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DISCOURSES ON LANGUAGE, CLASS, GENDER, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL

MOBILITY IN THREE SCHOOLS IN NEW DELHI, INDIA

by

Lavanya Murali Proctor

<u>An Abstract</u>

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Anthropology
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July 2010

Thesis Supervisors: Professor Virginia R. Dominguez
                     Associate Professor Meena R. Khandelwal

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the ideological connections between schooling, mobility, and social difference among students in New Delhi. In it, I argue that educational mobility, especially with regard to English-language education, is an ideology which seems to offer a path to reduce social difference while in fact protecting it. I also argue that people who desire mobility engage in discursive practices which attempt to emphasize how their social positions are better than the ones they aspire to, a process I call discursive mobility. These discourses are inherently conflicted and contradictory, something I argue is characteristic of discursive responses to ideologies of educational mobility. Thus, I inquire into how different ideologies and discourses (dominant and subordinate) relating to social difference, education, and mobility interact, the prominent role of English in ideologies of education and mobility, and how the process of attempting mobility produces inherently contradictory ways of being.

This research was conducted in two government schools and one private school in New Delhi, using a number of methods including participant observation, surveys, interviews, group discussions, and matched guise technique. I describe the discursive contradictions that come from attempts at discursive mobility, how language is implicated in ideologies of educational mobility, how social ideologies of privilege affect schooling experiences and mobility possibilities, how students discursively respond to social difference, and how the discursive worlds of students in government and private schools differ.

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Date

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Lavanya Murali Proctor

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
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                    Philip Lutgendorf

To my parents, Rama and S. Murali

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PREFACE

Throughout this thesis, I have used the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) for Hindi transliteration, with some exceptions. The nasals *bindu* and *chandrabindu*, along with *na*, have all been indicated with an "n," following popular usage. The retroflexes have been rendered in the font *Gentium* in some places because they do not always show up correctly in Times New Roman.

When transcribing what one student said, I have usually rendered it under a pseudonym. When transcribing conversations with two or more students, I have named them with letters and numbers. Thus, the first student from Government English is named GE1, and so on, using GH for Government Hindi, and EC for English Convent. Sometimes, a number of students spoke at once, all saying the same thing. I have, in such cases, also used this system to create composites. In this way, I have been able to reproduce their voices without depicting the (good-natured) chaos that usually attended my group discussions, as I felt this was necessary for clarity.

I found the choices of English words in Hindi speech very interesting, which is part of the reason I have both transliterated and translated my data here. However, a detailed analysis of code selection is a large project and must be left to another day. I do wish to draw the reader's attention to the ways in which English words are incorporated into Hindi utterances. Words like "teacher," "family," and "middle class" I consider to be loan words, borrowed from English much like "bus" or "bread." While Hindi words for these exist, the borrowed words have fallen into popular usage and have slipped into the dialect of Delhi Hindi. Words like "globalization," "international language," and "rave," on the other hand, are significant acts of code-switching. Bonnie Urciuoli observes that "what is actually switched depends on the ways in which the social actors, given their relationships and the specific context, interpret the codes involved…at times switching itself, rather than the specific code choice, accomplishes the social work of discourse"

(1995:528). She notes that the rhetorical reasons for codeswitching are related to the "long-term political economy of language that shapes not only the language situation itself but social actors' relations" (1995:529). These English words are drawn from different cultural contexts than the interlocutors (the government school students) engage with in their everyday lives. By code-switching in this way they index those cultural contexts and incorporate them into their everyday discourse. The ways in which I classify their codes might be different from their own aims in code-switching (Urciuoli 1995). However, I think that code-switching, here, functions as an important rhetorical device that allows these students to participate in contexts to which they otherwise have limited or no access. Therefore, the switching might not be "smooth," but it is nevertheless present, and deserves notice.

The reason I have left the Hindi transliterations in, though, is political, and has to do with issues of representation and voice. In this I include not just my interlocutors, but myself as well. In terms of my interlocutors, I wish their voices to be available in as close to the original form as possible. There is already a measure of interpretation in the fact that I have *chosen* some parts of their discourse to be presented here. By providing the original excerpts, I have tried to provide some transparency and intellectual honesty to my thesis. I believe this opens up avenues for dialogue with those who can read the Hindi transliterations, and might even choose to disagree with me on my interpretations and translations. This decision also reflects a personal political position. As a South Asian postcolonial woman who functions within the American academy, leaving the Hindi as is in my dissertation is a small step, in my mind, toward decolonizing anthropology.

All names in this dissertation, including those of the schools, have been changed to preserve anonymity. All the photographs have been digitally altered to preserve anonymity of the schools or children as much as possible. Photographs of adults taken in public have not been altered. Where I have used pictures of students, I have blurred their faces. I took all the photographs used in this dissertation.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the ideological connections between education, mobility, and social difference among school students in New Delhi, the inconsistencies and ambiguities inflecting such ideological interplay, and people's discursive responses to these ideologies.[1]

I argue, first, that educational mobility, particularly when it comes to English-language education, is an ideology that protects the interests of socioeconomically dominant groups by obscuring and preserving social difference while seeming to offer a path to reduce it.[2] Second, people who desire mobility respond to social difference and its impact on educational mobility by engaging in what I call discursive mobility, which, in turn, leads to the production of highly contradictory discourses about mobility and social difference, demonstrating the inherently conflicted nature of mobility attempts.

Discursive mobility is an attempt to redefine the parameters of social difference and social privilege through talk—by discursively shifting focus from the kind of education one has or the social position one occupies, to other, purportedly positively valued attributes, such as morality. It is a set of practices. My attempt here is to expand

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[1] I define *ideologies* here as sets of ideas shared by members of a social group, about a social phenomenon, which are used to validate or contest social power structures. I discuss scholarship on power and ideology in detail in Chapter Two, specifically, the theoretical perspectives and ideas which have brought me to this definition. By *discourse* I refer to the ways people talk, the words they use, and the subjects they talk about. It is "language-in-use…the way meaning is produced when a language is used in particular contexts for particular purposes" (Cameron and Kulick 2003:16), as opposed to discourse as "a set of propositions in circulation about a particular phenomenon, which constitute what people take to be the reality of that phenomenon" (Cameron and Kulick 2003:16). Educational mobility is the ideology that suggests that mobility can be achieved through education.

[2] Although there are distinctions between *education* and *schooling*, in this dissertation I use them interchangeably. The most important distinction is that education can refer to learning outside a formal schooling system. There are also certain possible ideologically positive associations to "education" (that it is "good" or "empowering") which I hope to avoid by using the terms interchangeably, since I am emphasizing here that education is not necessarily a "good" thing, that being dependent on what one means by "education," and by "good."

the notion of mobility—I see it not necessarily an upward movement, but as a process of muting certain aspects of one's identity and emphasizing others. My focus is therefore on the attempts of students to change how they are perceived through talking, and on the types of discourses that they think will change how they are perceived by others. In other words, people who desire mobility reframe discourses about language, class, schooling, and gender to present their social positions as "better" than the ones to which they aspire. Yet, they continue to aspire to these positions. Thus, they simultaneously desire and reject the social positions to which they aspire, leading to the production of discourses marked by conflicts and contradictions.

At the root of this is social difference. There are significant differences in how people from different socioeconomic groups experience schooling, and therefore in their access to privileged varieties of education, which limits educational mobility. People desiring mobility are aware of this, but they continue to have faith in educational mobility because, by its ideological nature, it continues to seem like a plausible (perhaps the most plausible) path to mobility, and because it is a dominant (and hegemonic) ideology of mobility. Nevertheless, they feel the need to engage in discursive practices which go beyond defending the social positions they occupy—these practices of discursive mobility produce significant cultural discourses which work toward redefining the parameters of social position and social difference.

<u>Research Questions</u>

This dissertation addresses the following questions relevant to these arguments, focusing on poorer students in government schools: (1) How do government school students conceive of mobility? (2) How is linguistic mobility ideological? (3) How does social difference (language, class, and gender) affect schooling experiences and mobility possibilities? (4) How do students discursively respond to social difference? (5) How do the discursive worlds of students in government and private schools differ?

Thus, I inquire into how different ideologies and discourses (dominant and subordinate) relating to social difference, education, and mobility interact, the prominent role of English in ideologies of education and mobility, and how the process of attempting mobility produces inherently contradictory ways of being.

Significance

This dissertation is based on pre-dissertation research conducted in the summer of 2006, and dissertation research that took place between July 2008 and March 2009 in New Delhi, India. My research intersects with six areas of anthropological scholarship: education, youth and childhood, gender and sexuality, language, class and social stratification, and India. Therefore, my dissertation also contributes to anthropological scholarship in these areas. It has much to offer South Asian scholars in terms of new perspectives on social difference and social mobility in India.

It also contributes to theory relating to discourse as a mechanism for social change. It will be particularly relevant for scholars who are interested in the functioning of discourse and its ability to simultaneously convey a variety of (possibly contradictory) meanings.

It will also be of interest to scholars who wish to investigate the ideological aspects of English-language education, particularly its connections with mobility and social difference, not just in so-called "developing" countries, but among linguistic minorities in "developed" countries such as the U.S. as well. I believe this is an area much in need of research. I hope that this thesis will also be able to contribute, in some small way, to policy formulation with regard to education, especially when it comes to the education of socially disadvantaged groups (and not necessarily in India).

<u>An Outline of This Thesis</u>

The chapters in my dissertation describe how ideologies relating to social difference (class, language, and gender), education, and mobility play out in discourse and practice.[3]

Chapter One is an introduction to my field sites, central arguments, and a discussion of the ideological connections between education, mobility, and difference. In this chapter I also describe students' perspectives on mobility, their aspirations, and their concerns about the effects of mobility, particularly that it might lead to alienation from their own cultures. This chapter begins to describe some of the contradictions inherent to mobility practices and ideologies.

Chapter Two is my methods chapter, in which I define some of my terms, explain my methodologies, and detail some problems encountered in fieldwork.

Chapter Three is an examination of language ideologies about English in India among the English-dominant (Zentella 1997) and the English-excluded (Puri 2008). It describes what is arguably the clearest case, in contemporary India, of how ideologies of educational and linguistic mobility are used to elide, or even perpetuate, social disparities. Through this chapter I also demonstrate how mobility can mean different things to different groups of people, even when they use the same terms to talk about it. English and English-language education are ideologically linked to social mobility in India. However, access to English (and to privileged varieties of English) is restricted.

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[3] If my discussions of gender seem heteronormative, they are, because all my data are heteronormative. Same-sex eroticism is still not openly discussed in most of India. Ruth Vanita says about India, "I wouldn't say that there was an active homophobic resistance, as much as a taken-for-granted heterosexism, where alternatives to hetero married norms were not even perceived or given any reality status" (Ayyar 2001). Although there is a lot of good work being done on the topic (see, for example, Hall 1997; Vanita 2002; Vanita and Kidwai 2000), this was not a focus of my research, and I didn't bring it up with my interlocutors. None of them ever mentioned it.

Ideologies of linguistic mobility elide this fact. This chapter examines how these ideologies work, and how the English-excluded respond to them.

Chapter Four examines the primary axis for social difference in urban India, class, focusing on the positive value attached to membership in the "middle class." It is an analysis of the ideological nature of class, and a demonstration of how discursive mobility works to shift focus from some identity categories to others. I focus on the discourses of upwardly mobile youth of the government schools and show how students engage in discursive mobility relating to class. Drawing on material given to me by my interlocutors, I incorporate eight elements into this analysis—income, occupation, education, caste, gender, geography, material culture, and morality. Language, which is a key aspect of class identity politics, is a running theme through discourses on class. Students in all three schools are invested in being perceived as middle class. However, there is a fundamental difference in how they define this category. Students in English Convent and Government English defined class in terms of income, occupation, and wealth. Students of Government Hindi were poorer than the other students. Therefore, in their definitions of middle class, moral codes (notably control over female sexuality) featured more prominently than wealth or occupation.

Chapter Five examines students' discourses about the differences between private and government schools. It also highlights how class difference affects the experience of schooling, in that students from government schools experience poorer quality schooling. In this chapter, as well, I demonstrate how these students create discursive structures to justify their social positions and their educations. They highlight morality, access to English, and middle class values as ways in which they are "better" than private-school students. Exploring these ideas provides valuable insight into what students, who are the end users of schooling systems, think about their education. Class becomes the primary marker of difference in these discourses. I highlight here the deep contradictions in the

discourses of government school students, as they both aspire to mobility and feel the need to defend their current social positions.

Chapter Six is a discussion of corporal punishment and gender within a broader context of power, not just as symbolic or structural power, but also as violence—raw power. I use this chapter to highlight one of the cardinal areas of difference between private and government schools—the teacher-student relationship. Identifying a particular expression of this relationship in government schools—female teachers hitting male students—I inquire into what it means in terms of age, gender, and class power relations in schools, and its broader implications in terms of the relationship between ideologies of obedience and violence as tools for enforcing the hierarchical interests of dominant groups. I emphasize, once again, how class is a critical factor in students' experience of schooling, and how a lack of social advantage can easily translate into being subject to violence.

Chapter Seven is a discussion of education, social mobility, and hypergamous ambition. It is the story of Lajjo, who was an English teacher in Government Hindi, and her attempts to negotiate a suitable marriage alliance for herself. Lajjo's story illustrates how mobility can have different meanings to different people. In this case, Lajjo defines it in terms of hypergamy, and education is a route to hyerpgamous possibility. It also shows how the success of mobility efforts is limited by social power structures. Where individual hypergamous desires outstrip socially ordained parameters, imbalances in affinal alliances result, and either the individual desire, or the social norm, must give way. I also show that education can often have unexpected consequences which actually have a negative impact on women's quality of life and ambitions for self. Thus, I further complicate the notion of educational mobility.

Chapter Eight, the conclusion, draws together the themes discussed in the previous five chapters. In it, I discuss why the ideology of educational mobility fails poor students, offer some thoughts on how this ideology can be changed (or its effects

mitigated), summarize my ideas on English and mobility, and describe plans for future research.

<center>Field Sites</center>

In India, public schools are called government schools, and Catholic schools are called convent schools. Except for where I describe the students' typology of schools, this is the terminology I will follow in this thesis.

