardeners but the pressure of government taxes and inability to feed their growing families often forced them to sell their land, frequently to white plantation owners, and return to agricultural labour for others. While the original scarcity of labour which led to the importation of Indians was on the agricultural side of the sugar industry, improved schemes for the recruitment of African labour from 1930 led to greater opportunities for Indians to be trained to work in the mills. By the end of the second World War mill workers were mainly Indian, although a number of Indians, particularly youngsters and some women still worked in the fields. One informant said that he began work in the sugar mill at Greenfields in 1939 at the age of fourteen, for £2.10s per month. During the six months 'off crop' when the mill was idle, he worked in the fields as a weeder, for which he earned the much smaller wage of seventeen shillings and sixpence a month. The only advantage of working in the fields, according to this informant, was that field workers stopped for the day at noon while the mill workers worked from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. The trend away from agricultural labour for Indians has steadily continued and today the majority of Indians in South Africa are employed in urban areas and diversified occupations. Apart from a few men in supervisory positions, there are no longer Indians working in the cane fields at Greenfields, although a few elderly women

augment their pensions by working as weeders in the Parks and Gardens Department of the estate.

The Indian labour force in Greenfields can therefore be seen as part of this movement from agricultural to industrial employment, though it is perhaps of a transitional kind, since the Greenfields setting is still partly agricultural. However, while Indians do not form the majority of the work force in the mill today, as may be seen from Table 1.1., they do tend to be in more skilled jobs than Africans and this is another index of their increasing absorption into industry.

Table 1.1. Proportions/Percentages of population groups employed in the Greenfields Mill, 1977

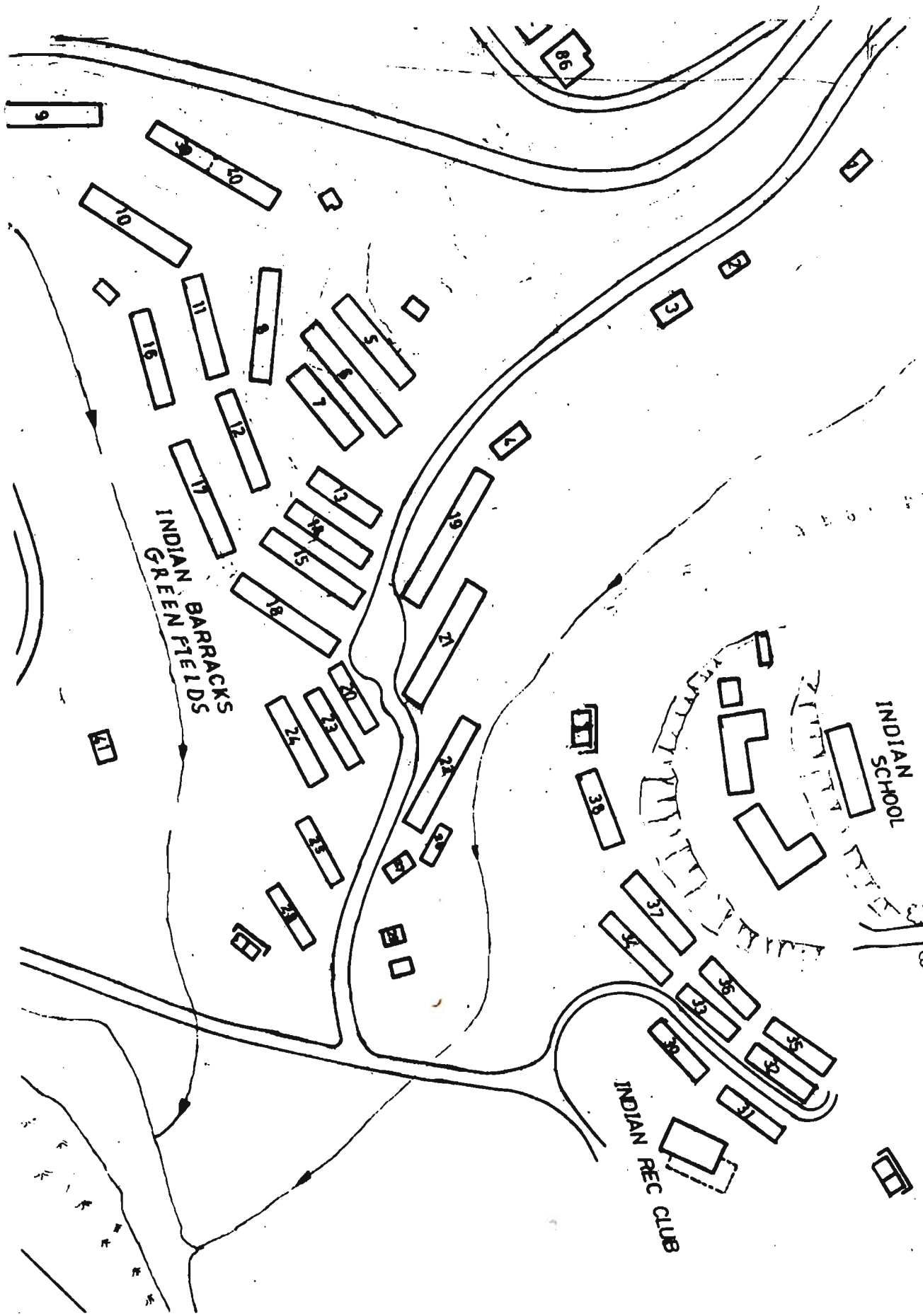
Population Group	Percentage of Employees
African	50
Indian	30
White	18
Coloured	2
	<hr/> 100 <hr/>

While Africans form the largest percentage of employees in the mill, it is nevertheless the Indians who form the largest residential group in the Greenfields village. African employees are housed in a hostel which, unlike the Indian barracks, does not provide accommodation for their families. Two-thirds of the Indians employed in the mill therefore live in the main Greenfields barracks, the rest being housed in barracks at Upper and Lower Greenfields. While these latter barracks are quite isolated, the main Greenfields barracks is close to the mill and is separated from the nearby houses of white company employees by steep contours, the houses for whites being built on top of the hills and

near the bed of the Greenfields river. Despite the existence of these contours, the actual distance between the white and Indian housing is not great, a couple of hundred metres, and the barracks are clearly visible to parts of the white village and vice-versa. This proximity of white to Indian housing meant that I was able to initiate contact with Indian families fairly easily, since the house which we occupied, by virtue of my husband's employment in the company, was only a few hundred metres from the edge of the barracks.

Once I had made contact with a number of families, the first part of the research was an investigation into the actual composition of households in Greenfields barracks. Although each married Indian worker was supposed to be allocated a separate dwelling of one or two rooms for himself and his wife and their unmarried children, I knew that in a number of instances young men working for the company chose to live with their parents for a few years after marriage, often to enable them to save money to buy furniture and household effects. In a few other cases, there have been insufficient dwellings available and young couples have then been forced to share the barracks home of the parents of either the husband or wife. It was also apparent that married couples often had living with them other kin, besides children, but the number of these kin and their genealogical relationships to the head of the household were not known. Thus, although the type of housing provided for the Indians at Greenfields should have generally prevented the formation of 'joint families' and produced a majority of nuclear family households, it was not clear to what extent this expectation actually obtained. I therefore decided to take a household census of all the Indian inhabitants of the main Greenfields barracks.

For the census a card was prepared with a limited set of questions,



which were first tried out amongst the inhabitants of Lower Greenfields barracks. This barracks consists of seventy homes, arranged in rows up the sides of a steep hill, with from six to ten dwellings in each row. Each dwelling was visited personally and one of the occupants questioned. The respondent was most often the wife of the household head, since visits took place during the day, when the men were at work in the mill. Occasionally, however, the household head himself was interviewed, or an adult child such as an unmarried daughter. The position of the respondent in the household was always noted on the card. Two unmarried girls who were living with their parents in Lower Greenfields accompanied me during the trial census. Their help was needed partly because a few elderly pensioners could not speak English and I knew only a few Tamil phrases, so in these cases the girls acted as interpreters. In other cases, respondents did not fully understand questions put to them and my companions then helped to explain them. The girls were also generally helpful in gaining the confidence of respondents, though there was little obvious reluctance to answer questions. This trial census revealed that the questions on the card raised no problems, except for one about lodgers of whom there were none in Lower Greenfields. This question was therefore removed.

Once this preliminary inquiry was successfully completed, the main census was conducted in Greenfields barracks itself. Within the boundaries of Greenfields barracks (see Map 2) which is arranged in 42 rows, are 202 homes with one or two or three rooms. Most of the three-room dwellings are in the form of semi-detached cottages and are slightly larger than the one- and two-roomed dwellings. There is also one four-roomed house in the barracks, the home of the headmaster of the Indian Primary school in Greenfields. In 1973 work had begun on a project to provide higher paid Indian employees with modern

housing and amenities, in the form of a number of three-bedroomed houses on a hill-top site about one kilometre from the Greenfields mill and roughly 800 metres from the barracks. At the time when the main census was conducted, all the inhabitants of 'New Delhi' (as the new complex came to be called) had very recently moved there from the main barracks and because of this I treated New Delhi as an extension of the barracks for the purposes of the census in which I included its inhabitants.

The same procedure was followed in the main census as in Lower Greenfields. I visited each home personally and interviewed the household head, his wife, or an adult dependant. I engaged the services of an unmarried girl as interpreter and companion. Once I had completed the census, information on the cards was processed and is used in appropriate places in the thesis, in particular in chapter two with reference to household composition and in chapter three dealing with marriage and caste.

Nevertheless, the census was only able to provide me with information of a limited kind and it was clear that in order to acquire the comprehensive and detailed information needed on such topics as kin relationships and life-cycle events in Indian families, I would have to conduct in-depth interviews with a restricted number of informants. The main informants eventually chosen were all women, largely because they were available for interviews at times when I too, was free. The menfolk were generally unavailable during the day and in any case there is still considerable separation between men and women in this community, so that interviewing the men alone or in some cases even in the presence of their wives would generally have been uncomfortable for all parties. Nevertheless, I did manage

to talk to some of the husbands of my informants and got genealogical and other information from four of them. It is clear therefore that I can make no claim for the randomness of my 'sample' of informants, since it was so heavily biased towards women.

Moreover, my selection of the women concerned was not itself random for my choice of those for intensive interviewing was initially effected through a local association known as the 'Indian Women's Circle.' This organisation consists of a group of Indian housewives, all wives or relatives of company employees, or wives of teachers at the Indian Primary school (who live in the barracks) and it meets weekly to learn and practise hand-crafts, home economics and allied skills. Shortly after my arrival in Greenfields in August, 1974, I was asked to help with this Women's Circle. From December of that year I actually took over the running of Circle affairs as 'supervisor'. Although Circle business was peripheral to my main interests, it did mean that I had already met regularly a group of women before the main fieldwork began. My meetings with them in the Circle lasted on average two hours each, during which I was able to listen to the interests and preoccupations of the women and pose questions of my own. Over a period of months I felt I had become accepted by these women. Therefore, when the time came to choose the main informants, I chose nine women whom I knew well from the Circle, because I felt they would be less likely to refuse to be interviewed and more willing to answer questions. The one informant who was not a Circle member did indeed prove more difficult to interview than any of the other informants. Despite this obvious bias in the choice of informants, I did try to select women with differing characteristics. While eight out of ten informants were married, they ranged in age from 19 to 50 years and the other two informants were unmarried girls. One of these became engaged and

and married during the period of fieldwork and I was able to observe and take part in the protracted ceremonies connected with her wedding. No widows were included, since none were members of the Women's Circle and in any case I knew from the household census that few of the widows in Greenfields barracks speak or understand English at the level required by intensive interviewing.

Nine informants were of Tamil or Telegu speaking background and one was of Hindustani origin. In Greenfields barracks and Natal generally the Telegu language has been largely superseded by Tamil, so that women who were brought up to speak Telegu say they now speak only Tamil or English and their children do not know any Telegu. Many barracks residents also denied that their children spoke or understook Tamil, although the same children were observed to talk with grandparents in the vernacular. Since the large majority of the population were Tamil or 'Tamilised', the Tamil proportion in my 'sample' is not unrepresentative. English, is, of course, increasingly used and all the women were fluent in it.

Another differing characteristic of my informants is that they were of varied socio-economic background. They included not only the wives of the Principal and Vice-Principal of the Greenfields Indian Primary School, the former having a B.A. degree, but also two women (one of whose husbands occupied a semi-skilled position in the mill) who could not read or write. Six out of the ten female informants had four or five years of schooling, enabling them to read and write English at a simple level, and had usually had several years of vernacular instruction in Tamil. Besides these contrasts in levels of education and affluence, religion was another criterion of major importance in choosing informants. Although approximately

75% of the population in Greenfields barracks are Hindu, 25% are members of a Protestant evangelical church, the South African General Mission, which has been active in Greenfields since 1920. One of the interesting themes which emerged early in the study was the extent and the nature of the division between Christian and Hindu in Greenfields barracks. I decided therefore, to include seven Hindu and three Christian women among the selected informants to reflect the proportional representation of the two religions in the barracks.

Since the thesis that follows is largely an account of kinship as seen and experienced by these women and their husbands, I may now introduce each individual, using the code name by which I will refer to her or him in the rest of the thesis. My first informant was Mrs. David who is 35 years old and was born and brought up in the Indian barracks at Fidelia, twelve kilometres from Greenfields. Mrs. David is a devout Hindu⁽¹⁾, Tamil-speaking and of 'good' Govender caste. She attended school for five years and married Mr. David when she was fifteen. Mr. David was brought up in Greenfields and worked for a time as a barman in Zululand when he left school, but he returned to Greenfields a few years later when his father died and took over his father's job in the mill. Today he is a time clerk, a white collar, but not very highly paid position. Like his wife, Mr. David is of 'good', though different, caste, Naidoo⁽²⁾. Naidoo is acknowledged by informants to be a Telegu caste name, but Mr. David speaks Tamil because his mother is a Tamil Govender. The David household consists of Mr. and Mrs. David with seven of their eight

(1) Many Hindus, as well as Christians, have Christian 'calling names' and these are used as surnames in ordinary conversation. This usage applied to her original, married surname and is reflected in the code-name I have given her.

(2) Such marriages out of caste are common among my informants, but

children and they occupy one of the three-roomed semi-detached cottages. The eighth child, a daughter of nineteen, works in a shop in Northlands and lives with Mrs. David's mother in Fidelia. Six children are still at school, but another daughter is engaged to be married next year and has left school. Both Mr. and Mrs. David are prominent members of the Greenfields Indian community. Mr. David is a member of the Greenfields Indian Advisory Board and on the Hindu temple committee. Mrs. David has been Chairwoman of the Women's Circle and ran the Nursery school in the barracks for a time. She has also conducted literacy classes. The Davids are often to be seen at weddings or other functions held in the barracks. Their own involvement with extra-familial kin was found to be less than that of other informants and is possibly connected with their greater involvement in barracks affairs generally. Mr. David was at home on about half the occasions when interviews took place with Mrs. David and questions were addressed to them both.

My second informant, Muniamma, also played a public role in the barracks community as the Tamil school teacher, but in contrast to the Davids who are cheerful, extrovert personalities, Muniamma is a quiet, shy girl. Muniamma was born in Greenfields 29 years ago, of good caste (Naidoo), conservative, Hindu parents. She went to school for seven years and passed a number of Tamil examinations as well. When she left school she taught at the Tamil school in the barracks for eight years. During the course of fieldwork Muniamma became engaged to Deva, a young man who also lives in Greenfields and works in the sugar mill. I was able to participate in the ceremonies connected with Muniamma's marriage and also interviewed her younger sister who was living at home.

Muniamma's mother had died three years before I began fieldwork. Her elderly father was rarely at home when I interviewed his daughters and when he did appear was reluctant to join in the conversation, so I did not make an attempt to interview him as well. Muniamma is a devout Hindu, making a point of attending the weekly services held in the temple. She is a member of the Siva Siddhanta Sanghum, an association dedicated to the promotion of the worship of Siva and abstract Hindu ideals, as opposed to village 'idol worship', popular among less-educated Hindus in Natal. Muniamma was the only person I encountered in Greenfields in barracks who said she did not eat 'flesh' (meaning meat) of any kind. At the close of fieldwork Muniamma was expecting her first child and withdrawing from her role of teacher to that of wife and mother. Her marriage was an arranged one and while she initially did not care for her husband, he treats her well and she has settled down to life in her new home where she lives with her husband, his widowed mother and his unmarried sister.

My third informant was also a young girl, but unlike Muniamma, Roberta John had been married to her husband Tommy John, for over a year when I met her. Roberta was 19 years old and was born in a small, predominantly Indian, village about twelve kilometres north of Greenfields. She has Standard 5 education, which means that she completed primary school, and she worked for a short time after she left school at the shoe factory in Northlands before marrying Tommy, who works as an operator in the chemical plant attached to the Greenfields sugar mill. Roberta's family are Christians, although of 'good' Naidoo caste. Roberta said she met Tommy (who is also a Christian) at an evangelical rally held in her village. Tommy and Roberta live with Tommy's parents in the barracks, where they have

one room of a two-roomed dwelling. Tommy's parents and four unmarried children occupy the other room. Roberta helps her mother-in-law with the household chores and the cooking. She made a point of emphasising her good relationship with her mother-in-law to me ('we are Christians, we mustn't fight'), thereby acknowledging that this relationship was often a tense one in many families. Roberta and her mother-in-law are staunch supporters of the Christian church in Greenfields and are regular attenders at the weekly Ladies Prayer Meeting. Roberta is proud of the new hi-fi, expensive bedroom furniture and fashionable clothes which Tommy's relatively high income has enabled them to buy, but she is aware that other women in the barracks who are unable to afford these things are envious of her. Tommy earns more than his father does, who works in the sugar mill, and he contributes some money monthly towards the joint household budget, about a fifth of the total. Tommy was at home on only a few occasions when I interviewed his wife, but he did provide information about his genealogy and about church activities in which he is involved.

My fourth informant, Mrs. Raj, was very different from my previous informants. She was born 47 years ago in Cato Manor, a suburb of Durban. She had three years of school: 'I am the eldest of eight children and when my mother died I was forced to leave school to give the others a chance to go to school.' Mrs. Raj stayed at home, not working, until she was nineteen and married her husband, Mr. Raj and came to live in Greenfields, where he works as a panboiler. Mrs. Raj has five children, three sons and two daughters. In comparison with most Greenfields scholars, Mrs. Raj's children are well educated, all of them, except the youngest who is still at school, having school-leaving certificates. Mrs. Raj is proud of her children's achievements and wants them to

contract good marriages. The Raj family are proud of their high caste (Singh) and Hindustani origin, in contrast to the Tamil background of most of the barracks occupants, and consider themselves to be of superior status to most of the barracks families. Mrs. Raj's half-sister is married to her husband's brother who also works in the sugar mill and lives a few doors away in the barracks. The two families are close friends. Mrs. Raj herself has a small dress-making business and her half-sister runs a small shop from her house, both of which ventures are very profitable. Mrs. Raj claims not to mix with other women in the barracks on the grounds that her husband does not allow her out of the house, but visitors were observed often to enter her home. I was unable to interview Mr. Raj as his wife claimed that he would not approve and therefore my interviews with Mrs. Raj were conducted whenever Mr. Raj was away at work. However, I did manage to speak to the two daughters on several occasions and attended the engagement and wedding ceremonies of the eldest girl.

The Rajes are among the most affluent inhabitants of the barracks but my fifth informant, Mrs. Ramsamy, and her husband were among the poorest. Mrs. Ramsamy is 26 years old and was born on her father's small-holding about 50 kilometres inland from Greenfields. Mrs. Ramsamy has completed primary school and is a Hindu of 'good' Naidoo caste, although Tamil-speaking. Her husband is a Govender. Mrs. Ramsamy married her husband at the age of nineteen and came to live in Greenfields with her husband and his parents. Mrs. Ramsamy has two small children, a daughter and a son. The Ramsamys live in a one-room dwelling and with them and their children live an unmarried sister of Mr. Ramsamy and two children of a brother of Mr. Ramsamy who used to live in Greenfields, and now works in town. He left these children in Greenfields so that they could attend school there. Although Mr Ramsamy's aged

parents have a separate room in the same barracks row, it is only used for sleeping by them and they eat at the Ramsamy's home and spend their days there. Mr. Ramsamy has one of the lower paid jobs in the mill and Mrs. Ramsamy often finds it a struggle to feed and clothe her family on his income, but she never complains. A devout Hindu, most of her religious activities are centred in and around her home and she does not attend temple festivities. She is a gentle, unsophisticated woman who leads a busy life, because her husband's sister and his mother are invalids and cannot help her with the household tasks. I did not interview Mr. Ramsamy because he was not at home in the day when I spoke to his wife, but his elderly mother, who does not speak English, volunteered information about his genealogy which Mrs. Ramsamy translated for me.

Like Mrs. Ramsamy, Mrs. Samuel, my sixth informant, was a quiet, shy woman. However, her husband was just the opposite. He was a talkative, domineering man who insisted on being interviewed rather than his wife, after I had completed her genealogy, on the grounds that he would be better able to provide the information I needed. Mrs. Samuel is fifty years old and was born at Fidelia, a few kilometres from Greenfields. Although she went to school for a couple of years, Mr. Samuel says she cannot read or write English (but she can read and write Tamil). Mrs. Samuel speaks more Tamil than English and was a low caste Hindu (Pillay) before her marriage to Mr. Samuel at the age of 21, when she became a Christian. Mr. Samuel is 55, the son of an itinerant preacher, and several of Mr. Samuel's kin are also church ministers. Mr. Samuel has worked all his life in sugar mills and at the moment is a dispatch clerk, but has done many other jobs in the mill. The Samuel family moved to Greenfields from Fidelia, when the sugar mill there closed shortly

before the last war. Mr. Samuel has been a deacon of the church in Greenfields and Mrs. Samuel attends the Ladies' Prayer Meetings. She is also a member of the Women's Circle. The Samuels have three children: a married daughter who lives close by and spends much of her time at her parents' home with her children; a married son who at the time of fieldwork was working in the sugar mill and living with his parents with his wife and baby daughter; a mentally retarded son who also lives at home. Shortly after the completion of interviews the married son left Greenfields with his wife and child to live in Durban. I was told that he was living with his wife's mother and had a better job in Durban; no other reason was given for the break-up of the joint family.

My seventh informant was another unmarried girl, Junie. Like Mr. and Mrs. Samuel, Junie had moved (with her parents) from Fidelia to Greenfields, but only a couple of years before I interviewed her. Junie is 24 years old and an intelligent girl who would probably have completed High School, if she had not had to leave early to look after her ailing mother. Her mother died shortly after the move to Greenfields and Junie gave up her job as assistant at the barracks nursery school to look after her father at home. Junie's mother had had a hawker's licence and sold snuff and betel nut from her home; Junie continued to do this for a couple of years until her father contracted cancer and the business was closed. During the period of interviews Junie lived alone with her father; one unmarried sister who had previously lived at home had started training to be a nurse and was living in a hostel in Durban. Junie's father died a year after interviews were completed and Junie went to live with some of her siblings in a house which they bought jointly in Durban. Junie was an outwardly cheerful, extrovert girl, and so did not conform

to the quiet reserved stereotype of an unmarried Indian girl and her chances of marriage while in Greenfields were perhaps lessened more by her unconventional behaviour than by the low caste (Pillay) of her family.

My eighth informant, unlike the previous ones, was born and lived for most of her life in Durban. Mrs. Virasami is forty years old and has completed primary school. After she left school, she did a year's handcraft course and then kept her father's accounts at home. Mrs. Virasami married her husband, who is a teacher, when she was 21 years old and the family have lived in various suburbs of Durban before moving to Greenfields seven years ago, when Mr. Virasami was appointed Vice-Principal of the Greenfields school. Mr. Virasami is an energetic, forceful man who has done much to stimulate community affairs in Greenfields through the medium of the Advisory Board. Mrs. Virasami is an active member of the Women's Circle. The Virasami's have five children: all except the youngest attended school at the time the interviews were held and they all lived at home with their parents. The Virasami's are Hindu, participating in private and public ritual, but also attending Christian life-cycle ceremonies when invited. Mrs. Virasami is of low caste (Pillay) but claims that her husband's family are Naidoos, i.e. of 'good' caste. The Virasami's do not like living in Greenfields and feel that the semi-detached three-room cottage which is provided for the Vice-Principal is somewhat beneath them. Mrs. Virasami's father is well-off and has an expensive house in a middle-class Indian area of Durban. Mr. Virasami is of Telegu origin while Mrs. Virasami is Tamil-speaking, but only English is spoken in the home, unlike most others in Greenfields, although the Virasami children do understand Tamil. Mr Virasami contributed largely to

the interviews which concerned his family.

My ninth informant, Mrs. Jacob, was also born in Durban, but moved to Greenfields when she married fifteen years ago. Mrs. Jacob is 41 years old and of Telegu origin, although her husband is Tamil-speaking. Although a high-caste Naidoo by birth, Mrs. Jacob became a Christian when she married her husband who is of low Pillay caste. Mr. Jacob is a painter in the mill, one of the lower paid jobs, and is strict with his wife and children. Mrs. Jacob appeared a little afraid of her husband and so I made no attempt to interview her when he was at home. The Jacobs have three school-going children, a girl and two boys. Mr. Jacob has a large number of his kin actually resident in Greenfields and many of them are members of the church. Mrs. Jacob is a deaconess and very active in the Women's Prayer Group. Although Mrs. Jacob attended school for a couple of years, she claims not to be able to read or write English but says she would dearly like to as this would help her with her church work. Mr. and Mrs. Jacob live with their children in a two-room barracks dwelling. Mr. Jacob's widowed mother lives alone in a one-room dwelling in Greenfields and Mrs. Jacob told me that, although she and her husband had asked his mother to come and live with them, the old lady preferred to be independent.

My last informant, Mrs. Narain, comes from a markedly different background to the other informants. She is 45 years old, of good Naidoo caste, and Tamil Hindu. Mrs. Narain's mother's parents came to South Africa from Mauritius as 'passenger' migrants who opened a trading store in northern Natal. Mrs. Narain was born in Pietermaritzburg and having passed her high school leaving exams, trained as a teacher and taught for several years before marrying

Mr. Narain, who is also her mother's brother's son. Mr. Narain is the Principal of the Greenfields Indian Primary school and both the Narain's have a B.A. Degree, for which they studied by correspondence. They have lived in various Durban suburbs before moving to Greenfields eight years ago. Like Mrs. Virasami, Mrs. Narain is not happy in Greenfields, although she does have a four-bedroomed house in the barracks with bathroom and indoor lavatory. The Narain's built their own home in a fashionable Indian suburb of Durban just before Mr. Narain was appointed Principal in Greenfields and Mrs. Narain says she misses the modern amenities of her own home and her friends in Durban. The Narain's have five children, ranging in age from a few months to thirteen years, all of whom live with them. Mrs. Narain performs the most important Hindu life-cycle ceremonies for her children but does not attend temple rituals. Mrs. Narain is more sophisticated than the other informants and unlike Mrs. Virasami, she has made no friends in Greenfields, although she is aware of barracks activities and gossip. Mrs. Narain thinks of herself as a member of the professional middle-class in contrast to the working-class status of the other inhabitants of the village.

The actual interviews with these ten women were conducted during repeated and quite lengthy visits to their homes, made at a time of day convenient to them. A start was made by recording the genealogy of the informant and that of her husband as far as she could remember, while encouraging her to talk about her consanguines and affines and the nature of her relationship to them. When possible the husband was asked separately for his genealogy, but this did not always prove practical with shift work.

When full genealogical information had been obtained, the

informant was questioned with the help of an aide-memoire. The original aide-memoire compiled by Firth et al. for their study of kinship in middle-class London was adapted to provide guide lines for the investigation. This aide-memoire consisted of a number of sections dealing with subjects such as the education, career and residential history of informants and their children, siblings and parents. General kin contacts and specific kin relationships and their content were also examined. In this investigation the aide-memoire was only used as an outline with some sections of the original omitted and others substituted, emphasising for instance the life-cycle ceremonies peculiar to Indian culture. I tried to avoid using the aide-memoire as a rigid questionnaire and informants were encouraged to digress and chat about topics of particular interest to them (e.g. the traditional domination of the Indian daughter-in-law by her mother-in-law). Informants had a limited amount of free time at their disposal, because household and family chores occupied them to a large extent, so the interviews were kept fairly short. The average interview lasted for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, although some took over two hours and none lasted for less than one hour. The total number of interviews with each informant varied; the more articulate and educated women were prepared to spend longer being interviewed than those whose illiteracy and poor knowledge of English made them shy and less forthcoming. The least number of interviews with any one informant was eight and the most was seventeen, the average number of interviews per informant was twelve.

Although the main focus of fieldwork has been on collecting case histories of selected informants by means of in-depth

interviews, it has not been the only technique. Participant observation has played a large part in the research. Involvement with informants and their families was not limited to formal interviews; in addition I was invited by informants to attend many life-cycle ceremonies and 'rites of passage' and after formal interviews had ended I returned to an informant's house from time to time to catch up on news of the family and important events in the life of an informant. Contact with informants was therefore maintained over a lengthy period. Through my association with the Women's Circle, I was invited to attend life-cycle ceremonies of numerous other people in addition to those of my selected informants and I have therefore witnessed many child dedication services, betrothals, weddings, birthday parties and funerals. There were also more informal kin gatherings, such as meals, and the unexpected visits of relatives which took place while I was in an informant's home. This participant observation enabled me often to corroborate and supplement the information given to me by informants in interviews, which I have used principally in chapter three dealing with caste and chapters four, five and six on kinship structures, their content and kin contact. It also enabled me to gain an overview of community life as a whole of which some account is given in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

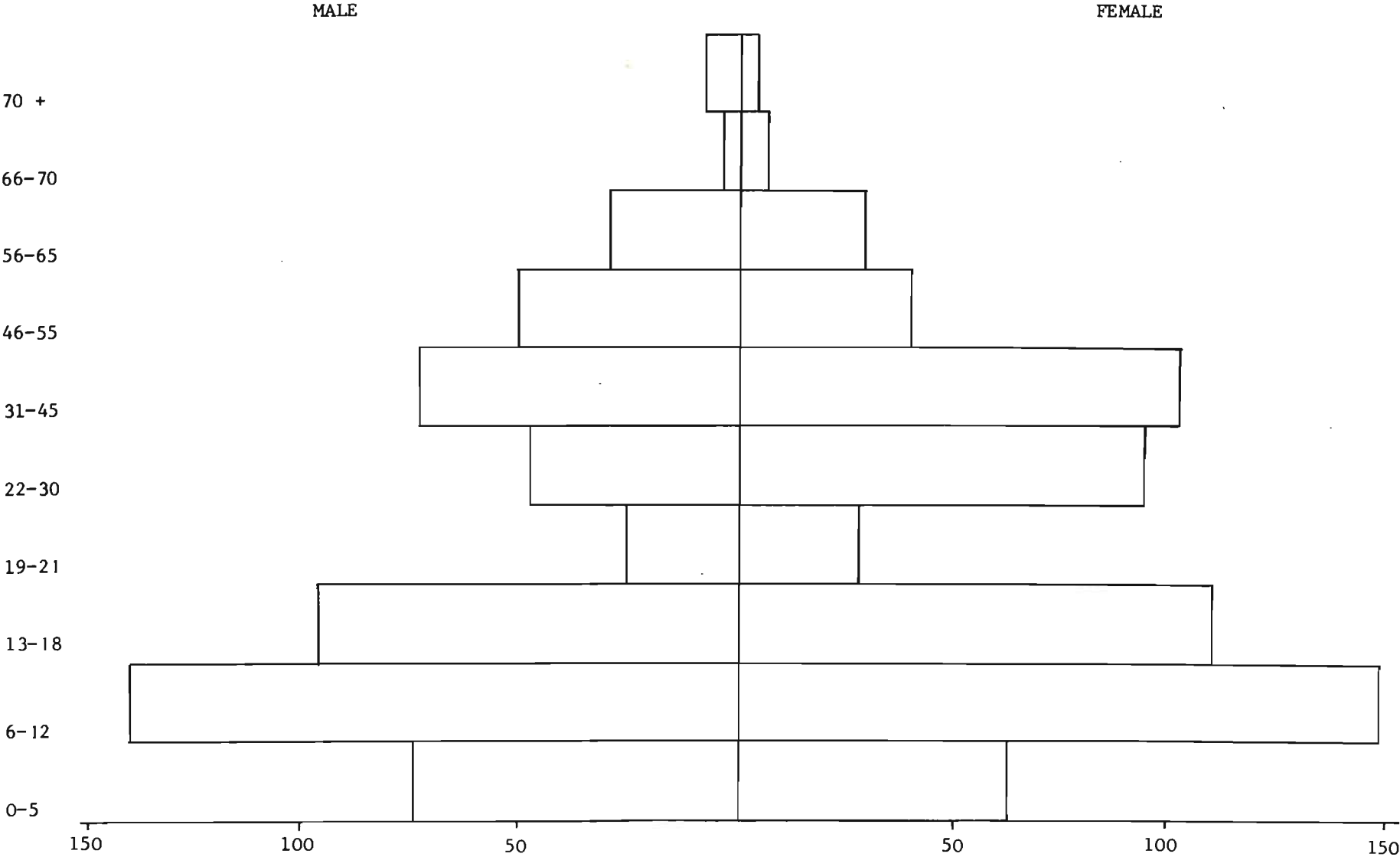
COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD

In Chapter One I introduced my major informants, upon whose experience of kinship this thesis is based. I said that although my choice of ten women was not a random one, I did try to include women with differing socio-economic backgrounds. Despite the differing characteristics of my informants, they were all resident in Greenfields barracks. The barracks setting, therefore, inevitably influenced the lives of my informants and their families and thus the patterns of their extra-familial kinship. Before discussing these patterns I want, therefore, to describe the community of Greenfields barracks and the institutions within it which affect the lives of the residents; the school, church and temple among others. While my informants are part of the community in its wider sense, they are also involved in family life on a narrower level, that is, they and their families are housed in the barracks and the kind of housing, through its influence on household composition does affect the patterns of extra-familial kinship.