English Convent

English Convent is a privately funded Catholic school run by nuns (Figure 1). It is a girls-only school, and is located in one of the most elite areas of Delhi. The school is organized in two sections, primary (grades one through five) and middle and senior school (grades six through twelve). The language of instruction (called "medium" in India) is English, and the students tend to be from wealthier families than those in the government schools. My plan was to work with twelfth-grade students in all three schools, but by the time I started research in English Convent, the twelfth grade students were busy working toward their pre-Board (school-leaving) exams, and I decided not to bother them at this most critical period of their school lives. I worked, instead, with students from the eleventh grade. The students in English Convent were all fluent in English, and used only English to talk with me, although I observed many of them using Hindi to talk to each other when they thought no teachers (or anthropologists) were around. The teachers in English Convent also spoke only English to each other and to me, with occasional words in Hindi or other shared regional languages thrown in.

Figure 1 Buses waiting to take students home from English Convent

Government Hindi

Government Hindi is a large school funded entirely by the Delhi government, situated in the south-west corner of Delhi, not too far from the international airport (Figure 2). It is co-educational, and the language of instruction is Hindi. I spoke primarily to twelfth-grade students in this school. The students from Government English came from a smaller range of economic backgrounds than those of English Convent or Government English. The Government Hindi students' parents largely worked as unskilled laborers, such as rickshaw pullers or vegetable sellers. Some of their parents had small general stores. The students were fluent in Hindi, but unable to conduct conversations in English, or understand me when I spoke in English, although they aspired to fluency in English. Except for the principal, English teacher, and Economics teacher, all the other teachers spoke to me in Hindi. All the teachers, including the ones mentioned above, generally spoke to each other in Hindi.

Figure 2 The front wall of Government Hindi

Government English

Government English is a centrally located, co-educational school (Figure 3). It is funded partly by a municipal organization, and partly by a school trust. It is considered a government school because the ultimate source of the money is the Delhi government. The language of instruction is, supposedly, English, though most teachers teach in Hindi. Teachers in this school, of all three schools, were most derelict in their duties. The students were from slightly higher economic backgrounds than those of Government Hindi. Their parents tended to work in government jobs, as clerks, personal assistants, or bank tellers. The students all understood English perfectly, but did not feel comfortable using it. All the teachers, with the exception of Lajjo, the English teacher, spoke to me in English, but to each other in Hindi. Lajjo spoke only in Hindi. However, when I was just "hanging out" in the staff room and not *formally* interviewing teachers, they generally

spoke to me in Hindi. I spoke to students of varied ages in this school, although I spent the most time with the twelfth grade.

Figure 3 Parents dropping their children off at Government English

Discourse and Social Change

This section is a brief introduction to my ideas on discourse and social change. A more detailed discussion of the role of language in identity formation and on linguistic ideologies can be found in Chapter Three. Language is a potentially powerful tool for effecting social change, because it is rooted in social and political power relations (Graham et al. 2007). Deborah Cameron states that "language us[e] is among the social practices through which people assert their identities—who they are or take themselves to be…it is also among the social practices through which people enact relations of domination and subordination" (2001:161). Sherzer and Urban observe that "the actual manifestation of language is…the utterances made by speakers under specific circumstances" (1986:2). Therefore, the parameters of identity and difference, such as

gender or class, are discursively produced and ideology is a factor in the production of identity (Bucholtz 1999; Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982).

Discourse, as talk, is marked by power relationships in that some people (or groups) have more control than others over who speaks, how, about what, and so on (Cameron 2001). Thus, Cameron (2001) says, analyzing discourse is a way to understand how such relations and identity processes are enacted or constructed through talk. Or, as Gumperz says, studying conversation can tell us a lot about "the communicative processes that underlie categorization, intergroup stereotyping, evaluation of verbal performance and access to public resources" (1982:vii). Farnell and Graham state that unmarked forms of discourse give us information about "language ideology, socialization, and ways in which gender, age, ethnic identity, and power relationships are linguistically constructed and received" (1998:422). In particular, paying attention to subaltern discourses of difference can give us critical insights into social power structures.[4]

A group that is more powerful (i.e. controls discourse) will be able to use discourse to effect social change more easily than one that does not have as much power. At the same time, people who lack discursive power are not merely consumers of discourse. For example, Mary Bucholtz notes that in studies of language and gender, women are no longer viewed as "victims of the masculine power of language…instead of invoking an invisible and omnipotent patriarchy as the source of power whereby women are interrupted and silenced, researchers have begun to examine the disruptions of this hegemonic system, the moments when women's voices interrupt the dominant discourse and subversive ideologies break through" (1999:6). If language can be used to index

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[4] Subaltern studies are rooted in South Asian history. I use the term here in the sense that Veena Das describes it, to index a "historical moment of defiance" (1989:312) through which we, as anthropologists, can legitimize the perspectives of those who have hitherto only been considered as the obects of domination (Das 1989).

identity (Cameron and Kulick 2003), it can also be used to attempt to change identity. That is, discourse can also be used to resist or reframe structures of power. There have been many studies of how language is used to index identity or effect social change, especially in the area of language and gender (see, for example, Bucholtz et al. 1999; Bucholtz 2004; Cameron and Kulick 2003). This dissertation, however, focuses on discourse specifically as a strategy for social mobility, moreover, one that is innately paradoxical and ambiguous.

The Need for Discursive Mobility

People who desire educational mobility in India often don't have access to the kinds of education that assure mobility—and they know it. At the same time, they are subject to, or at least aware of, dominant ideologies about educational mobility, which say they only need education to achieve mobility (see below). As Nitya Rao observes, "while differences in economic standing do contribute to the shaping of aspirations and goals, both educational and occupational, of young people, they do not necessarily accept this as a given, but seek other strategies for mobility" (2010:169). Therefore, they adopt other mobility strategies—in this case, they practice discursive mobility.

We can understand the concept of discursive mobility a little better by borrowing from Dipankar Gupta's (2000) framework of hierarchy and difference. Gupta says that social stratification cannot be understood only as "ranked gradations," and that there are other forms of social differentiation, such as aesthetic preferences, which are difficult to rank (although attempts to do so might be made). Therefore, difference and hierarchy are both elements of social stratification, and both affect how mobility attempts are made. In systems where hierarchies are strong and mobility is difficult, "a hitherto low-ranking class must necessarily step out of its location within the ranked hierarchy and energize an ideology of difference in order to justify and legitimize its quest for upward mobility" (Gupta 2000:23). One of the functions of discursive mobility is to emphasize difference in this way.

In the case of government school students in Delhi, systematic structural and social inequalities translate into educational inequalities and prevent poor students from government schools in Delhi from successfully participating in educational mobility. At the same time, dominant ideologies about mobility, language, and class obscure the fact that they will be unsuccessful in their mobility attempts. Government school students are aware of the disjuncture between the quality of the education they receive and the kinds of education which are socially privileged. Yet, they persist in their belief that their education will provide them access to social mobility—perhaps because it is all the hope they have. To bridge this disjuncture, they participate in discursive practices which focus on how their social positions, poor and underprivileged as they may be, are "better" than those that they aspire to. Nevertheless, they continue to aspire to them, creating fractured, contradictory discourses which, I argue, are emblematic of, and inherent to, processes of educational mobility.

Caste, class, or gender mobility is extremely difficult in India. For example, Sanjay Kumar et al. (2002) conducted a study of class reproduction and social mobility in India. They found that fifty-eight percent of people who originated from what they called the "salariat" class (salaried business or civil service occupations) were able to move into the salariat themselves. Only two percent of people from unskilled manual labor origins were able to move into the salariat. They attributed this to class inequality, and to the financial, social, and educational resources available to people from different social groups. I suggest here that attempts at both discursive mobility and educational mobility are responses to the difficulties of mobility in other areas. The ideology of educational mobility, in particular, lends itself to creating realms of possibility of social movement.

Ideological Aspects of Educational Mobility

Mobility efforts through education are severely limited because there is more to educational mobility than simply being educated. As I discuss in this dissertation, other

relevant factors are: differential access to education; differential access to privileged varieties of English; differential access to the right network of social contacts; and a resultant lack of awareness of, and access to, mobility opportunities. Mobility depends on being able to use social networks to access opportunities of which one must be aware. Of the cultural capital necessary for social mobility in contemporary India, knowledge of, and fluency in, English is most important.

The Ideology of Educational Mobility

Education, as a strategy of mobility, is ideologically positioned as a leveling mechanism, one that erases other differences and therefore facilitates social movement based on merit rather than ascription. As McNamee and Miller observe about the U.S. in The Meritocracy Myth, education is perceived as the "primary engine of equality and opportunity…the educational system recognizes and rewards the meritorious, regardless of the circumstances into which they were born, thus reducing inequalities based on nonmerit factors like birth or inheritance" (2009:114). However, the effects of education are dependent on the *kind* of education received (Faust and Nagar 2001; Jeffrey et al. 2008; Jeffery et al. 2005; LaDousa 2000, 2005, 2006), and that, in turn, is influenced by ascriptive factors.

In India, as I show in this dissertation, certain kinds of education are privileged. This means that if people are to achieve socioeconomic benefits from their education, it has to be of a quality that is perceived as "good," it has to be in a privileged language (in this case, English), and it has to be from the right educational institutions, which themselves index membership in privileged groups. The internal contradiction of the ideology of educational mobility is that these are not easily available to most people, and that educational mobility is ideologically presented as a reflection of personal ability. By corollary, a failure at educational mobility can be attributed to personal ineptitude rather than structural obstacles. As Nitya Rao says, "the experience of schooling is often contradictory: it carries the potential for inter-generational mobility, but it can also

contribute to reproducing social and gender inequalities and status hierarchies by justifying privilege and attributing poverty to personal failure" (2010:168). Not all schooling is created equal, and not all schooling can potentially lead to mobility. More often than not (as I show in this dissertation), the schooling of those who desire mobility is not of a quality or a variety that will help them in their mobility efforts.

Defining Mobility

Even if mobility is achieved through education, it is not an absolute good, and must be examined with sensitivity toward its effects. The idea of mobility needs to be investigated because, as this dissertation will show, it means different things to different groups of people. The definition of mobility is central to mobility strategies. People want different things out of life, and these shape their aspirations. For example, the government school students I spoke to discussed mobility in terms of more money, or better jobs (this chapter). For some women, though, mobility may focus on hypergamy (see Chapter Seven). The kind of mobility one desires depends on the kind of education one receives and one's awareness of opportunities. If the aspirational ideal perpetuated by dominant groups does not equate to that endeavored for by subordinate groups, the latter may find that, like Alice in the Looking-glass world, they keep trying to reach their destination, but don't get any closer no matter how hard they try.

Still useful is P. A. Sorokin's 1927 definition of mobility as the movement of individuals, objects, or values from one social position to another. He also observed that mobility may be vertical or horizontal. Horizontal mobility is shifting from one social position to another at the same level, and vertical mobility is movement from one social level to another. Vertical mobility is always conflicted, and Sorokin pointed out that "there has never existed a society in which vertical social mobility has been absolutely free and the transition from one social stratum to another has had no resistance" (1927:141). This is the ideological aspect of educational mobility—it seems to be a clear

path to raising social status when, in fact (as I show in this dissertation) it is most assuredly not.

The other idea of mobility that is relevant to this dissertation is M. N. Srinivas' (1966) idea of Sanskritization. He defines Sanskritization as "the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, 'twice-born' caste" (1966:6). He also distinguishes between *positional* and *structural* mobility. Positional mobility is where the hierarchical system is stable and its structure does not change, and structural mobility is where the social structure itself undergoes change. Government school students' discourses of class and morality can be constructed as discourses of resistance to dominant class ideology. Those discourses may be construed as attempts at structural mobility, as Srinivas defines it, through discursive mobility—the students attempt to alter their position in the hierarchical class system by discursively changing the definitions of classes.

To understand the contradictions inherent to practices of educational and discursive mobility, it is necessary to understand how social difference affects educational practice. In the course of this dissertation, I explain how students from different socioeconomic groups experience schooling differently, how social power structures (including gender) influence schooling practices and educational outcomes, how students perceive class and class difference, the role of English in ideologies of mobility, and students' perspectives on mobility.

<u>Education and Mobility: An Analysis of Ideology</u>

In a 2009 address before the U. S. Congress, President Barack Obama repeatedly returned to the theme of education, stating that education was a long-term investment which would help the economy grow. He said, "in a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a

pathway to opportunity, it is a prerequisite… And dropping out of high school is no longer an option. It's not just quitting on yourself, it's quitting on your country" (Obama 2009). In his 2010 State of the Union address, Obama even more directly related education to social mobility—"in the 21st century, the best antipoverty program around is a world-class education" (Obama 2010).

It may not seem as though Obama's statements have anything to do with government school students in India, but they do. Both are influenced by contemporary global flows of ideas and discourses, arguably the most important of which is the idea that education leads to mobility. This equation has spread through global educational policies and development discourses, such that education is a primary characteristic of discourses of development, especially of donor agencies such as the World Bank and DFID (the UK Department for International Development) (Jeffrey et al. 2008).[5] Education is an index of socioeconomic status and an axis for the organization of other such indices (LaDousa 2000). Jeffrey et al. note, "in the post-colonial era, narratives of upward mobility through formal education have proliferated. The media have often been at the forefront of this process, depicting educated people as confident, well-mannered and adept and the uneducated as the opposite. The state, educated entrepreneurs, and development agencies have been no less bold in their ideological work" (2008:63). Thus, education is perceived as a key element in social mobility (Jeffrey et al. 2008; LaDousa 2005; Srinivas 1966; Varma 2007).

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[5] *Development*, in this context, is usually defined as some variation on "industrialization, modern communications, and growth in gross national product" (Lewellen 2002:34), along with social changes such as improvements in women's "status" and child welfare, and, of course, education. It can be thought of as mobility for the entire nation. In somewhat different terms, Amartya Sen defines it as the "process of expanding the real freedoms which people enjoy" (1999:3), where freedoms imply such things as access to educational and health care opportunities, civil rights, and so on. In his view, education is not so much a path to development as it is an essential component of development.

Certain sets of ideas are cardinal to these discourses of education and mobility, and Obama's statements touch on some of them—"education leads to opportunity," "education is a path out of poverty," "education is a necessity in the global market," and, finally, "education leads to empowerment for the entire nation." There is one idea, though, that is fundamental to these discourses, without which the idea of educational mobility cannot be sustained. That is the idea that education overcomes social difference. So what do the forty-fourth President of the United States and a poor young student from a government school have in common? Both seem to fervently believe that education leads to mobility. However, they believe it from very different positions, in very different contexts, and with very different aspirations. In the end, as I show, these kinds of disparities make all the difference. Because of them, the equation succeeds for some people, and fails others miserably. The conversations transcribed in this chapter are with the students of Government English (GE) and Government Hindi (GH), a group of poor but ambitious students. I describe here some of the reasons they offer for desiring mobility. I also describe their anxieties relating to successful mobility, and question the link between education and mobility.

Does Education Lead to Mobility?

Education does not necessarily lead to development or mobility. These are also dependent on the ability to overcome other inequalities such as those of class, caste, or gender. Sadhna Saxena comments, "the disturbing fact, however, is that the recent developments in the field of education may have increased the overall enrolment rate and access but not necessarily equality. Evidence from recent school studies…shows that the process of increased universalisation is accompanied by growing privatisation and segregation by class, caste, and gender" (2007:415). While parents might be optimistic about their children's futures and the benefits of education to their careers, education does not always translate into better careers or opportunities. People may find that their education does not lead them to jobs which are better than their parents' (Jeffery 2005).

Elspeth Page observes (based on her research in Madhya Pradesh) that "parents dreamt of schools as sites of modernization that would enhance their daughter's marriage prospects and their son's opportunities for participation in economic, political and social processes. But most of them knew this would remain a dream. They were acutely aware of the inferior education offered to their children and of the vast inequalities of resources, power, and even respect between their communities and those of the teachers and educational administrators" (2005:189).

A. R. Vasavi (2003) states that aid agencies (and, consequently, governments) focus on setting up systems of education, often without attention to their infrastructure or the causes and relationships of social inequality. The result is that "a large number of communities are unable to mobilise for their education, as they are economically, socially, and politically marginal" (Vasavi 2003:73). Jeffrey et al comment, "power and culture mediate people's access to the freedoms that education provides" (2008:3). In other words, all education is not created equal, and unequal education, rather than leveling social inequality, can actually reinforce and reproduce it (Jeffrey et al 2008). Patricia Jeffery cautions us against naturalizing the relationship between education and development, and about "presumptions about the inherently transformative capacity of education…these days, however, education (and especially girls' schooling) is freighted with many expectations, more than it can realistically be expected to fulfill" (2005:15), and she says that, as social scientists, we must examine education as a social institution critically (2005).

Education doesn't always do what it is supposed to do, and when it doesn't, it can actually have negative effects. Jeffrey et al's (2005) research in Bijnor in western Uttar Pradesh shows that formal education can lead to small gains in emancipation from caste oppression. However, they also show that education does not translate into better, or more secure, employment. The lower caste people in Bijnor remained at a disadvantage within local hierarchies. There was also a gap between what they aspired to and what

they achieved. Thus, Jeffrey et al say that "in highly unequal societies with scarce job opportunties, the educational strategies of oppressed and disadvantaged groups may not follow a simple upward trajectory toward increasing investment and participation in formal education. Instead, there may be reassessment and reversal when the expected gains from formal education fail to materialise" (2005:274). Thus, when education did not translate into social or economic gains, lower caste parents in Bijnor stopped investing in educating their children beyond primary school.

This lack or desired benefits can also lead to processes of resistance where the connections between education and mobility are broken. For example, Peter Demerath (2001; 2003) notes that in Papua New Guinea, students may react to the high probability of post-school unemployment by resisting school authorities and reducing or stopping academic effort. In India, when schools have high rates of teacher absenteeism, poor teacher-student relationships, and insufficient infrastructure, students from impoverished backgrounds tend to drop out in high numbers (Vasavi 2003). In my research, though, even as parents and students observed that their education was not good enough to guarantee them social mobility, they continued to express faith in educational mobility. This contradiction is at the heart of why they turn to strategies of discursive mobility.

Student Views on Mobility and Education

As my dissertation shows, students from lower-income, government schools strongly desire mobility through education. However, they also believe that the quality of education they receive is not good enough to put them on par with students from upper-income private schools. Structural factors such as caste, class, gender, and language work against them and hold them down. Yet, as Rudolph and Rudolph observe, "governments are relying increasingly on the educational system to promote economic and political development" (1972:viii). What then? Should people stop educating themselves? Many students are aware that the education they receive is not good enough (see Chapter Five).

They are also aware that education, in itself, is not enough. Why do they keep attending school? What do they want? And how do they plan to get it?

The students I spoke to clearly associated education with mobility. When I asked them how one achieved mobility, they gave me two responses. The first was the "straight route"—through education and hard work. The second was the "crooked route"—through fraud or gambling. The point they were making was that money was necessary to successful mobility efforts. In lieu of student names, I have used GE/GH for the schools, and a number for each student.

LMP: Agar koī middle class se upper class jānā cāhe, to unko kyā karnā cāhiye?

If someone wants to go from the middle class to the upper class, what should they do?

GE3: Paḍhāī.

Study.

GE2: Sīdhā rastā kī teḍā? Kamāī, pehlī bāt. Kahīn se bhī. Robbery-vobbery. Yā to koī bandūk yā hathyār becnā.

The straight route or the crooked one? Earn lots of money, for one. From anywhere. Robbery, or arms dealing.

GE1: Riśvat.

Bribes.

LMP: To matlab pehle amīr bannā cāhiye?

So you mean one first has to become rich?

GE2: Hān. Sīdhā rastā hai kī paḍhāī karo, mehnat karo, jitnā paisā dete hain usko pūrā utilize karo. Disco-visco mat jāo, kuch bhī mat karo. Aur dūsrā method yeh hai, paise lāo, gambling karo. Cār hazār ko āṭh hazār banāo.

Yes. The straight path is study, work hard, use your money well. Don't go to clubs, don't do anything. And the other method is, bring in the money, gamble. Turn four thousand into eight thousand.

Despite the fact that they professed faith in education as a path to mobility, these students emphasized that, without money, mobility efforts would fail—and they did not have money. They were conscious that they needed a particular kind of education to be successfully mobile, and that their poverty stood in the way of their education.

GH1:   Ma'am middle class family me aise hotā hai jaise kī income bahut kam hotī hai aur bacca agar mān bhī lo bahut educated hai aur acchī percentage vālā hai—

In a middle class family, income is very low, and even if the child is very educated and does well in school—

GH2:   —Ma'am agar baccā cāhe to bhī yeh nahīn kar pātā.

—Even if the child wants to do this he cannot.

GH1:   To agar voh apne job ke liye apply kartā hai kisī acchī cīz me jaise kī medical science me kartā hai, engineering me kartā hai, to usko uske andar bāndhā ā jātā hai.

So if he applies for a job in some good field like medicine or engineering, there are obstacles in his way.

GH2 was of the opinion that a child from a poor family could not get access to a good education. This has been borne out by other research. For example, Rampal says that parents in Bihar, where she did her research, did not always have faith in the educational system's ability to grant their children a quality education (Rampal 2005). Yet, students continue to state that education is needed for mobility. The resultant conflicts in discourse and attitudes are evident throughout this dissertation. I believe they are unavoidable consequences of people with limited mobility options (and an awareness of these limitations) attempting to adopt dominant ideologies of mobility.

<u>Desiring Mobility: Conflicts and Contradictions</u>

These conflicts and contradictions reflect students' awareness of the social differences that affect the methods they could adopt for mobility and the results of such attempts.

"Dirty Water": Alienation and Mobility

The government school students I spoke to, while desiring mobility, were very concerned about potential alienation from their families and communities. Many of them were first-generation schoolgoers, and were already feeling the lack of congruence between the lives they experienced and learned about in school, and the lives they—and their parents—lived at home. Osella and Osella comment that "material advancement sometimes brings social advancement, but often involves suffering and separation" (2000:9). While the government school students worried about whether they would be able to fit into their communities once they achieved mobility, their parents complained that children were contemptuous of lesser educated or uneducated parents. As Patricia Jeffery comments, "commonsense understanding of 'education' rests on the assumption that it has a straightforwardly positive value. In various ways, however…education and schooling are not necessarily unambiguously life-enhancing or passports to success. Education *as it is practised* is profoundly ambiguous in its effects" (2005:13, italics in original).

I had a conversation with some students from Government English about schooling, and we started discussing whether they would have liked to attend private schools (which they associated with better education). I had asked them the same question earlier (see Chapter Five) and their answer had been "yes." Surprisingly, this time the answer was "no." When I asked them why, the students expressed anxiety about how someone who went to a private school would be able to return to his home environment, likening it to a fish who was used to clean water being dumped into dirty water. This analogy, with its reference to "dirty water" also indicates that students did not value their own home environments.

GE1:   Jaise, uskī family ka envinronment thoḍā acchā nahīn
         hai aur jo high society ke school me paḍh raha hai, to
         phir jaise hī voh…uske rehne kī ādat vohī rahegī, nā?
         Phir vohi environment cāhegā voh uske liye.

> *Like if someone's family environment is not good and they go to an upper class school, then he will get into the habit of living like that, no? Then he will want that environment.*

GE2:   To abroad jāega, to abroad jāne ke bād uskā jo rehnā-sehnā ho voh mostly high society vālā ho jāegā. To jaise hī voh vāpas apne parents ke pās jāegā, to voh ekdam alag type kā environment pāegā—

> *Then he will go abroad, and once he goes abroad his lifestyle will be upper class. Then when he goes home to his parents, he will find he is in an absolutely different environment—*

GE1:   Ma'am chote se baḍe me jā sakte hain par agar ham baḍe se chote me āenge to problems hogī, nā?

> *—We can go from small to big but if we go from big to small there will be problems, no?*

GE3:   Jaise āpne macchlī ko sāf pānī se lekar gande pānī me ḍāl diyā to voh reh nahīn pāegī, nā?

> *Like if you take a fish from clean water and put it in dirty water, it won't be able to live there, no?*

Conflicted Attitudes to Upper Classes

Students were also conflicted about the upper classes and whether they were "good" or "bad" (see Chapters Four and Five). On being asked, directly, if the upper classes were good or bad, students from Government English delivered their responses in terms of their own mobility efforts. Their opinions of the upper classes were often contrary, being located partly in a desire to join the upper classes, and partly in a need to present themselves as "middle class" and "better." As they said overtly, and as this conversation reveals, their qualitative judgments of the upper classes were nevertheless heavily influenced by their desire to participate in them.

GE2:   High society acchī nahīn hotī usme bahut problem hai lekin matlab—

> *Upper class isn't good. There are too many problems in it. But, I mean—*

GE4:   —Nahīn! Abhī agar ham apnī nazarīyā se dekhen is time to high society acchī nahīn hotī. Agar ham kyonkī

ham abhī dhīre-dhīre hī karke high society me jā rahe hain. To jab high society me jāenge to us samay hame voh acchī lagegī. Direct agar ūpar kā socenge to acchī nahīn lagegī. Dhīre-dhīre ā rahe hain, to thīk hai.

—No! Now if we look at it from our perspective, then the upper class isn't good. Because we are making our way into the upper class only slowly. So when we get there, we will like it. If we try to jump up there directly, we won't like it. We have to rise slowly.

GE1: Direct acchī lagtī hai. Jab ham vahān tak pahuncege nā to hamāre pe itnī tension śuru ho jāengī. Phir hame acchī nahīn lagegī.

Direct is better. By the time we get there we will be under so much tension. Then it won't look good to us.

GE2: Abhī acchī lagtī hai hame—"unke pās yeh hai, voh hai". Lekin uskī jindagī me kitnī tension hai voh voh hī jānte hain.

It looks good to us now, we say "they have this, they have that." But only they know how much tension is there in their lives.

Mobility as Suffering

The students also discussed how hard it was to achieve mobility. They frequently talked about cricketers or actors as examples to describe the movement of people from the middle classes to the upper classes. They stated that, to be upwardly mobile, one had to "suffer" and work hard before they could be successful. They used the example of Shah Rukh Khan, one of Bollywood's most successful film actors, as an example of the both the need to "suffer" for mobility as well as of the possibilities that hard work offered. To them, film actors and cricketers were symbols of possibility.

GE6: Mentality yehī hai kī bandā direct higher class me pahunch jātā hai. Suffer kartā hai middle se higher jāne ke liye.

The mentality is that you can reach the higher class directly. You have to suffer to go higher than the middle class.

GE4: Shah Rukh Khan ko dekh le! Suffer kartā hai, nā? Jab voh mehnat kartā hai, us vaqt to voh jānā nahīn cāhta high society me? Us vaqt to use yeh nahīn kahā jātā ki

hān bhai yeh deś kī hastī hai. Jab ban jātā hai tabhī to
kehte hain nā?

*Look at Shah Rukh Khan! He suffers, no? When he
works hard, doesn't he want then to be upper class? At
that point nobody says that he is a major public figure
in this country. Only when he becomes something they
say it.*

Reasons For Desiring Mobility

In this section, I discuss some of the reasons students gave me for desiring
mobility, which I elaborate in the course of the dissertation. Students were very
conflicted in their opinions of the "upper classes." As Chapters Four and Five reveal, they
considered the upper classes to be morally deficient and prided themselves on their own
high morals as members of the middle classes. At the same time, they desired to belong
to the upper classes. I decided to present them with this contradiction to see what they
would say:

LMP: Āpkī rāī me middle class culture jyādā acchā hai upper
        class culture se?

        *In your opinion, is middle class culture better than
        upper class culture?*

ALL: Yes, ma'am!

LMP: Phir āp middle class me rehnā cāhte hain yā upper class
        me jānā cāhte hain?

        *Then do you want to stay in the middle class or move to
        the upper class?*

At this, all the students burst into laughter and began to tease each other about
wanting to be in a group they did not respect. After a point they settled down and began
explaining to me why, exactly, they desired mobility.

Money

The first reason they gave me was, perhaps the most obvious one—money. The
students from the government schools had hopes, dreams, and aspirations, but they did

not have access to the networks that would give them knowledge of (and access to) the opportunities for mobility. Money and social contacts can be as important as educational qualifications in access to valued jobs. As Jeffrey et al state, "without sustained broad-based economic growth, or a substantial redistribution in material assets and social networking opportunities, educational incentives and institutional reform will not significantly improve the social standing and economic security of…disadvantaged groups" (Jeffery et al. 2005:274). These students had neither money nor a network of contacts they could draw on. What they did have was a burning desire to be richer nd move out of their current lifeworlds.