I begin, therefore, with an overview of the community in Greenfields barracks. As can be seen from the accompanying figure 1, there is a fairly even proportion of males to females in the barracks. This age pyramid was constructed from figures supplied by a company employee. Consequently, the intervals given are not symmetrical but reflect age groups in which the company was interested; pre-schoolers, primary school children, young adults, men and women past retirement age and so on. The juvenility of the barracks population as a whole

Figure 1

Age distribution of males and females in Greenfields Barracks



can be seen from the percentage of 53,7 (630 persons) under the age of 19 in 1975. The sharp drop between the ages of 19 and 21 is occasioned by a company regulation. It forbids Indian employees' male children over the age of 19 and who are not working for the company to live with their parents in company housing. Just under a quarter of the population, 24,5% are in the six to twelve year age group, which is attending primary school. The lower proportion of 11,7% who are under the age of six years reflects the result of a birth control drive begun by company management in 1972, which has resulted in the Indian birth-rate in Greenfields falling substantially. In 1976 the number of live births on the estate was one-third lower than the number of five years previously and this figure is in line with the general decline in the number of births among Indians in South Africa. The white nursing sister in charge of the dispensary at the mill said that Indian women in Greenfields today now want a family of only three or four children, whereas in the past eight or nine live children and a couple of still births were considered to be the norm. Figure 1 also indicates a fairly steep fall in population after the age of 46 years and only 2,2% of barracks inhabitants are over the age of 66 years. The small proportion of old people is partly due to the low life expectancy among Indian South Africans; they are particularly susceptible to heart disease and diabetes. The low proportion of old people in the barracks is also the result of a company regulation introduced in December 1973. From that date onwards all Indian employees who went on pension were required to leave their company homes and seek alternative accommodation. Before the introduction of this regulation pensioners were allowed to remain in their homes rent free until they died, when their widows took over the homes, and those who had already reached pensionable age before 1973 were allowed to stay on and their widows after them.

Besides the demographic preponderance of young people and children in the barracks, another dominant characteristic of the community is that it is overwhelmingly Tamil speaking. Tamil is spoken in 83,1% of the households in the barracks as the main vernacular language and Hindi is spoken in only 11,9% of the homes. The large percentage of Tamil speakers obscures the fact that many of the families in the barracks are of Telegu origin as is evident from their caste names, such as Naidoo and Chetty. However, the Telegu language, which is closely related to Tamil, appears to have been superseded by Tamil in the barracks and only a few of the older women claimed to speak Telegu with any fluency. In the early days of the barracks a Telegu school was started but it did not last long, while a Tamil school still exists there. Tamil and Telegu speakers also intermarried and only Tamil appears to have been used in these mixed language homes. All Hindi speakers in the barracks say they can speak Tamil, but only a few Tamil speakers said they could also speak Hindi. A number of Tamil housewives say they can understand Hindi, particularly if they have Hindi neighbours in the barracks, and watching Hindi films from India is a popular form of recreation. There is no Hindi school in the barracks, so that Hindi children can only acquire a knowledge of the language from their parents. Most Hindi children speak more English than Hindi, and most Tamil children and teenagers also use English more than Tamil in daily conversation. Besides Tamil and English, the majority of adult men and women in the barracks also have some knowledge of fanagalo (or pidgin Zulu), and Africans are usually spoken to in this language and not in English, since most of the Africans with whom barracks Indians come into contact, such as unskilled mill workers or washerwomen, cannot speak or understand English.

Although English is widely used in the barracks, the general knowledge of the Tamil language by the population is an indicator of the continuing importance of Hinduism as a religious force among barracks inhabitants. Of the 202 households in the barracks, 152 or 75,2% of respondents gave Hinduism as the religion of the household members. Numerous Hindu rites and ceremonies (in which extra-familial kin play important roles) commemorate stages in the life-cycles of barracks residents. The remaining households, 46 or 22,8% of the of the total number in the barracks, gave their religion as Christian. These families are members of the South African General Mission, which is part of the Evangelical Church of Southern Africa. Although some Tamil hymns are sung for the benefit of older church members, the Christian community in Greenfields barracks uses English predominantly in its church services and encourages the adoption of a modern 'western' cultural outlook by its members.

The ability to speak, read and write English tends to be correlated with the degree of formal education received. Table 2.1 gives some indication of the standards reached by household heads in the barracks.

Table 2.1

Approximate level of education of household heads in the barracks

Standard reached	Don't know	Nil	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. of Household heads	3	41	12	9	13	18	30	56	4	7	1	4
Percentage	1,5	21,9	6,0	4,5	6,5	9,0	14,9	27,9	2,0	3,5	0,5	2,0

The 21,9% of household heads who have had no formal education are pensioners or older men and women (six pensioner widows occupy one-room dwellings) who grew up in Greenfields or on neighbouring farms before schooling was available. The largest percentage of 27,9% comprises men who have completed primary education at Standard Six level, whereas only 2% of household heads have completed a High School education by finishing Standard 10.

Educational levels reached do not always correspond with the types of work barracks residents do. Indians in Greenfields are working in a variety of jobs and some of the less educated men earn more and occupy more responsible positions than younger men with a higher level of education. The types of work done by barracks residents range from unskilled labouring jobs to skilled positions occupied a few years ago by Whites. Out of a possible total of 540 males and females over the age of eighteen and under the age of 65, 264 males and females are employed. Of these employed, 206 men, 78% were mill workers in 1975; no women were employed in the sugar mill at that date. In 1975, 33 men and women said that they were working at the shoe factory in Northlands and ten women were domestic servants, employed in the houses of White company employees in Greenfields. Three men and one woman were teachers at the Indian Primary School in the barracks and eleven women were shop assistants, several of them employed at the supermarket, shop and bottle store in Greenfields. The rest of these women work in Northlands at the large Indian-owned stores there. One woman was self-employed; she is a crippled widow who ekes out her disability pension by hawking fruit and vegetables outside the shop in Greenfields.

Income levels vary considerably in Greenfields. Mill workers are paid according to the type of job they perform. The minimum

Table 2.2

WAGE RATES : TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED

RATE	Wages per month <u>1974</u>	Wages per month <u>1977</u>	Number of Indians Employed <u>1977</u>	Type of work performed
1	R48,84	R76,74	7	Sweeper, cleaner
2	50,83	78,74	3	Bag filler
3	54,82	83,72	-	
4	57,81	88,70	35	Centrifugal Operator
5	63,79	98,67	41	Juice preparer, security guard
6	69,77	107,64	24	Boiler Operator, Truck Driver
7	76,74	106,61	22	Crane Operator
8	83,71	127,57	30	Hygiene Supervisor, learner Tester
9	89,69	139,53	32	Assistant pan boiler
10	99,66	152,49	9	Cane yard supervisor
11	107,64	164,45	9	Laboratory Attendant
12	113,62	174,42	9	Administrative Assistant
13	-	256,00	14	Pan boilers
14	-	280,00	3	Artisan
15	-	296,00	1	Assistant Chemist
16	-	-	-	Chemist

wages for sugar mill workers are laid down in an agreement worked out between the Government and manufacturers in 1974. Each job in a sugar mill is classed at a rate from one to sixteen and a minimum wage is laid down for that rate. This agreement does not apply to salaried staff. Rate One includes ash removers, sweepers and cleaners and in 1974 the minimum wage was R48,84 per month which had been increased to R76,74 by 1977. Rates 13 to 16 were previously reserved for White artisans only, but since 1976 approximately 18 Indians have been promoted to Rates 13, 14 and 15 (see Table 2.2). Also in 1976, two Indian clerks were appointed salaried staff members, the first time that Indians had been made staff members at Greenfields. It can be seen from Table 2.2 that there were considerable increases in wage rates over these three years, though some of the increase will have been eroded by inflation. In addition to the wages, there is, of course, accommodation which is provided free and other 'perks' such as the ration of free coal. Workers in the shoe factory (almost all are women) are less well paid than the men in the mill, the basic wage being R11 per week in 1975. With overtime, some workers earn approximately R60 per month in the shoe factory, but the bus fare to Northlands costs R6,50 per month and workers at the factory are liable to find themselves on short time without notice, when business is slack. Domestic service (which only Indian women are prepared to undertake) is even less well paid than the work at the shoe factory, the average wage for an Indian maid being R25 per month for a seven to eight hour day. Domestic service, however, has become much less popular in recent years and the few remaining women who do this type of work are mostly middle-aged spinsters who have worked for one employer for a long time. While 78% of the available work force in the barracks is employed in the mill, only 14% of the total number of Indians living on the company estate are actually working for the

company. This low figure is a result of the juvenility of the Indian population as a whole and the large numbers of children in each family. These factors have a consequent effect on the institutional aspect of life in Greenfields.

With 42% of the barracks population of school-going age, the Indian primary school plays an important role in the community. The present Government school has only been in existence since 1945, superseding several informal schools run by Christian employees of the company and supervised by itinerant White missionaries. In 1952 permanent school buildings were completed and government teachers appointed. The school is built of brick and is situated on a ledge cut out of a slope above part of the barracks and just below some of the newly built houses for White employees (see Map 2). However, the buildings which seemed adequate in 1952 are not longer so today with the large increase in population and 'platoon' classes have to be held because of lack of space. In 1976 the Greenfields Indian Primary school had an enrollment of over 600 pupils. Children attend the school not only from Greenfields barracks but also from Lower Greenfields and other, smaller barracks villages on the estate. The Principal of the school, Vice-Principal and two of the twelve assistant teachers live in the barracks but most of the teachers travel daily from the town of Northlands, which has a largely Indian population.

Since 1971 there has been a large increase in the number of barracks children who continue their education beyond the primary school level of Standard Five. In 1971 the results of a census of the school-going population of the barracks showed no appreciable difference in the numbers of boys and girls attending primary school, but at the Standard Five level the number of girls attending school

dropped by about 50%. One reason for this sharp drop may be that at that stage most girls enter puberty and orthodox Indian parents keep them at home. However, in the past few years attitudes have changed to some extent and fathers are now more willing to let their daughters have at least a few years of High School Education. About 120 children from Greenfields barracks attended the Indian High School in Northlands in 1976 and approximately a third of these were girls. Although school books and tuition are free, parents still have to provide their children with expensive school uniforms, bus fares and other incidentals.

While the primary and high schools which barracks children attend are government run institutions, there are several informal schools in the barracks run by members of the community. During 1975 a Nursery school with 30 pupils from three to six years old was run in the barracks recreation hall by Mrs David, but there was insufficient equipment for the children and opposition from several of the government school teachers resulted in the school being closed down at the end of 1975. Another school, which makes use of the recreation hall, gives instruction in Tamil. This school is affiliated to the Greenfields Hindu temple, which is in its turn run by a sub-committee of the Advisory Board. The Tamil school was run, until her marriage, by another of my informants, Muniamma. She holds classes for the primary school children in the afternoons, when the government school instruction is over. The children learn to read and write Tamil religious songs and sing Tamil hymns. The pupils are mostly small girls; mothers complain that their sons are naughty and refuse to attend. The Tamil school has about thirty pupils and the school takes part in regional 'eisteddfods' and competitions with other Tamil schools in Natal. Pupils can also sit exams set by the Tamil

association in Durban.

The emphasis in the Tamil school is on the teaching of religious precepts and the school is closely linked to the barracks temple in Greenfields, which is known as the 'company temple'. This temple is a brick edifice a few metres distant from the Indian recreation hall and built at the same time in 1970. The temple was built by Hindu barracks residents with materials provided by the company (hence 'company temple') and it replaced an earlier temple made of wood and iron which has now been demolished. The present temple consists mainly of a large room about six metres long and three metres wide. It is dedicated primarily to Siva, for the majority of Hindus in the barracks (and Natal) are Saivites. There is also a smaller room, about one and a half metres square, which is dedicated to Mariamma, the popular South Indian goddess who is held to be responsible for outbreaks of infectious diseases. Services are held every Sunday in the temple and are conducted by a resident 'guru' or priest, who works for the company as a carpenter in the week. This 'guru' belongs to the Siva Siddhanta Sunghum, an organisation which promotes the worship of Siva. These services are not well attended by barracks residents; the Tamil school teacher and her pupils and less than a dozen older men and women are the usual Sunday congregation. Much more popular are the special ceremonies such as the annual festival of Mariamma (in which almost all Hindus in the barracks participate), Kavady, a procession made in fulfillment of vows to Subramoney, and Purutassi or prayers to Krishna, all of which are centred on the company temple. Temple affairs are managed by a committee, composed of prominent Hindu barracks residents, which is a sub-committee of the Advisory Board.

Apart from this 'official' temple, several families in the barracks have erected their own small wood and iron temples, near their homes. Typical of these privately owned temples is 'Ruby's' temple. Ruby's father, Peru, was the custodian of this temple until he died in 1976. Peru's forefathers were temple priests (pujari) in India and although Peru became a sugar plantation worker in South Africa, he carried on his traditional caste occupation as far as he could. This temple is a small corrugated iron building, built on a patch of waste land near to Ruby's barracks row. The main shrine is dedicated to Sakti, one of Siva's consorts, and contains several pictures of gods brought back from India many years ago, as well as conch shells, brass lamps and other ornaments. This temple was built in about 1947 with materials given by the company officials and Ruby describes her family as 'caretakers' of the temple. She said that anyone is welcome to pray there and that people come there to consult her mother who is a priestess and healer and 'gets the trance'. The fact that there are a number of family temples in the barracks, like Ruby's, indicates the importance of the home in Hindu religious ritual and the role of kin in this ritual is consequently marked.

In contrast to the variety of Hindu temples and shrines in the barracks, the structure of the Christian church organisation there is monolithic and leaves less room for the operation of family ritual involving kin. Christian services in the barracks are held only in the spacious brick church built by the mission in 1946. The church in the barracks is governed by a council consisting of elders, deacons and, since 1974, a resident Indian pastor. Services are held in the church each Sunday and Wednesday and are all well attended, and there is an active Sunday School. In addition to the regular

services a Junior Club, Ladies Prayer Group and Youth Group hold regular meetings. Inter-district rallies are held every three months and week-long 'evangelical campaigns' yearly, when visiting preachers from America or Britain conduct services. House to house visits with the object of converting the heathen are one of the major activities undertaken by church members in groups but the focus of Christian ritual is in the church and not the home, whereas the reverse tends to be true of Hindu ritual.

Apart from religious activities centred on church or temple, there was, until 1974, no association which catered exclusively for the needs and interests of adult women in the barracks. In 1974 the Greenfields Indian Women's Circle was established by a White nursing sister who is in charge of the dispensary at the mill. The intention was to establish an organisation similar to those of the Federation of Women's Institutes, but specifically for the Indian women on the estate. Circles were set up in each barracks on the estate and wives of White company employees volunteered to teach the members handicrafts. In addition to showing the women how to knit and sew, lectures in nutrition were given and a literacy scheme was started, because many of the older women were unable to read or write. Initially, interest in the Circle was considerable with as many as fifty women attending the weekly meetings. This number soon dropped to about a dozen and remained at this figure. Regular members complained that their neighbours were unwilling to leave the barracks and walk down to the hall, while non-members counter that they have too much housework to do or that there is no-one available to look after their children. Circle supervisors found, however, that non-members were quite anxious to learn the skills being taught at the meetings, if they could be taught at home and not have to attend

these meetings. There was an evident reluctance on the part of barracks women to meet with other, unrelated women in a group situation. Later, during in-depth interviews with selected informants, I found that barracks women expected to find friendship and companionship among related kin only and that unrelated women, except for close neighbours, were suspected of possible malicious gossip about one's affairs.

Such a restriction of companionship to kin only did not appear to apply to barracks men, and apart from informal drinking parties composed of workmates, the interests of young men in the barracks are catered for by the Greenfields Social and Cultural Club. This Club was founded in 1971, largely on the initiative of one of the clerks at the mill. He and several of his friends formed the nucleus of the club which had the object of improving the social and cultural life of Greenfields barracks. The club has organised several talent contests for barracks residents and 'get-togethers' with other barracks on the estate. Other activities organised by the club have been fishing competitions and karate demonstrations. Members have also formed a band, the 'Social-Lites', which practises weekly and plays at weddings. The club has also raised funds for charitable causes, for instance flood relief, and has organised several coach trips for barracks pensioners to places of interest in the province. Despite the varied activities, membership of the Social and Cultural Club has always been small and consists mainly of the founder and his friends. Few girls joined the club, although membership was open to them, but there was a female secretary for a time. Interest in the club began to wane in 1976, when the founder was elected Secretary of the Advisory Board and his new duties prevented him from devoting much time to club affairs.

With the exception of the Christian church, all the barracks associations I have mentioned; the temple, temple school, nursery school, Women's Circle and Social and Cultural Club fall under the umbrella of the Greenfields Advisory Board. The Board is the most important community association in the barracks and was established in 1960. A principal function of the Board is to act as a liaison body between the people of Greenfields barracks and the company management in all matters related to the residents' welfare. Although most members of the Advisory Board are mill workers, the Board is not concerned with the work situation, for which a separate works committee exists. The Board is made up of twelve members elected annually and is responsible for the supervision of the barracks Recreation Hall, for running film shows held in the hall, for trading permits in the barracks (a source of patronage) and for the upkeep of the Hindu cemetery, as well as the various community associations. The position of Chairman of the Advisory Board is keenly sought after and commands considerable prestige in Greenfields; elections to the Board in the past few years have been hotly contested.

While the Advisory Board is concerned about the institutions which exist for the benefit of barracks dwellers, it is also responsible for channelling suggestions and complaints to company management about the actual conditions of the barracks buildings and facilities. Since these conditions impinge directly on the lives of my informants and all other residents I now propose to give some idea of the barracks dwellings themselves, showing how material circumstances and living space influence types of household composition and therefore kinship patterns.

The actual barracks in Greenfields consists of 80 one-room dwellings, 84 two-room dwellings and 28 three-room dwellings. Each barracks row, of which there are 42 (see Map 2) consists of from four to ten numbered dwellings. As well as the barracks rows, there are six detached 'cottages' (one dwelling in each) and two semi-detached cottages (two dwellings in each). There are also two four-roomed houses. The barracks are built of brick and corrugated iron and are about 15 years old. The earlier barracks, erected around 1915 when the sugar mill at Greenfields was built, were made of wood and iron. According to informants, they were rough shacks without running water.

In the barracks homes with only one room it measures about four metres square and is divided into two across the centre by a rough iron partition, $1\frac{1}{2}$ metres high, with a curtained opening in the middle which serves as a door. There is no ceiling in the room and only one window, at the back. The original floor of the dwelling is unpainted cement. At the entrance to each dwelling is a door which faces onto an enclosed porch or verandah, about three metres long and one metre wide. On the right of the enclosed verandah is the kitchen, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ metres square. It is equipped with an old-fashioned coal stove and a sink with a cold water tap. In the tiny kitchen, apart from the coal stove and sink, is usually a dresser or kitchen cupboard, containing crockery pots and glassware. Tin pots for cooking are the imported Indian variety with flat lids and no handles. They are used for making the curries and biryanis which form the main part of the diet of all but the poorest barracks residents. Every Hindu bride takes a set of these pots with her to her husband's home and they form part of the wedding ritual. Primus stoves are also part of

the kitchen equipment, because coal is expensive and the coal stove is lit only once a day, when the main meal is cooked and hot water heated at the same time to provide a bath for the men of the house when they return home from shift.

Each one-room dwelling has a wash-room situated opposite it across a narrow path. The wash-rooms are little more than one metre square and have running cold water from a pipe in the wall and a stone floor. Hot water for baths has to be heated in the kitchen on the coal stove and poured into zinc tubs in the wash house. Clothes washing is done at stone troughs equipped with cold water taps which are placed at the end of barracks rows. Two-room dwellings differ from one-room dwellings in that the wash-house is incorporated in the dwelling at one end of the verandah, opposite the kitchen. The two main rooms are of equal size, four metres square.

The cement floors in the barracks are covered with linoleum in all but the poorest homes, and brightly crocheted cloths cover beds, tables and chairs. Younger couples in two-roomed dwellings buy bedroom suites consisting of double bed, twin wardrobes and dressing table from the large furniture stores which cater expressly for Indians in Northlands. The prices for such furniture may be exorbitant, but barracks residents generally buy on hire purchase and most families have considerable hire purchase debts. The other furniture in most homes consists of a small panelyte table and four matching chairs, placed either in the area used as a living room or on the verandah, and meals are served on this table. Better off couples often have several arm-chairs and a settee which can be changed into a bed at night. Apart from the beds and chairs there are often one or more heavy, wooden wardrobes where clothes and

family valuables, such as wedding jewellery and birth certificates are kept. There is also in the living areas in many houses a glass-fronted display cabinet, containing china ornaments and photographs of family and kin. The single window is usually covered by net curtaining to give some measure of privacy. There is little other privacy in barracks homes, because the walls separating each dwelling are so thin that conversations in adjoining homes can often be clearly heard, although these are normally masked by the noise of the radio or hi-fi set. Pride of place in many homes, especially those occupied by young couples goes to these expensive stereo hi-fi sets, battery run, and they are often the first major purchase of a newly married couple. Indian popular music (broadcast directly from India in the vernacular, Tamil in the morning and Hindustani in the afternoon) and local hits are the standard listening fare at all hours of the day.

Brightly coloured pictures depicting members of the Hindu pantheon often adorn the walls of Hindu homes, as well as photographs of well-known Indian film stars in sentimental poses. On one occasion I caught sight of a coloured picture of the Virgin Mary in a Hindu home, and my informant, upon being asked why her brother-in-law had a picture of a Christian saint in his home, replied that he thought it a good thing to 'include everyone'. If the family is Hindu, a small shrine occupies a corner of the main room or bedroom, where the holy lamp is kept, and here the Friday devotions or puja to Siva takes place. It is the duty of the women of the family in Hindu homes to clean the holy lamp and place flowers there regularly. Friday is a day when the whole house is cleaned thoroughly and many women 'fast', that is, abstain from eating meat on that day as a mark of devotion to Siva. The Friday prayers are usually attended only by the women and children of the family. If, on the other hand, the

dwelling is occupied by a Christian family, a phrase such as 'Jesus saves' or else a cross is often painted onto the door of the home indicating the allegiance of the family. In one home I saw a cross on the walls, although the family was Hindu; it was there because the wife had been brought up as a Christian. The walls of Christian homes are decorated with pictures of scenes from the life of Christ and, instead of popular Indian film music, American gospel songs are played on the hi-fi sets and the radio is often tuned to a religious network.

Furnishings and decoration are similar in most homes in the barracks, regardless of whether they are one- two- or three-room dwellings, although obviously one-room dwellings have less space and are consequently more cramped than three-room ones. Three-room homes have a central living room with two bedrooms and a kitchen leading off the living room. A bathroom leads off the kitchen but bathtubs are not provided, although there is room for them. The four-roomed house, occupied by the headmaster of the school, has an indoor lavatory and bathroom equipped with hot and cold running water, the water is heated from a coal stove outside. Only this house and four semi-detached three-room 'cottages' (two of them occupied by teachers) have private lavatories. In the rest of the village the lavatories are built in blocks to serve rows of barracks and are situated a few metres from the barracks buildings. These communal lavatories are a source of frequent complaints by barracks residents who say they are usually in a filthy condition, for which they blame each other's children. Until recently, the lavatories, like the barracks, were unlit at night.

The new housing development, now known as New Delhi, was started

by management in 1973 and provides modern housing for higher paid and more skilled Indian employees. New Delhi houses are similar to those built by the government in part of the giant Indian township of Chatsworth, near Durban. These houses have three bedrooms, a combined living-dining room, modern kitchen and bathroom. Each house has a covered verandah, which doubles as carport for those residents with cars, and a small garden. The households living in this development are headed by the more highly paid Indian employees, earning in excess of R150 per month. Not all of these men are white collar workers; they include pan boilers and welders as well as clerks. Most residents of New Delhi seem pleased with their modern homes, for which they pay no rent, and have spent considerable sums on furnishings, stoves, fridges and even television sets. Some women in New Delhi complain however, of the distance from their friends and relatives in the barracks. One informant said she was lonely and missed her friends. Some barracks women do make the journey from there to New Delhi and vice versa, but it is a half-hour's walk and the road is steep so such visits are infrequent. Several men eligible for homes in New Delhi have refused to leave their barracks dwellings; these men say that the rooms in the new houses are smaller than those in the barracks and they would have to sell their solid wooden furniture if they moved. Most of these objections come from older men with many years of service and who are due to retire in a few years time anyway; it may be that in these cases their wives and families do not want to be separated from friends and relatives who play such an important part in their lives. One informant said that her aged mother-in-law who lived with her and her husband had asked to be left behind in the barracks when the rest of the family moved to New Delhi; she had been born and brought up in the barracks and even the prospect

of moving with her son and grandchildren did not compensate her for the prospective loss of familiar surroundings. So far, then, the new housing policy has affected only a small minority of former barracks residents, and even for them their original experience of family life was obtained in the barracks.

Since living space is at a premium in the barracks, the average occupancy per dwelling (which is mostly of no more than two rooms) being 5.8 persons, it would seem reasonable to suppose that company housing policy and regulations play an important part in influencing the types of household in the barracks. While each male employee should be provided with a rent free dwelling for himself, his wife and minor children alone, only 119 (58,9%) of the 202 dwellings in Greenfields barracks are occupied by such nuclear families.

In some homes (17 in 1975), 'joint' families live where both father and married son or daughter share the same dwelling; 14 of these 17 families were in fact virilocal. In calling these families 'joint' I mean that they are co-residential and commensal, but not co-parcenary as joint families in India usually are. Certainly, there was no evidence among the barracks joint families of complete pooling of wages or of joint business undertakings, and no joint ownership of fixed property. Where grandparents or other relatives of a senior generation share a household, one room is usually allocated to them for sleeping and this may be shared with several small grandchildren, the junior couple sleeping in the other room (in a two-roomed dwelling), with the rest of their children. An example of such a joint family consists of Perumal, a pensioner in his sixties, and his wife Asodie; two of his daughters, Mary (who

is mentally retarded) and Sheila; Sheila's husband and two of his daughters by a first marriage (he was a widower); three children by his second marriage to Sheila. All of them share a three-room semi-detached cottage in the barracks. One room is set aside for the junior couple, Sheila and her husband, but this is only used for sleeping and Sheila and her husband share it with their three small children. In the second room which is used as a bedroom sleep Asodie Mary and her son-in-law's two daughters. Perumal sleeps in the living room on a couch. The bedrooms are used only at night. During the day the living room is used by the whole family, although Sheila spends most of her time cooking in the kitchen and the rest of the family (except for Sheila's husband) sit outdoors in the small garden patch watching the children and the other barracks inhabitants. This family is commensal in that Sheila does all the cooking; in other words, everyone 'eats from one hearth' or 'from one dish' as informants put it. But meals are not taken sitting around a table together, food is put onto plates and individuals eat it where they want, in the living or kitchen areas or outside and this haphazardness appeared to be the usual form of eating for barracks residents. Perumal and Asodie give Sheila R21 out of their old age pensions every month with which to buy groceries as their contribution to the household budget and Sheila's husband gives her his total wage of R70. Sheila is thus in charge of the household budget in this joint family.

Although it cannot be said that the development of such joint families is 'normal' in the barracks, nevertheless both the nuclear and joint families there may be seen as stages in a cycle. For in the past, according to the company Assistant Personnel Officer, when an Indian employee married, he remained with his wife in his Natal home until the birth of his second child, when he then usually applied

for a separate dwelling, often next door to his parents. The Personnel Officer said, however, that such requests for accommodation were not phrased in terms of lack of space in the parental home, but rather in terms of 'domestic trouble'. 'My wife doesn't get on with my mother', was the usual phrase, showing that 'joint' families are often stressful.

Pressure for a man to move out of his natal home by the time his second child is born would also come from younger sons, hoping to marry and bring their brides to live virilocally as well. A last phase of this developmental cycle from nuclear to 'joint' family may be an 'extended' family, by which I mean the presence in a family of a couple, their unmarried children and one or more senior relatives. A 'joint' family in which one of the senior couple dies automatically becomes an 'extended' family and 76 households in the barracks, or 42.1% of the total number of households are extended in this sense. In these extended families the additional, senior relative is a widowed mother (or very occasionally a widower father) of the household head, or of his wife. In another five households, the additional relative is a sister or brother of the father or mother of the household head, or of his wife. In all of the cases where the household head has a parent living with him, that parent was a company employee (or the wife of one) and occupied the dwelling with his or her children before becoming a pensioner, whereupon the home was transferred to the name of the son or son-in-law then resident who was working for the company.

Variations on this extended family pattern include the presence in 20 of the 81 extended families of adult siblings of the household head or of his wife. In two instances, these are women who have

separated from their husbands and come to live with their brothers, bringing their children with them. Two widows are also living with their brothers' families in the barracks. In 16 households unmarried brothers and sisters continue to live with the household head after his marriage, because they have nowhere else to go, particularly if the parents are dead. Although the company frowns on this kind of 'extended' family and tries to regulate against them, there is little that can be done to enforce the regulations short of evicting the relatives, which so far has not been done. A further variant of the 'extended' family is what Firth (1968 : 73) calls the 'denuded' family where the household head is living without husband (or wife) but with one or more children. There were twelve households of this 'denuded' type in the barracks in 1975. One further household consisted of siblings only; the parents of three brothers who all worked for the company had recently died and none of the brothers had, as yet, married. Six dwellings in the barracks are occupied by single person households, that is by widows living on their own without kin (although all have close kin living in Greenfields or Lower Greenfields barracks). Although it is not customary for Indian women to live on their own, it seems likely that these women remain by themselves partly because of lack of space with relatives and partly because they prefer being independent of a daughter-in-law, which receipt of an old age government pension enables them to be. Mr David's aged mother is one of them, living on her own in a one-room shack added onto a barracks row. She sees her son every day and since he has eight minor children it would not be easy for her to move into his three-room dwelling. Indeed, until the birth of her fourth child Mrs David and her husband did live with Mr David's mother in the one room shack, so the old lady's

independent existence perhaps represents the last possible phase of a family cycle. All my main informants, except for Mrs Narain, had lived in 'joint' families when they first married (two still did when I interviewed them) and this experience had a lasting effect on their relationships with extra-familial kin and with their in-laws, which I explore later in the thesis.

There were, however, various other factors influencing the patterns of extra-familial kinship, besides the complex patterns of inter-relationships inherent in the domestic cycles of my informants and other barracks residents. In the next chapter I take up some of these factors which affect kinship particularly by the restrictions they impose on marriage.

Chapter Three

FACTORS SETTING THE BOUNDARIES OF KINSHIP FOR INDIAN SOUTH AFRICANS

While Chapter Two was concerned with describing the physical setting within which my informants live, the barracks itself, and the restrictions which this form of housing tends to impose on household and family composition, I now turn to consider other, more wide-ranging factors which restrict the boundaries within which kinship may obtain for Indian South Africans.

Although all my informants live in a small company 'village' they, like most of the barracks inhabitants, have many kinship links in the wider area of Natal and further afield in the Republic. Thus the extra-familial kinship I shall be considering functions not only within the village, but also as a wider network linking individuals in both town and country areas. Nevertheless, the spread of kinship links is not completely random, since it is subject to several limiting factors which operate principally by restricting the choice of marriage (or mating) partners.

At least one of these factors is common to most, if not all, human communities. That is, the well-known tendency for most individuals in a community to find their partners within a limited geographical range of their own homes prevails amongst the Indians of Greenfields. In addition, other factors which operate to restrict the range of kinship still further are, in varying degrees, peculiar to Indian South Africans. The first of these is 'race'. It has been

illegal for Indian South Africans as 'non-Whites' to marry White South Africans since the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1948. Another, earlier Act, as subsequently amended, also prohibits sexual liaisons between Whites and all non-Whites. Even before the passage of these Acts, marriages or liaisons between Whites and Indians were rare. In the genealogies of my informants there was only one case of an Indian woman marrying a White man in South Africa (he was an Italian) and one where an Indian girl formed a liaison with a White South African boy. In the former instance the Indian woman successfully concealed her non-White identity and the couple have no children. In the latter case, the young couple went to England, where a child was born, but the affair did not last and the Indian girl returned to South Africa with her child, leaving her lover. Neither of these two unions created kinship ties with consanguines of the White partner in South Africa. Legislation and custom have, therefore, virtually prevented any creation of kinship links between Indians and Whites in South Africa.

The provisions of the two Acts do not, however, apply to marriages or liaisons between 'non-Whites', so that Indians are allowed by law to marry or have sexual relations with Coloureds or Africans, but such marriages or liaisons were even rarer in the genealogies of my informants than those with Whites. ⁽¹⁾ One informant had a MB who married a creole Mauritian woman. The couple had only one child and my informant did not know of any consanguines of the creole woman in South Africa. With very few

(1) Figures on such marriages, deriving from official statistics for the country as a whole, were calculated by van den Berghe (1960 : 76-77) for the period 1925 - 1946. They show that Indian - Coloured marriages were about ten times more frequent than Indian - African marriages. I have not seen any more recent calculations.

exceptions therefore, the outer limits of possible kinship for Indian South Africans are thus virtually defined by the boundaries of the Indian 'racial' category. But there are other factors which limit its range even further within that category. These factors are therefore peculiarly Indian and indeed derive ultimately from India itself. I refer particularly to the factors of language, religion and caste to which I devote the remainder of this chapter.

Taking language first, Greenfields, like other Indian barracks on sugar estates in South Africa, is a predominantly Tamil-speaking community. In 83% of the households questioned both husband and wife said that they spoke Tamil as their vernacular language. Hindi was spoken in 12% of the homes by both husband and wife and 2% of husbands and wives spoke Urdu. The remaining 3% of respondents claimed not to speak a vernacular language at home, but only English. As might be expected from these figures, in the overwhelming majority of cases Tamil-speakers were married to Tamil-speakers (see Figure 1). However, this distribution obscures the fact that in many Greenfields homes, either the husband or wife, or both, may be of Telegu ancestry, as is indicated by caste names or titles such as Naidoo or Chetty, which informants often said were Telegu names. The Telegu language which is related to Tamil, appears to have been superseded by Tamil in the barracks. Some respondents with Telegu caste names did claim to be able to speak Telegu (learnt in childhood), but said that their own children had not been brought up to speak the language so that Tamil was spoken in the home instead, whenever the vernacular was used. Although a Telegu school existed in the

barracks for a number of years before the war, there is today only a Tamil vernacular school.