> LMP: Āp jab baḍe ho jāen, āp jaise apne parents ke age ke, kaun se class me honā cāhenge āp? Āp apne middle class se khuś hain?
>
> *When you grow up, when you are your parents' age, what class do you want to be in? Are you happy with your middle class?*
>
> GE7: Amīr bannā cāhtā hūn! Mere sapne hain!
>
> *I want to be rich! I have dreams!*

In other words, as mentioned earlier, you need money to make money. Rachel Dwyer (2000) says that the lower classes are marked by aspirations to increase cultural and symbolic capital through self-help, education, and specific consumer choices. The people aspiring to mobility cannot be too low in the hierarchy, though. Caroline and Filippo Osella note that there is some consensus in academic literature that "mobility is most pronounced in the middle of status and class hierarchies, notably among blue-collar workers, and is least likely at extremes, as among agricultural laborers and professionals" (2000:13). Pavan Varma (2007) observes that the middle classes may be highly internally differentiated, but they are all marked by a desire for upward mobility. Mobility is most easily possible for groups in the middle of a hierarchical structure, because they are high

enough to be able to be aware of and access opportunities for mobility, and not so low

that institutional mechanisms of caste and class hold them down.

> LMP: Āp upper class kyon bannā cāhte hain?
>
> *Why do you want to be upper class?*
>
> GH4: Ma'am , paisa. Paisā itnā ho ki apnī life sahī se bitā sake.
>
> *Money. We should have enough money to live a proper life.*
>
> GH1: Ma'am jyādā paisā bhī acchā nahīn hotā.
>
> *Too much money isn't good either.*
>
> GH3: Tumhe kaise patā?
>
> *How would you know?*
>
> GH4: Upper class me kyā hota hai jaise ki medical science me doctorate me dakhilā lenā hai, IAS me, to unko koī dikkat nahīn hotī hai. Paise ke hisab se. Aur agar middle family hai to usko bahut dikkat hotī hai beśak voh educated ho, kuch bhī ho. Aur paison kī bahut dikkat ho jātī hai, is kāraṇ voh kar nahīn pātā.
>
> *In the upper class, if they want to do medicine, a doctorate, IAS, they don't have any problems. Because they have money. And if it is a middle class family, they have lots of difficulty, whether it is educated or anything. And there is too much difficulty with regard to money, so they aren't able to do it.*

As mentioned earlier, the students believed that money was necessary to take

advantage of higher education opportunities, and believed that they they didn't have the

kind of money needed for such enterprises.

Respect

The second reason for mobility the students gave me was that upper classes got

more respect.

> GE3: Madam ājke time pe har middle class…upper class kā status hai unko ijjat milega. To islīye middle class vālā upper class bannā cāhtā hai.

*These days every middle class person…the upper
classes have status, they get respect. That is why middle
class people want to become upper class.*

There was no discussion of this because there was no disagreement. When GE3
said that the upper classes got more respect, there was general nodding of heads and the
rowdy, argumentative bunch I spent most of my time with didn't even argue for the sake
of argument, as they usually did.

For Their Parents

Students gave me a third reason for desiring upward mobility—they wished to
help their parents live better lives. However, this was not entirely constructed in terms of
a joyfully accepted duty (unlike Shravan Kumar).[6] Rather, the students seemed worried
and anxious about it, and described it as "pressure" on them to make good use of their
parents' investment in their education, and to ensure family mobility.

GE4: Middle class ke family ke baccon pen nā jyādā dabāv
hotā hai. Unke mātā-pitā socte hain ki hamārā baccā
hame high society me le jāega.

*Children from middle classes have more pressure on
them. Their parents think "our children will take us into
the upper classes."*

GE2: Aur ma'am high society vāle ma'am unke koī jyādā
pressure nahīn hotā. Unko patā hai agar unke zindagī
me unkā kuch ho nā pāye to voh unke parents unko
support karne ke liye kitnā bhī paisā lagā sakte hain.
Par ham pe hotā hai ki agar ham nahīn karenge to
parents kā paisā to barbād ho jāegā. Is liye ma'am yeh
pressure alag se pressure hotā hai.

*And upper class people don't have much pressure. They
know that if they don't if they don't make it in life their
parents will be able to support them. But for us, if we
don't make it, our parents' money will be completely
wasted.*

---

[6] A story from the Ramayana about a boy named Shravan Kumar who exemplifies love for, and
duty toward, his parents. They wanted to go on a pilgrimage, but were too old to walk, so he
carried them everywhere they wanted to go on his shoulders, presumably without complaining.

As GH3's response shows, they included their parents in this desire for mobility, affirming that one of their stated reasons for mobility was a desire to return their parents' investment in their education.

Better Jobs

Students from both schools also said they didn't want to do the kinds of jobs their parents did, whether it was the lower-level government jobs of Government English or the largely manual jobs of Government Hindi. The primary reason they gave was that those jobs did not earn enough money or opportunity for upward mobility.

LMP: Jaise āpke parents jo naukrī karte hain government me—

The work your parents do, like in the government—

GE2: Nahīn.

No.

GE1: Voh nahīn karnā cāhte.

That's not what we want to do.

GH1: Ma'am usme income kam hotī hai aur ham cāhte haĩ hamārā profession acchā – usse zyādā better ho. Jo kāfī better ho. Abhī yeh jo hamāre ham thoḍe nīce haĩ, par ham cāhte haĩ ki ham kāfī ūpar hõ. To isīliye ham log voh nahīh karnā cāhte haĩ jo hamāre parents…

There's very little income to be earned from that and we want our profession to be better than that. We are okay now, but we want to be very high up. So we don't want to do the jobs our parents do.

GH2: Icchā yahī hai, bāhar nikal ke āye yahān se, acchā nahīn hai.

We only wish to get out of where we are, this is not nice.

GH3: Aur parents hamāre jitnī mehnat kare ham yeh cāhte haĩ ki ham unse acchā karke unhe bhī acchī tarah se rakh sake.

And the amount our parents work, we want to do better than them so we can take them to a better situation as well.

Once again, they refer to their parents and their desire to do better for them. They also clearly express their need for mobility as a desire to "get out of where we are," something that might be taken in both as metaphor and literally, with reference to where they live.

Better Neighborhoods

Another reason students gave was that they wanted to move in "better society." As when they gave me the "dirty water" analogy, most of the students I spoke to were not satisfied with their neighborhoods.

> GH4: Ma'am culture to acchā hai lekin ham cāhte hain ki hamārā thoḍā society bhī acchī ho. Ham cāhte hain kī ham thoḍā sahī area me rahen, acche logon ke sāth rahen. Hamaare agal-bagal ke log agar acche nahīn ho to ham cāhenge ki ham thoḍā upper class me jāe.
>
> *The culture is good but we also want our society to be good. We want to live in a good neighborhood, with good people. If our neighbors aren't good then we want to move to slightly higher class.*

Again, their opinions were very conflicted. In Chapter Four, I show how they were very defensive of the neighborhoods they lived in, declaring them to be "good middle class" neighborhoods. However, as this excerpt shows, they are equally ready to say that their neighborhoods are not "good," and give that as a reason for desiring mobility.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed five reasons poorer students from government schools give for desiring mobility: increased wealth, increased respect, increased ability to look after the welfare of their parents and return their investments in children's education, access to better jobs than their parents', and the desire to move to better neighborhoods (as an index of "better" society).

I have also highlighted some of the contradictions in the discourses and aspirations of these students. They believe education is the only legitimate route to wealth, but that students of their social position could not get a good education. While they desire mobility, they are also very concerned about the effects of successful mobility, suggesting that it would lead to alienation from one's family and culture. They desire to join the "upper classes," but at the same time they depict them as immoral, in an effort to cast their own social group in a more positive light.

Thus I have shown that students' attitudes toward and discourses about education, social difference, and mobility are very ambiguous. Part of the reason for this is the ideological dominance of the notion that education leads to mobility, which directly conflicts with their own awareness of the poor quality of their education, and of the fact that it is not of a privileged variety. In the chapters to follow, I set out how these students experience differential access to quality education and examine the discursive mechanisms they employ to negotiate these contradictions.

CHAPTER TWO: TERMS, PERSPECTIVES, AND METHODS

In this chapter, I explain what I mean by *power* and *ideology,* which are terms important to my analytical perspective. I also explain my emphasis on students, highlighting how few studies in the anthropology of education focus on school students and describe my fieldwork, detailing my methodology and describing some problems I encountered as I began fieldwork.

Power and Ideology: A Theoretical Perspective

Educational inequalities are directed by social power structures and relationships, and define them in turn. Nita Kumar draws attention to these relationships and their colonial roots in India as she notes that "this difference in education lies most of all not in principle, but in the execution. School curriculum is not significantly different in different schools. The implementation of it is" (2007:8). Thus, she says that inequality in India is a product of a historical difference in access to privileged education (Kumar 2007).

A discussion of social difference, education, and mobility is incomplete without an examination of the power relationships which connect them, because "power and inequality mediate people's access to educational 'freedoms'" (Jeffrey et al 2008:31). For example, in Chapter Three I will demonstrate how some ideologies about English in India seem to highlight the possibility of linguistic mobility through learning English, but they actually mask other factors which impede social mobility, such as class or dialect. Here, I will concentrate on the broader issues and my approach to them.

Power and Ideology: Definitions

J. M. Whitmeyer (1997) defines power as the ability to achieve one's goals and interests better than others can, and as the ability to affect others' behavior, including their overt and covert beliefs and attitudes. According to Eric Wolf (1990) power could be a personal attribute, the imposition of one's will on another, or control over social

environments. It is inherent in all social relations such as production, kinship, family, or sexuality (Foucault 1980). Michel Foucault (1980) also says that to understand society we must understand social power, which orders individual bodies and behavior. Power and knowledge are inextricably linked in the Foucauldian paradigm:

> Once knowledge can be analyzed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power. There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge, and which, if one tries to transcribe them, leads one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region, and territory [Foucault 1980:69].

These relations of power operate through the production and control of knowledge. Some knowledges are dominant, while others are "subjugated." That is, they have been "disqualified as inadequate to their task…[they are] naïve knowledges, low down on the hierarchy" (Foucault 1980:82). Foucault refers to these power relations as *regimes of truth*, a term that includes discourses that are presented as truth, mechanisms which enable this presentation, and the status of those who speak this "truth." Although Foucault rejects the use of the word ideology, the concept of regimes of truth is analogous to ideology as I use it here, as these regimes are "sets of understandings which legitimate particular social attitudes and practices" (Cameron et al. 1992:2).[7]

Ideologies are a source of social power (DeMarrais et al. 1996; Irvine 1998). The term itself is something of a palimpsest (Silverstein 1992), having had many different-yet-related meanings through the history of its use. Ideologies, by definition, involve relations of power (Woolard 1998), and to use the term ideology "signals a commitment to address the relevance of power relations to the nature of cultural forms" (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994:58). Social power influences how people live, behave, and are perceived, and can ensure that resources that are positively valued continue to be so

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[7] Foucault thought the term "ideology" was too Marxist.

valued (see DeMarrais et al. 1996). Such power is brought to bear not just by actors in power relationships, but also through social institutions that exert power over certain social groups (Foucault 1980; Whitmeyer 1997). When social power has authority, it is recognized as legitimate in terms of the dominant systems of ideas (Rahman 2002) and these ideas are written into the power relationship itself. In short, power provides the tools for its own perpetuation. These tools are ideological and, therefore, in such a schema, power and ideology are conceptually inseparable.

The Practice of Power and Ideology

Power can also be exercised through coercion and the creation of consent (Dickey and Adams 2000; Fairclough 2001), and ideology is the prime means for the latter (Fairclough 2001). In this case, ideology is akin to a Gramscian notion of hegemony, where hegemony is a form of control exerted by dominant groups. Antonio Gramsci suggests that dominant groups determine the direction of social life for all groups, under the guise of "consent" by subordinate groups (Hoare and Smith 1971). He notes that "this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (Hoare and Smith 1971:145). For example, ideologies relating English to social privilege and social mobility are hegemonic in India.

Pierre Bourdieu (1995) states that non-dominant groups reproduce dominant ideologies even in resistance, because their knowledge is also organized by the dominant system of classification. When people accept power structures, it is often because they cannot imagine alternatives, because they see them as natural, or because they see them as divinely designed or having positive value (Hall 1982). For example, Diane Austin says that while her working class informants in 1970s Jamaica "often argued that inequalities of wealth placed them where they were" they nevertheless tended to accept that it was their own lack of qualifications or personal ability that led to their being poor (Austin 1983).

Michael Mann argues that ideological power entails control over the meanings of social norms and values, aesthetics and rituals (1986; 1993), where one set of meanings is presented as being more "true" than others (Foucault 1980; Silverstein 1992; Whitmeyer 1997; Wolf 1990). Norman Fairclough states that ideology is the "power to project one's practices as universal and common-sense" (2001:27), or, as Bourdieu (1995) observes, ideologies serve particular interests, though they present these as universal interests. Ideological power is exerted through control over institutions such as churches, educational institutions, and mass media which contribute to the creation and perpetuation of systems of norms, values, rituals, and privileged skills, such as fluency in a particular language (see Whitmeyer 1997).[8] This power, which, adapting from Wolf (1990), we may also call structural power, organizes the social, political, and economic arenas such that some kinds of behaviors and identities are rendered more valuable than others.[9] One may also conceive of structural power, understood in this way, as leading to the enactment of structural violence upon those who do not have it.

Powerful social groups decide "what technology, what religion or economic system, or which languages should be imposed on the peripheral regions, and the specifics of this imposition will vary from one place to another so that the domination is locally effective" (Singh 2003: 708). These groups work to create and maintain the supremacy of their ideologies as a way of reinforcing their dominant position. Although dominant ideologies are presented by their holders as sacred and unquestionable, they are, nevertheless, always contested, resisted, and not always stable (Bourdieu 1995; Briggs 1998; Fairclough 2001; Foucault 1980; Gal 1991; Gal 1998; Irvine and Gal 2000;

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[8] Although J.M. Whitmeyer (1997) suggests that the power technique that affects long-term behaviors and creates privileged skill sets is a distinct category of power, I believe it could very easily be subsumed under the rubric of ideological power.

[9] Wolf (1990) uses "structural power" to refer to the allocation of social labor, affecting the possibility or impossibility of different kinds of behavior. I have extended the term to broader application.

Kroskrity 1998; London 2003; Wolf 1990; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). Contestation, in Charles Briggs' (1998) formulation, is a critical part of how ideologies create and perpetuate dominance—ideologies are, therefore, processes involving struggle (Fairclough 2001; Foucault 1980; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). They must be constantly reaffirmed (Wolf 1990). Social organizations and hierarchies are thus active, dynamic, and ideological processes, rather than static products (Wolf 1990).

Power, Ideology, and Education

Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron state that "all pedagogic action…is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (1977:5). Such pedagogic action, they say, usually reflects the interests of the dominant classes.[10] It is fruitful to discuss power contextually, to develop categories of power corresponding to the various contexts within, or through, which it operates. Joseph Alter, in fact, defines power *as* context: "power is not so much a thing that one group has and holds over another group as it is a context which defines the interaction of individuals and groups...what is useful about seeing power as a dynamic field of discursive practice is that it points in a direction where one can look at what might appear to be unambiguous control and see a more comprehensive set of nuanced interconnections" (2002:134, 135). Doing research in schools requires that one be aware of the ideologies and power structures present in them and perpetuated through them. These are not the same from school to school and, as my research shows, not even the same within schools. Paying attention to the contexts of power and viewing it (as Alter suggests) as discursive practice allows us to unpack ideological and power relationships in the context of schooling and education, specifically exploring the ideological connections between class, language, gender, education, and mobility.

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[10] Although there is more to their use of the term "pedagogic" than schools, it does include educational systems.

Schooling and Youth: A Methodological Pespective

I add another dimension to my research by emphasizing and foregrounding the perspectives of students. Given that relatively little anthropological research, even that conducted in schools, focuses on the discourses of school students to the extent that I have done here, my dissertation offers rare insights into students' worlds. I also examine how social power structures are reproduced in and through schools, focusing on how these affect students, how students respond to them, and how they develop their own discourses and ideologies around them. In this section, I discuss some of the literature on youth and schooling relevant to this aspect of my methodology.

Schools are important arenas for the perpetuation or maintenance of ideologies and power structures (Jeffery et al 2005). In the case of the anthropology of India, though, more attention needs to paid to schooling. Veronique Bénéï states, "schooling has yet to be considered a worthy object of anthropological scrutiny" (2005:141). Dell Hymes commented in 1972 (about the U.S.) that "there are thousands upon thousands of classrooms, but only a handful of interested and capable observers" (1972:xvii). Unfortunately, thirty-eight years later, this still holds true for many parts of the world. In India, studies of educational systems have tended to focus on higher education rather than primary or secondary schooling (Rudolph and Rudolph 1972). Within the research that has been done on schooling, many scholars have studied how it reproduces socioeconomic inequalities. Patricia Jeffery, for example, considers this an important area of inquiry as she asks: "do they tend to reproduce (or undermine) entrenched social, cultural, and economic inequalities? How do pupils and their families perceive the value of education for them as they…make their transitions to the diverse adulthoods that characterise contemporary Indian society?" (Jeffery 2005:14). In other words, what impact do differences in educational systems have on Indian society?

Studies have also been conducted that look into the differences between private and public schools, especially with regard to quality of education, facilities, and

infrastructure (see Chapter Five). While much of this work has been devoted to exploring parents' and teachers' perspectives on schooling, there has been less focus on the perspectives of youth. Even when scholars have examined student perspectives, they have tended to focus on how students react to schooling practices and/or dominant social ideologies (see, for example, Davidson 1996; MacLeod 1987; Willis 1977). Consequently, we know very little about what students think about the worlds in which they live (Jeffery 2005).

Students do not simply respond to, resist, or regurgitate dominant ideologies, schooling practices, and parental discourses. As Jeffery says, "children do not always straightforwardly and obediently imbibe what adults think they should, even when that is clear-cut. Children are not simply sponges, passively accepting the values and skills their education requires them to iternalise" (2005:26). They also create their own discursive and ideological worlds. Mary Bucholtz (2002) states that we must understand youth as a cultural category. Focusing on the role of adults in the creation of youth culture elides "the more informal ways in which young people socialize themselves and one another" (Bucholtz 2002:529). The cultures of young people are certainly influenced by dominant social ideologies, but they are also deeply influenced by the perspectives and discourses of other young people.

Meenakshi Thapan notes that "cultures of adolescence are complex in a heterogeneous, pluralist and changing society like India where they are shaped by class, gender and educational status and mediated by the peer group, marriage and childbearing" (2005:216). Bucholtz says, "youth as a cultural stage often marks the beginning of a long-term, even lifelong, engagement in particular cultural practices" (2002:526). Personhood, therefore, is not so much a static state as it is a dynamic process (Bucholtz 2002).[11] In my research I noticed that student ideologies are dialogically

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[11] It is also a political process. The notion of Indian personhood, for example, had a long history in scholarship where individuality was analytically abandoned in favor of social structure.

created, across (but incorporating) school, class, language, and gender boundaries. These ideological worlds are critical components in the identities of youth, which, in turn, are key elements of adult identity.

To understand ideological processes in schools and processes of social identity formation, therefore, it is imperative to investigate how school students organize, negotiate, and resist their discursive and ideological worlds. Bucholtz states it very clearly: "the lived experience of young people is not limited to the uneasy occupation of a developmental way station en route to full-fledged cultural standing. It also involves its own distinctive identities and practices, which are neither rehearsals for the adult 'real thing' nor even necessarily oriented to adults at all" (2002:531-32). If we are to understand how people come to be social persons, we must treat children and youth as social individuals in their own right, and accord their narratives the same respect we do those of adults.

Youth, as Ritty Lukose observes, is a "social category that sits at the crossroads between familial and educational contexts" (2009:13). However, the literature on youth and schooling has some lacunae. The anthropology of youth often neglects schooling. Bucholtz (2002), for example, makes only brief mention of education, and that only when providing examples to eludicate the points she is making. The anthropology of education, in turn, tends to neglect the perspectives of school students. Bénéï (2008), for example, recognizes that children's voices are important pieces of her research. However, she seems uncertain of how to situate young people's voices. Calling it a writing

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Kalpana Ram notes that "in their anxiety to posit India as not-West, anthropological texts have sought and found Indian identity primarily in a sociology of caste, kin and village rather than in a sociology of recognizably 'modern' themes such as class, urbanization, and migration" (1992:591). Thus she says that the focus on caste, when it came to India, reduced Indian personhood to an expression of caste (or other unitary) hierarchies—as opposed to a "Western" emphasis on individualism, and this focus on hierarchy erases all internal difference (Ram 1992). Or, as Mattison Mines (1988) says, a focus on Indian "hierarchy" led to a scholarly ignoring of other forms of social and individual behavior.

"experiment," she ends up locating them between chapters as "vignettes" or "interludes," not grounding them in the main body of text as incorporated parts of her ideas and data.

There is, though, important anthropological scholarship which brings the two together, such as the work of Peter Demerath (1999; 2000; 2001; 2003), Kathryn Woolard (1997), and Marjorie Goodwin (2006). Demerath notes that "young people in contexts of rapid and contentious social change are cultural innovators who constantly negotiate competing discourses, contradictory ideologies, and often limited opportunities…an enduring problem is that the meanings they construct about schooling can delimit their future lives" (2003:136). Acknowledging youth as full social persons becomes particularly important when one studies schools.

Schools, like many other institutions, are physically and socially enclosed. They have walls, gates, and geographic boundaries. They also have social boundaries. They are, therefore, highly concentrated social worlds. To borrow from Fredrik Barth, the social worlds included within these boundaries entail a "complex organization of behaviour and social relations" (Barth 1969:15), which is a rich area of study. Identifying another person as a member of the group involves acknowledging shared ways of being (Barth 1969). People who belong to schools share a sense of belonging to the institution, with all its attendant beliefs and practices, and also share participation in school ideologies. To gain entry to the ideological bases of this imagined community requires investigating *all* potential sources of discursive contribution to these ideologies, and children are particularly important.

Nita Kumar observes that "what makes a pedagogic institution different in so far as it is a space for children, and children are in their turn actors, albeit subaltern ones, and the commodity being produced is not only citizenship but also intelligence and stupidity, and the control of language and narratives" (2007:221). Schools ideologies are often influenced by dominant social beliefs. For example, the school, as an institution, usually has an official ideology. In my research I found that in the case of the government

schools, there was an ideology of mobility where schooling was tied to upward mobility in a very direct way. During a school event, the visiting government dignitary who was the "chief guest" for the event told the students that they were poor, but they could "rise up" and achieve much if they worked hard at their education. In the convent school, it was an ideology of "discipline"—in terms of language spoken as well as physical, bodily discipline (see Chapter Five). The language of education and the value associated with it are also highly ideologized, as will be discussed in detail in this thesis. These official ideologies are produced and reproduced by the state, the school administration, teachers, and media. They are also maintained or changed by the people who are subject to them— students. Young people in schools respond to and resist these official ideologies. They also often ignore them, or incorporate them into new ideologies which are created in dialogue with discourses generated by students from other schools (see Chapter Five). Moreover, students are not a homogeneous group—there are significant identity and status varations within them. Thus, studying what young people say and do is an important part of understanding schools.

At a more general level, there is a noticeable paucity of literature in anthropology that deals with both children and schooling. My dissertation is an important contribution to both fields, bringing them together in a way that has repercussions for future studies of both areas. Although it includes conversations with adults as well, my dissertation focuses on young students, foregrounding and privileging them. I seek to give them their full status as legitimate narrators and interlocutors and recognize that their lifeworlds are of equal social and cultural importance as those of adults.

A Note on My Fieldwork

My favorite story about fieldwork is from E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1976). He describes how he asked reknowned fieldworkers for advice before he began his own. The most pithy (and obtuse) suggestion was from Malinowski, who told him not to be a

bloody fool. It's not clear whether Malinowski told him not to be a bloody fool in the field, or called him a bloody fool for asking, but I took his advice to heart, resolving that I might be the model anthropological buffoon, but would not, under any circumstances, be a bloody fool. I wasn't sure what it meant in the abstract, but was sure that I would know if I were being one.

The Plan

Armed with Malinowksi's opaque sagacity and some excellent advice from my own committee ("Follow your data! Write fieldnotes everyday!"), I began my fieldwork in July 2008.[12] I intended to visit three schools in New Delhi to investigate discursive connections between language ideology, education, gender, and social mobility. I aimed to illuminate the relationship between language ideologies and processes of social mobility in India by determining the extent to which English-language education is positively valued among the lower and lower-middle classes in India. I wanted to understand institutionalized ideologies about language of education and socioeconomic mobility by: (1) studying how these ideologies were reinforced or subverted by teachers and school administrators in the school setting; (2) parental attitudes toward language of education and social mobility (with particular reference to different varieties of Indian English); and (3) whether social factors such as gender, caste, and regional affiliations affected these attitudes.

I intended to conduct my fieldwork in the primary (elementary) sections of three schools in Delhi. I thought that these three schools all catered to the same "class" of people (lower to lower middle class), while engaging with three different languages of instruction (English, Hindi, and Tamil), and at least two different regional identities (North Indian and Tamilian). By working in an institutional setting and holding class

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[12] I completed fieldwork in March 2009, and this dissertation is based on that research, and fieldwork conducted in Delhi in the summer of 2006.

constant, I hoped to reveal attitudes toward different languages, originating from—and reinforcing—different language ideologies and regional language attitudes.

The three schools were all government schools, and were selected for the difference in language of instruction and because they were accessible to socioeconomically oppressed groups. My expectation was that these three schools would present at least three different language ideologies, representing the dominant attitudes of speakers, which would influence how and where children are schooled. This would give me some insight into the relationships between language ideology, education, and social mobility.

When I went into the field, I expected my project to change a little. I have heard stories, through my studenthood, about people who went into the field to do one thing, and came back having done quite another. In these academic apocrypha, the fieldworker often takes at least five years to finish collecting data, sometimes ten. Sometimes the field simply swallows them up, and they never return. The imagined horror of such inefficiency intruding on my neatly planned research didn't quite keep me up nights, but it lurked in the hidden corners of my brain. And so, as I entered the field, I promised myself that this wouldn't happen to me. "I will rein in my fieldwork," I said, "I will control its every move and direction, and make sure it doesn't change too much." With this happy thought, I set off for my first day of fieldwork.

Anyone who has ever done any ethnographic research—or, indeed, anyone who has ever dealt extensively with people—would be laughing at me by now. I might even be laughing a little bit at myself, but only if no one is listening. It occurred to me, much later, that fieldwork is not only mutable, it is organic. It grows and changes as if it has a life of its own—which, indeed, it does. As I was thinking about my field experiences, another metaphor occurred to me—fieldwork is a bit like a tiger that you have by the tail. You hang on tight, hope it doesn't swallow you, and try your best to steer it in the direction you want it to go.

The Changes and Struggles

My first day of research was memorable for how quickly it destroyed my dreams of control over my research. I walked into my first field site, the Tamil school, and found my way to the principal's office. She seemed a little unsure of who I was, and I showed her my letter of permission, with her signature on it. She nodded, and sat down and talked to me about my research plans. The conversation was less than encouraging. I asked her if I could spend two months in the school. She replied swiftly, "two weeks, maybe. Two days, even better." I asked her if I could observe classes. She refused flatly, saying it would make the teachers nervous. When I asked her if I could interview her, she asked me why I would want to do that. I grew nervous, and asked if I could talk to students. She refused again, saying that they were busy all day. I offered to talk to them in their lunch break, and she told me sternly that they needed their lunch break to eat lunch.

A little desperately, I asked if I could simply sit in the school field and watch activities, hoping I could prove to her that I wasn't going to be a problem. She refused once more, telling me it would be too distracting for the students. "In fact," she concluded, "I don't think I can let you into my school at all. I don't think other schools will allow it either." She smiled at me (rather patronizingly, I thought) and said, "why don't you go away and ask them, and come back and tell me what they say." I saw my fieldwork running away from me and said to her, somewhat plaintively, "But I have a letter of permission from you! In response to my written proposal!" She looked suspiciously at the letter, then back at me, and said, "Yes. Well, I changed my mind."

I returned home, one day wasted, and my first experience of dissertation research a nightmare. I worried about what I would do next, and was considerably disheartened by the fact that, not only had I been denied access to my first field site, I had spent two unfruitful hours wrangling with a rather inflexible lady. I feared for my other two schools, and was worried about whether the other people I dealt with would also be rude to me. Choking down my worries, I calmed myself with the thought that, even if I

couldn't control other people, I could at least be efficient. I resolved to go, as soon as possible, to the school I had planned to go to next—Government English. I approached the principal of the Tamil school again, after I had done some research in the other schools, but she remained resolute in her refusal. Other people who knew her well advised me against asking her for permission again, and I gave up.