Marriages between Tamil- and Telegu-speakers were in any case never frowned on by members of either language group in Greenfields barracks, according to informants. Both languages are Dravidian and marriage ceremonies and other rites are similar for both groups. Unlike Tamil and Telegu, Hindi is a Sanskritic language, originating in the north of India, where marriage, with all its attendant rites, has many differences from the Hindu ceremony practised in the South. Such differences may, in the past, have proved a barrier to kinship between Tamil and Hindi-speakers, since only a very small percentage of people speaking those distinct languages have intermarried in Greenfields (as Table 3.1 shows) and fewer still in the genealogies of my informants. These linguistic and associated cultural differences appear to have been greater barriers to kinship in the early days of Indian immigration than today. Mrs Virasami is a Tamil-speaking woman married to a Telegu man, who gave her views on the significance of language differences between spouses as follows:

Mr Virasami's granny, she always speaks to me in Telegu and I answer in English because she understands. Me, I speak Tamil but after so many years married to Mr Virasami I understand Telegu but I can't speak it. Now these nation differences do not matter so much. My auntie's daughter (MZD) is married to a Hindustani boy. It was my granny's wish that the wedding be a small Tamilian function, then, after the first child is born they have to have this fire thing, Hawan they call it [in Hindi] and for the bride she must wear the red dot in her hair, its like the tali for us Tamils or the wedding ring for Christians; its very important.

This anecdote illustrates a 'modern' view of a compromise made at a marriage between Hindi- and Tamil-speakers. Although the wedding ceremony was a Tamil one, the bride thereafter wore the insignia of a Hindi married woman and the ceremony of thanksgiving for the first-born child was a Hindi one. Although marriages of Tamil-speakers to Hindi-speakers were comparatively rare in the genealogies, informants did not think they were extraordinary or likely to cause difficulties in the marriage, but that such matches were almost certainly love affairs and not arranged by the parents concerned. Junie said that a FZD was engaged to 'a Hindustani boy' and that 'they must have met and fallen in love'. She added that young people today didn't think it mattered at all to marry someone of a different language group, 'it is only the parents who mind'. Hindi-Tamil marriages were, however, less common in the genealogies of Mr and Mrs Raj (my Hindi informants) than in Tamil-speakers' genealogies. None of Mrs Raj's known kin had married a Tamil-speaking person and only two relatives of her husband had done so, out of a total known kin of 253. In one case a MBDS of Mr Raj had married a FBD of Muniamma, another Tamil informant. Although this marriage was said by Muniamma to be the result of a love affair, the Tamil groom appeared to be on good terms with his Hindi in-laws since, when he lost his job in the Greenfields sugar mill, he went to stay with them in a suburb of Durban, rather than with his own parents in another suburb. The important point that permits Tamil-Hindi marriages, according to Mrs Virasami and other informants, is that the couple belong to the same religion. Religion, therefore, rather than language, may be the main barrier to intermarriage between Indians and thus may limit the extension of kinship ties.

One religion which does oppose the marriage of its members to non-adherents in Islam. As it happens, there are very few Moslems in Greenfields barracks and only 2% of respondents said they spoke Urdu, the language spoken by most Moslems in Greenfields. Even so, only three cases were revealed by the household census of Moslem-Hindu marriages and one of these also figured in the genealogies, where it was the only one among consanguines of my seventeen selected informants. In this one case, a FBS of Muniamma married a Khan girl. Her parents strongly opposed her marriage to a Hindu youth and when she went ahead and married him, they cut off relations with their daughter and are not on speaking terms with her today. Muniamma's elder sister said 'she follows our ways now', meaning that the Moslem girl conforms to the Hindu rituals of her husband's family. In the second case in the barracks, a Hindi-speaking widower had married a Sheikh Moslem woman and he said that he was taking instruction at the mosque in Northlands in preparation for converting to his wife's religion. This may have been a condition agreed upon by the husband before his wife's family would give permission for the marriage, since Mrs Virasami commented that while a Hindu girl would have to become a Moslem if she married a Moslem boy, 'Moslem families will never let a Moslem girl convert', meaning that a Moslem family would never give its approval to such a marriage.

That Moslem-Hindu marriages are still rare in the wider confines of South African Indian society was implicit in a recent (1977) case reported in a Durban newspaper, when a Moslem girl made an urgent legal application to marry her Hindu boyfriend, claiming that her father had held a knife to her throat and threatened to kill her if she continued to see him.

While most Moslem parents may still express strong opposition to the marriage of their children to members of other religions, the marriage of Christians to Hindus does not now seem to be so unpopular as it once was. Certainly the Christian community in Greenfields barracks is not a closed one; Christian men do marry Hindu women and vice-versa. In the past such church membership may have led to the severing of relationships (at least temporarily) by the kin of the non-Christian spouse, but today it is not uncommon for Hindus to have Christian kin with whom they interact. However, in many of the Christian-Hindu marriages which occurred among my informants and their kin, there was the additional complication that the spouses were of different caste categories and, in some of the cases, it was the low caste of the Christian partner to which the Hindu family appeared to object, as one of my cases illustrates.

Leonard is a Naidoo, (a 'good' caste), who has worked in the mill at Greenfields for some years and is now an apprentice artisan. Leonard's father is one of the younger brothers of Mr M. Naidoo, Muniamma's father, and a 'big man', periver, in Greenfields. Leonard met his wife, Sarah (daughter of a prominent but low-caste Pillay man in the barracks), when he was selling bread for his father in Greenfields. The fact that Sarah was a Christian did not deter Leonard and he proposed to Sarah by letter. She accepted, but told me that she instructed him to ask her father personally for her hand in marriage: 'no aunty or mother coming - so that they could see it was straight and we were in love. Of course, they thought we were carrying on [i.e. having an affair] but we did it in such a way that they could see it was all open and nothing was wrong.' Sarah's parents were pleased since Leonard had a good job and was of high caste; the fact that he was not a Christian did not appear to upset

them. Leonard's father, on the other hand, was furious when he learnt that Leonard intended to marry Sarah. He turned Leonard out of his house and refused to attend the wedding, which Sarah's parents made sure was a grand affair in the Greenfields church. One of Leonard's brothers agreed to act as his sponsor at the wedding. Since his wedding, Leonard spends most of his time with his wife's family and attends church with them regularly. He and Sarah do, however, visit his father who has now left Greenfields to live in Durban, though the old man ignores Sarah's existence and has never spoken to her. Leonard and Sarah attend important kin gatherings of Leonard's family, such as the weddings of the children of Leonard's father's brothers who still live in Greenfields barracks, but they do not have as much contact with his kin as they would have done if he had married a Hindu girl of 'good' caste, or one chosen for him by his father. In Leonard's case my impression was that his marriage to a 'low' caste girl had led to a severe strain, but not a complete break in his relations with his immediate kin. In other instances, good caste Hindu families, while disapproving of the marriage of one of their members to a low caste Christian man or woman, choose to maintain close kin ties with the couple, but not to interact with the family of the low-caste spouse, as they would have done if the spouse had been of 'good' caste. Thus it seems that differences in religious adherence are not enough in themselves (with the possible exception of Islam) to prevent the formation of kinship ties, but differences in religion may be given as an excuse by parents for disapproving of the marriage of their son or daughter to a spouse who is of 'low' caste, as well as being of a different religion.

Mrs Jacob is a 'good' caste Naidoo woman who married a 'low'

caste Christian man against the wishes of her father, but she later became reconciled with her family:

One of my friends worked with me [at a clothing factory] and she introduced me; he was her cousin. Actually, what happened she asked me to come and visit her Granny here in Greenfields and Mr Jacob saw me and liked me and he wrote to me after and asked me if I wanted to marry him. Only my parents objected, you know with some Indians there is this caste business. My father was a Naidoo; his [Jacob's] parents, his mother was a Pillay and his father a Govender, they were mixed. My father said I should not marry him because he was a Christian, I could get someone else.

Mrs Jacob admitted that it was principally the mixed caste ancestry of Mr Jacob to which her parents objected. Other informants in Greenfields also claimed that Indian Christians in South Africa were usually of low caste. The problem was resolved for Mrs Jacob when one of her brothers agreed to act as sponsor for her at the wedding instead of her father. Mrs Jacob continued,

It was an Indian pastor, not S.A.G.M., one of the Galilee temple ministers. There were about 200 people there. There must have been the same amount from my side and from Jacob's. My father didn't come but my mother did and my brothers and sisters. From Greenfields they had a car and a van, not a bus, I didn't have a big wedding. My friend and Jacob's brother arranged it and Jacob and his family paid for it all, [this was not unusual since the bridegroom and his family are traditionally responsible for wedding expenses among Tamil-speakers]. My mother gave me saris, about ten sets, not counting the dresses and slips. She also gave me a pair of earrings and a necklace and bracelet. Jacob gave me the wedding ring and a pair of earrings.

The absence of Mrs Jacob's father at her wedding may therefore have been only a token of disapproval, since she received all the

traditional wedding gifts from her family, and some part of this paternal disapproval in both Mrs Jacob's case and that of Leonard may have stemmed from the fact that both marriages were not arranged by the fathers, but the partners were chosen by the junior generation themselves. The replacement of Mrs Jacob's father and Leonard's by their brothers allowed the marriages to take place with some support from the family, but enabled the father in each case to claim that he had nothing to do with it himself. However, the disapproval of Leonard's family had more enduring consequences than that of Mrs Jacob's, since his contact with his kin is now limited largely to formal occasions such as weddings. In the fourteen years since her marriage, Mrs Jacob's contact with her Hindu siblings has not lessened in frequency and she remains very fond of them, despite her formal adherence to Christianity (she is a deaconess in the church in the barracks). Mrs Jacob said that she receives seven or eight cards from her Hindu siblings annually for Diwali, although she had told them that as a Christian she could not return these cards. 'Last Diwali, my brother Peter, sent a box of crackers for the children and R10 for us with Jacob', she said. Mrs. Jacob explained that her husband had had to visit a dentist in Durban and, not knowing his way around the city, he had gone to his wife's brother's home and Peter, who owned a van, had taken him to his destination. As it was Diwali time, Peter had also bought a box of firecrackers for the Jacob children. 'We always go to Peter's house when we go to Durban', added Mrs Jacob. Mrs Jacob's eldest sister, Mariamma, was also a favourite relative whose family had shown much kindness to the Jacobs: 'when Jacob wasn't working [unemployed] my sister, Mariamma, sent her son, Dan, with R30 for us'. Another of Mariamma's sons had given Mrs Jacob a transistor

radio, for which she was very grateful. 'I always go and see my sister Mariamma, she's most important, she is like a mother to me'. Mrs. Jacob admitted that Peter and Mariamma were better off than her other siblings, 'they can manage but the others are poor'. On the other hand Mrs Jacob's relationships with her husband's siblings and cousins were not as close as with her own siblings, despite their common religious affiliation. Material help was not forthcoming from these brothers of Jacob who could afford help when Jacob was unemployed, although his unmarried brothers and sisters did give his children clothes and gifts from time to time.

Thus reaction on the part of close kin to a family member who marries outside both religious and caste limits does vary. While Leonard's kin have largely ignored him since his marriage (and certainly have nothing to do with his wife or in-laws), Mrs Jacob's siblings (but not her father) keep in close contact with her and her husband, but have no contact with his kin. These two cases were both examples of 'good' caste Hindus marrying 'low' caste Christians, but marriages of Christians to Hindus do occur with the approval of both families and with kin of both spouses interacting after the marriage. Such marriages of Christians to Hindus that I came across in the genealogies of my informants occurred outside Greenfields barracks and were ones where the Christian partner was either of 'good' caste, or wealthy, factors which appear to outweigh religious considerations among Indians, when marriage is under consideration.

Roberta was unusual among my informants (and unique in Greenfields) in that her family, although Christian, are of 'good' caste, her father being a Naidoo and her mother an Iyer (a caste

which Thurston (1909 : 19) records as being accorded Brahmin status among Tamil-speakers in South India). Roberta's family live in a village a few kilometres from Greenfields and Roberts said that she met her husband, Tommy, there at an evangelical rally and her marriage to him was a love match and not arranged by either set of parents. Although there was considerable kin interaction between the families of Tommy and Roberta following the marriage, I noted that the marriage itself took place in a registry office with only the pastor as witness and this may have indicated some initial disapproval of Roberta's family at her marriage to a low-caste man. Although Tommy's family gave their caste name as Naidoo on the household census, his genealogy revealed that Tommy's FF was a Chetty, stigmatised as pork eaters and low caste in South Africa. Although Roberta's family may not have known of this change of caste name, it was obvious in other ways that Tommy's family were of low caste, since affines of consanguines of Tommy resident in Greenfields were definitely not Naidoos, but low caste Telegus. It had almost certainly not escaped notice that Tommy was also much darker in skin colour than Roberta, who in fact stood out in the barracks by her height, fair skin colour and long nose. Beteille comments about a village in South India that "in some ways the most striking difference between Brahmins on the one hand and non-Brahmins on the other is in their physical appearance summed up in popular sayings, e.g. 'Dark Brahmins and light Paraiyas are not proper.' " (1965 : 47). Despite the fact that Christianity, at least as practised in Greenfields, denies caste discrimination and teaches that young people should be free to choose their own marriage partners, preferably from among fellow Christians, one might imagine that given the high caste of Roberta's family, they would have preferred to arrange the marriage of their daughter to a similarly

'good' caste youth. They did just this with Roberta's younger sister, Prema.

Prema was married at the age of sixteen to a 'good' caste (Naidoo) Hindu boy whose parents owned a shop in Chatsworth, a suburb of Durban. The marriage was an arranged one and Prema did not know her future husband. Roberta herself disapproved of the match, because the bridegroom was Hindu and initially refused to attend the wedding until her mother paid a special visit to Greenfields to persuade her to do so. After the wedding (which was a large one and held in a Hindu temple in Durban), Roberta visited Prema in Durban and Prema came to Greenfields with her husband. Roberta related to me with pride the story of Prema's holiday in Mauritius with her in-laws and displayed the gift Prema had brought back for her. Although Prema became a Hindu upon her marriage, at one time her younger brother (an ardent Christian) worked for Prema's father-in-law in his shop in Chatsworth. In this case it seems clear that considerations of caste, of the wealth of the bridegroom's family (Prema's own family were poor) and their status as 'business people' were the main influences encouraging Prema's parents to accept the marriage offer. While religious differences were conveniently ignored in this Christian-Hindu marriage, the common membership of a particular Christian denomination may have been a factor forcing Roberta's family to agree to her own marriage to the lower-caste Tommy.

In the cases mentioned where marriages were across language or religious boundaries, informants frequently noted that some opposition to a marriage invariably occurred with the partners were also of different caste status, that is, when one was of 'good'

caste and the other 'low' (at least in the eyes of the 'good' caste family). I therefore now want to examine in more detail what caste and its gradations of 'high' (or 'good') and 'low' appear to mean for my selected informants and for the inhabitants of the barracks generally.

My initial observation was that barracks residents did usually recognise the term 'caste', though they sometimes seemed more familiar with the English term 'nation' as a synonym. Out of 202 households in which I asked for the caste names of husband and wife before marriage, in only ten cases did the respondent decline to give a name, saying in the case of Christians, 'we don't have that any more', or else quite plainly that he or she did not know the caste name of the family. From the direct answers which all others gave to the question, I think it more likely that these respondents did not want to admit their caste names, rather than that they were ignorant of them. However, direct questioning of villagers about caste in general (as distinct from the question on the census form) was found to be unhelpful. Tamil-speakers, both of low and high caste, then often said 'that doesn't exist any more' or, if Christian, 'we don't have that now.' There was an apparent feeling that caste involved discrimination in the same way as apartheid and a wish to be dissociated from both. I did not attempt therefore, to do a ranking survey of castes in Greenfields on any wide scale; instead information about caste and caste attitudes came mainly from intensive interviews with selected informants and members of their families and from a company official and his brother, both well-educated but low caste men, as well as from casual but revealing remarks made by other informants from time to time. This information and that obtained from the census have enabled me to compile Figure 2 and Table 3.1.

Figure 2

Number of males marrying in and out of caste

		Females																				
Males		Iyer	Govender	Moodley	Naicker	Maistry	Paliathar	Pandaram	Pillay	Naidoo	Reddy	Chetty	Maharaj	Singh	Persad	Wadiya	Sonar	Khan	Khan	Sheikh	Sayyid	Marathi
<u>Iyer</u>	1												1									
<u>Govender</u>		16	1	1				1	3	7	2											
<u>Moodley</u>			3																			
<u>Naicker</u>		3		1						1												
<u>Maistry</u>				1	2																	
<u>Paliathar</u>		1																				
<u>Pandaram</u>																						
<u>Pillay</u>		3		1					56	1	1			3								
<u>Naidoo</u>		9	2						7	17				1					1			
<u>Reddy</u>									2	3												
<u>Chetty</u>												4										
<u>Maharaj</u>													3									
<u>Singh</u>														12	1							
<u>Banya</u>															1				1	1		
<u>Persad</u>																1						
<u>Wadiya</u>			1																			
<u>Sonar</u>																		1				
<u>Khan</u>																			3			
<u>Sheikh</u>																						
<u>Sayyid</u>																			1			
<u>Marathi</u>																						1

Total marriages 196
 Total in marriages 132
 Total out marriages 64
 % Total in marriages 67,35
 % Total out marriages 32,65

Castes arranged
 hierarchically according
 to language group
 (except for Urdu)

Colour Code:

Tamil —

Telegu —

Hindi —

Urdu —

Marathi —

Table 3.1

'In' and 'Out' marriages among the larger caste categories in Greenfields barracks

Caste Names (Husband)	Total No. of marriages	'In' marrying		'Out' marrying	
		No.	%	No.	%
GOVENDER	42	26	61,9	16	38,1
PILLAY	65	56	86,1	9	13,9
NAIDOO	37	17	45,9	20	54,1
SINGH	13	12	92,3	1	7,7

Figure 2 shows the actual numbers of marriages in Greenfields per caste name, both within the same caste and out-marriages. Table 3.1 gives the percentages of in- and out-marriages for only the larger castes in Greenfields. Although Figure 2 is arranged so that castes (at least for Tamil/Telegu- and Hindi-speakers) are ranked, this ranking is an impressionistic one based upon the comments of selected informants and my own observations, and not upon a questionnaire or random sample. When asked, however, selected informants in Greenfields barracks were quite ready to produce a ranking order of caste names and invariably agreed about the caste names at the top and bottom of the hierarchy, though the position of one or two in the middle was not fixed. Tamil-speakers did not include Hindi-speakers or Muslims in their caste ranking order and referred to them as a single category within which no differentiation was made. Similarly, Hindi-speakers only ranked caste names in their own language group and did not differentiate among Tamil-speakers. Urdu-speakers (Muslims) refused to admit to any caste ranking among themselves. This phenomenon seems to correspond to that

noted by Pocock for Indians in East Africa: 'the hierarchy to which each caste belongs is the hierarchy of its area (in India). The position of different castes in different hierarchies is not inter-changeable' (1957 : 291).

Taking Tamil/Telegu-speakers first, since they were in the majority in Greenfields, they generally placed Naidoo in the highest position. Mrs Narain explained that 'Naidoo means foreman. My father was an Iyer, they were the Brahmins, but when he came here he changed to Naidoo, I don't know why I suppose because he saw others did' which suggests that Naidoo was reasonably respectable. According to Thurston (1909), Naidoo is not a caste name but a title meaning 'chief' or 'headman' which has been adopted by various Telegu castes of Sudra varna which consider themselves superior to other Sudras. Mrs Narain's FF may himself have changed his name in order to be accepted by the recruiting agents who were instructed not to take Brahmins for indenture, because they were said to be unsuited for manual work; on the other hand he may have wished to impress his descendants by later claiming an original higher caste name than the one he bore in South Africa. Few other informants recognised Iyer as a caste name and those who did merely said that Iyer was a high caste name and on a par with Naidoo, with whom Iyers could intermarry (there was one such case out of a total of three Iyers in Greenfields barracks - see Table 3.1). Unlike Hindi-speakers, Tamil informants did not appear to distinguish between castes of Sudra and those of higher varna. Apart from the three Iyers, there were no Tamil-speakers who claimed to be higher than Naidoo, that is, Sudra, in Greenfields.

Slightly below Naidoos, informants placed Govenders. Govender

appears to be the South African spelling of Goundar or Kavuntar, a large agricultural caste of South India, containing both land owners and landless workers who are mostly to be found in Tamil Nadu. Govenders consider themselves to be and are considered by members of other castes as 'good' caste. Little distinction is made between Govenders and Naidoos and marriage between members of these castes is permitted and approved. There were nine such cases of a Naidoo marrying a Govender in Greenfields. Naidoos were, however, said to prefer to marry other Naidoos if possible; if not, it was preferable for the man to be a Naidoo, since the wife and her children acquire the caste category of the husband. Including the marriages with Govenders, there were thirteen cases in Greenfields barracks where Naidoos had married spouses of a different, but socially approved, caste name. Apart from Govender other 'good' Tamil castes whom Naidoos may marry are Moodley, in India possibly Mudliar, an agricultural caste, and Naicker, the Tamil equivalent of the Telegu Naidoo or 'headman'.

Below these castes, but above the caste generally acknowledged (even indirectly by its members) as the lowest, were Chettys. Chetty may be the South African version of Cettiyyar, a large caste of business people and traders in southern India, who are there acknowledged as high Sudras. However, while some informants placed Chetty on a par with Govenders, others said that Chetty was a 'low' caste; 'they are gravediggers' said one, referring to the supposedly traditional occupation of Chettys, and another said 'Chettys eat pork', which is of course a mark of low caste status for Hindus. What reasons might there be for this ambiguity in informants' ranking of Chetty? One possibility is that Cettiyyars were spread over a wide

area in South India and some 'good' caste members may have emigrated to South Africa. Since, however, the caste was not confined to a particular area or region, members of low castes may have thought it easier to improve their caste rank by adopting this name, rather than one like Govender which was confined to certain areas. Such possible attempts to improve caste status only resulted in members of 'good' castes distinguishing between 'high' (genuine) and 'low' (imposter) Chettys. Some informants similarly alleged that there were also 'high' and 'low' Naidoos and Pillays. In any case, it was noticeable that there were in fact no instances of marriage between a Chetty and a higher caste in Greenfields barracks (see Figure 2.)

Below Chetty or sometimes on a par with them was placed Pillay. Figure 2 shows that in 56 households (or a quarter of the total number of households in Greenfields barracks), both husband and wife gave their caste name as Pillay, which was almost two-thirds more than for any other caste name in the barracks. Pillay, usually spelt Pillai in sources on India, is well-known there as a caste of scribes or accountants who rank as high Sudras (Beck 1972 : 9). But in South Africa, Pillays are said by members of other castes to be low caste Tamils. Muniamma, of Naidoo caste, said that her father would not allow her to marry a Pillay boy, 'my father does not like Pillays', though she was not very clear about his reasons, except that Pillays in the past were not allowed to worship at the temple with other castes. She hastened to add that this was 'all in the past' and that nowadays there was no 'colour bar', as she put it. It was a Hindustani informant, a high-caste Singh, who told me that Pillays were paraiyas in India, where they skinned dead cows and made shoes and ate beef. In

South Africa, beef-eating was the only mark of their status in India as 'out-castes'. Mr Ram, a well-educated Pillay, who holds a responsible position in the company, remarked that 'while many people will say that they do not discriminate on the grounds of caste, when it comes to matchmaking their prejudices are revealed', meaning that while members of 'good' castes are quite willing to interact socially with members of 'low' castes, they are not anxious for their sons or daughters to marry low-caste men or women. Pillays who did marry out of caste in Greenfields may therefore have done so to 'low' members of other castes (e.g. Naidoos), though some 'out' marriages may have been the result of love affairs, like that of Leonard and Sarah or Mr and Mrs Jacob, and which had therefore not been countenanced by the parents of the 'good' caste spouse. That some form of endogamy was maintained for some time amongst Pillays in South Africa was asserted by Mr Samuel, a Christian Pillay man, when he said proudly in reference to his daughter-in-law:

in those early days [in South Africa] Pillays only married Pillays when I was small; now they don't worry and in fact I will tell you that Lucy is a Naidoo.

When Mr Samuel referred to Pillays only marrying Pillays, he may have meant 'low' or 'out-castes' who took the name Pillay, since apparently not all 'Pillays' arrived in South Africa with a caste name. Mr Ram said that when his father landed from India, he had no caste name on his identity document but, Mr Ram said, a caste name was essential to gain entry to a school or treatment at a hospital (the caste name was probably used as a surname by the colonial authorities); Kuper (1955 : 27) suggests, on the other hand, that 'to have no caste name gives anonymity; a low caste name

is a perpetual stigma', but there is another point of view.

R.S. Nowbath, a South African Indian lawyer, writes ' the fact that a man has one of these [caste] names indicates that he is a man of caste, the fact that he does not have one of these names leads to the presumption that a man does not have a caste and may be seen as a man of low caste' (1953 : 74). Certainly, Mr Ram told me that his brother, a teacher with a University degree, had gone to considerable trouble to register 'Pillay' as his official surname.

At first sight it may appear odd that a man would want to adopt a very low caste name, but informants aver that, like Chetty, there are 'high' and 'low' Pillays in South Africa. Mr Ram said that the 'high' Pillays were a clean caste of shepherds in India and as such could associate with and marry (in South Africa) members of other Sudra castes, such as Govenders and Naidoos. 'Low' Pillays on the other hand were grave diggers, or, as Mr Ram said when acknowledging his membership of this caste, 'undertakers', and as such very low caste, if not actually out-caste. These ambiguities and the absence of outward signs of caste membership such as style of clothing or hair create problems of identification. Mrs Narain summarised the problems and one way of overcoming them:

Pillay is a good caste but quite a lot of people take that name for convenience. It is easy to say and to spell. Now you hear the name and you don't know if the people are good or bad, for instance Moonsamy, that's a low caste, could take the name Pillay. The way to find out is to find out who their relatives are and then you can ask one of them

When Mrs Narain was asked what she meant by 'good' and 'bad'

in the context of caste, she said 'what it means is, can we marry them? In my mother's time they were very strict about this but not any more'. Caste, therefore, for those who consider themselves to be 'high' caste is expressed in moral terms, a 'high caste is 'good' and a 'low' caste 'bad'. This sort of evaluation is made explicit only when marriage between members of two castes is being considered, but the moral element crept into the conversation of high-caste informants, when the Christian community in Greenfields barracks was being discussed. Several high-caste Hindus said that the Christians (i.e. Pillays) were very low caste and insinuated that the moral of Christians were laxer than those of Hindus, giving instances of sexual misbehaviour among Christian families. Christian informants, on the other hand, were anxious to stress their moral probity, if not puritanism, and cited the prohibition of their church on drinking, smoking, dancing or watching secular films, or having any truck with 'worldly things'. Observation revealed instances of nominally Christian villagers doing all these things, however. Similar observations about the influence of caste on marriage have been made by Jayawardena about Fiji Indian society: "there is a marked tendency despite the absence of formal sanctions, to marry someone of a caste regarded as comparable in rank ... the factor inhibiting caste-free marriage is the individuals' own apprehension of the behaviour of people with whom close relations are to be established by marriage. Until recently low castes were believed to be 'by nature' mean and unreliable and their womenfolk immodest; they were suspected of habitually gorging themselves on pork and beef and of resorting to black magic to harm people" (1971 : 108, 109).

Within the Tamil hierarchy, then, there appeared to be a

fairly clear separation for marriage purposes between 'good' castes who could, and did, intermarry and 'low' castes who intermarried with good castes only in rare cases, which were either love matches, not sanctioned by the parents of the 'good' caste spouse, or else Hindu-Christian marriages, opposition to which was described earlier in the chapter. Since non-Tamil speakers in the barracks, whether Hindi or Urdu, comprised only 13,66% of the householders in Greenfields, the ranking among them was less complex. Indeed, no Urdu-speakers would admit to any form of caste ranking among themselves. The Hindi-speakers made a broad differentiation between the two castes they ranked as highest and other Hindi castes. R.S. Nowbath (1879 : 15) reports that among Hindi-speakers in South Africa the caste names in common use are Maharaj, indicating Brahmin descent, and Singh, claiming Kshatriya status. Vaishyas and Sudras also have definite caste names, but 'it is interesting to note that these are not appended to the name of the individual as is Maharaj or Singh'. This peculiarity was borne out in the fieldwork, when I interviewed Mrs Raj. When giving me the names of her relatives in her genealogy, she invariably mentioned if someone was a Singh and if he or she was not, she would say 'he is a Hindustani man, not a Singh' or 'she is an ordinary woman' by which she meant that the person in question was not a Singh or Maharaj. Mrs Raj even said she did not know the caste names of her relatives who were not Singhs, apart from the Maharajs, and it was evident that she was not interested either; anyone who was not of these high castes was 'ordinary'. In Greenfields barracks there were no Murao, Lohar or Dom families (low caste in India), but there were two Banya households and one Sonar (goldsmith), as Figure 2 shows. Apart from these, it was noticeable that of the ten households where the respondent refused to give a caste name, five were Hindi-speaking, which suggests,

following Nowbath, that they were low caste.

It seems, then, that it is certain Hindi-speakers from northern India who lay claim to high caste membership, at least in terms of the varna structure. Indeed, I observed that members of the Singh families in the barracks were accorded a higher status and generally shown more respect than any prominent Tamil of good caste, but this difference may have been because these families were in any case better-off than Tamil-speakers, owning land outside the village and having children at University. As far as marriage among Hindi-speakers was concerned, Mrs Raj's daughter said her father wanted his daughters to marry men of their own (Singh) caste

my father will make the choice. He will go into it, in fact he is already talking about it. That is my main reason for wanting to go to Training College. I don't want to get married. He'll tell our relatives to look for someone. It will be another Singh boy, he'll accept a Singh or Maharaj, nothing lower. Then he'll look at the boy's job or career, financial prospects.

This was Mr Raj's ideal, but reality turned out otherwise for Mr Raj's elder daughter, Nalini. While nursing in Durban, Nalini boarded with Mrs Raj's younger sister. The family lived next door to a well-to-do Gujarati family who owned a tailor's shop. The younger son of this family was a close friend of one of Nalini's brothers who introduced him to Nalini. The young couple fell in love and everyone except Mr Raj approved. Mrs Raj said 'today they must have their own choice as long as its the same religion' but Mr Raj was adamant. The Gujarati family were passenger immigrants from India and had done well financially, but they were of Vaishya

varna and Mr Raj disapproved. Nalini, however, would not give in and the family atmosphere was strained for some months. However, the weight of family and kin opinion was against Mr Raj and, with no one to support him, he gave in and Nalini was married at a large wedding in Greenfields, paid for by her father and attended by him. Some of Mr Raj's opposition to the marriage may have been because he did not choose the bridegroom himself, though the Gujarati family were much better off than he was and had more status as 'business people', whereas he was only a sugar mill worker.

Within Greenfields barracks, then, among both Tamil- and Hindi-speakers, a distinction between castes does appear to exist and this distinction is expressed in the ranking of castes as 'high' or 'low'. However, castes in Greenfields (and by extension in South Africa as a whole) do not consist of locally corporate, or at least distinct and exclusive, social units, as they have been said to do in India, where caste therefore might be and often has been represented as a group. Caste in South Africa may be said to be rather a category or set of categories. Such caste categories do seem to influence the choice of marriage partner in Greenfields barracks, since 67,35% of marriages occurred within the caste category, though individuals can, and do marry across caste category boundaries. Such boundaries become most evident in marriage negotiations (as Mrs Narain stated) and are often expressed in moral terms, that is, that some castes are 'good' i.e. morally acceptable as kin, and others are 'bad', i.e. morally unacceptable as kin. Opposition to marriages in the barracks occurred mostly when an individual from a 'bad' or 'low' caste intended marrying someone from a 'good' or 'high' caste. For the most part the

categorizing of a person as 'low caste' or morally unacceptable occurred in the context of proposed marriages and not in normal everyday social interaction. By influencing marriage, therefore, caste categories do impose further limits on the possible range of kin an individual may have.

Race, language, religion and caste appear to be the major factors which can and often do set the boundaries of kinship for individuals in Greenfields barracks. The limitations of 'race' are largely imposed by legal restrictions while those of language also reflect cultural differences, which appear to be lessening among Indian South Africans today. The limitations which religion imposes on the extent of kinship varies according to the religion. Islam attempts to prohibit totally its members marrying non-Moslems, while Christianity teaches that Christians are free to marry members of other religions. Within the barracks, opposition to marriages of Hindus with Christians appears to be based on caste, as much as on religion, although religious differences are sometimes used as an excuse for opposition to a match. Caste category membership was found to be important to barracks residents when marriage was being considered and was probably the most influential limitation on kinship for most of my informants.

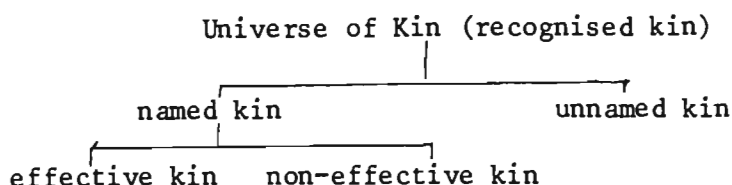
Chapter Four

AN EXAMINATION OF THE STRUCTURE OF SOME KIN UNIVERSES

By the word 'structure' in the title to this chapter I refer to a set of more or less 'objective' characteristics of the total genealogies collected as well as to patterns elucidated from informants statements and from these people's observations of behaviour. In an industrialized society, of which Greenfields barracks is essentially part, one would not expect to find much trace of a formal structure of kin relations outside the nuclear family, that is, for such relations there are few expressed rules governing principles of conduct and moral sanctions. Nevertheless, people do not behave towards their extra familial kin in an entirely haphazard, unstructured way. According to Firth, regularities can be observed in all kinship behaviour in industrialized societies, although these regularities are not followed by everyone to the same degree. The 'regularities' of which Firth writes (1969 : 163) are a matter of relative frequencies based largely on quantative estimates of, for example, the number and sorts of kin known and kept in touch with, the quality of these recognitions of kin and the contact made with them. Firth points out that while many concepts are used by anthropologists in discussing kinship, these have been formulated mainly with reference to data from non-industrialized societies. Firth suggests, therefore, that the terms he has constructed have more relevance to a large-scale complex society.