I made my way within the week to Government English. The principal, Mrs. Rawat, was on "rounds"—going through the school making sure all was as it should be. She did this every morning, I realized later, and I accompanied her a few times later in the year. This morning, though, I waited in her office for her, not without some trepidation. I needn't have worried at all. She walked in with a cheerful smile on her face and sat down next to me. She offered me the first of many cups of tea, fed me biscuits, and listened carefully when I told her what I wanted to do. When I finished my tea, she asked the secretary to take me to the fourth grade, and gave me the run of the school. I was also given permission to spend as much time as I needed with the science section (students who have taken science electives) of the twelfth grade. This turned out to be a good thing, since I discovered that I was near-hopeless at eliciting information from small children. I managed one conversation with the fourth grade, which ended in less than twenty minutes. They got bored swiftly, and begged me to tell them a story instead. I was bored, too, so I gave up, and obliged.[13]

My next attempt to talk to younger students also fizzled out. I was asked by a couple of fifth-grade students to accompany them to the first grade, which they were going to "mind" (monitor) during a teacher's absence. Amused at the thought of tiny children monitoring other tinier children, and hoping to talk to the older girls, I agreed. As I walked into the class, a very small child I had never seen before ran up to me,

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[13] I began with a traditional "Once upon a time, there was a princess…" and had them play a game where each person added one line to the story.

grabbed me around the knees, and whispered, "I love you." She then collapsed on the floor, whooping with loud, slightly manic laughter. The older fifth-grader looked gravely at me and said "voh āpse pyār kartī hai" [*she loves you*]. I weakly indicated my understanding, whereupon she said, seriously, "āp mere best friend banoge?" [*will you be my best friend*]. Her friend then crossly said, "nahīn! Ma'am merī best friend hai!" [*no! ma'am is my best friend*]. This went on for a few minutes, rapidly escalating, until I frantically reassured them that I could be best friends with both of them. Then I beat a strategic retreat to the teachers' lounge, and then and there decided to focus on older students, none younger than fourteen. I found them far less disconcerting. The problem, really, is that I am not good at forming informative relationships with younger students.[14] So I abandoned any plans to do research among elementary school children.

Nevertheless, I got more information at Government English than I could have hoped, and I learnt more from Mrs. Rawat, and from working there, than I would have thought possible. My experiences in that school shaped my fieldwork. The students were affectionate and friendly, and ready to share as many of their thoughts and ideas with me as I wanted. Working in Government English gave me the confidence to do the rest of my fieldwork, despite all the other problems that came my way. Of all the people I worked with and interviewed, Mrs. Rawat and her students were among the few people who didn't make me feel like an outsider but, rather, a friend.

While I was working in Government English, I decided to visit the school that would be my second field site, while I figured out what I was going to do about my third school. In August, I went to the municipal school for which I believed I had permission.

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[14] It is not that young children do not have opinions, or that they do not notice the world around them. Communicating with younger children and successfully eliciting the kind of information I needed is a bit of an art, I think. It requires communicative competence in a specific kind of language, one which is comprehensible to small children. I do not have enough experience practicing this kind of language. Moreover, I simply did not find younger children as interesting to be around, which was a fairly serious problem, flippant as it might sound. Much of my enthusiasm for my research came from the enjoyment I got out of spending time with teenagers.

It was not too far from my apartment. The neighborhood I stayed in had over 400,000 residents, and a large number of schools of varying quality. I spent about half an hour trying to find the school for which I had a letter from the municipality (it wasn't evident from the address). Finally, I found a municipal school. The school entrance was protected by a small gate and deep potholes. I made my way through an overgrown field to a broken-down building. I asked the gentleman I saw outside where I could find the principal, and he said that he was the principal. I went with him to his office and explained my project. He listened very carefully and told me, when I was finally done, fifteen minutes later, that I had the wrong school. I thanked him for his time and left.

I asked around outside and found another municipal primary school that seemed more likely to be the one for which I had received permission. I then went to that school. The principal was very nice, and introduced me to one of his teachers, who was doing her Ph.D. in education. We chatted amiably about my project for a while. Then he told me that I was in the wrong school. "In any case," he said, "you will learn nothing from talking to small children. Talk to older children." Given my experiences in Government English, and my realizations about my ability to elicit information from children, I believed him. So I wandered around a little longer, and found a third school, which was a girls' school. The principal shook her head at me within moments of my starting to explain my project. "That's not our school," she said, and politely indicated I should leave. None of these principals were able to tell me where the school I was looking for was, and kept directing me to each other.

I was quite despondent by this time, and wondering if I could do all my fieldwork in one school. I was convinced the school I was looking for was either a figment of someone's imagination, or existed in a pocket dimension outside the reality I could access. I went back home and explained my problems to the lady who worked as domestic help in my parents' house. She listened patiently and told me about another school, a better school, a few minutes' walk from my house. Perhaps I could do my work

there? Disbelieving and grumpy, I made my way to this school the next day. The school's front gate was hidden in a sunny, dusty alley, and it proclaimed that the Delhi Government ran the school. The school building was large, relatively clean, and an odd hexagonal shape. The principal, Mrs. Gupta, was very friendly, and told me to come back with the appropriate letter of permission. I managed to get this letter very quickly, and she welcomed me to her school and allowed me to work with the twelfth grade. I still needed a third school. I decided to I was going to try to find a private school, and focus more on the class axis. Things fell into place about halfway through my fieldwork, and I got permission to do research in English Convent.

Methodologies

Despite the perplexing changes in my research plans, my basic methodology remained the same as originally planned. Operating in a more or less linear fashion, I began my research in one school, moved on to the next, and then to the third, rather than trying to do research in all three schools simultaneously. As a result, I was also able to go back to each school to refine ideas or explore things to which I had not paid enough attention the first time around. I began my research in Government English, moved on to Government Hindi, and finally to English Convent. Occasionally, if a school was on holiday or had exams, I would visit another school so I didn't waste any time. I was able to keep my research going at a steady pace and was pleased not to have to spend much time waiting for interviews or running around for permission letters. Apart from the initial fiasco at the Tamil school, I did not have to spend time sorting out logistical details, in large part due to groundwork done by my parents (both retired bureaucrats), who used their network of professional contacts to help me with my permissions before I even arrived in India. Also, because I already spoke Hindi, I did not need to spend any time learning the language before I started research.

Languages in Conversation

In Government English and Government Hindi, all interviews with students and parents were conducted largely in Hindi, with a smattering of English thrown in, usually in the form of commonly understood loan words or phrases. When I asked questions in English, responses were generally in Hindi. They also contained some interesting codeswitching, which I discuss in the note that precedes my chapters. The interviews with teachers were either in English or Hindi, depending on the choice of the teacher, and both principals spoke to me largely in English. The teachers spoke to each other in Hindi. In English Convent, all interaction, including between teachers, occurred in English, with only the occasional Hindi word thrown in. The only time I heard the principal using Hindi was when she was reprimanding a parent over a student's misbehavior. I was outside the office, and noted that the entire interaction was in Hindi.

Methods

In each school, my plan was to interview the principals, the English teachers, at least two other teachers, at least ten students, and at least five parents. I also planned to collect demographic data on schools, attend special events and assemblies, and observe and videotape classes and other curricular activities. Finally, I planned to administer surveys to students and parents, and use a variation of Lambert, et al.'s (1960) matched guise technique to evaluate stereotyping processes, values attributed to specific varieties of English, and how people imagined themselves linguistically and socioeconomically (see Appendices).

To a large extent, I managed to do what I set out to do. The principals of Government English and Government Hindi were willing to participate in interviews and allowed me to sit in their offices or follow them around for extended periods of time. The principal of English Convent's middle and high school section refused to talk to me or allow me to interview her. In fact, when she saw me heading toward her, she would turn around and walk the other way. However, Sister Mary, the principal of the elementary

school section of English Convent, was willing to talk to me. The English teachers in all three schools, especially, developed a professional interest in my project and were happy to offer their opinions on English education in India. I also found other teachers willing to be interviewed in every school.

I spent time in the staff rooms (teachers' lounges) of all three schools, which was very fruitful. I was able to attend various special events in all three schools, including the preparation and rehearsals for these events. These rehearsals were especially valuable, since teachers were usually not present, and they tended to be rather informal affairs, inflected with a sense of the carnivalesque. I was also able to talk to a few parents from each school, although they were extremely guarded in their opinions. Demographic data were a little harder to come by, since I wasn't able to access school files, and the principals were all somewhat reticent, for reasons I did not understand and were not adequately explained to me. I am still not very clear why, but I suspect that it would have been a lot of work for everyone involved, and people were simply not willing to do that for me.

Luckily for my research, I did not have any problems at all in talking to older students. In fact, talking to them was so much easier than talking to anyone else that it decided my research focus. My meetings with students were of three types. Group discussions occurred in the classroom, and usually involved at least thirty students at one time. Group interviews were the students' preferred mode of communication. They involved interviewing at least three to four students (usually about ten) at a time. They occurred in the classroom, during "free periods" or recess, or outside, during extra-curricular activities or PE. I also conducted individual interviews. In fact, I spent rather far more time with students in all three schools than I should have been able to. None of these encounters were supervised in any of the schools, and all my interactions with students were conducted in a state of semi-to-uncontrolled chaos. Without the presence of an authoritarian adult (I did not, apparently, fall into this category), the students were

loud, argumentative, and extremely vocal in their opinions.[15] Often, five to ten students would talk loudly to me while simultaneously yelling at each other, a situation that immensely hindered my ability to understand what they had said when I replayed my audio recordings.[16] They were also open, forthcoming, and absolutely enchanting. I was pulled into their daily life as surely as if I belonged there—as I noted in my field notes from Government English, "I am full of affection for this group. Young, attractive, enthusiastic—I cannot *help* but be drawn into their crazy, laughing world." And, when I left, they accepted it with (rather humbling) amnesic cheerfulness—when I was there, they looked for me everyday and incorporated my presence actively into their school lives. When I was done, I was gone, and they never called, emailed, or attempted to stay in contact unless I initiated it.

Recording Data

Although all the students allowed me to record their interviews and discussions, either voice or video, adults weren't as forthcoming. Most of the teachers I interviewed refused to allow me to use my voice recorder during the interviews, and I had to rely on pen and paper. Often, this, too, was refused, and I would run "to the bathroom" or lurk on stairways fairly often, frantically scribbling in my notebook before I forgot everything I had been told. The result of this, of course, was that, for the entire duration of my research, female teachers would solicitously ask after the state of my stomach, unaware that my frequent trips (supposedly to the bathroom) were actually surreptitious note-taking expeditions. The male teachers probably also wondered about it, but were perhaps simply too polite to ask. I decided that, since I have an extraordinarily unreliable

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[15] Amartya Sen, in <u>The Argumentative Indian</u>, suggests that India has a hoary "argumentative tradition" and says "prolixity is not alien to us in India. We are able to talk at some length…we do like to speak" (2005:3).

[16] See Graham (1993) for a well-theorized discussion of similar problems in *warā* meetings in Brazil.

memory, this reputation of a permanent state of "Delhi belly" was a small price to pay for recording data.

Survey Distribution and Collection

The surveys were easy to give out—I simply handed them out in class. They were much harder to collect. Students wouldn't fill them out. They wouldn't take them home to their parents. They wouldn't bring them back. They forgot. A lot. After a few months of this, and feeling the pinch of repeated photocopying, I changed my strategy. I asked the principals to allow me to meet the students in one class they had free. During this class, I administered both student surveys and the matched guise technique experiment. Unfortunately, I still had no control over parental surveys, and took what I got. Only in Government Hindi did I get the all the completed surveys back the very next day. In the end, I got back over thirty parents' surveys from Government Hindi, and only five each from Government English and English Convent. I had to accept that there would be some serious skewing of my results because of large differences in the numbers of parental surveys in each school. This, of course, would drastically affect comparability, and I ended up not running even basic statistics on these surveys. As a failsafe, though, I repeated many important questions on both student and parent surveys, and thus I was able to get answers to many of the questions for which I really wanted answers. The only question I was unable to repeat on the student survey was about parental income—IRB did not permit me to ask students that question, although I was allowed to ask them how much they *thought* their parents earned.

<u>Conclusion</u>

One of the things that helped me stay on track despite changes in field sites and populations was having a clear methodological path. Even as my project changed direction, I was able to continue to use and apply those methods to the developing new project. Having an unambiguous research plan was the first step toward research

cohesion. I also took very seriously repeated advice from committee members and scholarly literature to write notes everyday. I maintained regular field notes, writing down everything I possibly could. Unsure of what would be useful to me later and what would not, I followed the premise that there's no such thing as too much data, at least for that stage of work. I also was fairly diligent (though, I confess, not always) about transcribing interviews the same day I conducted them, and was therefore able to supplement them with immediate thoughts and annotations. Having a fellow anthropologist living in the same house with me also helped—being able to talk my day over with Dan was a great source of new ideas and new thoughts on old ideas. All these things contributed to keeping my thoughts going while my project flowed and changed around me.

In the end, fieldwork was a learning experience for me, in ways outside the scholarly as well. I sometimes semi-jokingly refer to it as the Great Anthropological Hazing Ritual, referring both to its importance as a rite of passage in anthropology, as well as to the difficulties a fieldworker is certain to undergo. Like all rites of passage, we come out different on the other side. My research project changed according to the things I found interesting and relevant, and some things that simply no longer had any appeal to me once I encountered them on the ground. As my project changed, I found that I, too, was changed by my experiences in the field. At a personal level, I gained a deeper understanding of who I am, as a person, as a scholar, as a citizen, and as a migrant. At a scholarly level, I discovered a joy in research that I didn't know I would find, and a greater confidence in my ability as an anthropologist. I *saw* things that I wouldn't have noticed before—behavior, patterns, trends, ideologies—all visible with a great transparency that came from a clarity of purpose and method. I went through fieldwork and came out the other side with joy, with a deep sense of contentment and with enjoyment in my chosen profession.

CHAPTER THREE: LANGUAGE AND MOBILITY

My original project was to conduct research into English-language ideology in Delhi and its ideological connections to upward mobility. I aimed to find out if English was ideologically related to social mobility and, if so, how. As my research progressed, I found that these ideological positions were virtually impenetrable. When asked if it was important to know English, the answer was always "yes." When asked why, the answer was invariably "because it is a global language," or "because it is needed for a good job." When I asked why it was needed for a job, I was told, "because it is important to know English" or "because it is a global language."