Firth relates this idea of structure to the concept of a 'universe of kin'. By this he means all persons whom Ego knows are related to him by genealogical ties, both of consanguinity and affinity, that is, all the persons whom Ego acknowledges as kin, or as Firth says 'recognises'

as kin. For purposes of tabulating such a universe Firth has excluded the consanguines of immediate affines ⁽¹⁾ of Ego and a similar procedure has been used in this thesis, particularly in Table 4.1 which appears below. Within the total kin universe, Firth makes several distinctions which he has organised into a scheme of categories of kin, of which part is reproduced below.



This scheme is more or less applicable to my material, but it does require certain modifications which I indicate in a preliminary way here and take up again later in this chapter. The first modification refers to the distinction between named and unnamed kin. Like Firth I use unnamed kin to refer to those who are not known by any name at all, forename or surname. Firth then leaves this unnamed category undivided, but makes a further division of named kin into 'effective kin', those with whom social contact of some kind is maintained by Ego, and 'non-effective kin', with whom no contact of any kind is maintained by Ego, although the possibility of contact remains. Although unnamed kin would appear to be another kind of non-effective kin, this is not always so for my informants, as I will explain later. Within the category of effective kin, Firth makes another distinction between 'intimate' and 'peripheral' kin, contact with the former being close, frequent and purposeful and that with the latter, accidental and sporadic. However, he admits that it is difficult, if not impossible, to demarcate intimate and peripheral kin and does not attempt to quantify them. I therefore do not propose to use this distinction in this chapter, but will describe the types of kin whom

I classify as 'intimate' for my informants in succeeding chapters. The chief purpose of this scheme of analysis is to classify and explore the regularities and dissimilarities in the kinship behaviour of the people whose kinship is being investigated. Objective criteria used in comparing features of the universes of kin of different individuals were as follows:

First, the size of the kin universe, meaning the number of kin contained in a universe;

second, the depth of the kin universe, referring to the number of generations the universe contains;

third, the range of the kin universe, that is, the number of degrees of cousinship or other distance from Ego at which kin are known;

fourth, the symmetry of the kin universe, the extent to which there is a balance between paternal and maternal kin and between kin of earlier and later generations.

Starting with an examination of the size of the kin universes in Greenfields barracks, the table below gives the total number of kin, excluding children and grandchildren as direct descendants and also excluding consanguines of affines, known to the ten informants whose genealogies were collected and to seven of their eight spouses. The eighth spouse, Mr Narain, was his wife's MBS and thus his genealogy largely coincided with hers. Two unmarried girls were among the ten female informants. The total number of kin known for the seventeen

individuals living in Greenfields barracks was 3,783 of whom 346 were dead. The average number of all kin known by each informant was therefore 222, the average number of live kin being 202. The following table displays the distribution of all numbers of kin known, living and dead, for individual informants.

Table 4.1

Numbers of kin, living and dead, in kin universes

Informant	Number of living kin	%	Number of dead kin	%	TOTAL
1 Mrs Virasami	299	85,5	34	14,5	³ 233
2 Mr Virasami	364	92,8	28	7,2	392
3 Mrs Narain	247	85,7	41	14,2	288
4 Mrs David	107	93,0	8	6,9	115
5 Mr David	94	87,8	13	12,2	107
6 Muniamma	345	94,5	20	5,3	365
7 Roberta	167	94,3	10	5,6	177
8 Tommy	172	92,9	13	7,1	185
9 Mrs Raj	166	82,5	35	17,4	201
10 Mr Raj	243	89,2	32	11,8	270
11 Mrs Samuel	181	86,1	29	13,9	210
12 Mr Samuel	178	92,2	15	7,8	193
13 Junie	171	90,4	19	10,0	189
14 Mrs Ramsamy	182	93,8	12	6,2	194
15 Mr Ramsamy	210	89,3	25	10,7	235
16 Mrs Jacob	92	85,9	15	14,1	107
17 Mr Jacob	298	92,5	24	7,5	322
TOTAL	3 437	90,85	346	9,15	3 783

Although Firth was able to use a much larger sample of 166 genealogies, than the one I gathered in Greenfields barracks, I believe I can still claim that there are some significant differences and some similarities between my Greenfields figures and those obtained by Firth from his London genealogies. Firth found that the smallest number of kin known by one individual was seven, whereas in Greenfields it was 107. The largest number of kin known in Highgate was 388 and in Greenbanks 243 (these were the two London suburbs in which the informants lived), whereas in Greenfields barracks the largest number of kin known was 392. Moreover, the London genealogy which included 388 individuals was clearly exceptional in that the informant came from a well-known London Jewish family which prided itself upon its strong kin links. It therefore seems as if the kin universes of my Indian informants tend to be larger than the London ones. The same tendency is discernible in Chekki's material from western India. For his totals of recognised kin are indeed very similar to those of Greenfields barracks. Out of 14 genealogies, his informants in Kalyan knew of a total of 3 261 kin, the highest number known by one individual being 397 and the lowest 140. Firth says further (1969 : 159) that in 60% of their cases, known kin were in the range between 20 and 100, and a further 25% knew between 100 and 200 kin. Very few cases, 5 out of 166, knew more than 200 kin. Table 4.2. below shows the marked difference in Greenfields barracks, where none of the informants knew less than 100 kin and more than half knew over 200.

Table 4.2
Numerical distribution of kin known, living and dead

No. of Kin	Cases	%
100 - 150	3	17,6
151 - 200	5	29,4
201 - 250	4	23,5
251 - 300	2	11,8
301 - 350	1	5,9
351 - 400	2	11,8
Total	17	100

Such extreme differences seem unlikely to be due to chance arising from the relative smallness of my sample. From this evidence, therefore, these Indian inhabitants of Greenfields appear to have substantially larger kin universes on the whole than the middle-class British informants described by Firth but are similar in size of those of their counterparts in Western India. Firth comments on this aspect of size that while the actual numbers of kin known by informants are not in themselves significant, 'relative kin numbers may be indicative of relative social assets'. (1969 : 158) Whereas in small-scale societies for which kin obligations and ideology are part of the formal structure of kin relations, types of kin available to Ego may be more important than their actual numbers, in a community influenced by industrialization, such as that of Greenfields barracks, kin ideology and obligations could be expected to be weaker. However, numbers of kin may be important in such a situation as an indication of the range of possibilities for mobilizing assistance. The relatively large size of the average kin universe in Greenfields barracks is thus a preliminary indication that extra-familial kinship plays a considerable role in the total social relationships an individual may have. There are however, a number of other points about the size of kin universes which merit further detailed consideration before I turn to the content of kin relationships.

One of these points relates to the sex of Ego, which Firth records was important for numbers of kin known in Highgate, women knowing on average 20% more kin than men. Such a difference did not occur amongst my admittedly small number of informants in Greenfields barracks. Indeed, the men mostly appeared to know of more kin than their wives, with only two of them, Mr David and Mr Samuel, knowing of less than their wives, though it was only

seven less in each case so that the difference is hardly significant. On the other hand, two husbands, Mr Virasami and Mr Jacob, knew of over 200 more kin than their wives. Although men tended to know of more kin than women, this did not mean that there was a greater knowledge of paternal than maternal kin on the whole. Both male and female informants tended to know as much about mother's siblings as about father's siblings and knowledge of the children of these siblings was about equal.

Male and female informants also knew roughly the same amount of dead kin. Table 4.1 shows the knowledge of dead kin per informant, the average number being 20. The highest total of dead kin known by one individual, Mrs Narain, was 41. This total is partially accounted for by her age, 45 years. Many of her kin in her parents' generation had died within the past ten years and she easily remembered them. She also had more reason to remember deceased kin than other informants, because many of them had been successful business owners or professional people, unlike the illiterate working-class forebears of other informants. Younger women did not know so much about their grandparents' siblings, but the total dead kin known by each informant was within a relatively small range, the lowest being eight, in the case of Mrs David. The lowest percentage of dead kin out of total kin known was 5.5% for Muniamma, an unmarried girl in her twenties. The numbers of dead kin known by each informant therefore tended to be smaller than those of Firth's London informants. Firth comments (1969 : 163) that 'the numbers of dead kin recognised by our informants were not spread out but fell within the fifty belt'. While the numbers of dead kin known in London are more than in Greenfields, the proportions of dead to live kin are also very different in the two areas. While in Greenfields only just over 9% of the total known kin were dead, in London the

proportion was 35% or 4 793 individuals out of a total of 13 927.

What reasons can one find for this apparently low proportion of dead kin known by the Greenfields informants? One important reason for this lack of knowledge is the cut-off point caused by the departure from India of Ego's grand-parents or great-grandparents. The usual phrase used by informants of an individual who was known to have emigrated from India was 'he was an India man' with the implication that nothing was known of any kin of this person who remained behind in India. With one or two exceptions there was almost no interest on the part of informants in finding out about possible kin in India. The general impression I had was that while the sub-continent was an interesting place to visit as a tourist, few South African Indians had any desire to return there to live, even if this had been made possible politically. The reason given was that the culture and way of life of Indians in India was very different from that of South African Indians. Several informants remarked on the poverty of the majority of the population in India and stated that they felt they were 'better off' in South Africa. They had therefore little incentive to recall kin in India. A partial exception to the general ignorance among barracks informants of kin living in India was Mr Samuel. Mr Samuel's father, now dead, arrived in South Africa at the age of twelve, unaccompanied by any members of his family. He did, however, correspond with his family in India, in the vernacular, until he died. Mr Samuel said that his father used to write to a brother in India,

when my father died, my brother Aaron used to take it [the correspondence] over. When that brother [FB] died we lost touch. You see, there was a little famine and that house [in India] and our address were burnt. So my

brother wrote to the India government, giving the the name of the place and the street and the India government sent us the address. Now this boy [FBS] writes to my brother almost every month. He works for the railways, I don't know quite what he does.

Mr Samuel then proudly displayed a photograph of his relatives in India which his FBS had sent him.

Another reason for the low proportion of dead kin known by my informants may be the absence in Greenfields barracks of rights, duties and inheritance patterns such as those vested in lineage groups in India, and a corresponding absence of any elaborate form of ancestor cult (other than a simple prayer ritual for deceased parents) or other ritual reason for remembering the dead. This situation is unlike that of Chekki's Brahman informants, who perform sraddha, a ceremony to propitiate the ancestors, for which they are required to know the names of ancestors for three generations in father's, mother's and wife's lines. P. Hiebert, writing of a small village in the Telegu-speaking area of central India, says (1973 : 37) 'it is the patrilineage relatives that grieve for one's death. Lineal relatives of the deceased are considered polluted ritually, generally for ten days. Members of the immediate family may observe mourning rites for longer periods of time.' In Greenfields barracks there is nothing corresponding to the lineage and ritual pollution extends only to members of the dead person's immediate family. There is thus little reason for dead lineal relatives to be remembered by the living through drawn out ceremonies or long periods of mourning or for instance by inheritance or bequest. None of my informants admitted to inheriting any valuables in the form of property or cash from ancestors. Small items such as gold bangles or saris were

divided among siblings upon their mother's death. Such an absence of both inheritable wealth and status is unusual in the rural society of village India from which most of the ancestors of present-day Greenfields barracks inhabitants are descended.

Since this low proportion of dead kin generally goes with a relatively large total universe, I now consider the conditions which make for a high level of kin knowledge. Among those I have adapted from Firth (1969 : 176,177) are : an abundance of parents' siblings and consequently of cousins; survival of parents' beyond Ego's own childhood; geographical propinquity of kin; close and amicable kin relationships and family business or professional interests. Some estimation of the applicability of these conditions may be made from looking at those of my informants with particularly large kin universes. Five of the seventeen each knew of over 250 kin and three of these were reared in Greenfields barracks. Two are men: Mr Jacob, who is in his forties, and Mr Raj, who is in his fifties. The third is an unmarried girl in her twenties, Muniamma.

Mr Jacob, a Christian man of low caste, has a total kin universe of 322 people, the third largest recorded. Of these kin only 24 or 7.5% are dead and, apart from them, Mr Jacob has no contact with only 37 kin, most of them the children and children's children of his father's only sister. This sister remained Hindu when her brother converted and she does not live in Greenfields. Mr Jacob thus has effective contact with 271 kin or 88% of his total kin universe, which also displays an unusual lateral extension in that a large number of kin are second cousins. Mr Jacob's MF had an only brother who had two wives, and three of their four known children are now living in Greenfields barracks with their wives, children and grand-

children. The youngest of these mother's cousins, all sons, also had two wives (one is now dead) by whom he had seventeen children, all living. Mr Jacob himself is the eldest of thirteen children three of whom died in infancy. Thus a major reason for the large number of kin in Mr Jacob's kin universe, as in those of other informants in the barracks, is the large size of siblings groups, particularly in Ego's own and parents' generation. This large size of sibling groups reflects the high birth rate that was common to Indian families in the towns and rural areas until the last decade, combined with a relatively low infant mortality rate (cf Kark and Chesler 1956)^{in Kuper, H. 1960} Today the birth rate among Indians in South Africa approximates to that of Whites and is considerably lower than in previous generations.

While large sibling groups are important factors in the large amounts of kin known by Mr Jacob, it is obvious from his case and others that geographical propinquity is also a factor in the preservation of large kin universes among those informants born and reared in the barracks. Many of Mr Jacob's kin live in the barracks and are fellow members of the only Christian church there. While others live further afield, contact with them is maintained primarily through visits by these people to Mr Jacob's elderly mother who also lives in the barracks.

Mr Raj is another informant, born and bred in the barracks, who has a high total of known kin. Mr Raj's father and one of his brothers moved to Greenfields when the sugar mill was built and married two sisters whose families also lived there. Later, two other brothers of Mr Raj's father came to settle in Greenfields. While Mr Raj knew

of 270 kin, 32 of whom, or 11,8%, were dead, most of his kin have moved away from the barracks in recent years, but he nevertheless did grow up with them there, thus geographical propinquity has played a part in his large kin knowledge. Moreover, the family is still a prominent one in the barracks, partly because of the number of members formerly resident and partly because it is one of the few high-caste Hindi families there.

A similarly well-known family to that of Mr Raj is that of Muniamma, who had a total kin universe of 365 individuals, of whom 20 or 5,5% were dead. Muniamma's father is the eldest living son of a family of eight sons and three daughters who moved to Greenfields from Durban when the mill was built in 1915. All of the sons grew up in the barracks and worked in the mill for a time, although some have since moved back to Durban. Many of their sons and daughters in turn are still living and working in the barracks. Moreover, three of Muniamma's sisters and she herself married men who live in the barracks. Muniamma is therefore in close contact, not only with her father's brothers who are resident in the barracks and their wives and children, but also with her own siblings and their spouses and children. Of more distant kin, Muniamma knows of three children of a FFBS, two of whom live in Durban and one in Johannesburg. Two of these FFBS's came to the wedding of one of Muniamma's sisters in the barracks a few years ago, as did a FFBSD, but Muniamma does not know the names of the spouses of these kin or the names of their children. The large size of Muniamma's kin universe is therefore mainly the result both of the large sibling groups of her parents and the large number of her father's brothers who spent their working lives in Greenfields. In this respect, the barracks does, for many of its inhabitants, resemble a village composing a small, close-knit

social world where individuals like Muniamma and many of their kin have been brought up, married and may die.

Their situation contrasts with that of the remaining two informants with large kin universes, Mrs Narain and Mr Virasami, who were not born or brought up in the barracks, but did still have extensive contacts with their kin. While Mrs Narain's father died only after she married, Mr Virasami's father died when he was twelve but his death in no way affected Mr Virasami's contact with his paternal kin, which was extensive. It seems therefore that other factors, besides geographical propinquity and survival of parents, need to be considered in their cases.

While Mrs Narain is not a native of Greenfields, she has lived in the barracks for over seven years and two of her five children were born while she was living there. Mrs Narain is an educated woman with a degree and she is proud of the fact that her earliest known ancestors emigrated to South Africa from Mauritius as 'passenger' or trader immigrants. Whereas many of the Indians descended from indentured labourers are only too eager to forget their ancestry, Mrs Narain often recounted stories told to her by her mother about her mother's kin. Mrs Narain's MF opened a trading store in Northern Natal upon his arrival in South Africa and, although one of his sons bought out his siblings upon their father's death, the family business which has prospered and expanded, still serves as a point of pride and interest among Mrs Narain's kin. Mrs Narain married her MBS which also contributes to her extensive kin knowledge. Many of Mrs Narain's kin of her own generation have professional qualifications, like her and her husband, and Mrs Narain is very interested in them. Whenever advice and help is needed by Mrs Narain or her husband, whether medical

legal or merely on purchasing a car, they turn to kin. These are usually the children or grandchildren of Mrs Narain's mother's brothers, who are, of course, Mr Narain's paternal kin. Mrs Narain is also proud of her Hindu religious affiliation and customs which emphasize kin participation. Moreover, as the wife of the school Principal in Greenfields barracks, she feels socially and intellectually superior to her neighbours and thus relies almost exclusively upon kin for friendships and aid in domestic crises. All these factors contribute towards Mrs Narain's high total of known kin, 272. While close and amicable kin contacts are evident in Mrs Narain's kin universe, in her case the family business and professional interests have also served as a focus of kin recognition.

Like Mrs Narain, Mr Virasami, the Vice-Principal of the Greenfields Indian school, is not a native of the barracks but has lived there for the past five years. Mr Virasami knew nearly 400 kin and was in effective contact with 92,9% of them, in spite of the fact that his FF had come from India to South Africa with only one brother and Mr Virasami knew of no siblings of his MM or MF. Mr Virasami's mother was one of eight children and his father one of nine. Mr Virasami himself is a gregarious, outgoing man who enjoys meeting people in general and keeping up contact with his kin. Interestingly enough, a family quarrel over an inheritance has played an important part in encouraging Mr Virasami to keep up contact with his paternal kin. Mr Virasami's FF had settled in an area which is now an old-established suburb of Durban and one of the few original Indian areas there which has not been declared 'White' in terms of the Group Areas Act. The sons and daughters of Mr Virasami's FF had continued to live close to the family home. Mr Virasami explained the origin of his family's land ownership and

a subsequent dispute over the land as follows,

You see, there is an old family quarrel. When my grandfather completed his indenture at Mt. Edgecombe, the company offered them land. Now my grandfather was an ace ginger farmer ... he and a Pillay man chose land two miles inward from the main road. All told there was over ten acres and at a later date another three acres was bought.

When Mr Virasami's FF died, he left the land to all his children jointly in his will and the quarrel began then. One of the sons claimed that he had got hold of an earlier will made out in his favour alone and legal wranglings ensued. The quarrel over the land has lasted now for 21 years and most of the original participants, Mr Virasami's father's brothers, are dead, but their children continue the dispute. As it stands the land is idle and no one can develop it, although Greenwood Park (the suburb) is now a very valuable Indian residential area. Mr Virasami claims to have washed his hands of the matter, because he lives too far from Durban to take an active interest in the affair, but he still feels he has a claim to part of the land and takes an active interest in the legal proceedings. Superficially, the family quarrel over the inheritance might be expected to lessen contact between the members of Mr Virasami's kin universe, but in fact it appears to have had an opposite effect, since the claimants to the inheritance are eager to swap news with one another about the legal process and calculate the large amounts of money they expect to receive in view of rising land prices. Without the prospect of a financial windfall always imminent Mr Virasami might not have kept in such close contact with his paternal kin, whom he sees regularly, but it is worth noting that his contact with his mother's siblings and their children is also

close, no doubt influenced by the fact that Mr Virasami's mother was an eldest child and a domineering woman who paid regular visits to her siblings in her lifetime which were always returned.

To sum up the factors involved in high numbers of kin known, it appears that the most important seems to be large numbers of siblings in own and parents' generation, followed by geographical propinquity. Close and amicable relationships with kin were also important and although this would appear to depend to a certain extent on the personality of Ego, gregarious and extrovert informants did not know appreciably more kin than shy people. For instance, Muniamma, a quiet and shy girl, knew 365 kin, while Mr Virasami, a cheerful and exuberant man, knew only 35 more. The fact that an individual was not deprived of a parent in early childhood did not appear to make any difference to my informants' total knowledge of kin, since the few whose parents had died while they were young still kept in contact with siblings of the dead parent and their children. Other factors, such as the creation of family property or enterprises, seem to be important in some cases for the sizes of kin universes.

Although the average size of the kin universes is relatively high and the size of some universes is exceptionally high, three of my informants, two women and one man, do have a lower total knowledge of kin than other informants. These were Mr and Mrs David and Mrs Jacob. Their cases call for some comment in the light of the findings by Firth and his colleagues that four sets of conditions were relevant to low levels of kin knowledge: a demographic gap, particularly a lack of parents' siblings and consequently of first cousins; early deprivation of parent; geographical separation;

family strain.

Looking at these conditions in relation to Mrs Jacob, whose total kin knowledge of 107 was one of the very lowest, it is immediately apparent that both her parents had small sibling sets relative to other informants. The fact that her mother's two sisters had died before she was born also meant that Mrs Jacob had no personal knowledge of them, and was less likely to know much about their descendants, especially as she said 'my mother never spoke of them'. Turning to Mr David, whose total kin knowledge of 107 was the same as Mrs Jacob's, his late father, who had lived in Greenfields from the time the mill was built, had only one sibling, a brother, who in turn had only one daughter. Mr David knows that this daughter is married, but not the name of her husband or children, if any. Mr David's mother had only one brother, although his MF had two wives and five children by his second wife. In Mr David's case I infer that the unusually small number of his parents' siblings (in relation to other informants) and his ignorance of any grandparents' siblings resulted in a smaller total of kin than for other informants (except for his wife, whose low kin knowledge stemmed from different factors, and Mrs Jacob).

Firth's second condition for low levels of kin knowledge is early loss of parent. This condition does not appear to be relevant in the cases of my informants with low levels of kin knowledge. In only two cases out of seventeen, did a parent die while Ego was still at school, that is, before Ego reached the age of ten or twelve years. In both these cases the mother died, but the father soon remarried and contact was kept with the dead mother's siblings. In the one instance, the father married his dead wife's younger sister. There

were two or three such instances of the 'sororate' in the total genealogies of my informants and the general comment was that remarriage to a deceased wife's sister made it easier for the children to accept their aunt whom they knew, as step-mother, than a total stranger.

While Firth's second condition influencing low levels of kin knowledge does not appear to be directly relevant to my informants, his third condition, geographical separation, does apply. This condition can certainly be said to have played a part in reducing levels of kin knowledge in all seventeen cases as far as third and further ascending generations is concerned (and in some cases in the second ascending generation), since this was the point at which my informants' ancestors left their native India, usually as individuals, and contact with their families in India was not maintained. More recent cases of immigration had a more marked effect on levels of kin knowledge, as Mrs Jacob's case shows. It seems likely that Mrs Jacob's father's parents were immigrants, if not he himself, since she noted that he was in his seventies when he died in 1974 and no mention was made when she was a child of the place of origin of her FF or FM. While Mr and Mrs David did not know if their grandparents were immigrants or not, they did not know of any siblings of their grandparents, which suggests that these people may have immigrated as individuals. On the other hand, the fact that adults of the present generation lack personal knowledge of their grandparents siblings may also be a result of the wandering existence led by ex-indentured Indians of fifty years ago who had neither the leisure time nor the facilities such as transport and telephone, necessary to maintain contact with each other. The illiteracy of many of them would also have hampered

written communication.

In contrast to this uncertainty about the effect of geographical separation on the Davids' kin knowledge, it is clear that Firth's fourth condition, family strain, affected Mrs David's total kin knowledge. She was born and brought up in another barracks village, about 14 kilometres from Greenfields, but part of the same estate. Mrs David's mother was one of eleven children, all resident in the area and with whom and with whose children Mrs David has had considerable contact, although she does not know all the names of the spouses of her first cousins or of their children. On the maternal side, therefore, Mrs David's knowledge of kin was quite extensive. It was therefore all the more striking that Mrs David would say of her father's siblings only that her father had five sisters with no brothers and that she had no contact with any of them. She even denied that she knew the names of these women, although she did know that three of them live in suburbs of Durban. Mrs David went so far as to say that if these women arrived unexpectedly on her doorstep 'they would be as strangers to me'. This extremely strong repudiation of such close kin as father's sisters was in fact not true, as Mrs David admitted later when she let slip that she had accompanied her father on a visit to three of his sisters the previous year. One hour was spent at the home of each sister. Mrs David said that one of them, a widow, had complained that she had no one to look after her financially. Mrs David added that she had told this aunt that she herself lived too far away to be of any help to her. Such refusal of help to close kin was most unusual among informants and in Mrs David's case was possibly the result of a previous quarrel between her father and his sisters. In any event, if Mrs David knew

of any descendants of her father's sisters she refused to admit it, and this omission helps to account for her smaller number of known kin than other informants, apart from her husband and Mrs Jacob.

On the other hand, I found no such unwillingness to talk about certain kin among other informants and thus family strain did not appear to be a major factor limiting kin knowledge. Indeed, in one case a family quarrel over an inheritance (which I described earlier actually contributed to kin contact, since the related participants were all anxious to maintain their claims to part of a property.

Another factor peculiar to the Davids, which may partly explain why their levels of kin knowledge were low, is their interest and involvement in community affairs to all kinds in the barracks. The Davids are often to be seen at weddings, funerals etc. of prominent or well-to-do barracks inhabitants and I think that the time and energy they expend in this way leaves them less time to attend to kin affairs of their own. Therefore, although several of the four conditions which Firth suggests are partially relevant to the Davids' low levels of kin knowledge, they are not equally applicable to all my informants with low total numbers of known kin. It is perhaps worth emphasising that size, whether high or low, does not seem to correlate with the depth of genealogies which is the second criterion used by Firth in comparing kin universes. I have already indicated a general lack of knowledge of dead kin and a particular ignorance of antecedent kin in India. This ignorance has resulted in my informants having genealogies of shallow depth. Table 4.3 below illustrates this shallowness in comparison with Firth's London material.

Table 4.3

Knowledge of past generations of kin by name in Greenfields and London

	<u>Greenfields</u>		<u>London</u>	
	Number of Informants	%	Number of Informants	%
One generation only	2	11,7	30	18,1
Two	11	64,7	78	47,0
Three	4	23,6	37	22,3
Four	0	0	14	8,4
Five	0	0	6	3,6
Six	0	0	1	0,6
TOTAL	17	100	166	100

Using the knowledge of name as a criterion for comparison, it seems that 15 of my informants knew the names or had any other information only of their grandparents; only two informants knew of no ancestor further removed than parents' generation. While such lack of knowledge of previous generations usually reflects the cut-off point in kin knowledge caused by emigration, this is not the only reason for the lack of depth in informants genealogies. There is also a frequent ignorance about ancestors who came to or were born in Natal.

None of the selected informants in the barracks was older than 55 years; most were in their early forties but despite their relative youth only a few, such as Mr Samuel, knew where their fathers or grandfathers were born, whether in India or South Africa. In most cases, all that informants knew of their grandparents' place of origin was where these grandparents were living at the time when Ego's parents were born which was often in then rural areas of Natal, on smallholdings or plantations. It seems probable that for most of my informants, it was actually their great-grandparents who emigrated from India, but in only 23,6% of cases were any kin in this generation known at all. One probable answer to this lack of knowledge of any kin above the second ascending generation is that

ex-indentured Indians in South Africa were mostly extremely poor and usually illiterate. Families did not always remain in one place in the early days, but moved from place to place wherever work could be obtained. Consequently, there is little reason why Ego should remember much of his or her great-grandparents in Natal, where they lacked property and had few possessions to tie them to particular places and to leave to their descendants. However, two of the seventeen informants came from families which had accumulated comparative wealth and property which did fix their residence; their genealogies reflect correspondingly more knowledge about their ancestors than those of other, poorer, informants. This difference tends to support the suggested correlation between early poverty and shallow depth in the other genealogies.

However, the shallowness of depth is not all that abnormal for, despite the greater number of genealogies collected by Firth, only 21 people (12,6%) knew of any kin in the fourth, fifth or sixth ascending generation, suggesting a general lack of interest in ancestors similar to that of Greenfields informants. Firth comments 'knowledge of generations further back than grandparents tended to fall away rapidly; few of our informants were historically minded as far as their own families were concerned ... one of the characteristic features of the kinship of our North London middle class subjects was the general lack of interest they displayed in their forebears ... It was quite clear that in general no very widespread effort was made by people to learn about their past kin, nor was there any corresponding enthusiasm by their elders to teach them about the history of their families' (1969 : 164, 165, 168). But even in communities where an effort is made to teach people about

their forebears, knowledge of these kin is not noticeably increased. Chekki (1971 : 35) notes that professional genealogists visit all Lingayat households in Kalyan once a year or at least one in two years, but only one informant knew of any kin in the fourth or higher ascending generations and six out of fourteen knew of no kin above the second ascending generation.

The generally low numbers of kin known in ascending generations in Greenfields, London and Kalyan may therefore be an example (together with the low numbers of dead kin known in Greenfields) of what Firth calls (1969 : 164) 'a kind of unconscious closure applied to the genealogical reckoning, an erasure of memory, which, it is noteworthy occurs on the part of both young and old'. Firth adds that anthropologists working in societies with unilineal descent groups have observed a 'structural amnesia' which takes place at a certain point in the genealogical reckoning. Firth suggests that a similar process takes place in societies with bilateral kin reckoning and, moreover, that the number of kin remembered varies little from informant to informant; 'dead kin have their uses but only a limited degree' (1969 : 164). Evidence from the genealogies of my informants supports this suggestion and it may be that, for informants living in the barracks for most of their lives, living kin are known to such a greater extent than dead kin just because they are so much more significant to Ego. After all, most social contact is with living kin who also provide assistance not only at life cycle rituals but also in the crises which occur in daily life. Mrs Virasami summed up the attitude to dead kin : 'when someone dies we remember them for a few years but then we forget'.

The shallow depth of genealogies traced by my informants was

paralleled by the restricted range of their kin universes, which was the third criterion used by Firth. By the range of kin universe is meant the genealogical closeness or remoteness of kin whom informants knew and this was defined particularly in terms of cousinship. In under half of my genealogies, only first cousins were known and in just over half second cousins were known. None of the Greenfields barracks informants knew of any third cousins or any still more distant kin. This restriction of knowledge to second cousins at the most again may stem partly from the genealogical cut-off point caused by the emigration from India. It also follows that, if dead kin in general are not remembered, it is unlikely that Ego will know of their descendants, especially if the dead kin are in the second ascending generation from Ego.

Certainly, the restricted range of Mrs Jacob's kin universe was linked to its shallow depth and to the comparatively large proportion of dead kin in her total kin universe. Mrs Jacob said in reference to the rather extraordinary death of her MF

I believe my MF died in Brickfield Road when a wall fell on him and the mother [MM] went back to India and died there, that's all I know. There was only three children [of MM], three sisters.

Mrs Jacob also said that her elder MZ had died before she herself was born.

I don't know if she was married or had children, my mother never spoke of them. My mother was next and then a younger sister, she died also before I was born. I don't know about her husband or where they were living, all I know is that she's got a daughter living in Port Shepstone but I don't know her name, I haven't met her.

In Mrs Jacob's case she did possess more information about her father's siblings than about those of her mother, but not much more. Mrs Jacob also knew her FF name, but not that of her FM. She said that her FF had three children, all sons, of whom her father was the second. Mrs Jacob said that her father's elder brother's name was Durgai Naidoo and that he died about four years previously.

We called his wife 'big mother' padamma, and when I knew him he was driving a bread van for a bakery. They had six children, I think, but I don't remember their names. I last saw them at my father's funeral, they are all grown up.

Mrs Jacob knew the name of her father's younger brother.

He was working when my Dad passed away. I think he's a clerk in Durban somewhere. I don't know his wife's name, we used to call her 'small mother', pinamma.

Mrs Jacob knew that her father's younger brother had four sons and one daughter, but she knew the name only of the daughter because it happened to be the same as one of her sisters. 'She is married but I don't know her husband's name or where she lives. Could be that she's got children, I don't know, I last saw her a very long time ago'. Such was the total knowledge of Mrs Jacob of her parents' siblings and their families and her case is not unique among informants, for although most knew of parents' siblings families, few knew of any parents' parents' siblings or of their descendants.

Turning to Firth's fourth condition, the ~~symme~~metry of the kin

universe, my informants did not seem to know an appreciably larger number of paternal than maternal kin, and this was in accord with the London findings. As much was known about mother's siblings as about father's siblings and knowledge of their children was about equally distributed. Later, in Chapter Five, I examine the effective contact Ego has with mother's and father's siblings and here a maternal bias was evident, contact with female kin often being more frequent and affectionate than contact with male kin, but such contact did not affect the overall balance between male and female kin recognised in the kin universes.

Having discussed the four main criteria which Firth uses to compare features of the total universe of kin of different individuals, I now turn to his first dichotomous distinction of the universe into categories of named and unnamed kin. Although most of the seventeen genealogies of my informants showed remarkably high levels of kin knowledge compared to Firth's London informants, just under half of all known kin were not named by informants, whereas in London, with lower totals of known kin, only one third were not named by the informants. On the surface, therefore, it might seem as if the Greenfields inhabitants actually knew fewer personal details about their kin than Londoners did. However, the real reason for the disparity lies in cultural differences between Firth's London informants and my Indian ones. Whereas in western societies the majority of extra-familial kin are addressed by name and also referred to by name, prefixed by the terms 'uncle' or 'aunt' where appropriate, the usage among Indian South Africans is different. For my own informants, the use of vernacular or English kin terms of address or reference for senior kin, without added personal names, remains

prevalent. This practise also seemed to me to be general in the barracks and I have observed it elsewhere among Indians.

Only children and siblings who are junior to Ego are addressed by name. Two forenames are given to Hindu babies; the first one, given at the naming ceremony, is the official name of the child and is known colloquially as the 'registered' name, because it appears on the child's birth certificate. Since the 'registered' name is chosen by the parents after consulting the almanac or panchungum, it is also known as the 'star' name and formerly this name was rarely used for fear of sorcery. Informants related that spells could take effect more quickly if the 'star' name of the victim was uttered. In addition to this 'registered' or 'star' name, the baby is usually given a name by which he is addressed or referred to by parents and older kin. This name may be a western-sounding adaption of an Indian name, such as 'Bunny' for Bhanithran, or a shortened version such as 'Kogie' for Kogilappa. Alternatively it may be simply a western name like 'Dolly', 'Queenie' or 'Sam'. Christian parents in Greenfields barracks have abandoned Indian forenames in favour of western names (not necessarily those of saints) and a baby is usually given two of these, e.g. Clinton Christopher. A child may also be named after a favourite grandparent among both Hindus and Christians. Despite the existence of these personal names, informants did not always know the names of more distant kin such as siblings' childrens' spouses and their children. This ignorance was not, however, an indication that Ego had no contact with these persons, particularly in the case of small babies. Both male and female informants often recounted to me visits the previous weekend by siblings and their grandchildren and then could not remember the

babies' names. This ignorance possibly occurred because as yet the infants had no social identity. However, even the sex of the baby was not always remembered, unless it was a long-awaited son or another in a long line of daughters. Names of children become more generally remembered once they leave school and start work, or if they become engaged or married and thus involved in rites of passage, such as a wedding which Ego is likely to attend. As children acquire social persona, the caste category often serves as a surname for official purposes (school and birth certificates), but is not generally used in conversation.

In view of the prevalence of terms of address and reference for senior kin, informants were quick to point out that not only did they rarely know the names of kin in ascending generations, but that they could not be expected to know these names as a matter of course, since they did not address or refer to the relative concerned by name. In reference, parents' siblings and other kin may be differentiated by the town or village they come from e.g. 'my father's sister from Colenso' or 'Briardene aunty'. Thus the fact of such kin being unnamed does not, in the context of Greenfields barracks society, necessarily mean that Ego has no contact at all with them, whereas Firth's distinction between named and unnamed kin did imply that Ego has little or no contact with most of the unnamed kin, since personal names are used so frequently in western society. Firth writes, 'these unnamed kin are defined only by relationship, so that their personality is in a sense incomplete as far as the informant is concerned' (1969 : 156). This assertion is much less applicable to my informants, and I prefer not to emphasize this particular distinction of Firth's. For in Greenfields, one may find 'effective' kin amongst unnamed kin, even

if one may not in London.

Having discussed the distinction between named and unnamed kin, I now move to the next lower 'level' in Firth's scheme of categories of kin, which is the division he makes between 'effective' and 'non-effective' kin. By 'effective' kin Firth means those

with whom social contact is maintained, as by correspondence, occasional visits, services, or attendance at family gatherings. By non-effective kin is meant those kin who are recognised to be related but with whom no contact of any kind is maintained, although contact may be initiated or revived (1969 : 156).

Here I merely illustrate the dimensions of the 'effective' category for my informants by taking Mr Jacob as an example (since he had an average number of effective kin in his kin universe). He had a total kin universe of 322 known kin, of whom 23 were dead, and he is in effective contact with 271 kin or 88% of his total living kin. Mr Jacob sees many of his kin in the barracks in the course of the day or week, at work in the mill or on their way to church on Sundays. Other kin are seen when they visit his house or that of his elderly mother; yet others come to weddings and funerals. Such a large number of effective kin is in striking contrast to the usually limited numbers of effective kin found in London. Firth estimates that his informants had an average of twenty effective kin each, or one third the number of live kin. Of course, a possible objection to this contrast is that Mr Jacob may not be typical of my informants in having so many of his kin (100) in the barracks. The force of this objection is lessened by the further example of the effective kin set of Mr Jacob's wife,

who was not born or brought up in Greenfields barracks. Mrs Jacob has a far smaller total of known kin (107) than her husband, but the percentage of effective kin (83%) remains close to that of her husband, despite the fact that she married her husband against the wishes of her parents who were 'good' caste Naidoos, whereas Mr Jacob's family were lower caste Christians. Furthermore, Mrs Jacob became an ardent Christian after her marriage and one might expect that her conversion would diminish contact with her natal family (who live some distance from Greenfields), as effective contact with her husband's family has increased. However, this expectation is not realised for out of Mrs Jacob's known living kin of 92, only 15 were non-effective and these were all the children of Mrs Jacob's two father's brothers. Her effective kin consists of her ten remaining siblings and half-siblings (her father had two wives), their spouses, children and children's children.

This chapter has then, been largely concerned with discussing the criteria Firth uses to examine extra-familial kinship (size of kin universes, influences on kin knowledge, depth, range and symmetry of genealogies) with reference to information provided from the genealogies of my selected informants. In my next chapter I want to concentrate on more detailed aspects of extra-familial kin knowledge, that is, to examine who effective kin really are for my informants and what the type and content of the relationship between Ego and his or her 'effective' kin is.

Chapter Five

THE EFFECTIVE KIN SET

In the previous chapter a preliminary indication of effective kin was given in terms of some sort of social contact with Ego. Such contact may be made by telephone, correspondence, visiting, exchange of services or common attendance at family gatherings. These contacts were calculated from primary data forms which were completed for each informant. On these forms were recorded the relationship of each relative to Ego, his or her names (where known), date of birth (and death where applicable), place of residence, level of education, occupation, and type and frequency of contact with Ego. From this material I now define more clearly who effective kin are in the context of an individual's kin universe; I then discuss the types of contact mentioned above which Ego has with his or her effective kin. By effective kin here I do not mean only those kin who are in close and frequent contact with Ego, that is those kin whom Firth would define as 'intimate', but all those with whom any form of social contact is maintained.

Initially then, we want to know:

first, what the sizes of informants' effective kin sets are, both the average and variations;

second, what the relation between the size of the total universe of kin and the effective kin set is, if any; in other words if an informant who knows a large number of kin is likely to have contact with a greater proportion of these kin than an informant whose kin universe is smaller;

third, if there are significant differences in the kin sets of husband and wife;

fourth, if the effective kin set is bounded in some particular way and if the boundaries are affected to any extent by personal choice within the total kin universe;

fifth, what the preferences are for contact within a possible boundary, whether for contact with maternal or paternal kin;

sixth, what relation does geographical distance bear to the maintenance of kin ties?

Firstly, the average size of the effective kin set of my informants was large, 180 kin or 87% of the average total living kin universe of 207. Effective kin numbers did vary, but not necessarily in relation to the total number of kin known. Table 5.1 below shows the numbers and proportions of effective and non-effective kin for my informants.

Turning to the second point, none of the four informants with the largest kin universes had effective kin sets of less than 84% of their living kin. On the other hand, Mrs Jacob and Mr David with small kin universes also had proportions of 85% and 88% of their effective kin so that evidence from my genealogies at least shows that an informant who knows a large number of kin will not necessarily have contact with a greater proportion of these kin than an informant whose kin universe is smaller. The numbers and proportions of effective kin with whom Firth's informants had contact were far smaller than those of Greenfields barracks. In London the

Table 5.1

Numbers and proportions of effective and non-effective living kin ⁽¹⁾

Informants	Effective	%	Non-effective	%	Total living kin
1. Mrs Virasami	252	84,3	47	15,7	299
2. Mr Virasami	364	100	0	0	364
3. Mrs Narain	213	86,2	34	13,8	247
4. Mrs David	68	63,6	39	36,4	107
5. Mr David	83	88,3	11	11,7	94
6. Muniamma	324	93,9	21	6,1	345
7. Roberta	167	100	0	0	167
8. Tommy	172	100	0	0	172
9. Mrs Raj	115	69,3	51	30,7	166
10. Mr Raj	148	60,9	95	39,1	243
11. Mrs Samuel	155	85,6	26	14,4	181
12. Mr Samuel	169	94,9	9	5,1	178
13. Junie	148	86,5	23	13,5	171
14. Mrs Ramsamy	160	87,9	22	12,1	182
15. Mr Ramsamy	171	81,4	39	18,6	210
16. Mrs Jacob	79	85,9	13	14,1	92
17. Mr Jacob	271	90,9	27	9,1	298
TOTAL	3 059	87,0	457	13,0	3 516

(1) In calculating non-effective kin here and elsewhere I have excluded all dead kin. It is not clear to me if this was always done in the corresponding parts of the London Study.

average number of effective kin per person was only 20 (Greenfields 180), and this was on average a quarter of the total kin universe or one third of living kin. Secondly, in London there were considerable variations in the proportions of effective kin recognised, from person to person. Firth writes that some married couples largely ignored kinship, while others put great store on kin ties, so that the effective kin sets there varied considerably (1969 : 196). While my number of genealogies is so much smaller than that of Firth's that the difference in numbers and proportions of effective kin may not be statistically significant, the comparison suggests that personal idiosyncrasy or inclination may, on the whole, not play such an important role in the selection of effective kin by Greenfields barracks informants, as it may in London.

Thirdly, effective kin sets of husband and wife in the barracks did not vary to any great extent, with the exception of Mrs David and in three cases were remarkably similar as regards proportions of effective kin. For instance, Roberta has an effective kin set of 167 persons, or 100% of her total kin universe and her husband, Tommy, was in contact with 172 kin or 100% of his total kin universe. A parallel situation existed with informants who have small effective kin sets in relation to the average. Mr and Mrs Raj had effective kin sets comprising 60,9% and 69,3% of their respective total kin universes. These were the lowest proportions of total kin among the seventeen informants except for Mrs David and were a direct result of the attitude of Mr Raj towards his kin in general and those of his wife, an attitude with which his wife disagreed but was not in a position to change.

He's well off, but money isn't everything, [said Mrs Raj about her husband] he got very much of poor family but he don't care for them. He only mixes with his brother, doesn't talk to his brother's wife. He don't go and visit his big brother, his big brother is poor ... 26 years his stubbornness since we married. My mother got eight brothers, three sisters, only wedding times we see them. He never let me go to the funeral of my father's sister and father's brother, no time he said.

Apart from the one exception of Mrs David, there was little indication in the sample, therefore, of a high effective kin set in one partner contrasting with a smaller set in the other.

Turning now to the fourth point, we may ask what the boundaries were in the effective kin sets of my informants. By boundaries I mean the distance from Ego in terms of degrees of cousinship at which kin are known, and thus what the limits to effective kin sets are. Table 5.2 displays the boundaries of effective kin.

Table 5.2
Boundaries of effective kin

Effective kin confined to:	Number of informants	Percent of Total number
Siblings	0	0
First cousins	9	52,9
Second cousins	7	41,7
Third cousins	1	5,8
Fourth cousins	0	0
	17	100,0

Thus the majority of informants had effective contact with kin within the range of first cousins and their descendants only, although a

considerable proportion were in contact with second cousins. Only one informant, Mrs Virasami, was in contact with any third cousins and none knew of any fourth cousins, which is not surprising given the lack of knowledge of ancestors discussed in chapter four. On the other hand, while there were 22 cases in London where effective contact was restricted to siblings and their descendants only, there were none of these among my informants. Partial exceptions might be made of Mrs Jacob and the Rajs since their contact with first cousins occurs only at weddings and funerals, but this is nevertheless a social contact according to the definition of effective kin. It appears that in general, the closer the degree of cousinship, the higher the proportion of informants who have social contact with cousins and the greater the number of cousins with whom contact is maintained. Within a generally narrower range, this appears to be the case for London informants as well and Firth comments that for kin further removed than first cousins 'the process of kin linkage in social as distinct from genealogical relationships is a highly selective one and seems to rest upon an attitude of personal liking akin to friendship rather than on the kinship tie as such' (1969 : 198).

Although one might expect the effective kin set of an individual to be composed primarily of kin of his own generation who would be the nearest to his own age and have interests in common, all my informants who had aunts and uncles had effective contact with them; only in one case was contact not maintained in any way by an informant with two of her father's sisters. In all other cases, even if the parents' siblings did not visit or were not visited by my informants in the home, social contact was maintained by a morally obligatory attendance at family weddings and usually at funerals. This was in sharp contrast to London where,

Firth states, 'for any individual case there were kin, equally close genealogically and equally close residentially, who are not part of the effective kin set, with whom contact is minimal in frequency and effect, or who even may not be in contact at all ... the patterns of this relationship are personally determined' (1969 : 198).

Given this trend away from personal selection among kin for my informants, we may now turn to the fifth point, what the preferences for contact are within a possible boundary, whether for contact with maternal or paternal kin; in other words how symmetrical effective kin sets are. Taking male and female informants together, Table 5.3 shows a considerable maternal bias in numbers, my informants knowing more mother's siblings and their descendants than they did father's siblings and their descendants, and a less marked bias in the proportions of effective kin with some 95% of the kin in mother's own and descending generations being effective, against 89% of kin in father's own and descending generations. The bias towards maternal kin becomes more marked in those traced through the parents of mother and father.

Table 5.3

Maternal and paternal distribution in total effective kin

Kin recognised	Total Number	In effective contact	Proportion of Total kin in Effective contact
Mother's siblings & descendants	1 337	1 267	94,76%
Father's siblings & descendants	973	867	89,10%
Mother's parents siblings etc.	274	227	82,87%
Father's parents siblings etc.	174	97	67,3%

However, only five out of the seventeen informants had contact with mother's parents' siblings or father's parents' siblings or with kin traced through them which reflects the general shallow depth of the universes of known kin on which I have previously remarked.

Turning to the sixth general point, it did not appear as if geographical distance or separation had such a drastic influence as might have been expected in lessening effective kin contact for my informants. Mrs Virasami has some second cousins living in Cape Town, nearly four thousand kilometres from Durban (her home), but these kin came on holiday to Natal and also to attend weddings and funerals. Even when someone left his home to look for work in another city and province, it was rare that he did not maintain some form of effective contact with his relations, as in the case of Mr Jacob's youngest brother. This youth was considered the 'black sheep' of the family by Mr Jacob, his wife, mother and other siblings. The boy passed his school leaving examination at the second attempt, his fees at Teacher Training College were paid for by an elder brother, but after six months he abruptly left the college, without consulting his brother and obtained work as a clerk in Durban. Later he left this job and announced his intention of going to Johannesburg to look for work. Mrs Jacob said to me that Johannesburg was a bad place, where young people were easily led astray. Despite the disapproval of his mother and siblings, the boy went to Johannesburg and did not communicate with his family for three months, much to their distress. However, it did not occur to the youth to cut his ties with his effective kin completely, despite their disapproval of his behaviour. He suddenly wrote to say that he would spend three days at Easter with his mother at Greenfields when the rest of his siblings would be there, although this involved travelling over 500 miles. Mrs Jacob commented that

when her brother-in-law did arrive home, he saw his siblings at his mother's house, but did not visit his eldest brother because he knew he would be angry with him.

Of course, most visits between effective kin did not involve travel of such great distances as between Cape Town or Johannesburg and Durban. The fifty miles between Greenfields and Durban was the most common distance travelled. The pattern of visits by barracks residents to kin in Durban was often similar to that given by Mrs Narain in describing a typical week-end spent with her husband's family.

When my husband's brother and his wife came last weekend I mentioned to them that we might come and see them this weekend. We left here at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday and did some shopping, [before arriving at HB's home]. They live in a flat in Overport [suburb of Durban] in fact all the children are living in Overport now except for the one son who took over the house in Reservoir Hills [another suburb]. In the afternoon I went to see my husband's mother [with husband and children]. She had just moved at the end of last month from the house and it was the first time I saw the flat. After that I had to take my daughter to Shifa hospital to the doctor, so when that was over it was too late to go anywhere else. We saw my HM's elder daughter and her husband at the flat and I wanted to see the younger daughter but there was no time. Then I rang my sister's home [the one who has gone to Pretoria] and I was so surprised to hear my mother's voice! She told me she had managed to get a lift down from Pietermaritzburg [her home] and had come because she was worried about my sister's children. My sister [a widow] left the smallest child with my mother and the others are being looked after by her husband's sister. Well, of course, we had to pop in and see my mother at Greenwood Park then ...

In one day, therefore, Mrs Narain and her husband had seen her mother, his step-mother, one of his sisters and one of his brothers, Their spouses and children, two unmarried brothers of Mr Narain who

live with their mother and several affines of consanguines. Mrs Narain did not consider this an unusual amount of contact with kin:

my husband goes to Durban very frequently, sometimes three times a week. He always sees one or other relative when he goes. Sometimes he only goes to Chatsworth to his FB children who run these businesses there. He is closer to these people because he was brought up with them, than he is to his own brothers and sisters and they are often jealous about this, but they do not realise the age gap. My husband was fourteen when his father remarried [Mr Narain's mother had died when he was born] so of course his half-brothers and sisters are much younger than he is and he has more in common with his cousins with whom he was brought up.

Mrs Narain did indicate some effect of geographical separation when she said that she would like to see more of her mother and sisters in Pietermaritzburg, 'the trouble is that they have no cars and the trains are so difficult. The taxi fare has increased so much that nowadays it can cost R6 or R7 to go to Durban and who can afford that?' Mrs Narain continued, 'since we are staying here [in Greenfields barracks] the pattern of our life has changed. In Durban at least one relative popped in every day. There our house was so convenient, it was on the taxi route for we never took trains.' Despite this implied lessening of contact with her kin now that the family had moved to Greenfields, Mrs Narain said 'my mother is my most frequent visitor. Then my husband's family, his sisters come every two months and his brothers, each of them has a car and this makes such a difference.' Mrs Narain also manages to visit her mother in Pietermaritzburg in the school holidays. 'We go to Maritzburg in the holidays for a long weekend, Christmas, July, Michaelmas and Easter. Before I used to spend the whole of the holidays with my mother but now I find it very difficult to travel, all the things for the baby and so on ...'

Since Mr and Mrs Narain were first cousins, they shared a large part of their kin universes but each placed emphasis on contact with a different set of kin. For Mrs Narain her mother and sisters (she had only one much younger brother who was unmarried) were her closest kin; for Mr Narain, although he saw most of his half-brothers and sisters, his stated preference was for contact with his FB children who ran several business concerns jointly as partners. Mr Narain had spent most of his childhood at the home of these cousins and remained very fond of them. As a school-teacher, Mr Narain was able to use the long school holidays to see kin; for other informants from the barracks prolonged visits were not possible except during the annual leave.

Mr Samuel's description of the way he intended spending his annual leave (which was due a few weeks after interviews with the family were completed) resembled that of other Greenfields barracks residents. After leaving Greenfields with Mrs Samuel by train, Mr Samuel intended visiting one of his brothers who lives in the large Indian suburb of Chatsworth near Durban. Three days would be spent with this brother and then Mr Samuel said he would be 'moving on' to three other brothers who all live in the same area. One day and one night would be spent with each brother. After that Mr Samuel would be going to the home of his daughter-in-law's mother, also in that suburb. 'You see, Lucy's house is very convenient to me. I can stretch out from there and come back to sleep.' Mr Samuel implied that this affine's home would be used as a base from which to visit other, consanguineal kin, but the main emphasis seemed to be on contact with siblings. Mr Samuel said in reference to one of his sisters who was seen at least once a month, 'my sister and me will never part. When we meet Susan will kiss me and I mustn't say

that something is wrong with me or that I'm sick or she will cry. Every time I go there she gives me some food which she has cooked. She always does that.'

Such an emotional attitude towards a sibling was not unique to Mr Samuel among informants. The strong bond which appears to persist between many siblings in the Indian community throughout life was not necessarily weakened even when Ego had become a convert to Christianity from Hinduism and his or her siblings remained Hindu. Mrs Samuel herself had become a Christian when she married and, although she had contact with most of her surviving siblings, she was especially close to her youngest sister, a Hindu. This woman often came to the barracks from her home in Durban to visit the Samuels and also attended their family celebrations, like the elaborate birthday party Mr Samuel gave for his son's eldest child's first birthday and the fiftieth birthday of Mrs Samuel, although these parties had a marked Christian emphasis with opening prayers and a homily given by the pastor. One of this sister's seven children was also a boarder in the Samuel home. Sandra attended the Greenfields barracks school and helped with the household chores, returning to her natal home for visits in the school holidays, when her place in the Samuel home was taken by another sibling of Sandra. Mr and Mrs Samuel always made a point of visiting this sister and her husband whenever they went to Durban.

In similar fashion Mrs Jacob emphasised her closeness to her elder sister, a staunch Hindu, although Mrs Jacob had become a devout Christian upon her marriage:

I always go and see my big sister, Mariamma.
She's most important, she is like a mother to

me. We go there during Jacob's leave or if there is something important like a wedding or an engagement. We last saw her [Mariamma] in December [three months prior to the interview], we stayed with her and went from there to see Kogilam [Z] and my brother Ram. I also go to see my younger sister in Unit 7 [from elder sister's home.]

The following December was to see the wedding of one of Mariamma's sons who had been a favourite nephew of Mrs Jacob and given her several expensive gifts, including a transistor radio. Mariamma visited the Jacobs at Greenfields at Easter and invited the Jacob family to spend two weeks at her home in December during the wedding festivities. Mrs Jacob told me her husband had grumbled at the invitation and had said that he did not want to go to her sister at Christmas, because Christmas was a time when his siblings came to Greenfields barracks. When Mrs Jacob was asked how she intended to solve this thorny problem she said 'I told Jacob that if he doesn't want to go he must stay at home and I must go there with my children.' Mrs Jacob seldom crossed her husband who was a difficult man and strict with his family, so this statement took some courage to make on her part and shows how important she considered attendance at her sister's son's wedding to be. A principle of seniority was also involved here; Mariamma as the eldest sibling had a right to expect her younger sister to accept her invitation, but unfortunately Mr Jacob is the eldest sibling of his family and so expected his brothers and sisters to come to his home during the holidays. Finally, the wedding took precedence and the Jacobs attended it together, but did not stay at Mariamma's home for the two weeks.

Other ways in which effective kin made contact with each other, apart from visiting, were by regular telephone conversations,

letter writing and exchange of greetings cards at festivals such as Christmas and Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights. Despite the limited access to a telephone which most barracks residents have (there is one call-box in the barracks and only the pastor has a 'phone in his home), most informants preferred to use the telephone to pass on information about kin to other kin or to warn kin of impending visits (although prior warning of visits was often not given for several informants said that they just 'turned up' at the homes of kin for visits). Often, telephone calls without any special purpose are made to siblings or other close kin who have access to a 'phone. Mrs Virasami said she telephones her sister and father in Durban from Greenfields school (where her school-teacher husband has access to a 'phone); 'we 'phone my Dad and my sister, they have a 'phone at her place, about once every three weeks, just to say 'hello', to keep in touch'. Mrs Virasami said that she does write to her father but admitted that it is not very often, 'we feel that we can speak to them more personally than by writing'. Mrs Virasami said that her husband also does not write letters regularly to anyone and that in case of bad news of kin, 'if anything is wrong they can 'phone the school, its much quicker'. Letters were written by Mrs Virasami only when there was little chance of seeing her correspondent regularly. A few years ago one of Mrs Virasami's sisters was sent to India to study dentistry, since there were no facilities for Indians in South Africa at that time, and then Mrs Virasami and her siblings and parents wrote to her sister, who was living in Poona, every week. 'When my sister was in India we had to write to her every week because she was so far away, we were just waiting to hear what's happening that side'.

Mrs Narain, whose husband, as Principal, also had access to

the 'phone at the Indian school, said her husband and herself used the telephone frequently to keep in touch with kin and wrote letters more rarely.

My husband telephones my sister in Greenwood Park every Friday evening, and I used to telephone her as well, she has a 'phone in the house. Because we are so cut off here my husband used to 'phone her weekly to get all the news and in case anything had happened or if any of my relatives are coming down. My brother in Pretoria used to 'phone my sister and we got news of him that way. We also used to 'phone my mother in Pietermaritzburg, we did that by 'phoning one of the shops owned by the family my mother's sister's daughter married into, they have messengers and pass on the message to my mother quite quickly. My husband's sister and her husband and also my husband's mother used to 'phone quite often when they had the house in Reservoir Hills. My husband used to 'phone often there to find out how his mother was keeping and also to his cousin [FBS] at Umhkeluzana, the one who has the garage. When we were negotiating to buy the Kombi there was a lot of telephoning going on [to this family].

In Mrs Narain's case her sister in Greenwood Park who was fortunate enough to have a telephone in her home, appeared to act as a channel through which information about other effective kin reached the Narains. However, a few months later Mrs Narain's sister who was a widow, left Durban to look for work in Pretoria and stay with her brother. Mrs Narain and her husband quarrelled with the MZDH through whose shop Mrs Narain used to send telephone messages to her mother. Faced with this predicament, Mrs Narain said she had no intention of making up the quarrel for the sake of being able to telephone her mother and said, 'now I'll have to write'.

It was evident that for these informants writing letters was resorted to only in instances when telephone contact was not possible. Among informants whose kin did not have easy access to a telephone,

writing letters to exchange news was more common. Mrs Jacob was semi-literate, since she had had no formal education, except in the vernacular, but had taught herself to read simple English. Her elder son helped her to compose the letters which she wrote to her siblings in Durban to keep in touch with them between visits. None of Mrs Jacob's siblings had access to a 'phone and she wrote to them three or four times a year. 'It's family news, they write back to us, tell us how they are, if someone is ill, or of visits, or if there is a new baby, they tell us. If we are going there we also let them know.' Mr Jacob on the other hand, had three siblings who had access to a 'phone and they were 'phoned regularly; Mr Jacob never wrote letters to any of his kin.

Other informants said that they only wrote letters in cases where telephone messages could not be passed on and for a specific purpose. Mr Samuel said 'now the wife and Lucy [SW] might have to go to Durban this week, the letter [informing Lucy's mother of their arrival] has already gone'. Junie said she only wrote to her siblings for a specific purpose, 'when I want something. At the end of the month we send money to Mala [widowed sister] for groceries, she does not get enough money at the Tamil school, and then I write and tell her what I want, cosmetics and chilli powder'. It was plain that informants in the barracks considered letter writing as second best to telephone conversations as a means of keeping in touch with kin. The telephone was direct and immediate, as Mrs Virasami suggested, a more 'personal' type of contact than a letter. Moreover, telephone conversations in themselves appeared to be regarded by informants as substitutes for visits and to be used for 'keeping in touch' with kin, rather than relaying specific items of news.

Although letters were infrequently written by the majority of informants in Greenfields barracks, greetings cards were exchanged at least once a year and sometimes twice between siblings and other close kin. Christmas and Diwali were the most usual occasions for the exchange of cards. Christian informants maintained, however, that they did not send Diwali cards. Mrs Jacob said she sent Christmas cards each year to her siblings who also sent Christmas cards to her (although they are Hindu) and Diwali cards Mrs Jacob said she had told her siblings not to send Diwali cards to her because she would not return them, but this did not appear to make any difference, her brothers and sisters insisted on sending Diwali cards to her anyway, indicating that the sending of these cards was an expression of kin sentiment and contact rather than a commemoration of the festival concerned. Brothers and sisters seemed to be the main recipients of greetings cards with friends and more distant kin occasionally being sent, or sending, cards. Mrs Narain was representative of other informants when she said that she sends at least three-quarters of her cards to kin and the remainder to friends. Hindu informants sent mostly Diwali cards, although some sent Christmas cards as well (often these cards were sold in aid of Indian charities).

Informants in Greenfields barracks did not commonly exchange gifts with close kin at Christmas and Diwali, as Firth reports that London informants often did (1969 : 275). Gifts were rather linked to personal visits to kin or to children's birthdays. Mrs Narain said that she did buy a gift for her widowed mother and sister at Diwali time but 'otherwise we don't send gifts. Of course, we always take a gift when we visit, I always take something for the children'.

In this chapter, then, I have looked at the categories of kin who form 'effective' kin for my informants and have found that the most important among them seems to be siblings and own parents if alive. An important feature of this 'effective' contact among kin was that there was a clear connection between closeness of effective contact with kin and closeness of genealogical connection, so that siblings particularly were visited, seen and spoken to (via the telephone) much more often than any other type of kin. Firth's material shows a different pattern in London. There, the amount and type of kin contact was personally determined by Ego, so that in any category of kin some were kept in effective contact and others not. (1969 : 196) I also examined the ways in which these 'effective' kin maintain contact with one another and found chief among these were regular personal visits, often undertaken, apart from weekends, during the annual leave from work or holiday times such as Christmas and Easter. Effective kin also use other avenues of contact such as telephone conversations, as well as exchange of letters and greetings cards and to a limited extent, gift giving. Besides visiting, other gradations of kin contact are marked by special services only performed by close kin at birth, marriage and death. These occasions are also marked by another kind of kin interaction, kin gatherings. Kin gatherings will therefore be examined in more detail in the next chapter, where I also note particular services performed by effective kin at life cycle ceremonies.

Chapter Six

KIN GATHERINGS

In this chapter I intend to describe first, the informal, non-ceremonial gatherings which kin attend and, secondly, formal ceremonies related to kin gatherings. The main distinction between the two is that in informal kin gatherings (such as parties) kin are invited and are present simply because they are kin, that is, there are no particular kin roles for them to play. In formal, life-cycle ceremonies, on the other hand, there are particular duties attaching to certain kin, who should be present to perform them. These kin obligations are especially marked in Hindu life-cycle ceremonial and less so (or even absent) in equivalent Christian ritual.

Visits of the type described in the previous chapter, although often made with the purpose of keeping up contact with kin, were also sometimes made so that personal invitations could be given for larger gatherings of kin. Such gatherings, both formal and informal, played an important role in the lives of informants and, by comparison, meetings with friends and colleagues, even for men, appeared to be of minimal significance. The major kin gatherings were celebrations of rites of passage in the lives of individuals, such as christening or naming ceremonies after births, weddings and funerals. However, the Christian feasts of Christmas and Easter, marked in South Africa by the usual public holidays, often supplemented in the New Year by annual leave, were also occasions when Indian families made a special effort to meet at the home of one of their members, most often a surviving parent or elder sibling.

Mrs Narain, a Hindu, mentioned that at Christmas she and her siblings tried to be with her widowed mother in Pietermaritzburg, where they were often joined by the children of a MZ who lived as far away as Pretoria, about 500 miles.

We usually leave here the week before Christmas, and go to my mother's first. My husband spends a few days at my mother's with us and then about three days before Christmas he goes to Colenso [home of FB children] and stays there until the New Year. But now she [turning to third child] was born on New Year's Eve so I like him to be with us and he has to rush back! My sister from Durban, the one who is a widow, always goes to my mother for Christmas and not only then, but for all holidays and weekends. All my other sisters who live near will pop in and over Christmas the Pretoria crowd [MZ children] often spend a few days with my mother and then go on to Durban, they often come down.

An example of a Christmas kin gathering influenced by White South African culture was the annual braaivleis given by Mr David at his home in Greenfields barracks to which most of his siblings are invited. This party is held annually on Christmas Eve. Mr David said that, although he may sometimes invite a couple of close friends to this party, 'those with whom I associate weekends and things like that' (i.e. workmates), mostly it is only relatives who are invited to the Christmas party and these will be generally siblings of both Mr David and his wife, their spouses and children. Since the guests are expected to stay the night, Mr David said he is limited by the number of mattresses he can supply as to whom he invites which generally means that not more than three or four of his siblings, their spouses and children can be accommodated.

Muniamma also described the annual Christmas party given by her Hindu father, when all her siblings, their spouses and children

gather at Greenfields beach for a picnic party. This is held each year on the day before or after Christmas and no non-kin are included in the gathering. Muniamma has only two siblings who are not resident in the barracks and they and their families stay at the homes of Muniamma's sisters. The beach is a favourite venue for parties among barracks residents, because unlike the cramped houses, it offers plenty of open space for the children to play in and visiting townsfolk enjoy the fresh air and sea. The fact that all Muniamma's siblings attended her father's Christmas party, while not all of Mr David's attended his party, probably means that the presence of parents or a widowed father or mother places an additional obligation on children to attend an annual kin gathering. However, informants never implied that a selection would be made from among kin for invitations to a gathering such as a Christmas party especially within a small group such as a sibling unit. By contrast, Firth records such selection in London: 'The exercise of overt personal choice between kin even if it invites discrimination is admitted as a right and not challenged' (1969 : 217). Amongst my informants, such discrimination between kin on the grounds of personal likes and dislikes remains rare and strenuous efforts were made by informants to prevent tensions between kin from erupting into quarrels which might sever, albeit temporarily, kin contact.

Except for that of Mrs Narain, the gatherings I have mentioned were in the form of Christmas parties which were usually simple affairs consisting mainly of picnics or, as in Mr David's case, a braaivleis. A more elaborate celebration, and one perhaps more typical of the 'middle class' sector of South African Indian society than the working class of which the Greenfields population largely consists, was described to me by Mrs Virasami. Her father was, until

his retirement a few years ago, a barman at an exclusive White men's club in Durban. At this club Mrs Virasami's father had been influenced by the colonial English customs and habits of the members (a portrait of the Queen hung in his living room). Every New Year's Eve, Mrs Virasami's father gave a party at his home which his children, their spouses and children attended. Mrs Virasami said that about thirty people were usually present, including some friends of the family, and her father served champagne.

He always phones his friends just after 12.
 We have the party just before 12. We have
 supper and then the friends come at 10 or 11 p.m.
 Even if my sister has gone to a dance she must
 come home for midnight, my father insists. My
 brother also has a party then at his home but
 that'll be before 12. Twelve, we must be at
 my Dad's place.

This rather Victorian picture of the elderly patriarch assembling his children each New Year's Eve was blended with ceremonial which was purely Hindu. 'At the stroke of 12 they /Mrs Virasami's parents/ put fruits before the Holy lamp and burn the camphor. At 12 my Dad lights a camphor for his parents. In the temples they ring the brass bell' said Mrs Virasami. In this kin gathering a religious element was clearly present in the prayers for the dead offered by their living descendants. Such prayers were absent from other informants accounts of kin gatherings at Christmastide which appeared to be purely secular occasions.

Most gatherings of kin which my informants attended were not however, of a purely social nature. Such gatherings were usually ceremonies having a ritual component and a religious sanction. The first of these in the life of an individual is, for a Hindu baby, the naming ceremony and, for a Christian infant in Greenfields barracks, the dedication service. I was able to observe several naming ceremonies

in Greenfields barracks, although all took place in Tamil houses. The birth of the first child is especially important to Indian parents and even if the child is not the hoped for son, a daughter is welcomed. Children are an essential part of the Indian family, a great fuss is made of them and, at least in their early years, they are often extremely spoilt. Shortly after the birth, the father or other male relative, consults a local priest who has a copy of the almanac, panchungum in Tamil. Depending on the date and hour of the child's birth, the priest gives the parent a syllable which must form part of the first syllable of the child's name. Commenting on the large number of western names being given to Indian children at the present time, Mr Virasami said

Indians like to give their children impressive names. When I went to the priest to consult the book for my children, for Kirendra he gave me 'Ki' and for Sasadevi 'Sa', that's all, then one can make a choice with that. Formerly it was the grandparents who had control over the choice of names, then in these parents' [i.e. the present] generation the joint family was breaking up, most of the young boys were on their own and the western names symbolized if you like the breaking up of the joint family.