In this chapter, I discuss some of the ideologies relating to English and English-medium education in India. It serves as a useful demonstration of how ideas of mobility can vary based on social position, of how ideologies of educational (in this case, linguistic) mobility can elide other factors in the perpetuation of social difference, and of how people desiring mobility struggle to resolve contradictions by engaging in new forms of discourse.

Powerful public discourses, in India, link English to terms like "globalization" and "liberalization." These, in turn, have strong ideological implications, referring back to ideas of nationalism and mobility. This chapter is a discussion of the ideologies and discourses in India that relate English to globalization and, consequently, to new forms of linguistic nationalism and transnationalism. I suggest here that there are two very different points of view on English-associated mobility—group/national and individual/transnational—in India, and they differ based on whether one is English-dominant or not.

I want to offer an entry point into a new way of thinking about English in India and about ideas of language and social mobility in general. Discussions of the importance of English in India, both in popular discourse and in scholarship, obscure what English

means to different groups of people. Popular discourse, the media, and scholarship draw a connection between English and upward mobility in India. For example, Nita Kumar says that "English education opens the door not only to employment and income, but to comfort and confidence in the modern world. The absence of English, and often any formal education, keeps all doors closed and produces only comfort and confidence in a limited range of activities in a limited space" (2007:21). However, the notion of linguistic mobility is extremely nuanced, and this hasn't been analyzed as well.

Ideas of mobility are highly contextual, and a simple construction of "English=upward mobility" is over-simplifying the matter. To accept this equation is to be complicit in how this construction is used by dominant groups to cover up all the other factors used to perpetuate inequality (such as class, caste, or gender) and, also, how it really doesn't work when it comes to individual mobility. Access to English, especially to privileged varieties, is highly restricted.[17] As Anne Vaughier-Chatterjee says, "critiques of the standard of English in schools abound. Among the recurring problems, one finds the lack of adequate teaching material and techniques, the neglect of grammar and the fact that English remains as formidable a tool of segregation as ever" (2007:368). Thus, dominant ideologies about English in India as well as English-language education itself mediate access to linguistic mobility.

Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997) say that, if we are to decolonize anthropology, we must begin by shedding our commitment to seeing the field as a specific geographic location (e.g. such quintessential colonial fields as India or Melanesia) and see it as a political location. They advocate adopting other methods of representation in addition to ethnography, such as "archival research, the analysis of

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[17] The English spoken by upper-class English-educated speakers is hegemonic in India. However, even this has internal variations, such as by region. There are other varieties of English, depending on region, first language, training, and so on. For example, the English I learned in school was modeled after upper-class British English. Call center English training often focuses on American "Standard" Midwestern English accents.

public discourse, interviewing, journalism, fiction, or statistical representations of collectives" (1997:38). I therefore use a variety of data to discuss English-language ideologies in India—ethnographic evidence, interviews, newspaper articles, and advertisements. By using all these sources, I show how these ideologies play out, not just in the discourses of my interlocutors, but also in public discourse.

<div align="center">Language, (Trans)Nationalism, and Mobility: An Argument</div>

My data led me to the conclusion that language ideologies about English in India have taken on both nationalistic and transnationalistic aspects, depending on whether one is English-dominant or English-excluded. These ideologies evoke public discourses on liberalization and globalization, India's economic boom, and the importance of English for global market success.[18] This new form of linguistic nationalism is particularly relevant considering the position English has occupied in India's national and linguistic history (see Chapter Five). From being seen as an outsider's language, a foreign imposition, or simply as the lesser of two evils, there is a growing public discourse that now accepts English as an Indian language, and invests it with national pride. This discourse, though, comes from a very specific group of people, the English-educated upper or upper middle class elite.

Language and Ideology

Ferdinand de Saussure (1966) states that language is both a social institution and a social product, in that language (*langue*) is a convention, agreed upon by members of a community, while speech (*parole*) is an individual act of selection and combination from language. Language is a unique semiotic system in that it can be used to refer to itself

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[18] Ritty Lukose defines liberalization as the "more concrete economic reforms that rework the relationship between the state and market through processes of privatization", though, as she says, the term is also used to refer to "global forces and their impact in India in the aftermath of these economic reforms" (2009:208 n.2).

(Jakobson 1980; Jakobson and Halle 1971). In fact, metalinguistic activities are a critical aspect of linguistic interactions. Language is used to speak about itself and to form opinions and attitudes about language as well as social behavior. These are implicit in people's linguistic interactions, though people may not be conscious of them (Fairclough 2001). They are embedded in language use. They "are a means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power, simply through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take these relations and power differences for granted" (Fairclough 2001:2). In everyday life, "institutional practices which people draw on without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing social power relations" (Fairclough 2001:27), and social institutions such as schools ensure the continued supremacy of the dominant group (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

There are a number of ideologies relating to English in India, varying in terms of their group of origin, but also in terms of their power, dominance, and strength of reproduction in popular discourse. Language ideologies may be defined as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein 1979:193). They are "cultural systems of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine 1989:255). Ideologies are held by specific people and are rooted in specific social positions, which are often represented by those in them as positions of truth (Foucault 1980; Woolard 1998). They are embedded in language use (Fairclough 2001), but they are always about more than language. The ideologies surrounding English continue to serve the purpose of maintaining the power structures that privilege upper class, English-dominant Indians. In this ideological world, English confers a kind of "mana" (in the sense of an almost magical prestige) on the fluent English speaker, making them somehow "superior" and more "intelligent" than people who are not English-dominant.

Language and Nationalism

People who are English-dominant are convinced of the superiority and necessity of English. For them, English language ability is seen as leading to group mobility, both for the nation as a whole, as well as for poorer people as a group. It is also equated with a "good" education. Thus, in this discourse, it becomes a vehicle *par excellence* for social mobility. Since upper class, English-dominant people are already generally where they want to be, their discussions of mobility are not personal or individualized. Rather, they discuss the mobility value of English in terms of *group* mobility, whether at the level of class or nation. There is also a sharp discursive binary here. The nation, in this construction, is imagined as Self—all people who speak English and, thus, are contributing to global success. Poor people, on the other hand, are firmly Other—hence, they are homogenized into some sort of "them," a group identity which needs no unpacking. This Other is discursively portrayed as a group of people that needs empowering or uplifting, which can be accomplished through their learning English.

English as "Empowerment"

As conversations with teachers in English Convent revealed, there is another side to the empowerment discourse. This "empowerment" must only be accomplished through learning English. People who achieve higher statuses through other means, such as becoming civil servants, are looked down upon. They are described by the English-dominant as people who impede progress by "dumbing down" education. That phrase, in turn, has very little to do with general school curricula. It is simply a euphemism for reducing the importance given to English, either in terms of curricula, or in terms of parental use of English in the home. Institutional conditions are such that people who are not from English-dominant backgrounds have a very hard time learning to speak English at all, let alone privileged varieties of English. Thus, if the only acceptable mode of "empowerment" is through learning English, then it is clear that the disempowered will not be empowered at all, and mobility attempts are always doomed to failure.

Language and Transnationalism

Jeffery says, "education in contemporary India…is entangled in wider political projects, internal as well as global, that are often controversial as well as contradictory. Contemporary debates about education reflect struggles over the normative domains of citizenship and identity" (2005:23). People who are poor and not English-dominant are not participants in the nationalistic discourse about English because they do not belong to the group that perpetuates it. Thus, they do not think about English in terms of national pride or global economic domination. Transcending nationalism, the English-excluded discuss English in terms of transnationalism, in terms of membership in an international community.

Virginia Dominguez (1998) conceptualizes transnationalism as a "social imaginary—one among many possible, past, present and, no doubt, future ways of creating boundedness" (1998:141). She notes that, in U.S. scholarship, transnationalism indexes social Others, notably "non-white" immigrants. Moreover, U.S. nationalism is racialized, which leads to counter-nationalisms, or a nationalistic orientation toward the country of origin rather than the U.S. In other words, immigrants choose to exclude themselves from U.S. nationalism rather than occupy outsider positions within it (Dominguez 1998). I also use "transnationalism" here to indicate a social imaginary. I use it to refer to the imagination of an identity that goes beyond nationalism, moving out of nationalistic imaginings into global ones. Transnationalism, in this context, is the dream of unboundedness. In this case, it is the imagined and desired state of complete social acceptance and success, to which knowledge of English is the key.

The students from the government schools in which I did my research made frequent references to English as an international language, or as a key element in globalized markets, when I asked them why it was important to know English. They were fully conversant with the terms used in globalization discourses. As Dominguez (1998) notes, certain terms become naturalized swiftly within specific socioeconomic times and

contexts. However, these terms mean different things to these students than they do to people who are English-dominant. Not being part of the English-educated elite, they do not (and, indeed, cannot) participate in the discourses of linguistic nationalism centered on English in India. Rather, they imagine themselves as members of a transnational community in which they desire to participate. In other words, they are opting out of "tainted, partial, or at best conditional membership in a particular social imaginary" (Dominguez 1998:154), that of English-centered nationalism, and choosing instead to aspire to a transnational identity—but also through the medium of English.

The central difference is that, for them, English is an avenue for *individual* mobility. In other words, although they may talk about English being a global language or an international language, to them, it is all about the possibility of *personal* change. If they learn English, will people see them differently? Will it be that one thing that makes all the difference, which pulls them out of poverty into the middle classes? Will it allow them to be accepted by powerful people who think English is important? They take it as given that English is necessary for socioeconomic success, although they do not necessarily think that it is superior to any other Indian language. In fact, many of them see it as an imposition that they must endure if they are to be successful in their mobility attempts. They also fear the alienation they will suffer if they are successful in their mobility attempts (Chapter One). Thus, they often have highly conflicted attitudes toward English.

Globalization and Neoliberalism

The students I spoke to in all three schools made frequent references to globalization as an important reason to learn English. Since the idea of globalization is a critical element in the students' discourses, I will explain what it means to me, and, later in this chapter, what I think it means to them.

Globalization

Globalization has been described in a number of ways, ranging from the circulation of cultural forms (Appadurai 1996) to a mode of empire (Maira 2004). Anna Tsing uses the term *globalism* to describe "endorsements of the importance of the global" (2000:330), and notes that it is "multireferential: part corporate hype and part capitalist regulatory agenda, part cultural excitement, part social commentary and protest" (2000:332). Ted Lewellen states that "contemporary globalization is the increasing flow of trade, finance, culture, ideas, and people brought about by the sophisticated technology of communications and travel and by the worldwide spread of neoliberal capitalism, and it is the local and regional adaptations to and resistances against these flows" (2002:8). John Tomlinson defines it as the "rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern life" (1999:2). In Lewellens's (2002) perspective, neoliberalism is the dominant ideology of globalization. He defines neoliberalism as "the view that a certain form of global capitalism is good; if Third World countries carry out a few specific prescriptions, standards of living will be raised" (2002:9). Lewellen also observes that international agencies like the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) have imposed the adoption of neoliberal capitalism upon countries like India as conditions of much-needed loans. While globalization is pushed as a strategy for participation in global markets (generally at the cost of national self-sufficiency), everyone does not experience it in the same way, and it can often have disastrous consequences for poor and marginalized people (Lewellen 2002).

I think of globalization as a set of normative ideologies, not just about how business should be conducted, but also how life should be lived. It operates as "experience, as practice, as discourse" (Lukose 2009:7). It confers privilege on some groups of people (those who are poised to participate in globalization ideologies and practices) over others (those who are not). At the same time, it can be invoked in local

struggles and resistances, as the students in the government schools do. This is because the discourse of free flow and movement (of people and capital) allows globalization to be linked to "the overcoming of boundaries and restrictions" (Tsing 2000:332). As Tomlinson (1999) says, globalization and culture are related, and globalization-as-connectivity can be understood as the transformation of local practices. He observes that "one of the most striking features of the idea of globalization is just how readily and plentifully all manner of implications seem to flow from it. It is an extraordinality fecund concept in its capacity to generate speculations, hypotheses and powerful social images and metaphors which reach far beyond the bare social facts" (1999:2). This chapter examines some of those images and metaphors, those that deal with the English language in India.

Neoliberalism

Implicit in the ideologies of globalization are ideas of neoliberalism, technological "progress," language ability, and transnationalism. David Harvey defines neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (2005:2). Thus, neoliberalism is itself deeply ideological, coming from Euro-American discourses of capitalism, *laissez-faire* markets, and minimal state intervention. In turn, these discourses are marked by the twin themes of democracy and freedom. Neoliberalism has both positive and negative aspects. Lewellen says, "neoliberalism favors the rich and…neoliberal adjustments undercut domestic production prices, cause unemployment, create sweatshops that utlize underpaid child and female labor, disrupt families, disempower peasants, and encourage environmental despoilation" (2002:19). At the same time, he says, it can be perceived positively because sweatshops, for example, can pay more with better working conditions than workers experienced prior

to globalization (Lewellen 2002). Thus, people experience globalization as the changes it brings to them (Tomlinson 1999), negative or positive.

English and Globalization

All of these discursive and ideological themes are played out in Indian discourses on globalization and language, albeit in uniquely local ways. Tomlinson (1999) notes that, in the hierarchy of global languages, English is at the top, largely because of widespread use in scientific, technological, and communicative arenas. In India, globalization has been firmly linked to language. The newspapers are full of stories about English, English-language training centers, teaching of English in schools, and what prominent scholars have to say about English and globalization in India. Ramachandra Guha, for example, is quoted in a <u>Hindustan Times</u> article as saying that the emergence of English in India is linked to India's growing global presence (Sandhu and Butalia 2008).