What Mr Virasami meant when he spoke of the joint family 'breaking up' was not so much the change in residential arrangements, as the transfer of authority from the senior to the junior couple so that whereas in the past the grandparents would have taken the decisions about the child's upbringing, this was now done by the parents themselves. A more detailed discussion of changes in affinal relationships in the sphere of authority between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is given in the next chapter.

The chosen names are bestowed on a Hindu boy in the course of the naming ceremony. There is not a set date on which the naming

ceremony must take place, but the mother has to undergo certain purificatory rites after the birth and a Sunday a few weeks after the baby has been born is a usual choice. A weekend is a good time since kin are then generally free to attend the ceremonies. The scale and elaborateness of the naming ceremony and the numbers of kin who attend it vary according to the means of couple and the status of their kin in the barracks, but the form the ceremony takes remains much the same. The child is first given a bath and then dressed in a white dress which resembles a christening robe. Traditionally the child is cradled in a sari which is hung from the rafters and then the paternal grandmother, if no priest is present, lights a camphor and circles it round the child while calling out the child's 'official' name three times. Before this a mantra may be recited. After the naming, each relative present takes, in turn, a brass bowl containing holy and symbolic materials like camphor, flowers and turmeric, and circles this round the head of the child three times. A coin is also dropped into the bowl and a cash present of a rand or two is given to the parents. Some informants said the coins were given to the midwife, but in one of the ceremonies I attended they went to the last person to perform the ritual, 'to buy sweets or something small for herself.' After this ceremony is completed, everyone present takes part in a meal at the home of the wife's parents where the first child is supposed to be born (even if the birth itself takes place in hospital, the end of the pregnancy and some time after the birth is spent at the wife's natal home, at least for the first child). Naming ceremonies are of especial interest to older kin, the child's aunts, uncles and grandparents. The fact that the actual naming ceremony takes place at the home of the child's mother may mean that her kin tend to predominate in numbers at such affairs over the father's kin, as

happened at the naming ceremony of Kamala's first child, a daughter.

Kamala's elder sister, Muniamma, was one of my selected informants and it was she who invited me to attend this ceremony, which took place in the main room of the home of one of Muniamma's other sisters. This dwelling was adjacent to Kamala's father's home where she was living after the birth and there was more room to accommodate all the guests. Present on this occasion were Kamala and her husband, his father and mother, her widower father, five of her sisters and their spouses, her elder brother and his wife, one of her husband's sisters, four of Kamala's father's brothers and their wives but not their children, a FBD and FBW of Kamala's husband. An expensive silk sari was hung from a nail in the ceiling in the centre of the room and a shawl was placed in it. The women came into the room first and the baby was held in the arms of one of Kamala's FBW's while Kamala lit the holy lamp. After this the male kin filed into the room and sat down. The baby was placed in the sari and then the midwife (not a relative) came in. The men and youths and some of the older women were given seats, but most of the younger women remained standing. One of Kamala's FBW's lit a camphor and blessed a coconut which was broken on a stone outside. There was silence during the proceedings. Kamala's husband's father asked for a prayer book to be handed to him and the men stood while a prayer to Vishnu was chanted. Then Kamala's husband's mother stepped forward as the first one to bless and name the child (this appeared to be the prerogative of the paternal grandmother) and there was a chorus of complaints that no one could hear the name. After she had finished, there was a short silence and then each female relative in turn stepped forward to bless the child. After the women had finished, Kamala's husband's father and her own father

were called to come forward and bless the child, but they appeared reluctant for a few moments and then stepped forward. Kamala told me that her father had bought the baby a gold bangle, which he did for every first-born grandchild irrespective of sex, but not for succeeding ones. Kamala's in-laws were buying an expensive cot for the child which was also a stereo-typed gift in that young couples appeared to expect the husband's parents to buy a cot for the first grandchild, though this did depend on the financial circumstances of the paternal grandparents. Tommy, for instance, earned more than his father so he bought the cot himself for his first child. After the ceremonial of the naming ceremony was completed and each relative had blessed the child, the men left the room, looking relieved, and resumed their chat outside (Hindu ceremonies connected with births appeared to be regarded as primarily women's affairs). An elaborate meal prepared by Kamala's five sisters was spread on the table and the older women ate first, followed by the children and men and the younger women last. As well as donations of cash, gifts of baby clothes were made to the child's mother.

The naming of Kamala's first child was a fairly grand ceremony by barracks standards; that of Muniamma's first born, a son, was much simpler and this apparent discrimination was connected with the different statuses of the two husbands in the barracks. The naming ceremony of Muniamma's son took place in her father's home in the small main room. The baby was not hung in a sari, but dressed in a white robe and held by each of his parents in turn. Four of Muniamma's sisters were present and her elder and younger brothers, with the wife of the elder brother and the fiancée of the younger one. One of Muniamma's sisters had quarrelled publicly with her husband a few weeks before and refused to come. About five of the child's paternal kin were present and the child's paternal grandmother named him. The

naming was not preceded by prayers and when the men were asked to come into the room for the naming, they found it was too crowded and went out without blessing the child, Muniamma's father saying 'this is women's work.' The child was blessed by each female relative present and each one made a small cash donation to the parents. The atmosphere was light hearted (in contrast to the rather solemn mood at Kamala's baby's naming ceremony) and some bantering went on, Muniamma's husband even saying to his mother 'what, only R2 for a grandson?' The old lady was not offended and tweaked her ear as a gesture to show she was pleased with the child, who resembled one of her daughters. Photographs of the couple with their baby were taken by Muniamma's elder brother (as he had done for Kamala) and a meal had been prepared by Muniamma's sisters for the guests. The ceremony, however, was much shorter than that for Kamala's child and there were fewer kin present. The reason probably lies in the relative status of the two husband's families. Kamala's HF is a well known barracks resident with a white collar job in the mill laboratory; he had also been president of the temple committee, and a friend of Kamala's father and his brothers for many years. His son, Kamala's husband, owns a car and commutes to Durban from Greenfields to a fairly well paid clerical job. Muniamma's HM, on the other hand, is a widow who relies on her son for support. Since he is a young man without a school leaving certificate, his job in the mill is not particularly well paid. Moreover, Muniamma's husband's family do not have as many kin links in Greenfields as do Kamala's husband's family. These factors combine to demonstrate why the naming ceremony may vary in scale and expense from family to family.

The Hindu naming ceremony is, then, pre-eminently an occasion

for kin to gather together to celebrate the birth of a new member of the family. The types of kin present are usually close relatives of the child's parents, that is, siblings or parents' siblings together with spouses, although some cousins may attend and consanguines' affines. Wealthy Indian business men may make a naming ceremony an excuse for a grand celebration and as many as three or four hundred kin and friends may be invited, but this is rare and beyond the means of barracks residents. Do we find any parallels or differences in the Christian dedication ceremony?

The first and most obvious difference between the Hindu naming ceremony and the Christian dedication service is that the latter ceremony takes place in the church and not in the home. The South African General Mission (to which the church in the barracks belongs) does not practise infant baptism; therefore the child is not baptised but, as the pastor put it to me, 'placed in the care of God'. This ceremony does not take place soon after the birth, but when the child is a few months old and is part of the usual Sunday morning service. The mother of the child is expected to wear her wedding dress (often a white lace sari) for the occasion but without the veil. The child's father wears a smart suit and the baby a white christening robe. About halfway through the Sunday service, the pastor announces the event to the congregation and asks the couple to step forward to the front of the church with the child. A short homily is then addressed to the parents and congregation by the pastor, instructing the parents on the proper care and upbringing of the child. The pastor then announces the child's name and hands the parents a certificate with the child's name on it and the date of dedication. The parents then return to their places while a suitable hymn is sung and the service continues. At the dedication service of Roberta's son, Clinton, none of her natal

family were present since they were not members of the Greenfields barracks congregation; the only kin of she and her husband in the church were her HF and HM and several husband's siblings with whom they shared a home. There appeared to be no obligation on the part of members of the congregation to give the child gifts and none did so. Roberta said she and her husband had asked the pastor and his wife to join them for a meal at their home that evening, but relatives and friends would not be invited. The general impression given was that the dedication ceremony was only a matter of announcing the child's arrival to the other Christian residents of the barracks and was not intended in any way as a gathering of kin, unlike the naming ceremony or, for instance, christening service. Roberta commented that the dedication service was not essential, 'those who like can have it', but it seemed to be more important for the first born of a family to be 'dedicated' than for later children and Hindu informants also said that their naming ceremony is always held for the first born but not often for subsequent children. Both the Hindu naming and the Christian dedication ceremonies may then be ways of publicly announcing the fulfillment of a marriage and the fertility of a wife, through the birth of the first child. Cases of divorce and separation were rare in the barracks and also in the genealogies of informants, but divorce seemed to be a less serious affair if it occurred early in a marriage before the birth of children.

Mr Samuel said that instead of a party after the dedication service 'a big fuss' is made of the child's first birthday. At the first birthday in Christian families, the pastor comes to the child's home and blesses the child: 'we thank God for the twelve months which that child has been with us', said Mr Samuel. The first birthday party of Mr Samuel's son's daughter, Florence, was a relatively grand

affair in the barracks. The party began at 4 p.m. and was held at Mr Samuel's home under a tent made of bamboo poles covered with a tarpaulin to provide shade at the side of the house. About thirty adults and more children were seated at long trestle tables or were standing. The proceedings were opened by the pastor conducting a short prayer in Tamil. After this was over, one could see that at the far end of the tent was a head table where Mark, Mr Samuel's son, and his wife Lucy, were sitting with baby Florence. Next to Lucy sat her widowed mother and next to her were Mr and Mrs Samuel and the pastor. At the lower end of this trestle were two Christian women, residents of the barracks and also distant consanguines' affines consanguines of Mr Samuel who were, however, invited because of their high status among Christian families in the barracks, and not because they were relatives. Behind the head table the sides of the tent were covered in brown paper and decorated with large letters saying 'Happy Birthday, Florence'.

When the pastor had finished the prayer, he introduced Mr Samuel as 'your host here for this afternoon' and asked him to speak. Mr Samuel welcomed his guests and spoke for about three minutes. He said that he and his family were grateful for the privilege of having Florence. He also said it was important to bring up children in the right way; God has entrusted us with children, they must be disciplined as well as loved. After Mr Samuel had made his speech, the pastor asked Mark to speak. Mark said only a few words to the effect that he hoped Florence would grow up in the right way and then an address was delivered by the pastor. He took for his text the story of Hannah in the book of Samuel, who had no children 'and we all know how sad it is when we come to a home without children', but she prayed to God. Hannah suffered in addition because 'there was another woman

in that house' and she had children and taunted Hannah because of her childlessness. But Hannah prayed and her prayers were heard by God and she gave birth, although well past child bearing age. Hannah at once began to thank God for the privilege He had given to her and she promised God to carry out the responsibility of bringing up the child to fear God. The pastor then emphasised the duty of parents to see that their children were brought up 'in the right way' and he emphasised the importance of discipline. So far then, the party had had a strong moral tone, resembling a church service more than a secular occasion. The reference to polygamy in the sermon was not lost on the audience who knew the tensions that can arise in polygynous unions from those that existed in the barracks and among their own kin of previous (Hindu) generations. Childlessness was also a severe misfortune for a married woman, and adoption of a relative's child is often resorted to in cases where a woman remains childless for some time.

During the speeches, Mr Samuel's daughter's husband had been taking photographs and when the pastor finished speaking a small presentation of gifts from the guests was made to Florence's parents on her behalf. The candle on the cake was lit and Florence blew it out with her parents' help. After the cake was cut and the guests had sung 'Happy Birthday to you', Lucy's mother put a small gold bracelet on the child's wrist (a traditionally Hindu gift for the first born) and a Hindu sister of Mrs Samuel gave the child a gold ring which was fitted onto one of her fingers. After this presentation, various guests came forward with envelopes (containing cash) or parcels which were dropped into a cardboard box by Lucy. Non-kin as well as kin gave gifts. After the gift giving was over, the bottles of soft drinks on the tables were opened and the children began to eat the sweets and biscuits. Lucy

and Mark and Mrs Samuel left their places and helped to supervise the distribution of the meal of curry and rice which had been cooking in large iron pots in the yard. Before the guests left, each was offered a piece of birthday cake and some fruit. Lucy told me later that, apart from her mother, all her siblings had come: four sisters and two brothers. Only one of the sister's husbands came, the rest were said to be working, but both the brothers brought their wives. Lucy said her siblings brought eight of their children with them, 'there was no place for any more in the van.' Mark's siblings, his sister and her husband who live in the barracks and his younger brother who lives with his parents, were of course present. The emphasis appeared to be on attendance by siblings of the child's parents, that is, of Mark and Lucy, since only two siblings of Mr Samuel came from Fidelia and Mrs Samuel's favourite sister (a Hindu) from Durban. 'The other sisters didn't come but there was a lot of visitors from here we invited' said Lucy. The pastor, although present in his official capacity, is also a MFS of Mr Samuel, and a Hindu MZS of Lucy's came. The other guests included members of most of the Christian families in Greenfields barracks and several prominent Hindu residents.

The inclusion of non-relatives and the rather grand scale of the birthday party were indicative of Mr Samuel's desire to demonstrate his status in the community as a whole, both Christian and Hindu. The party was also slightly more lavish than it might otherwise have been because Florence was the first child of Mr Samuel's eldest son. Mr Samuel's daughter, Sarah, said that her father had also given a party for her first born, also a girl, 'for Mary we had a party but not very grand one like this, it was just in the house, no canopy and just family'. Mr Samuel did, however, give Mary the same gifts he gave

Florence, including a tricycle. The first birthday party appears to be held only for the eldest child among Christian families and Mrs Jacob's description of the one she and her husband gave for their eldest son is probably more representative of the average first birthday party than Mr Samuel's.

For Isaac [the Jacob's eldest son] we had it grand and invited people. My parents came and Jacob's uncles and aunties [mother's siblings] and my friend, Rachel, came and Jacob's brother from Durban. All brought presents. My mother gave Isaac a suit and pram and when I went home for the third month [customary visit to mother's home three months after birth], she gave Isaac a pair of bangles and a ring. Jacob's brother also gave him a suit and people gave money, R1 and R2.

This money was used to pay for the food at the party and other expenses, since the Jacob's are not well off, but Lucy said that the money given to Florence would be put into a savings account for her. The Jacobs party, in contrast to that of the Samuels, was only intended for fairly close kin of both husband and wife, but it was Mrs Jacob's mother, a Hindu, who seemed to have given the most gifts.

The two parties described were for Christian children, although Hindu kin were accepted and welcomed in both cases. One might presume that the first birthday party for Christian children performs the same function of bringing kin together as the naming ceremony does in Hindu homes, but Hindu children also have birthday parties to which kin are invited, although this may be a 'modern' development. Mr Virasami even alleged that the naming ceremony for Hindu children 'is being replaced nowadays by the first birthday party'.

That is the first opportunity after marriage the wife usually has of meeting close relatives, [the first child often being born about a year after the wedding]. At the wedding so many relatives are present that it is not possible to have more than a few words with each family, but at a

birthday party you can get together much more easily... it is held in the home, a social occasion. Only the elderly people are interested in naming ceremonies, all that singing, prayers. Young people won't come to that sort of thing, but they will come to the birthday party.

Mrs Virasami said that she had had a first birthday party for all her five children, adding that for the eldest, a son, 'we had one party at my mother's home and another at Mr Virasami's place. There was so many people that we couldn't fit them all in with one party'.

The most recent, elaborate birthday party the Virasami's had given was for their youngest child, Prema, and the occasion was not Prema's first birthday, but her third. Mrs Virasami explained that her father had been ill for Prema's previous birthdays and, although a family party had been held, it had not been the grand celebration the third birthday was. By then both Mr Virasami's parents were dead, so the party was held in the spacious new home of Mrs Virasami's parents in Overport. Mr Virasami added that he had happened to be in town for a few weeks at that time', and therefore it had been easy to invite personally numerous relatives living in Durban who would have had difficulty in coming to Greenfields barracks. 'That's what it boils down to, an opportunity to meet relatives', he said. Although Mrs Virasami said that over one hundred people were present, she was not sure of the exact number but photographs showed that the party was crowded. All of Mrs Virasami's siblings, their spouses and children, her parents and a MZ and MMZ attended. Mr Virasami's siblings, their spouses and children were also present and a MBS, his wife and children. The master of ceremonies was a friend of one of Mr Virasami's brothers and he brought his wife, children, his wife's mother and one of his

brothers. The emphasis was on party fun at this celebration by a Hindu family and, although speeches were made, there was no specific religious content to them. Mrs Virasami said that the cost of the food and drink came to over R100, paid for by Mr Virasami. However, she said that Prema had received many presents (including cash gifts) and she seemed to think that the expense had been well justified and the party a success. In the Virasamis' case no kin or friends had been invited to witness the naming of any of the children and the birthday parties clearly took the place of the formal invitation of kin at a naming ceremony.

After the naming ceremony or birthday party, the next occasion at which kin would be expected to be present in large numbers in the life of an individual in Greenfields barracks would be at the ceremonies connected with marriage. I am not here concerned directly with the procedures through which marriages are arranged and the factors involved in them, since caste and other matters have been considered in Chapter Three. Rather, I want to examine the particular rituals associated with marriage and part extra-familial kin play in them.

Once a match has been arranged and the prospective partners have agreed to the marriage, a formal betrothal is arranged. In the barracks this usually takes place on a Sunday morning, when relatives are most easily able to attend. In Muniamma's case about nineteen of her future husband's kin (his mother, siblings, their spouses and children) came to her father's house at about 11 a.m. Muniamma's father exchanged trays with betel nut on it with Deva's nearest male relative, a MB. This exchange symbolised the union of the two families in the approaching marriage. Next an elderly man, a friend of Muniamma's father who was also the father-in-law of one of his daughters, Kamala,

publicly asked Muniamma if she liked Deva and wanted to marry him, and asked Deva the reciprocal question. After this exchange, a brother's wife of Deva brought a tray into the house on which was kungum (red lead powder) and manja (tamarind stick) and flowers, all of which are used in religious ritual and signify holiness. This woman used the powder to make a red dot on Muniamma's forehead, the symbol of a married woman. From this moment on the engagement could not be broken without disgrace to both families. The tamarind and flowers were also symbols of fertility. Muniamma was wearing a new sari, given to her by Deva, and Muniamma's father had given a new suit of clothes as a gift to Deva's family, although they would go to Deva himself. There was a small amount of money on the brass tray which was presented to Muniamma's father by Deva's family and Muniamma explained the significance of this by saying, 'It is as if they [Deva's family] are buying me'. This could be seen as a token of past bridewealth, although there is no formal evidence of bridewealth or dowry in the traditional sense in the South African Indian community today.

After the betrothal the preparations for the wedding begin in earnest and Muniamma's father, her sisters, but not she herself, paid a return visit to Deva's home a few weeks later to discuss practical arrangements for the wedding. Deva and his family were responsible for buying Muniamma her wedding sari, an expensive Benares silk one, and for the cost of the wedding feast, as well as the hire of the hall and the officiating priest (among Hindi-speaking Indians this order would be reversed and the cost of these items be borne by the bride's father). Muniamma's father had to provide her with only a trousseau and set of jewellery, but was expected to buy his future son-in-law a gold wedding ring. Muniamma said she expected the clothes and jewellery

her father was going to buy to cost about R500, less than they would if she had been working and able to contribute from her wages. Deva's family would spend about R300 on another set of jewels, bangles, necklace, earrings and rings in gold which Muniamma would wear on her wedding day. These jewels remain the exclusive property of the bride and her husband is not supposed to pawn or sell them, although some unscrupulous men have been known to do so. The jewellery and clothes are usually the only 'inheritance' a girl receives from her family, unless her father is wealthy and owns land or other property. These gifts are placed on brass trays at the wedding and ritually exchanged between the families of bride and groom, 'to show that the two families are joining' said Muniamma's elder sister.

Once the wedding date has been agreed upon by both families, invitation cards are printed. Approximately the same number are printed to be distributed among the kin of the bride and of the groom and it is a point of honour that the cards be delivered personally by the parents of the bride and groom to kin; only in the case of those relatives living hundreds of miles away would an invitation be sent through the post. Muniamma's father spent three days in Durban delivering invitations to his dead wife's siblings families and to two of his brothers' families personally and at some expense, since he had to hire a car. These personal visits impose an extra obligation on kin to attend weddings and may be occasions on which sums of money are given to help with the wedding expenses, but only if the family are impoverished. Mr Virasami said that he gave R10 to one of his FBW when she visited him to give him an invitation to the wedding of her youngest son. He added:

You see, when I got married all the brothers [FB's] had a hand in it. One of the uncles said 'I'll pay for the refreshments', another said 'I'll pay for

the canopy' and so it went on. Now in turn when there are weddings in their families they expect me to help. They don't ask, of course, but it is expected. Like my aunt now, when she came the other day I gave her R10 to help her with her troubles.

Mr Virasami went on to say that when he got married almost twenty years ago, the wording on the invitations did not say that the groom was the 'son of so-and-so' but, for instance, 'Vella brothers invite ...' indicating that the wedding was the affair of the brothers jointly and not only the particular father of the groom. In like vein, Mr David commented on an invitation he had received to the wedding of his FBS and said the wording was incorrect, because it did not mention his own late father who was the elder brother of the groom's deceased father. 'The invitation should have read 'son of the late A.B. Naidoo and nephew of the late Johnny Rangasamy', complained Mr David. He added that, since the wedding was of a younger FBS, he had an especial obligation to attend (the principle that brothers could expect attendance from elder and junior siblings at their family functions was extended by Mr David to the children of siblings) and would have to take an expensive gift; in the past this would have been a sari for the bride and shirt for the groom, but nowadays glassware or something similar is appropriate.

During the drawn-out wedding preparations which often last from six months to a year, the groom may visit the bride at her parents' home but only 'modern' girls visit the groom's home. January is a favourite and auspicious month for weddings among Tamil speakers, the beginning of the harvest season in India, and according to one informant some families in South Africa still do Pongal prayers to the sun for cattle and crops. In South Africa, January coincides with the long school holidays and is a time when the annual leave is often taken; it

is thus a good time for relatives to be able to attend weddings.

Muniamma was married to Deva at the end of January and the wedding was a large one by barracks standards with over 400 people crowding the hall, a large proportion of the barracks population. This attendance was because both bride and groom were barracks residents (a fairly unusual occurrence nowadays) and the bride was known and liked by many as the former Tamil teacher. Before the actual wedding, two other ceremonies took place, both involving kin. The first of these was the 'pole-raising ceremony', a fertility rite in which a bamboo pole is erected at the bride's home and anointed with various substances by the priest who invokes the blessing of God on the future married couple. This ceremony often takes place early on the wedding morning and is followed by a special ritual known in Tamil as nelungu which consists essentially of a ritual anointing of bride and groom separately by fertile married women. Most of the women in Muniamma's case were kinswomen, wives of her father's and mother's brothers, her parents' sisters and her own married sisters. The first Nelungu for Muniamma (there were three altogether) took place at about 8 a.m. on the wedding morning, with the wedding scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. Muniamma was seated on a low bench under a tarpaulin outside the home of her elder sister (where the preliminary ceremonies took place, since her father's house was too small to cope with all the guests). Next to Muniamma sat a small boy of about ten years, her brother's son. Although no-one present could explain why the boy was there, he was probably symbolic of the bridegroom (who in India was sometimes a cross relative). About thirty women were present and twenty children of both sexes. A few men, all kinsmen of Muniamma, stood or sat a few feet away from where the actual ceremony was being held. The women present were of all age groups, but only married women took part in the ceremony. About

fifteen women came forward in turn and took from a tray at Muniamma's feet a small amount of three different pastes, mixed with turmeric, green lentil and sandalum, a type of incense. The paste was rubbed by each woman into Muniamma's face and arms and sometimes onto her feet. Attempts were made to smear the small boy with paste but he shied away, much to the amusement of the onlookers. After each woman had finished anointing Muniamma, she sprinkled her with water using sacred grass and placed a marigold flower in her hair. After the anointing was finished, Muniamma got up and walked away to the door of the house. There followed an argument in Tamil among the older women and Muniamma came back to the bench, walked round it three times and sat down again for the second Nelungu. This time a small tin tray was brought from the house with seven small cakes on it. A woman who had not previously anointed Muniamma came from the house and touched her on the face, arms and feet with the cakes, taking three in her hands and putting them back on the tray afterwards. Only five women took part in this Nelungu, the rest looked on. The Nelungu were differentiated by the use of different substances; oil was the main ingredient for the first one, used to mix the pastes; flour for the second, in the cakes; for the third, red lead powder. This third and last Nelungu was performed just before Muniamma left the house for the wedding ceremony at the hall; it was a perfunctory one compared to the previous two and consisted of Muniamma sitting on the low bench while her forehead was anointed once with kungum and holy water was sprinkled on her. The first two nelungu ceremonies were over by about 8.20 a.m. and the women who took part were all invited to have a cup of tea and sweetmeats to eat. There was some joking and laughter when two of Muniamma's FBW's, middle aged women, ran into the house, the one pursued by the other who was trying to rub some of the turmeric paste onto her. Both of them were laughing, and the significance of the

episode lay in the use of the paste which was supposed to beautify the bride and make her attractive to her husband.

The Nelungu ritual has three main aspects; the social, preparing for the status of married person; the physical, strengthening and beautifying the body; the purificatory, using ingredients which are essentially holy. The latter purpose was paramount in the observations of women present at the ceremony. Mrs Narain said the main purpose of the ritual was to take away any bad luck, envy, jealousy or spells, which might have been put on the bride. To this end Muniamma sat during the nelungu within an intricate pattern resembling 'paisley' and made in a flour and water paste on the ground. This is known as korlum and is used widely throughout South India as a charm to keep away evil spirits, particularly on occasions such as weddings.

Although nelungu can be said to be a ritual of the 'little tradition', not associated with the main stream of Hinduism, Muniamma's wedding was a 'Sunghum' wedding, a reformed version of the traditional Tamil ceremony. Emphasis was laid on the one Godhead, in this case Siva, rather than on minor deities and some of the traditional ceremonial was eliminated. The stage in the hall was decorated with flowers and an altar was draped with a cloth and Siva's sign of the trident. Beside it was a low wooden bench also draped with a cloth. At 4 p.m. the bridal couple entered the hall, the bride dressed in a blue silk sari with white carnations (symbol of purity) in her hair. The groom wore a dark suit. After walking round the bench three times the bridal couple sat down and the officiating priest (not of Brahmin caste but a Govender), began to read the prayers and chant mantras. The bridal couple joined hands and joined in the chorus as they pledged life-long devotion to one another and exchanged mutual vows. These were symbolized by ritual acts such as the exchange of garlands and the sacred fire ritual which consisted of throwing offerings of seeds

symbols of fertility, and ghee into the flames while reciting prayers. The marriage ritual culminated in Deva giving his wife a visible sign of her new status. Among the Tamil-speaking this is a gold coloured string hung with several gold ornaments, chief among them being a caste ornament. This necklace is known as the 'tali' and once fastened on the bride's neck by her groom can only be taken off upon the death of her spouse. As well as the tali, the groom placed a silver ring on one of his bride's toes as a pledge of fidelity.

Although in this reform wedding the influence of kin was not as apparent as at a more traditional ceremony, the relatives of both bride and groom were involved in the ritual. During the tying of the tali, Deva's unmarried sister held a holy lamp and stood close behind her brother. For this service, Deva was required to give his sister a sari. This part of the South African Tamil wedding ritual may only indicate the close tie between brother and sister, rather than any symbolic commitment to cross-cousin marriage in the next generation; alternatively it would be a relic of the Inaiccir ceremony described by Beck (1972 : 240) in which the wedding sari is tied between the groom and his sister and she ritually asks for the fruit of his marriage, i.e. his daughter for her son. Another hint that in the past a woman had the right to claim her BD for her son can be seen in a ritual which follows the modern Tamil wedding. When the young couple return to the home of the groom's father after the main ceremony is over, the groom's sister deliberately bars the entrance and refuses to let the newly weds enter until her brother gives her a small sum of money, when she relents and opens the door. Beck describes a similar episode among some left-division castes in Konku (Tamil Nadu), when the bridal couple attempt to enter the groom's home for the first time. As in South Africa, the groom's sister refuses to let the couple into the house, but in Konku she extracts a

promise from her brother that he will give his future daughter as a bride for her son. The two joke for a minute and then the brother agrees to the request and the sister opens the door. There is no such demand in South Africa, only the request for money which may perhaps replace the promise of a daughter for the sister's son. Muniamma's elder sister told me that her mother (now dead) had said that in her youth the children of brother and sister were ritually sprinkled with water and told that they were promised to one another, but the promise was not considered binding in any way and the sister had not herself witnessed the ceremony.

Apart from the part taken in the Tamil wedding ritual by the groom's sister, the parents of bride and groom are involved in a series of ritual gift giving which reaches a climax in the wedding ceremony when clothes and cooking vessels are placed on trays, varse, and exchanged between parents of the bride and groom. This gift giving symbolises that the two families will henceforth be linked through the marriage of their children.

Ceremonies showing the new links between the two parental families are perhaps less marked in Tamil, than in Hindi, wedding ritual because cross-cousin marriage was formerly a preferential form of marriage among Tamil-speakers and other types of kin marriage were also practised, e.g. MB - ZD. For Hindi-speaking South Africans, however, marriage is forbidden within seven degrees of relationship and the wedding ritual emphasises the pre-marriage separation of the two families. Nalini is one of the daughters of a high-caste Singh man of Greenfields barracks who married a Gujarati man, whose parents had a tailor's shop in Durban.

On the night before the wedding, Nalini underwent several annointings, similar in purpose to Nelungu but with a different ritual and known as huldee. As with the nelungu for Muniamma, there was participation by kin, in this case the bride's mother's sisters and her own sister took a prominent part. Shortly after 8 p.m. a small procession consisting of the bride, her mother and sister, two mother's sisters and one father's sister and several other women and children, left the bride's home and walked a short way up the dirt road leading out of the barracks. A woman who was not related to the bridal party played a drum and there was singing and laughter. The procession stopped at a point on the roadside where the bride's mother dug a hole and placed betel nut and leaves, turmeric, camphor and spices beside it. The bride said that this was done to placate evil spirits. Then water was poured into the hole with a ring. The bride was blindfolded and made to search for the ring in the mud, but she failed to find it. Although this was supposed to be an unlucky omen, no-one present seemed to mind and the joking and laughter continued. The bride's mother danced with her sisters and other women and everyone present (all female) was given corn to eat 'for good luck'. The bride then washed her hands and the procession returned to her father's home where the Brahmin priest (a young man of Maharaj caste) was waiting. The bride was made to sit on a stool in front of a fire and camphor was lit and ghee (symbol of purity) poured onto a clay lamp. The bride was then rubbed on the forehead, shoulders, knees and feet by seven women, most of whom were kinswomen. This was the second anointing with turmeric paste; the first had been held earlier in the afternoon, at 2 p.m. In front of the fire was a wooden pestle and mortar, which belonged to the family according to the bride's brother and had been used when the family used to grow their own rice in years gone by.

After the anointing with turmeric paste, another took place when three women used handfuls of rice and kus grass (a sacred grass) to annoint Nalini on her shoulders, knees and feet. While this was being done the Brahmin was saying prayers and Nalini made certain responses. She explained to me later that huldee was performed 'to lock up the household spirits' who might otherwise have caused trouble for her on her wedding day, but the ceremony also had purificatory aspects and was symbolic of her new status of married woman. While the huldee was taking place, the bride's father and other male relatives stayed inside the house and once the ceremony was finished all present were given vegetable curries and other food to eat.

The next morning the guests assembled at the hall for the actual wedding ceremony, a MZ of the bride acted as usher showing guests to their places. It was noticeable that there were more friends and relatives of the bridegroom present than of the bride, the groom's kin being expected to make a show of strength as guests at the bride's home. The separation of the two families was immediately evident in the seating arrangements, the groom's guests sat on the left of the main aisle in the hall and the bride's guests sat on the right. When the groom arrived at the hall, he was welcomed by his future father-in-law in a ceremony which indicated his new status as son-in-law. This was the dwar pooja or 'door prayer' ceremony, in which the bride's father offers the groom a seat at the door of the hall, symbol of the groom's future authority in his home and gives him three containers of water, one to wash his feet, one his face and the third to drink. The bride's parents symbolically transfer their authority over the bride in a rite known as kanya dhan, or 'gift of the girl' when they lay their hands on top of those of the groom who holds a lump of rice containing betel nut, money and a piece of sacred grass. One of the bride's male

kin, usually a younger brother, pours water over the hands and the priest recites appropriate prayers.

When bride and groom are seated on the stage, female relatives of the bride, her sisters and daughters of parents' siblings, and aunts, bring traditional brass trays filled with fruit and flowers. I was told that these indicate the popularity of the bride, the more trays the better she is liked; no doubt this part of the ritual is also designed to impress on the groom's kin the desirability of the bride. The parents of both bride and groom also exchange gifts of saris and suits on the stage, gifts which indicate the future links between the two families. The rituals which take place on the stage also include ritual vows between the bridal couple and pledges of life-long union and devotion, as in the Tamil wedding ceremony. The sacred fire ritual - hawan - is an essential part of the ceremony, bride and groom throw grain and ghee into the fire while the priest is reciting prayers. The authority of the groom over the bride is made more evident in the Hindi than the Tamil wedding ritual, since, the bride leads for the first few rounds as the bridal couple circle the fire and then the groom takes the lead while the priest proclaims that the husband has now taken over responsibility for the bride from her parents. The bridal pair also take the 'seven steps', or saptapadi, which indicate their desire for children, health, prosperity, happiness, virtue, knowledge, friendship and peace in their married life. The blessing of fertility is ritually asked for in the marriage ceremony through prayers and the use of symbolic substances such as seeds, earth and water. Although the Hindi bridal couple exchange wedding rings, these are not the visible sign of a Hindi married woman. The actual climax to the wedding ritual is when the groom marks the centre parting of his wife's hair with vermilion powder, (this mark is known as

sindhoor) and places a red dot or tilak on her forehead, 'this is the moment every girl longs for', remarked Nalini. These symbols are the Hindi equivalent to the Tamil tali and are ritually removed when a Hindi woman becomes a widow. Before bride and groom leave the stage after this ritual is completed, to be kissed by guests and showered with confetti, a contest takes place between two junior male members of bride and groom's kin. At this wedding they were Nalini's younger brother and a BS of her husband. Each boy was given a bag of popcorn and, standing a few feet away from one another, each boy at a given signal, had to throw his corn into the other's bag. The first boy to finish was the winner and traditionally he should be the bridegroom's representative, indicating that the groom will have more authority in his house than the bride.

After the wedding ceremony the Hindi bridal couple return to the groom's home for a short while, before the bride goes back to her father's house for a few days and then returns to the groom's home, where the marriage is consummated. The Tamil bride returns to her father's home after three months, when her mother ties additional ornaments to her tali and knots, indicating the permanence of the marriage and the fact that it has been consummated.

Christian weddings in Greenfields barracks involve kin to a much lesser extent than Hindu rituals and more emphasis is laid on the couple as a new family unit rather than as members of two different families. A typical wedding held in the Greenfields church was that between David, a young convert to Christianity of low caste, and Sylvia, a FBD of one of David's Christian neighbours. At 11 a.m., the groom and his brother who acted as best man, arrived at the church wearing dark suits and white gloves. Soon afterwards a car arrived carrying the bride, her

mother and younger sister who was bridesmaid. Photographs were taken of the bride before she entered the church, escorted by her father's brother whose function was to 'give away' the bride, her own father being deaf and dumb. The bride was dressed in a white lace sari, long sleeved blouse and short wedding veil; she also wore white gloves and carried a bouquet. The congregation consisted mainly of Hindu relatives of bride and groom. After an opening hymn the officiating pastor said a short prayer and preached a sermon on the wedding feast at Cana with reference to the joys and tribulation of married life, which lay ahead of the couple about to be married. David and Sylvia then exchanged wedding rings and vows and signed the register. Unlike the Hindu ceremonial, there was no mention in the Christian service of the bride being handed over from the care of her parents to that of her husband. Although the blessing of children was asked for during the service, it was the virtues of a righteous married life and the avoidance of sin, rather than fertility, which were emphasised in the service. It was noticeable that the pastor played a more prominent role in the Christian ceremony as a whole than the Tamil priest or Hindi Brahmin at a Hindu wedding. At the wedding reception which was held after the church service in the barracks recreation hall, the pastor acted as master of ceremonies, seated beside the newly married couple on the stage at a 'head table' and next to the parents of bride and groom. Speeches were made on behalf of bride and groom and a meal was served of vegetable curry and rice. Throughout this Christian wedding the kin of bride and groom played a passive rather than active role and were present more as onlookers rather than active participants in the wedding ritual, unlike their role in the Hindu ceremonial. This reduction in the ritual role of kin is an aspect of change to which I refer later in the thesis.

Death is the final occasion at which participation by kin in the ritual is considered essential by both Hindus and Christians in Greenfields barracks. Funerals in Greenfields barracks are solemn occasions and are attended by the majority of adult men and many women. One of the largest Hindu funerals I attended was that of Venkiah Naidoo, one of the brothers of Muniamma's father, M. Naidoo. On the day of the funeral the gravedigger, an old man probably of untouchable caste, whose usual job was barracks sweeper, walked around the barracks ringing a brass hand bell and announcing the time of the funeral.

At 2.50 p.m. the corpse was laid out in a white shroud, in a plain wooden coffin set on a trestle outside the house. A crowd of about sixty women were pressing round the coffin, hoping for a glimpse of the dead man's face. At the head of the coffin stood one of the sisters of the dead man in a prominent position and at the foot of the coffin was a brass tray on which was a phial containing turmeric water, a few coins and lighted camphors. A bunch of sacred leaves lay in a clay pot filled with milk near the tray. One by one the dead man's kin, starting with his children, their spouses, and followed by his siblings and their spouses and children, and then his wife's relatives, came to the foot of the coffin and lifted the brass tray in a circle over the foot of the coffin. Each person then dipped the leaves in the milk and shook them over the corpse and put a handful of sand in the coffin from a bag which was held by one of the dead man's brothers.

During this part of the ritual the widow sat on a stool at the head of the coffin, quite composed. She was dressed in a white sari, symbol of widowhood, with no ornaments but had a larger than usual red dot, mark of a married woman, on her forehead. This would be ritually

removed later. Both the widow's cheeks were smeared with ash and one of her husband's sisters stood beside her. At about 3.20 p.m. there was a shout from the road and the crowd was told to make way as the lid of the coffin, draped in a sheet, was brought along. At this the widow and her youngest daughter began to wail, followed by the dead man's sisters and other female kin. As the lid was being placed on the coffin and the crowd pressed forward for a last look at the face of the dead man, the wails of the widow grew louder and she had to be restrained from throwing herself into the coffin. Garlands of marigolds were then placed on the coffin and it was carried by several men away from the house. The screams of the widow grew louder and she fainted and was revived with a cup of water and led back to the house. The female mourners only followed the coffin a short way from the house before returning. The dead man's youngest son, the chief mourner, and other men followed the coffin to a waiting van which drove it the half kilometre to the Hindu cemetery. The cemetery consisted merely of a small fenced off area in the bush beyond the barracks boundary. Within the fence, a newly dug grave could be seen and there were small mounds indicating two other recent graves but no headstones or other memorials to past dead.

A preliminary ritual was held at the entrance to the graveyard. The youngest son of the dead man squatted near the entrance and washed a small stone with soap and water. Camphors were lit and prayers said and offerings of fruit and rice made. The offerings and rice were to Harischandra, guardian of the land of the dead according to Tamil legend, asking his permission for the soul of the dead man to enter the land of the dead. One of Venkiah's brothers, who organised several village annual ceremonies, appeared to take charge of the funeral ritual. After these preliminaries, which took about ten minutes, the mourners

stood around the edge of the grave. Before the coffin was lowered into the grave, the youngest son broke a coconut at its foot and prayers were said. The only other woman at the graveside apart from myself, a BD who had arrived late for the ceremonies held at the house, said 'Don't they have anyone to say the prayers?' At this point a little old man of unkempt appearance and probable low caste appeared and chanted prayers from a battered book, at the foot of the grave as the coffin was lowered in. When this was done, the old man sat on the ground and criticised the way the grave was filled in. First a few of the mourners standing round the grave, including the youngest son, threw a handful of earth in, then the barracks sweeper, assisted by an African, filled the grave. The mourners criticised the way the grave had been dug, because there was not enough earth to make a proper mound over it. Eventually a small mound was made and a FB cut a branch of a frangi-pani tree nearby and placed it on the mound. Then, taking two clay pots, he filled them with water and emptied a tin of condensed milk into one. Turmeric and kungum were scattered over the grave and the gravedigger handed rice to the mourners and then placed a sheet on the ground into which all present threw the rice and 2c coins. The gravedigger then gathered up the sheet and threw the rice into the bush. The dead man's brother then placed the clay pot containing water on the shoulders of the youngest son and led him round the grave, while doing so he plunged a sharp knife at intervals into the clay pot so that the water streamed out over the boy's shoulders. After this, water and milk were poured out into the mound of earth on the grave. Next the brother of the dead man took a dozen twigs tipped with lint and dipped these in ghee before lighting them. According to a FBS this action symbolised 'the smoke which carries the soul to the other world'. The youngest son then walked away from the grave without looking back, since to do so would be very

unlucky according to popular belief, and everyone else left the cemetery.

Not all the mourners at the graveside lived in the barracks; some had made a considerable effort to get to the funeral. One of Venkiah's brother's sons who lived in Durban said he had received news of the funeral at 2 a.m. that day from another FBS and, after going to his place of work in the morning to ask for time off to attend the funeral, he had driven straight down to Greenfields with his sister. His own father had left the barracks many years ago to settle in Durban where he had died, the first of the brothers to do so, but his son still kept up ties with his uncles' families living in Greenfields barracks.

After the burial the close mourners returned to the home of the deceased and conducted purificatory rituals to rid themselves of the pollution of the graveyard. Inside the house everyone was in a polluted state which would last until a special ceremony was held on the sixteenth day after the death. The closest male mourners, the sons, sons-in-law and brothers of the dead man are not allowed to shave or cut their nails for the sixteen days; no 'flesh' (meat or fish) is cooked or eaten in the home and all food is unsalted. Tamil-speakers believe the soul of the dead person wanders near the home for this period of sixteen days before journeying to the land of the dead after the ceremony known as 'the sixteenth day ceremony'.

Kin are obliged to attend this mortuary ceremony almost as strongly as a funeral and, since it is held at night, work offers no excuse from it. On the evening of the sixteenth day after Venkiah Naidoo's death an awning had been put up outside his home and a meal

of vegetarian dishes was being given to adults and children gathered in and around the home. In the main room an altar had been constructed on the floor. In the centre of the altar was a ritual urn containing water, milk and honey tied with a white cloth. At 7 p.m. the first prayers had been said to Vanaiga, the 'guardian' of Siva, who was represented on the altar by a small conical mound of turmeric and kungum. Beside a clay lamp were three stones, emblems of Siva. The first prayers for the dead man were performed by his wife and children in this room. On one side of the altar lay all the clothes of the deceased and his more important personal possessions, like his watch. These belongings would be distributed among his children at the end of the first year of mourning. Above the clothes hung an enlarged photograph of the dead man. All Venkiah's sons and daughters, their spouses and children were pointed out to me at this ceremony and most of his siblings were also present. They included one sister from Port Shepstone, some forty kilometres from Greenfields, who had little contact with her siblings in Greenfields barracks. This sister had arrived late for her brother's funeral and had not seen the face of the dead man before the coffin was closed. Her brothers evidently considered her presence at the sixteenth day ceremony extremely important, for when she made the excuse that she had no means of transport and so could not come, they each contributed towards the expense of hiring a taxi to bring her. After everyone had eaten, a choir consisting of ten small girls, pupils at the Tamil school, and three musicians began to play and sing under the awning. They played in front of an elaborate, ladder-like structure with sixteen sacred lamps burning before a second enlarged photograph of the dead man which was kept covered by a handkerchief until the prayers began. A priest hired for the occasion announced the hymns which were sung by the choir. The singing continued until 11 p.m. when food which

the dead man had liked would be put before the holy lamp and all kin present would come forward and pray before the lamp in turn, starting with the children of the dead man. The prayers continued throughout the night and at 5 a.m. three widows cut the tali off Venkiah's wife and dropped it and her marriage jewels into a pot of milk. She had already been given two white saris by her sons which she would wear for the initial three months mourning when she would not be allowed to wear coloured saris. At about 6.30 a.m. the next day, the close male relatives of the dead man, his sons, sons-in-law and brothers, go to the beach where the barber shaves them and cuts their nails. Prayers are said to Surya, the sun, and the remains of fruit and flowers used in the sixteenth day ceremony are burnt and the ash allowed to float away on the tide.

After this ceremony although some of the restrictions on social intercourse are lifted for the dead man's kin, life does not return to normal. No public celebrations such as Diwali can be undertaken or marriages celebrated for at least a year and the widow is expected to spend most of her time in her home. When it was clear that Venkiah was dying, his brothers had quickly arranged the marriage of one of his daughters who was already betrothed, because the marriage could not take place in the first year of mourning. Further commemorative ceremonies take place at the dead man's home, three months after death, and a bigger memorial service takes place on the first anniversary of the death, when the widow invites close kin and friends to a meal and prayers.

No such elaborate involvement of kin occurs with Christian funerals. While prayers are said in the home of the dead person and close kin such as sons and brothers are expected to be ready to act as

pall bearers at the funeral, it is the pastor who plays the major role in conducting the funeral service, at which kin are expected to be present. The children of the dead man do contribute to the cost of a gravestone, which is as fine a one as they can afford, as a memorial to the dead man. His children are also expected to visit his grave and keep it tidy, bunches of flowers are sometimes laid on the grave when visits are made to the cemetery. The Christian cemetery is within the boundaries of Greenfields barracks and is generally well-kept. Christian widows undergo none of the isolation of Hindu widows and apart from close kin it is the pastor and the church who provide comfort for the bereaved in the face of death.

It is noticeable that at all kin gatherings, important life-cycle ceremonies as well as informal meetings, particular kin are of importance and often have roles and obligations. These kin are the parents of a married (or about to be married) man or woman, his or her adult siblings, their spouses and children, and parents' siblings and their spouses. Other, more distant extra-familial kin, such as cousins, are often present but their importance seems to diminish as their relationship to Ego recedes. The importance of extra-familial kin is also especially apparent at formal life-cycle Hindu ceremonies. While Christian ceremonies are very different from Hindu ones, in particular by not allowing for roles by kin in the ritual they are, nonetheless, Indian gatherings in which kin are expected to be present and to take part, whether as guests or as members of the congregation. Even in Christian families therefore, extra-familial kin have a continuing importance that they do not appear to have to the same extent in fully westernized societies, such as those of Firth's two London suburbs.

Chapter Seven

THE CONTENT OF KIN RELATIONS

In the last chapter I examined the major life-cycle ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death to show which kin played important roles in these ceremonies and it appeared that on many occasions siblings and parents took major parts. In this chapter I look more closely at the particular quality of the relationships with these types of kin. I consider, therefore, what my Indian South African informants regard as the ideal type of mother, father, brother and sister and how far these stereotypes resemble or differ from the concrete relationships as discussed by informants and observed by the researcher.

I start with siblings, since most of my informants emphasized clearly the importance of these kin. Relationships between siblings can be broken down into a set of dyads, that is, brother to brother, brother to sister and sister to sister. Although these dyadic relationships are initially formed in the nuclear family, they naturally influence those which form after marriage. I thus include a consideration of pre-and post-marital sibling relationships. Although my informants did very occasionally state norms of behaviour, they mostly had little education and the women, especially, were unaccustomed to expressing themselves freely or even, in some cases, to saying very much in English at all. Thus norms and stereotypes of behaviour were implicit rather than explicit in what informants said about their kin and the way such kin behaved. Nonetheless, it was possible to get an impression of how informants felt kin should behave and contrast this with actual behaviour.

Hilda Kuper has written of Indian South Africans that 'seniority regulates the relationship between siblings of the same sex and particular deference is shown the eldest brother, between brothers mutual help is the ideal with responsibility placed on the oldest for assisting in the education and marriage arrangements of the younger' (Kuper 1960 : 130). Kuper's comments seem to reflect the feelings of informants that this is how the relationship between brothers should be, even today. It was noticeable in the barracks that in the senior generation to my informants, elder brothers were still accorded respect by their juniors, who accepted their interference in their affairs. Muniamma's father, for instance, was the eldest of seven brothers, all of whom lived at Greenfields at one time. Even today when he and his brothers are in their sixties, he convenes meetings of his brothers to discuss family affairs, such as weddings and funerals and his brothers come to ask his advice. However, some of the younger generation appears to feel no such obligation to consult elder brothers. Ram, Muniamma's younger brother, was something of a scallywag with a history of frequent job changing and a broken engagement. Ram appeared to avoid the company of his elder brother, Hamilton, rarely attending family gatherings (which Hamilton made apoint of doing) and spending most of his spare time lounging under a large fig tree in the main open area of the barracks with other youths. Hamilton seemed to have little influence over his younger brother in getting him to mend his ways. A similar situation existed between Mr Jacob and his youngest brother. This youth had run away to Johannesburg to look for work against his family's wishes. When the boy did return home to Greenfields, he avoided Mr Jacob because, said Mrs Jacob 'he is afraid of what my husband will say to him [about his bad behaviour]'. Mr Jacob did not actually reprimand his brother and this was probably because such a rebuke would have had little effect. The authority which elder brothers may have been able to wield over younger

ones in the past appears to be eroded today, but elder brothers and their wives are still expected to perform services for their younger siblings. Mrs Jacob looked after one of her husband's brother's children daily because both he and his wife worked, yet there was no question of any payment or gift to the Jacobs in return, although this brother could well have afforded a recompense. On the other hand Mr Jacob expected his brothers to visit him at Christmas; he did not expect, as the eldest, to have to go to their homes.

Moving from the relationships between brothers to that between brothers and their sisters, female informants were usually very close to their brothers, both older and younger. Informants implied that an older brother was owed respect and obedience by his sisters, but sisters were not obliged to obey or respect a younger brother, with whom the relationship was a more informal, almost joking one. My observations of behaviour between adult brothers and sisters appeared to conform by and large to informants' stereotypes. Hamilton, Muniamma's elder brother, had lived and worked for many years in Durban, but he kept in close touch with his younger sisters in Greenfields barracks. He and his young wife attended every rite of passage of his sisters' children, gave them gifts, and took photographs of the proceedings. When Hamilton's spinster sisters married he spent hundreds of rands on elaborate saris and kists to hold their trousseaux. In return, he expected his sisters to help him and his family, if needed. One night at 11 p.m. Hamilton arrived in the barracks with the news that his wife was ill and the doctor had told her to stay in bed. There and then Hamilton took two of his spinster sisters back with him to his home in Durban (they arrived at 1 a.m.) and the sisters remained at their brother's home for two weeks, doing the housework and shopping for their sister-in-law, caring for her children and accompanying her on visits to the doctor.

There appeared to be no question of any possible refusal of help on the sisters part, the illness of their older brother's wife put them under an immediate obligation to help.

Apart from contributing to the expense of her wedding, a brother is also taught to protect and look after his sister and, before her marriage, it is he who accompanies her to films or soccer matches which her parents do not attend. Mrs Raj encouraged her sons to chaperone her daughters on visits to kin or friends in Durban. Without the presence of their brothers, the girls would certainly not have been allowed out of the home. In several instances informants recalled meeting prospective husbands through their brothers, 'he is my brother's best friend' said one girl about her husband. Brothers often give small, spontaneous gifts of clothes, jewellery and cash to their sisters, quite apart from expected gifts at rites of passage ceremonies. Mrs David mentioned that when one of her brothers won R150 at the races he gave her R7. This brother was a favourite of Mrs David's and she saw him daily since he worked at Greenfields, although he lived with his mother at Fidelia. Mrs David gave this brother his midday meal for which he did not pay her, although she was badly off and in debt. Thus there does appear to be often a sense of duty or obligation involved in the relationship between brother and sister. On the one hand, an older brother may expect help in domestic crises from younger spinster sisters, in return for which he helps with their wedding expenses. On the other hand a married sister may expect to cook for her bachelor younger brother if occasion arises, with no prospect of payment.

This apparent sense of duty or obligation tends to make relationships between brother and sister more inhibited and formal than those between sister and sister. Muniamma and her sisters who lived in Greenfields barracks were all extremely attached to one another, and this bond was

not affected by marriage to any degree. The sisters (six out of seven lived in Greenfields barracks) paid one another daily visits and often stayed for meals at one another's homes. Seniority was still acknowledged among the sisters and since Betty was the eldest sister living in the barracks, her younger sisters often helped her with her housework and family chores but in return she did much of the cooking and supervision of kin ceremonies. The nelungu ceremonies held before Muniamma's wedding were held at Betty's home.

Mrs Jacob was also very attached to her eldest sister, Mariamma, who, since the death of their mother had become a substitute mother to Mrs Jacob and her sisters. Mariamma and her children were frequent visitors to the Jacob family and often gave Mrs Jacob gifts. Mrs Jacob said she was very fond of her eldest sister 'we always go and see Mariamma. She is like a mother to me'. Although Mrs Jacob had become a convert to Christianity when she married, this did not appear to have changed her relationship with her Hindu sisters in any way. She attended the large Hindu naming ceremony of one of Mariamma's grandchildren and was asked by another sister to choose the name of the last of her five children.

Sisters show considerable interest in one another's children, exchanging information on child care and comparing rates of growth. Women who have lost children in childbirth have been known to 'give away' subsequent infants to siblings to nurse in the belief that the evil spirits thought to be responsible for the previous death would be misled into regarding the child as the other woman's. Nalini and her twin brother were 'given away' in this manner to one of her mother's sisters shortly after birth and lived with her until they were weaned. This aunt was henceforth regarded in a special manner as a 'mother' by the twins. She took a particular interest in them

and Nalini said that at her wedding she was obliged to wear a sari given to her by this MZ and not one given by her parents, as an acknowledgement of the relationship. Another instance of the 'loan' of children was in Mrs Samuel's case where one of the daughters of her favourite sister boarded with the Samuels on a permanent basis, only returning to her natal home for the school holidays when her place in the Samuel home was taken by one of her sisters. Mrs Samuel's sister had eight children living in crowded conditions in Durban. Apart from such 'loans' there were also cases of outright adoption; informants related that it was accepted for a childless woman to 'beg' a son or daughter from a sibling with numerous children. One of Mr Samuel's married sisters was childless and when his youngest brother's wife gave birth to her third daughter, the child was adopted by the childless sister and registered in the husband's name. Although the fact of the adoption was known in the family, the girl was always referred to as her adoptive parents daughter.

Unmarried aunts were expected to give their sisters' children small cash presents when the nieces and nephews visited them, and on their birthdays. Junie, a single girl, commented

I send cards to my brothers and sisters. I don't remember giving them anything for their birthdays. They know I get so little they don't expect it. I send my nieces cards and when they come here I give them what I have ... money. They don't want coins or silver, it has to be notes. I give them R1 each. Most of them expect it ... my mother made a habit of it and when she died I was expected to carry it on.

This habit of giving small cash gifts to sisters' children is probably one of the reasons why women remember more of mother's sisters than any other category of kin. Children's clothes are also often passed on from one sister to another. Mrs Narain said that 'my

sister's little daughter is the same age as Neela /Mrs Narain's third child/ but she is tiny so I pass on Neela's dresses to her and they come back to me for the little one'.

Despite the ideal of harmony symbolized in the gift giving, jealousy and backbiting does occur among sisters, although female informants were unwilling to admit this or acknowledge that quarrels occurred between them and their sisters. Junie said that her mother had left her a number of good saris when she died, but that her widowed sister had helped herself to them and when Junie complained she had been told by another sister that she should not mind because her widowed sister had very few clothes. Mrs Narain said that her sisters tended to be critical of cakes or other gifts taken when visiting, 'they are so critical, it [the cake] is not light enough, or tasty enough, of course they are nice to your face, but you do not know what they are saying behind your back ... even my own sisters do this, it is very difficult to know what to take as a present'. Other informants denied any tension in their relationship with their sisters but in such a way as to imply a stereotype rather than an actual state of affairs. However, I was unable to observe any actual quarrels between sisters and my impressions gathered from personal observations of Muniamma and her sisters were that sisters indeed fulfil the role of 'best friends' and that sisters try to avoid open breaches among themselves.

Quite apart from the importance of sibling relationships Ego is also involved in a continually developing relationship with his own parents and this relationship has four possible dyads; father - son, father - daughter, mother - son, mother - daughter. Informants implied that sons should always be obedient and respectful to their fathers, often quoting Hindu scripture to this effect, but there was little

evidence in the case histories of my informants of father - son relationships conforming to this norm. Boys tended to be independent of their father's jurisdiction and authority at an early age, when they roamed freely around the barracks. Until a boy reaches school going age, his father takes little part in disciplining him and his grandmother (paternal) is often the one to administer slaps or scolds. Since competition for higher education and professional training is keen among Indians, many less able boys become 'drop-outs' at the high school stage and live at home at their parents' expense. Instead of throwing such sons out of the house to fend for themselves, many fathers go to considerable lengths to obtain employment for them with the company at Greenfields, calling daily at the offices to see if any vacancies have occurred and campaigning on their son's behalf with the Labour Officer. In return sons do not appear to show overt gratitude to their fathers; teenage boys and youths in their twenties form gangs of age-mates with whom they spend as much time as possible, avoiding the home and father's company. Fathers know that their sons are liable to be led astray in this way, for drinking liquor and smoking are features of gang activities, but they seem to lack the authority to forbid their sons to do these things.

Mr Virasami was horrified when his eldest son was caught shop-lifting at the local supermarket, but his reaction seemed to be more one of shame at the general knowledge of the affair in the barracks than at the wrong-doing itself. The boy was prosecuted and appeared in the local magistrates court where he was sentenced to six cuts. Mrs Virasami said her husband knew that the boy was in the wrong, but felt he had been led astray by others in his gang who had also stolen from the shop but had not been caught. The affair soon died down, but the next year Mr Virasami took the boy away from the local school and

sent him to one in Durban, where he boarded with a MMZD at Chatsworth. However, it was not always fathers who had trouble with unruly sons; in some cases it was the other way round. Mrs Narain spoke of her husband's poor relationship with his father, who was also her MB.

My husband's father was an interpreter and he used to travel from place to place, so my husband had no settled home life and went to school in so many places. My husband was keen to do medicine and there was some idea that he was promised to go overseas, my husband's father's younger brother was doing medicine in Kenya when he died and it was thought that my husband could take his place, as it were. But then there was not enough money, my HF was a spendthrift, he was well paid as an interpreter and had his shares of the family business but all the money went on the races. The only thing my husband could do was teaching, but it was not what he wanted to do at all. My HFB, who had taken over the family business in Colenso when my HF let it go bankrupt and did very well, was more like a father to my husband than his own father, his own father had no time for him ... when we married first, my husband rented rooms for us in Greenwood Park but it was a basement and damp, so then we moved to another place only two doors from my in-laws. When we married my HF did not want us to live with him. In fact father and son were not on speaking terms, it was only in the two years before his father died that they began to speak again ... it was my sons who healed the breach, they were the first grandchildren and my husband's mother was very fond of them but not my husband's father, by then his mind was wandering; he took no notice of the children.

The case of Mr Narain's father is probably exceptional, however, since far more fathers experienced trouble with their sons than the other way round. Fathers appeared to have less difficulty in maintaining authority over their daughters than they did over their sons. While a girl's mother is alive she is the main disciplinarian and the father seems to reinforce her decisions, but if the mother dies early before the marriage of her daughter fathers must take on a dual role. Junie's mother had died the year before interviews began and she was left alone to housekeep for her father. Junie was lonely without female companionship (her other siblings were married or working away from home), although

she continued a small business selling snuff and betel nut from the house which her mother had done before she died. Junie's overtures of friendship to other single girls in the barracks were rejected and she tended to be the target of gossip and criticism. Her elderly father was a strict disciplinarian and although Junie loved him she was also afraid of his anger. At one time Junie had a clandestine boyfriend who telephoned her from time to time at the call-box in the barracks and she admitted that her father would have been very cross if he had known about the calls or the boyfriend. 'He used to say that place /the call-box/ no good for a young girl because the boys hang around there'. The emphasis here was on fatherly protection of his daughters and a similar attitude was displayed by Muniamma's widower father towards her and her two unmarried sisters, whom he insisted remained indoors when they were at home and did not allow them to sit outside the house and chat to passersby. Women or girls who are seen chatting to neighbours or friends may be accused of fomenting trouble between husbands and wives or else, of acting as go-betweens for lovers. Nor would Muniamma's father let his daughters attend the mixed sports evenings organised by the Greenfields Social and Cultural Club and Muniamma said that most parents would not let their daughters go, 'they are afraid that they will misbehave' she said. Muniamma's father was very reserved in his behaviour towards his daughters; he rarely spoke to them directly and they served him his food in a separate room from theirs. At the same time he was very fond of his daughters and personally chose and paid for new saris and trousseaux for their weddings. His daughters stressed his kindness to them and their children and he often joined in childish games with his grandchildren.

Although Mrs Jacob's own father was dead, he also appears to have been a cold and distant figure from her recollections. An immigrant from India, he was a polygamist and objected to his children speaking

English. Mrs Jacob therefore received some vernacular but no secular education, and she said her father was very concerned with 'caste' in marriage. He wanted her brothers to marry women of their own 'good' caste and was horrified when Mrs Jacob decided to marry a Christian man of mixed caste. Mrs Jacob was much closer to her mother who gave her moral and financial support in her marriage and also visited her in Greenfields barracks, but Mrs Jacob did attend her father's funeral, although refusing as a Christian to perform traditional Hindu last rites. The remote relationship which Mrs Jacob's father had with his children was probably more common among Indian fathers thirty years ago, but today Indian daughters are likely to experience a more relaxed, affectionate relationship.

Mrs Virasami, for instance, was devoted to her father and give many examples of his generosity to his children and grandchildren.

When the boys grew up my father told them they must go and look for a girl [to marry] and then he'll do the wedding, take care of all the expenses and all and then they must go and live on their own. No living together, he's seen our Indian custom, twenty people in the house and then they get a young girl, not as a wife but to do all the work. Most of them carry on in the old way and then it ends up in divorce. That's why my Dad had to give them [his sons] the title deeds [to various pieces of land he owned]. But he said they must visit him, they are free to come and see him whenever they want.

Mrs Virasami complained that when she married, her HM never bought the children gifts while her own parents used to 'bring a lot to eat when they visited us and they bought me clothes. When he went to India my Dad brought me back ten saris and he has given clothes to all the children'. Moreover, Mrs Virasami's father had no intention of excluding his daughters from inheriting his assets, 'my father has said we will get an equal amount, the boys will not get more than the

girls'. Mrs Virasami travelled frequently to Durban to visit her father who had a weak heart, and whenever he was admitted to hospital she insisted on her husband taking her immediately to see him. 'We were so worried, they [her family] 'phoned to the mill and I wanted to go straight away so we went last night to see him ... my father was so glad to see me, since he was in hospital he kept asking if they had 'phoned me and when he saw me he burst into tears!'. Mrs Virasami was also very fond of her mother but she was a quiet woman who tended to stay in the shadow of her ebullient husband.

While the relationship between father and daughter is usually a formal, often inhibited one, that between mother and son is much closer. The first born in every Indian family should preferably be a male and there is great rejoicing when a son arrives, although mothers also welcome daughters. Mothers are especially proud of their sons and from an early age they are allowed considerably more freedom of expression than girls. Boyish escapades (such as wreaking havoc in other people's vegetable gardens) are looked upon by mothers with indulgence and the offender can usually tell that mother's scolding carries no real threat of punishment. Mothers in Greenfields barracks indeed tend to spoil their sons, whereas this only happens to daughters if they are the youngest in the family. Boys are often given more pocket money than their sisters and always more freedom to roam around the village with companions, a freedom denied to girls. Mothers can be heard to complain with pride 'he is so naughty'.

As sons grow older their mother remains a stable influence in their lives, through her presence in the home, although she has little disciplinary authority over her sons. When the time comes for sons to marry it was traditionally the mother or her sister who went to look for a suitable bride, in other words a girl who would be acceptable

to them as well as the boy. Mrs Virasami commented 'you know our Indian custom, it is not the boy who comes [with an offer of marriage] but his mother ...' The developing parent-child relationship is obviously affected by what happens after marriage and these changes in kin relationships will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

While the keynote of the relationship between mother and son may be said to be 'indulgence', the same is not true of the behaviour of mothers towards their daughters. From an early age mothers instruct their daughters in household supervision and chores, as well as teaching them socially correct behaviour in and outside the home. Until they marry girls in Greenfields barracks are not often far from their mothers. Although nowadays education is compulsory and girls spend five or six years at the local school, they attend classes for a few hours in the mornings only. Few daughters are allowed to work after they leave school, unless there is a pressing financial need. Friendship with other girls of the same age is often discouraged by parents, unless the two sets of parents are friends. Although children of immediate neighbours are allowed to visit one another, an unmarried girl should always be accompanied by a sister or younger brother if she ventures any further afield, even to visit kin living elsewhere in the barracks. In such circumstances daughters are likely to become attached to their mothers, who in turn rely on their daughters for companionship and support, particularly in illness or childbirth. Because of this close attachment, a girl's marriage is often a wrench for both mother and daughter but the blow is softened by the frequent visits of the young bride to her natal home, where she is treated as an honoured guest and by the mother's pride in her daughter's new married status and in her son-in-law.

The birth of grandchildren brings mother and daughter together once more, as a daughter expects to spend the months immediately preceding and following the birth of at least her first child at her mother's home. Moreover, it is her mother who pays for all the expenses connected with the birth; for the child's layette; the traditional mid-wif, or, nowadays, for the hospital fees. Mrs David was particularly attached to her mother, since she herself was the only girl in a family of seven boys. Mrs David commented that she had gone to her mother's home for the birth of her first four children, but that when the fifth child was born the eldest was already at school and it was not easy to go away, therefore she did not go to her mother. At her mother's house, Mrs David said, her mother had taken care of her and she had stayed in bed, but in her own home she had to get up two days after giving birth because there was too much work to do to stay in bed. As daughters become mothers themselves and their children grow up, contacts with mother may become less frequent because of the increasing amount of work at home and mother may be seen less often than in the early days of marriage, unless she lives near. Nevertheless, daughters always remember their mothers with great affection and her death is a particularly sad occasion. At one stage of Muniamma's wedding tears were rolling down her cheeks and one of the guests whispered to me 'she is remembering her mother' (who had died three years before). One of Muniamma's sisters remarked about the infant of another sister 'this is the only one that (our) mother has not bathed, all the others she did', it being the traditional task of the MM to bathe a new born grandchild.

The relationship between child and parent, whether son or daughter, mother or father, is obviously affected by the marriage of the child. The marriage of a son is usually marked by a period of co-residence

with the son's parents in which the new element is the daughter-in-law. At this stage a man's relationship with his mother often changes and becomes less close; the clue to this change lies in the acquisition of a wife by a man and of a daughter-in-law by his mother, that is, a rival female for her son's time and affection. Among my ten selected informants and their spouses, all the married couples, with the exception of Mr and Mrs Narain, had lived with the husband's parents or at least with his mother for some length of time after marriage. The length of time spent with the husband's parents varied from the usual few months to the entire length of the marriage to date (for Roberta and Mrs Ramsamy), but most of the wives agreed that joint living produced disharmony and tension in the home. Mrs Virasami was most explicit about the trials and tribulations of being a daughter-in-law in a joint family twenty years ago.

They was so strict with us in my mother-in-law's house. It was fourteen in the family there, my husband's mother, her sister and her husband and their children. All the cooking and housework I had to do. I was the only daughter-in-law. The two sisters got dressed in the morning and went visiting and I was left at home like a servant. Mr Virasami's mother is modern in dress but so old-fashioned in thinking! I was the first daughter-in-law, no one else wanted to marry her sons. In that family the mother goes and looks for a girl. Now in most cases today they tell the sons to look for a girl for themselves, but in that case they wanted the girl as a servant. Now for the second son they looked everywhere and eventually found a girl from Mt. Edgecombe in the barracks there. She went through hell, that girl, and she complained to her parents and of course there was trouble. Now in my case they made hints and all but I never spoke of them to Mr Virasami. Now when I was pregnant they was making me do all the heavy work and my legs swelled, I didn't feel well. My father came to see me and he said I must pack my bags and come home, he couldn't stand to see me suffer like that.

However, Mrs Virasami and her mother-in-law did reach a compromise. Other daughters-in-law were not so fortunate. It was

clear that the customary pattern, inferable from informants' statements about the earlier generation, was that a son should put his parents before his wife, so that in any conflict between wife and parents-in-law, a son should align himself with his parents, and a daughter-in-law should subordinate herself to her parents-in-law. Mrs Narain said

Indian mothers in joint families are terrors. This was one of our regular discussions at home. I used to ask 'were they really so cruel?' and my mother said 'yes, they were'. I think this was because they did have the power, they could do what they liked and they used this power. I've never heard of a kind mother-in-law except for my sister's mother-in-law and she used to say that her own mother-in-law was so cruel. She [ZHM] was married at 13 and she had to do all the work in a large house. Her husband's mother kept her away from her husband, they were only given a room together three years later. She did not have children for six years and she did suffer.

Part of the pressure on a daughter-in-law to submit to a domineering or demanding mother-in-law came from the fact that, until recently, few Indian marriages were legally registered. It was therefore comparatively easy for a mother, faced with an intractable daughter-in-law, to persuade her son to send his wife back to her parents and marry again. A girl who was sent back to her parents in this way would be unlikely to get other offers of marriage and would be a burden on her parents. Parents therefore often put pressure on their daughters to remain with their husbands, even if the marriage was unsatisfactory. Mrs Virasami recounted the story of her adopted MZ,

in fact my aunty is not living with my uncle now ... before he could marry my aunt he already had a wife and a family of five. I suppose his family disliked her and wanted someone to suit them. My aunty lived there with his people until the second baby was six years old, but when she was expecting the third baby she couldn't stick the rumpus and she moved out and came back to my granny. I suppose he was trying to get his first wife and children back into the house, they were living apart when my aunty married my uncle.

Many of the problems that daughters-in-law encountered with their husband's mothers seemed to stem from the expectation by the mother that her son's wife would take on a quasi-servant role which would relieve her from the physical chores of house-keeping, while still being the 'head' of the household. In one case a son's wife was even expected to cook and look after her husband's unmarried brothers who were to live with her and her husband. Mrs David was critical of her own husband's mother, but she was quick to condemn the wife of one of her brothers who also had objections to living in an 'extended' family. Mrs David said that her third brother's wife had been 'as quiet as a mouse' before her marriage and very compliant, but within three months of marrying 'she had such a fast mouth', that is, was impertinent. Mrs David said that this brother had been given a double-storey house in Chatsworth by her father upon his marriage on condition that his wife cooked for and looked after his three remaining unmarried brothers who were to live in the house as there was plenty of room for them. After three months the wife had returned to her natal home for a visit as was customary. Her parents had then 'coached her', according to Mrs David, to make unreasonable demands. On her return the wife had said that it was her job to cook for her husband only and not for his brothers and had refused to have them living with her. Mrs David said that her parents had cried at this, but that her father did not think he could turn his son out of the house.

This anecdote illustrates that while Mrs David's parents considered their daughter-in-law to be an unreasonable and ungrateful girl, she no doubt felt that she was being used as a servant when asked to housekeep for her brothers-in-law. Much of the tension in the relationship between mother and daughter-in-law appears to arise from differences in expectations of the duties and responsibilities of both son's wife and husband's mother. Nevertheless, it was noticeable that Mrs David's brother's wife did not end up living with her unmarried brothers-in-law

and when Mrs Virasami and her mother-in-law had a confrontation, the problem was resolved by Mr Virasami moving his family to an 'outhouse' where Mrs Virasami remarked 'his mother came to visit me there and things were much better then'. Mrs Virasami's two sisters were much younger than herself and neither lived with their mothers-in-law for any length of time after marriage. One sister, who had married into a Catholic family, only lived with her husband's mother for one month before she and her husband looked for a flat for themselves. Mrs Virasami commented that the HM had agreed to the move, saying it was better for the children to 'live separate', so that they could all be friends and see one another from time to time rather than have the quarrels which are the inevitable result of living in an extended family. Mrs Virasami's second sister's husband was an only son and Mrs Virasami described his mother as 'crabby', she added that the old lady was, however, very fond of her grandchild, 'she thought the world of him, always wanting to pet and hold him'. When Mrs Virasami's sister and her husband stopped living with the husband's mother, she paid the young couple visits and they got on better.

The norm nowadays appears to be for young married couples to spend a token amount of time living with the husband's parents, possibly for appearances sake, before looking for accommodation on their own. Mrs Narain described the changing role of the Indian mother-in-law today.

Today mothers-in-law are careful not to interfere with their daughters-in-law if the families are living separately. They would be afraid of a complete split and of not being able to see their sons. Now mothers-in-law have changed so much; the girls are educated today, the legal position has changed, the girls know their rights, why, they would just walk out if they were treated like that. My husband's mother has to be extremely careful what she says, she never criticizes her daughters-in-law at all, she is afraid such criticism might be brought up in quarrels later.

This [situation] has changed in about two generations, very rapid change'.

Mrs Narain's comment seems to show that nowadays a wife expects her husband to side with her in any conflict with his mother, but that such a conflict is avoided whenever possible. Informants who had mothers-in-law who were still resident in the barracks were reluctant to discuss the tensions of joint living with me. Mrs Jacob had lived with her husband's mother until the birth of her third child and then moved into another dwelling with her husband and children. She was careful not to criticise her husband's mother in any way, saying that the move was made because her husband's mother's home was 'too crowded'. She also said that she had returned home to nurse her husband's father in his last illness. 'I went and stayed with my husband's mother in her house and also looked after Dan and Naomi [husband's siblings], that was for three months until he died. He used to say he didn't want anyone except me. We did stay for one month after my husband's father died with my husband's mother'. She added that her husband had invited his mother to stay with them but the old lady had refused, preferring to keep her one room home to which she was entitled as a widow.

Mrs David lived with her husband's mother in the barracks for six years after marriage, during which five of her eight children were born, before moving into another home in the same barracks row. Although Mrs David said that in a crisis she would turn to her husband's mother as being her nearest available relative, she admitted that she had had 'a lot of ups and downs' in her relationship with her husband's mother, but said that she forgot these when she was not living with her. It was difficult to find any evidence of persecution of daughters-in-law by their mothers-in-law in the barracks today and my two

informants who were living with their mothers-in-law at the time of the interviews both had amicable relationships with them. In both these cases the husband's mothers were elderly and in ill-health which made them dependent on their daughters-in-law rather than the other way round.

Mrs Ramsamy's husband's mother had had two heart attacks and was very frail. She spent her days watching her infant grandchild or sitting, quietly chatting to neighbours. Mrs Ramsamy did all the heavy work for the household; the cooking, clothes washing and cleaning, for the family was too poor to afford an African washerwoman. A sister of Mr Ramsamy also lived with the family, but she was also an invalid and could not help with the housework. Mrs Ramsamy never complained about the work she had to do or about her mother-in-law and stressed 'aya's' ill-health. Her husband's mother had a gentle demeanour, she never raised her voice and made it clear she was dependent on her daughter-in-law. Tommy's mother was a much younger woman than Mrs Ramsamy's husband's mother, but she was also in poor health, suffering from a kidney complaint, and Roberta said that this was why she was happy to help her HM as much as possible in the home, doing all the heavy work with the help of her husband's sisters, while her HM supervised the cooking. Tommy's mother was also a calm, gentle woman who never raised her voice. She moved slowly and was rarely seen to ask her daughter-in-law to do anything. Roberta admitted that she considered herself fortunate in getting on with her husband's mother and attributed this to the family being Christians, 'any troubles and all, the pastor can come down here and solve them. But I don't have problems, sister, like some husbands and wives they fight. I was born lucky, God has given me a good man. Even in the house here, no problems'. By this Roberta meant that she and her HM do not quarrel.

Both women, however, appeared to be careful not to antagonise one another; while Roberta was deferential and helpful, her HM was careful not to issue orders. Both women were aware that open quarrels between them would be obvious to the neighbours and fuel for gossip.

While the relationship between a mother and her daughter-in-law is complex and changing, that between a father and his daughter-in-law is less involved. Tommy's father had little to do with Roberta and Mrs Ramsamy's father-in-law, although a pensioner, was a pigeon fancier and spent most of his waking hours away from the home. Mrs Ramsamy was fond of the old man, but said that he was very independent and went his own way, having little to do with the household in general. Usually fathers paid little attention to their sons' wives and some even made a point of avoiding them in the home. Only on one occasion did a father speak about his daughter-in-law to me and this was to complain that the girl was too shy and he felt that she had a speech defect. These complaints were possibly the result of pique, because his son had made his own choice of a bride and not left it up to his father. Naturally, exceptions to this general mode of behaviour do occur, Mrs Raj (who said her own husband was a very difficult man) had her husband's father living with her for nine years after his wife died until his own death. Although the old man should, by custom, have lived with his eldest son, Mrs Raj said 'he used to like staying with me. He didn't like staying with the other brother. My husband's father was a very good man. We all liked him'.

The formal avoidance which appears to occur between fathers and their sons' wives in general is also apparent in the relationship between men and their wives' fathers and mothers. Since residence after marriage is usually virilocal, at least for some time, a man

and his wife are not in such frequent contact with her mother or father as they are with his. On visits to the wife's home a man is usually treated as an honoured guest by his mother and father-in-law and care is taken not to antagonise him. In most cases the husband is in a strong position when he visits his wife's home and the implication is that he has done his wife's mother and father a favour by marrying their daughter and taking her off their hands. If the two families knew one another well, prior to the marriage, the son-in-law may well be accepted on a more informal basis and be treated as a son. Or if a man has 'married up' into a family more well-known and better off than his own (as Mr Virasami did), he may treat his wife's mother and father with deference. Mr Virasami took care to visit his wife's home whenever he was in the area, even if his wife could not accompany him, and he ingratiated himself with his wife's parents by taking small gifts of food to them.

Although when a daughter marries she most often moves away from her natal home, there were a few cases of coresident married daughters in the barracks, but they were rare and when they did occur were either a temporary expedient until the son-in-law could get accommodation for himself and his wife on their own, or were the result of the housing shortage in the barracks and the inability of the company to provide alternative accommodation. In no cases was the husband found to be living with his wife's parents through choice. On the other hand, the position of a husband living with his wife's parents did not seem to be any different from that of a man living with his own parents. There did not appear to be any discrimination in favour of the daughter or attempts to make the son-in-law feel inferior on the part of his parents-in-law.

While marriage most evidently changes the relationship between

parents and children, marriage also brings about alterations in the relationship between siblings, since they now have to adjust to the presence of their brother's wives or sisters' husbands. Sunitha, a young girl of high Hindi caste (Maharaj) described how, now that she was married, she had to cover her head in the presence of her husband's elder brother, but could joke with his younger brother. Mrs Narain felt that there was a clear distinction between her own sisters and brothers and their husbands and wives and these spouses of her husband's brothers and sisters.

yes, there is a difference, when they are in my home, my husband's brothers' wives always ask if they want something, while my own sisters would have no hesitation about taking it. I do expect my husband's sisters to be more like guests, for instance they would never slap my children, while my sister would hit them quite readily if they were naughty. My husband's brothers are definitely guests, they must be respectful to me, they can't smoke in my presence and they wouldn't dream of going into my bedroom. My brother wouldn't care at all, if he wanted to sleep he would go into my room and sleep.

Mrs Virasami, however, seemed to think that siblings' husbands and wives should be treated like siblings. 'We get on very well with them [siblings' spouses]. Soon as they got married we took them very close to us, same as my brothers and sisters. My brother's wives are very kind. When I had that op, my father got a car to pick me up and if my sister could not drive me [to the doctor] then my brother's wife used to'.

There were examples, although few, of brother's wives who disliked their husband's families and persuaded the husband to avoid his siblings. Junie, a single girl, was close to most of her brothers and sisters, and in particular to one elder brother, Sam, and his wife. Shortly before Junie's father died, leaving her an orphan, Sam bought

a house in Chatsworth with contributions from his unmarried siblings and offered them a home there with him and his wife which they accepted. The eldest brother, two married sisters and one widowed sister had no part in this joint ownership. Junie commented about her eldest brother's wife, 'Puspa would like to stay on her own. She doesn't like coming here [to Greenfields]. She won't live in the house [at Chatsworth] with the rest of us'.

The norm of a free and easy relationship between Ego and his or her siblings' spouses is further illustrated by the custom of sisters-in-law 'asking' for small household objects belonging to their husband's sisters. These objects (informants have given breadboards and knitted children's garments as examples) are literally carried off by the brother's wives without the owners being able to refuse. Although I observed several instances of this custom, none of my female informants would admit to taking anything from their brother's wives homes! On the other hand, they did not appear to be upset about losing articles, but to accept the loss as a prerogative of the brother's wife. In other cases, brothers' wives sometimes asked their sisters-in-law to knit articles for layettes or to sew clothes for their own children with no expectation of payment. Such demands may be an attempt on the part of the wives at getting some compensation for gifts given by their husbands to the husbands' sisters.

When brother and sister continue to have close contact with one another and with spouses after marriage, it is inevitable that their children should grow up knowing the children of these kin. In Chapter five, Table 5. showed the high proportion among informants of the total number of both mother's and father's siblings and their descendants who were in effective contact with Ego. However, such 'effective contact'

was usually of a different order from that with own parents and siblings. The most common form that effective contact took between Ego and descendants of his parents' siblings was that involved in mutual attendance at weddings and other kin ceremonies. However, such contact was brief and limited to the exchange of a few words of greeting or family news. Mr Virasami had remarked on this feature when he said that the first birthday party was a good opportunity for the wife to meet her husband's relatives, since so many people came to weddings that there was time only for a few words with each one. In Chapter Six, I showed that the majority of kin involved in the major life cycle ceremonies were siblings and parents' siblings. Parents' siblings children, although always invited to weddings and expected to attend funerals, did not appear so prominently at smaller kin ceremonies such as the naming ceremony or first birthday party. Nevertheless, several informants said that other kinds of contact with first cousins were important to them.

Mr Narain's mother died in childbirth and his father left him in the care of one of his brothers, with whose family, four daughters and then five sons, Mr Narain grew up and became very fond. Even after Mr Narain qualified as a teacher, he kept in close touch with his cousins. Mrs Narain explained

my husband taught in Colenso for three years, then his FB died suddenly of a heart attack, he was only 46 years old. My husband had applied for a transfer to Durban in 1951 and it came through a year later, but soon after he went to Durban he received news that the business in Colenso was suffering. The eldest son of my HFB was then only a boy of 15 years and the widow and daughters could not cope so my husband stayed only a few months in Durban and went back to Colenso to teach and supervise the family business. He stayed there for three years. By that time my HFB's daughters had married and the sons-in-law came into the business and did very well, so there was no need for my husband to stay... When the business

prospered, they [HFB ch] bought a hotel in Wasbank and then opened a hotel in Estcourt and now they have just opened this filling station in Chatsworth ... actually my husband was brought up with this family, they are closer to him than his own [half] brothers and sisters and his own family are quite cross about this, his brother makes remarks. These people [MB ch] came often to see my husband when he was in hospital after his heart attack.

Mr Narain still visited his cousins in Northern Natal several times a year and saw those living in Chatsworth at least once a month and sometimes more often. The relationship between Mr Narain and these cousins had been of mutual benefit and service. While Mr Narain had helped run the business after his uncle died, his FBDH's had given him financial advice and he had bought a car through their garage. Although Mr Narain had a considerable amount of contact with his half-brothers and sisters, he was much older than they were and since he had not been brought up with them, he found that they did not have interests in common. However, Mr Narain was unique among my informants in that he had been the only child of his father's first marriage and had no own siblings; other informants who had a close and affectionate relationship with their siblings also mentioned particular cousins as being close.

Mr and Mrs Virasami saw a lot of Mr Virasami's mother's brother, Harry, and of his wife and children. Harry was one of the organisers of a 'lottery', a type of savings scheme into which Mrs Virasami pays R25 each month. Harry collects the money from the members, so the Virasami's inevitably see him and his family at least once a month. Mrs Virasami said that even when she is staying with her own parents in Durban she also visits Harry and his family, when we are with my parents, my brother takes us for a drive in the car in the evening and we generally end up there'. Harry, his sons, daughters and sons-in-law come to visit the Virasami's in Greenfields regularly, 'they come most

weekends, we are close to them. You see, it was Harry's wife who came to stay in the house when I had Veena and Bunny, we got close because of that. She is such a nice lady, she went under a heart op a few years ago, but she still got time to help people like that'. Mrs Virasami said that although Harry, his wife, daughters and sons are Christians, while the Virasamis are Hindus, the difference in religion makes no difference to the friendship between the two families. The important factor in maintaining this on-going friendship appeared to be the lottery. From time to time the members met to 'draw' the money and this ensured regular contact. The members of the lottery, apart from Harry and his wife (MB and MBW) were all first cousins or their spouses and most of them were the children of Harry. Mrs Virasami added that it was important to be able to trust lottery members. Her mother, she said, had been caught out once in such a lottery, when a member had drawn money and never replaced it. Since most of the members of the lottery in which Mrs Virasami took part were first cousins or their spouses, this was an indication that in the Virasami's opinion cousins were people who could be trusted; neighbours and friends could not necessarily be.

'Effective' contact for the ten selected informants and their spouses with first cousins tended, then, to take the form of exchange of services and, if this did not occur, then contact was usually only maintained at the level of morally compulsory attendance at major life-cycle ceremonies. My informants on the whole showed little interest in their first cousins as individuals, in contrast to their interest in their siblings and parents' siblings. Unless there was a special reason to see first cousins, informants merely kept themselves informed of births, marriages and deaths and usually knew the type of work and educational qualifications a cousin had, for instance if he had reached

Standard 5 or was a waiter or salesman. The place of work was often not known, however. In contrast, informants knew more on the whole of the personal lives of their parents' siblings. Mr Virasami said that one of his father's brothers had taken an interest in the school careers of all his siblings' children and encouraged them; another father's brother had been a soldier in North Africa in the last war and Mr Virasami remembered letters being sent home from Egypt; a third father's brother had failed in his furniture business, because he was something of a 'playboy' and so on. Such personal details were almost always absent when informants described cousins for their genealogies.

In this chapter I have described how the quality of relationships between kin tended to be associated with the degree of relationship. Siblings were closest to one another, with sisters possessing on the whole the warmest and most affectionate ties. Relationships between brother and brother and sister and brother, while also affectionate, tended to be more formal than between sister and sister and included a sense of obligation on the older brother's part towards his younger sisters. In all these relationships, while tension was at times unavoidable, informants made a considerable effort to avoid quarrels which might cause rifts between close kin. Quarrels were more likely to occur in affinal relationships, although here, too, they could be avoided as the cases of Roberta and Mrs Ramsamy showed. The bond between siblings was not noticeably lessened at marriage and siblings' spouses were often treated as siblings. While the children of siblings had a high degree of contact with parents' siblings, especially mother's sisters, this did not extend to cousins, unless exchange of services or other factors were involved.

CONCLUSION

Before undertaking this research, it seemed likely to me that the sorts of kinship values held and kin behaviour exhibited by Indian South Africans would have been greatly influenced by their exposure to the forces of social change in South Africa. These forces of social change include industrialization, urbanization, wage labour, education and the mass media.

In my early chapters I gave some account of the degree to which the inhabitants of Greenfields barracks were exposed to these forces of change. Research showed, among other things, a more or less predictable absence or diminution of many 'traditional' features of Indian social structure, such as uni-lineal descent groups, co-parcenary 'joint' families, locally corporate castes and preferential or prescriptive marriage rules.

Since such 'traditional' features were absent or greatly modified in Greenfields, it would seem reasonable to assume that a system of extra-familial kinship similar to that of modern 'western' societies might be emerging amongst Indian South Africans. Such a system of extra-familial kinship would include, for example, a reduction in the 'scale' of kinship; a more or less equal emphasis on maternal as well as paternal kin, and a move away from virilocal to neolocal residence, as nuclear instead of 'joint' families became the norm. The most direct comparison on Indian South African society with a modern, 'western' society would have been with that of a study of the local 'White' South African system. However, while such a study has been undertaken, the results are not yet available, at least not in published form. There is, indeed, a general lack of detailed studies

of extra-familial kinship in 'westernized' European societies, with the exception of those by Firth and his colleagues. This research and the comparison which the use of Firth has allowed have produced results which show that my prior suppositions about the nature of extra-familial kinship among Indians in a changing society like that of South Africa, were too simplistic and that change did not take place in one direction only.

I turn now to look at these assumptions individually and compare them with the results I have found. The first assumption was that in such an urbanising society the scale of kinship would be reduced. This is a long-standing general assumption about the differences in kinship between pre-industrial and 'modern' societies. For instance, Radcliffe-Brown (1952) wrote 'in a narrow-range system, such as the English system of the present-day, only a limited number of relatives are recognised as such in any way that entails any special behaviour or any specific rights and duties ... in systems of very wide range, such as are found in some non-European societies, a man may recognise many hundred of relatives, towards each of whom his behaviour is qualified by the existence of the relationship'. However, this comment by Radcliffe-Brown is largely an impression, since he did not (and could not) provide any proper numerical evidence for the modern English system. In chapter four of this thesis, I provided equivalent figures for informants from a community which, although its background may be said to be 'non-industrial' is nevertheless embedded in a wider industrial setting. These figures suggest (although cannot be said to prove because of the smallness of my sample) that it is possible for relatively large kin universes to be retained in an industrial setting. The question then arises if this difference is really evidence of a 'survival' of pre-industrial kinship patterns? In other words, do my Indian South African informants have bigger kin

universes just because they value kinship more highly than Europeans? My answer is that while they may well do so, there are other factors which also contribute towards the information of large kin universes.

The large sizes of most of my informants' kin universes could be partly accounted for in terms of demographic factors. That is, until recently there was a high birth rate among the Indian community in South Africa, which, combined with a declining infant and general mortality rate, produced large numbers of children surviving into adulthood. This trend was especially influential in my informants' own generation and that of their parents and resulted in the production of large siblings groups in these two generations. However, the demographic trend is now moving towards the next usual phase in 'developed countries', that of a declining birth rate. This decline in Indian births has been particularly rapid in the last ten years and the rate now approaches that of the White population in South Africa. One can venture to predict, therefore, that, with fewer children, future generations of Indian South Africans will have kin universes of a size much more like those in London.

Such a prediction might be invalid, if Indian South Africans in fact recognise a wider range of kin (in Firth's sense of the term). My research has shown that to a certain extent they do, since rather more second cousins were known by my informants than by Firth's London ones. The wider range may be partly a reflection of the 'village' aspect of the barracks community. As people become geographically and socially more mobile, it is likely that the range of their kinship universes will also reduce towards a European pattern; that is, known kin will be in general restricted to first cousins or in some cases even to siblings. Certainly, the research showed that the kin universes among Greenfields Indians generally were already of shallow genealogical depth, which I

attributed largely to the emigration from India, and to the illiteracy of early immigrants and the initially unsettled and wandering existence led by the ex-indentured. But Firth's established and middle-class informants also knew very few kin in ascending generations and displayed little interest in them. Shallow genealogies may then be a feature of 'westernizing' societies with high social mobility and there was little, if any, sign that the most recent generations of Indians were developing deeper genealogies.

Besides these measurable aspects of size, range and depth, there are, of course, also the aspects of kinship values and interaction. For them, my research does suggest quite strongly a greater emphasis on the total value of kinship than is typical of at least northern European countries. This emphasis is expressed particularly in the attachment of informants to own siblings and those of parents. Much of the case material in this thesis has shown the close links between brother and brother, brother and sister and sister and sister. These sibling links are manifested in various ways, but primarily through visiting and support of various kinds, both emotional and financial, and for women this includes help in domestic crises.

The occasions on which siblings mobilise such aid vary from crises, such as illness or loss of employment, to rites of passage and other ceremonies. The attachment between siblings rarely altered upon marriage for informants, although there were a few allegations that siblings' spouses encouraged their husbands or wives to neglect their natal families. Since the attachments, which manifest themselves in reciprocal aid and the fulfillment of social obligations, do generally continue even after marriage, it is not surprising that the children of siblings usually develop corresponding, though less intense, attachments to their aunts

and uncles which are demonstrated in a tangible form by gifts given to the children and by visits paid to the homes of the aunts or uncles and vice versa. Such a relationship is more likely to be remembered by Ego when his MB or MZ is unmarried and thus has more time (and cash) to spend on his or her siblings' children than a married brother or sister.

The research showed that other factors also influence the direction of Ego's attachment to his parents' siblings. Both men and women in Greenfields barracks knew of more siblings of mother and kept in touch with more sisters of both mother and father than they did with parents' brothers. This bias is paralleled by Firth's London study which also revealed more contact with mother's siblings and their descendants than those of father. While Firth comments (1969 : 202) that this 'female linkage' was in accordance with the relative frequency of contact between sisters as compared with that between sisters and brothers or brothers with one another, in Greenfields it was not especially apparent that women were in much more frequent contact with their sisters than brothers were with each other. What was apparent there was the different type of contact which women had with their sisters and other female kin. Kin contact between women was of a much more openly affectionate and close nature than that between brothers or between brother and sister. Visits of sisters to one another tended to be of longer duration and sometimes more frequent than those between brothers. The interests of sisters, centred on their children and homes, tend to coincide. While men may and do make some friendships at their place of work, friendships between wives and neighbours who are not related are frowned on in Greenfields barracks as leading to gossip, quarrels and possibly extra-marital affairs. This denial of any meaningful companionship with unrelated women means that sisters become doubly important as friends

as well as kin. Their importance is especially prominent in barracks society, where husbands and wives share little social intercourse apart from visits to kin and ceremonies such as weddings and funerals. Women, too, have more opportunity to remember details of kin activity than men and are more likely to know the names of kin in junior generations than men are. Given the closer contact between female kin and female siblings in particular, it seems consistent that both male and female informants should interact more with female siblings of parents and especially those of mother, than with male parental siblings.

While the largest number of kin that informants knew fell into the category of first cousins, the relationship of Ego with the children of his parents' siblings was of a different kind from the relationship with his own siblings or even with his parents' siblings. Although contact with cousins was maintained by every informant in Greenfields barracks, the type of contact varied widely and in very few cases did it resemble the close and affectionate nature of the bond between siblings. There were a number of reasons for this difference; the first being that when children grow up and marry in Indian South African society, they most often move away from their natal home, particularly after the birth of children. Thus while cousins may see one another as children during visits to each other's homes, when Ego as an adult visits, say, his MZ he or she does not, as a rule, see her children as well. Occasions when Ego does see cousins are at rites of passage, particularly weddings and funerals, attendance at which is still morally obligatory for kin. However, such ceremonies are invariably crowded and noisy and several informants commented that there was only time for a few words with kin. Such occasions nevertheless serve to keep kin informed of any changes in each other's lives, such as new jobs, changes of address, or impending births or marriages, but preclude close friendship. For this reason

cousins are not likely to be asked for help or advice in a crisis unless there are no siblings or parents' siblings available. Cousins with whom there is close contact have often performed some special service for Ego, such as Mr Virasami's MBS and his family who at one time helped to look after the Virasami children, or Mr Narain's mother's brother's children who had given him financial advice.

In addition to the actual meeting of kin at life-cycle ceremonies, the Hindu ones in particular do make provision for specific ritual roles for kin which in turn emphasise the values of kinship. Although Christianity has (in the Greenfields barracks context) abolished specific ritual roles for extra-familial kin, it does not always concomitantly reduce the interaction of kin. They continue to participate in such important Christian occasions as the first birthday party for the eldest child to which kin are always invited and their attendance is considered important, especially that of siblings and their families.

In contrast, the choice of kin invited to life-cycle ceremonies by Firth's London subjects was quite selective, and Firth comments that while his informants felt an obligation to help their siblings, there were no general social formulations about expected behaviour to extra-familial kin. On this basis Firth categorizes the middle-class English kinship system as a permissive one (his italics) and writes 'the relative lack of role categorization and formal obligation also means that their system is on the whole a selective one' (1969 : 453). Middle-class Londoners implementation of relationships with kin are based on factors such as personal liking, the views of other kin and geographical accessibility which do not, or at least not to the same extent, occur among Greenfields Indians. For instance, Firth notes that while ties between sisters are close, those between brothers or between brothers

and sisters are highly selective for his informants. The amount of kin interaction an individual had in London, therefore, was largely a matter of personal choice, while such selection was not apparent in Greenfields, at least among siblings, although there were variations in the amount of contact Ego had with his first and second cousins. The kinship system of Greenfields informants may therefore occupy an intermediary position between the permissive system of middle-class London and what Firth terms an authoritarian system, where norms of kinship behaviour are highly formalised and associated with firm codes of privilege and obligation. Such an 'authoritarian' system is characteristic of most societies studied by anthropologists, including those of southern India, to which much of my information indirectly relates.

Thus, while much of my research suggests that some of the most 'basic' aspects of kinship may in fact be the bi-lateral attachments built up through sibling groups (as originally suggested by Radcliffe-Brown in a somewhat imprecise fashion in his classic paper on the Mother's Brother in South Africa), the importance of these aspects has perhaps been rather obscured in at least some Indian kinship studies by a relative lack of attention to the full ramifications of extra-familial kinship. There is a natural tendency in these anthropological studies of kinship to concentrate on such matters as the unilineal aspects and the concomitant 'complementary filiation' or 'extra-descent-group' aspects of kinship. Dumont, for instance, who lays further emphasis on 'alliance theory' in his well-known discussion of Dravidian kinship terminology (1953) sees it almost entirely in terms of a system of alliances between groups. He wants to reverse the earlier assumption about the meanings of 'Dravidian' kin terms:

.... the mother's brother is also the father-in-law and the common assumption that the affinal meaning is here secondary, the cognatic meaning being primary,

is based on nothing but the common notion that one's kinship position precedes one's marriage, an idea quite out of place ... as only the analysis of the system can reveal the real meaning of the category. All these assumptions arise from our own way of thinking, unconsciously superimposed upon the native way of thinking.

Yet Dumont's exposition of the 'native way of thinking' is, he says, 'logical rather than statistical' so that 'what is here called kin has, of course, nothing to do with actual groups, being only an abstraction arising from the oppositions' (1953 : 35, 36, 37). Yet this abstract substitution of an 'affinal' for a cognatic meaning may conflict with the actual values of the kinship system in real life. For example, although Chekki's fieldwork relates to western India, he found there a high incidence of kin marriage and he comments on one form of it that 'the brother-sister tie in the Lingayat community is the pivotal relationship responsible for the high incidence of uncle-niece marriages' (1971 : 80). He also quotes McCormack on Lingayat kinship 'the bond between siblings, when qualified by the factor of sex difference among them, functions as the axis for cordial relationships among relatives. Brother-sister ties are maintained by festival visits, gifts and mutual assistance and by marriages ... it would be difficult to over-emphasise the effects of these favoured marriages on preserving the bonds of friendship and cooperation, which are founded on the affection of brother and sister, as it appears that herein lies one of the major functions served by sister's daughter and cross-cousin marriages' (in Chekki 1971 : 80). It is not unreasonable to suppose that these conclusions do express a 'native way of thinking'^m which the 'cognatic' meaning of the link between siblings is primary and the marriage between their offspring secondary.

My material suggests that the strength of the sibling bond in general, including all possible dyads, is more persistent than any specific

manifestation of it, such as matrilateral cross-cousin marriage or MB-ZD marriage, and that therefore the considerable concentration on these aspects in some other literature such as Dumont (1953) and Beck (1972) is perhaps excessive. This is especially so in Dumont's case, when he goes so far as to say that these marriage prescriptions are 'the whole basis of kinship', thus taking a special manifestation as being the key to the whole system. In fact the disappearance of cross-cousin marriage, as has happened among Tamil-speaking Indian South Africans, does not eliminate the importance of the sibling bond in the system, as my material shows. To some extent the fact that the Tamil language as spoken in South Africa has retained 'affinal' terms for certain cross-kin shows that kin terminology may persist after the actual practise has fallen away, (which incidentally provides one example of the supposition by Morgan and his followers that terminologies could persist after associated marriage forms had disappeared). This vernacular terminology is admittedly being replaced by an English one, with certain special features such as the term 'cousin-brother', which is more 'descriptive' and therefore overrides the cross-parallel distinction. Such terms may, however, be more a reflection of the increasing adoption of English in general rather than any 'strain towards consistency' between the terminology and an increasing bi-lateral system.

It may be then, that the situation in South Africa, which has stripped away all such specialized expression of kinship as cross-cousin marriage, serves to show the fundamental importance of the bi-lateral attachments which are built up through sibling groups in constructing the universes of kin. Certainly their importance in the lives of residents in Greenfields, and by implication in Indian South African Society as a whole, became very evident in the research on which this thesis has reported. Extra-familial kin play vital roles at rites of

passage and in other life-crises such as job selection; they assist in obtaining housing, may provide financial relief when needed and aid in domestic crises. In the society of Greenfields barracks such roles are seldom fulfilled by non-kin. Friendships, except among work-mates, are rare. Mr Samuel, who had a large kin universe and spent most of his free time maintaining contact with his extra-familial kin, was probably expressing the majority view of Greenfields Indians when he said 'friends are nothing to me at all', to which he might well have added 'yet kin, especially siblings, are everything'.

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About half the items in this bibliography are not referred to in the text but were used in earlier drafts of this thesis and therefore form part of the background.