I must mention here that public discourses about English and globalization in India are somewhat illusory. They do not generally discuss the sorts of labor and capitalist enterprises which give India a global market presence, e.g. outsourcing, the international politics around them, or the differential rewards such jobs might give different groups of people. They also do not indicate how much English one needs to know to have such a job, what kind of English it should be, or the ethical aspects of bringing "globalization" to vulnerable people. For example, the <u>New York Times</u>, in November 2009, carried an article about an outsourcing company called Rural Shores, which set up an office in Bagepelli in rural Karnataka (Polgreen 2009). The workers, hired from close-by villages, have just enough English to answer simple emails and enter data, such as from time cards of American truck drivers. The company explained that it wanted to "bring jobs to the people." The fact is that companies outsource jobs to India because labor there is cheap. Rural Shores took this one step further. By taking these jobs to rural India, Rural Shores spent only about half the money on paychecks than they

would have had to in, say, Bangalore (Polgreen 2009). If outsourcing to India is exploitative (which it is), taking advantage of vulnerable rural populations desperate to attempt to participate in a vibrant economy that seems out of reach for them is even more exploitative. Do these people in Bagepalli have higher-status jobs and more income than they would have had otherwise? Probably. Does that mean they are not being exploited? No. How does one balance the two? Does their having jobs they would not otherwise have had justify the fact that, in the end, they are "worth" less than an urban Indian employee, and far less than a rural American employee? Globalization, as a socioeconomic imperative, creates structures of supposed utility and worth which organize access to opportunity and jobs. These structures, however, are set up to relfect the positive value attached to dominant social attributes, such as English ability or urbanism. Having only some English and living in a rural location, therefore, automatically reduces the "worth" of Bagepalli residents.

As Arjun Appadurai notes, globalization is "a deeply historical, uneven, and even localizing process" (1996:17), and different groups experience it differently. Jeffrey et al point out that one of the groups which benefits (perhaps that which benefits most) from economic restructuring is "a thin upper stratum of young people who acquire high quality education in elite institutions and move smoothly into secured salaried work, often within the professions or business" (2008:9). This "high quality" elite education is, of course, English-medium, and this group is a small percentage of the overall population of India. I return, therefore, to my argument that access to privileged English varieties is restricted, and therefore not everyone benefits from the glories of globalization equally. And yet, English—some English, any English—is perceived as critical to success in contemporary India's neoliberal market. The successful ideology of commodification has led to the mushrooming of thousands of English-training institutes all over India, with inadequate infrastructure and even more inadequate teaching. How do the English-excluded engage with this particular ideology?

<u>Language, Ideology, and the Production of Difference</u>

The government school students I spoke to felt they had a lot to gain by learning English. They reproduced dominant discourses around English. However, as I show in Chapter Five, they also sought out ways to resist these dominant discourses, and attempted to replace or subvert them with others that did not portray them as inferior to English-speaking students from private schools. This seems extremely contradictory, and it is. It exemplifies their struggle both to participate in an ideology they know to be dominant (and therefore promises socioeconomic success), as well as to resist the same ideology (which they know places them at a severe social, economic, and linguistic disadvantage).

The Contradictions of English-language Ideologies

The bitter awareness, acceptance, and simultaneous rejection of dominant English-language ideologies was demonstrated most clearly by Bikram Singh, a parent from Government Hindi. Bikram Singh was from Uttar Pradesh, one of the largest states in India's Hindi belt, and he worked in Delhi as a rickshaw-puller, earning between fifty and one hundred rupees a day (a dollar or two). He spoke beautiful Hindi, but explained to me at length that it was very important that his children learn English and, if he had been able to afford it, he would have enrolled them in an English-medium school. He said,

> Aisā hai nā, ājkal sārā kām English me hī ho rahā hai. Islīye majbūran – raṣṭrabhāṣā hamārā to Hindi hai. Par usko nā apnāte hue purā Hindustan jo hai, English pe hī jyādā hai. Sārā kām English me hī hai, āj ke time me. Ab jo pehle ke paḍhe hue hain, jaise ham log hai, koī Matric hai, koī Inter hai, to ham log to paḍhaī to utnā nahīn tha, us time me. Ab is time me uskā kuc jyādā hi mahatva hai. Bahut mane ninyānve percent mahatva English kā hī hai, mere samajh me. Sārā kām English me hī hai. To uskī koī value nahin reh gayī is hisab se. Kahīn jao, English bolo, to uskī kīmat jyādā hai, value jyādā hai, uskā mahatva jyādā hai, log us pe yakīn kar lete hain, ki "hān bhai, mind vālā ādmī hai". Aur Hindi cahe kitnā bhī śudh Hindi bole, koī value nahin, uske kehte hain "gavār hai". To is līya nā cāhte hue bhī English ko hī mannā paḍegā, nahīn?

> *The thing is, these days everything happens in English. Therefore, out of necessity…Our national language is Hindi. But even as all of India acknowledges that, they emphasize English more. Everything is in English these days. Those of us who did our schooling before, we didn't study as much [English]. But now it is more important. Ninety-nine percent of importance is given to English. Everything is in English. [Hindi] no longer has any value. If you go somewhere and speak English, it is valued more, it's importance is more, people believe in it more, they say, 'here is an intelligent man'. And it doesn't matter how pure your Hindi is, it has no value, they say, 'he is a hick'. That is why, even though I don't want to, I have to accept that English is important.*

Bikram's regret over the lack of value placed on Hindi shows that he is very aware of dominant language ideologies about English in India. His resentment at having to acknowledge this comes out strongly in the last sentence, where he says he has to accept that English is important, even though he didn't want to. He comments on the futility of knowing Hindi, even though it is "our national language." Bikram clearly does not identify English as a source of national pride. To the contrary, he sees it as a usurper of the importance and value that should be rightfully given to the real national language, Hindi. Even as he acknowledges dominant language ideologies and feels he should act on them, he resists them by verbalizing his disagreement.[19]

This conflicted attitude toward English is not restricted to the poorer or less-educated classes. It is also found in the regional-language intelligentsia. The Hindi-language daily, Jansatta, published an article in June 2008 titled *Angrezī Kyon Jītī aur Hindi Kyon Hārī* (Why did English Win and Hindi Lose). In it, the author, Rajkishore, discusses the relationship between Hindi or other regional languages and English in India as one between sentimentality/emotion (*bhavuktā*) and reality (*yathārth*) respectively. Hindi is discussed in very nationalistic terms, such that speaking Hindi, buying khadi,

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[19] My focus here has been on English-language ideologies, and I have not attemped to analyze Hindi-language or other regional language ideologies as much. However, I do believe this is an important area of research. Ideally, it would be done as collaborative research among a number of scholars of India, since it would need expertise in different languages and different kinds of field areas.

and living in India (rather than moving abroad for financial gain) are all discussed as prime examples of Indian nationalism.[20] Rajkishore says that if a child studies in Hindi-medium, it means that his or her parents are poor. Much of the article is a discussion of how he agonized over whether to send his son to an English-medium school or a Hindi-medium school. He is a stalwart supporter of Hindi, even taking part in "Angrezī Haṭao" (Remove English) campaigns. Although he wished to enroll his son in a Hindi-medium school, he decided that, to be successful in life (get a good job), he would need to have an English-medium education. Rajkishore goes to on talk, with obvious pride, about his son's employment in a British media company, and the fact that his son now earns more than he himself does. He comments that language is a way to "organize life," not just a way to communicate. He goes on to iterate that the reality of life in India is that one must speak English, a foreign language, in order to succeed, even though one's heart may be with Hindi.

The Role of Gender in Language Education

That parental choices for children are guided by ideas of globalization and socioeconomic success is indubitable. What is less obvious is that they are also sometimes guided by gender. Laurie Patton (2002) describes how, in Maharashtra, the study of Sanskrit is gradually being dominated by women, because men are turning to higher-income and higher-status professions such as in the fields of technology. This leaves open for women areas of study which are no longer prestigious, no longer lucrative. Thus she notes, "the world which women inherit is tarnished as unwanted" (2002:135). It is not uncommon in India for privileged education to be available to boys, while girls take whatever they can get (see, for example, Rao 2010). Shefali Chandra (2009) observes that, in India, the English language came to be aligned with

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[20] Khadi is handspun cotton, arguably the foremost symbol of Gandhi and the Indian freedom movement.

(heterosexual) masculinity and masculine authority. This association of English with privilege and masculinity continues in India even today, as more boys have access to English-medium education than girls.

Rajkishore decided that it was not worth "gambling" with his son's life by educating him in a Hindi-medium school, and so he enrolled him in an English-medium school. However, when it came to his daughter, he had no such qualms. He freely admits that he decided it was okay to enroll her in a Hindi-medium school. Eventually, dissatisfied with the quality of education in the government school, he moved her to Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, a private school in Delhi, which is Hindi-medium until the fifth grade, and English-medium from the sixth upward. She did not receive the upper class Catholic school English-medium education her brother received. Rajkishore mentions that she has a job, but does not tell us what it is, nor does he mention how she might feel about the difference between her and her brother's educations. She seems almost irrelevant, except as a sop to his conscience—that he did, indeed, enroll one of his children in a Hindi school, even if it was the one whose future he felt he could "gamble" with.

<div align="center">Nationalistic Imaginings of English</div>

Languages form part of group imaginings (Anderson 1983), but they are subject to multiple imaginings (Ramaswamy 1993). An inquiry into the dominance of English in India must draw attention to two levels of English language ideology. At one level, English is ideologically positioned as both a path to and marker of global success. Once this position is established, English becomes an important vehicle for nationalism. This nationalism is particularly vehement in the context of India's economic competition with China, as described later in this section. It is a peculiarly capitalist nationalism, constructed in terms of competition with China in the global market. Within this nationalist discourse, it is the purported widespread English ability of its citizens that

allows India to be a major player on a global stage. Therefore, the country's poor who wish to be upwardly mobile must learn to speak English. In this way, they not only help themselves, they participate in a dominant linguistic nationalist ideology. At another level, poorer people who are not English-dominant see English as a path to, and marker of, individual success—within the parameters set out by dominant language ideologies. However, rather than buying into the dominant nationalist discourse, they see in English the hope of transnational possibilities.

Language and Nationalism in India

The intertwining of national, religious, and linguistic identities in pre-Independence India, expressed in nationalistic slogans such as "Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan" led to Hindi becoming an important symbol of group identity (King 1994).[21] During the Indian freedom struggle, many nationalist leaders, including Gandhi, felt the need for a pan-Indian language that could replace English as a common language.[22] Based on the vast numbers of people who spoke it, the nationalistic ideology surrounding it, and the representation of Hindi speakers in the freedom movement, Hindi was projected as the "*raśtrīya bhaṣa*," the national language. Gandhi encouraged all freedom fighters to learn Hindi, and to teach it to as many people as they could, to spread the national language—along with the nationalist ideology. The two went hand-in-hand.[23]

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[21] India is also called either Bharat (the official name) or Hindustan.

[22] The independence movement in India is often referred to as the freedom struggle or fight for freedom. In 1947, India became independent of British rule, and it also marked the violent and bloody separation of Pakistan from India, an event referred to simply as the Partition.

[23] My grandmother, Rajalakshmi Raghavan, who was a freedom fighter and Gandhian, told me this many years ago. Having received these instructions from Gandhi, she took them to heart. She learned Hindi and then taught it to hundreds of people, and was an ardent, lifelong member of the Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti, a large national organization that teaches Hindi and firmly links it to national pride. For example, a song the Samiti teaches says: "India is our mother, let our souls unite, we have one national language, Hindi."

Almost half of India's population consists of native speakers of what are classified as "dialects" of Hindi (King 1994). After India gained independence in 1947, the states were delineated according to linguistic "boundaries." Most of the linguistic forms in the North, no matter how different, were declared to be dialects of Hindi. Thus, for example, *Khari boli* and *Braj bhasha*, two enormously different and possibly almost mutually unintelligible languages, have both (along with a number of other Northern Indian languages) been subsumed under the rubric of dialects of Hindi (King 1994). Thus, the linguistically organized post-independence states were large, awkward, and marked by tremendous internal differentiation and dispute, and linguistic sectarian movements abounded in post-independence India.

English was the language of the British, adopted by the colonial middle class (Fernandes 2006). It became associated, thus, with upper caste and upper class identity. As Varma notes, "the creation of a native elite in its own image was the most spectacular and enduring achievement of British colonialism in India (2007:2). In pre-independence India, Fernandes states, "English education did not simply represent a means for a shift in cultural status, it also provided a central avenue for various segments of upper caste, upper middle class individuals to consolidate their socioeconomic position within the political economy of colonial rule" (2006:7).

The original Indian Constitution included a plan to have Hindi as independent India's official language, supported by English only until 1965. However, there were many ideological differences within the nascent nation, which had their roots in linguistic differences. People from many parts of India, notably Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, were vehemently anti-Hindi, and English's "temporary" status as an associate official language continues to this day (Agnihotri and Khanna 1997; Forrester 1966; Kachru 1983; King 1994; Sinha 1978; Sridhar 1996). The perseverance of nationalistic regional-language ideologies has thus been a major factor in the perpetuation of persistent ideologies about the importance of English in India. English continues to be a language of power in India.

As late as the 1980s, the English-educated social elite controlled the civil services in India (Fernandes 2006), although this is slowly changing.

New Nationalisms

With the opening up of Indian markets in the early nineties, new discourses of language and nationalism came into being.[24] When India's markets opened up, the Indian economy began to "boom," and the English-dominant elite began to feel a sense of nationalistic pride. The Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign slogan for the 2004 elections, "India Shining," tried to harness this feeling toward electoral victory (but failed). There was this feeling among the Indian elite that India had finally come into her own, and Indians' ability to speak English was seen as a critical element of this success. I reproduce here a conversation between a woman I call Padma and her daughter, Priya, recorded in Delhi in 2006. This conversation was about the English language in India. In it, there were certain claims being made about the English language, notably that it was a language that was commonly used in India. Padma and her daughter are wealthy, educated, urban Tamil Brahmins who live in Delhi. Both are also extremely successful in their professional careers.

Padma and Priya have three languages in common and yet, they used only one—English—while talking about the value of the English language. Part of the reason for this might be that Priya is most fluent in English. It might also be, though, that different languages serve different functions. For example, Tamil, which is their "mother tongue," might serve a more personal or familial function, while English might be the language of more impersonal conversation. In a previous part of the conversation (not reproduced here), Padma asked Priya for water, and this was the only part of the conversation that occurred in Tamil.

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[24] In the early nineties, international loan agencies forced the Indian state to stop protecting its markets and privatize the economy, ushering in the current era of globalization, neoliberalism, and capitalism.

At the time that this conversation was recorded I was not in the room. Padma and Priya had permitted me to record all their conversations. They were comfortable being recorded, and tended to ignore the voice recorder, even when they were aware that it was on. This conversation was neither part of an interview, nor was it elicited discourse. I believe there was no one else in the room at the time it occurred. I had left my voice recorder on a table, and left the room to talk to someone else. They began to talk about Ajit, a mutual acquaintance and a Londoner of Indian descent.

Padma: What were you saying about Ajit?

Priya: I was only saying he was very surprised about the English. And how everyone is, like, everyone in office also is speaking English.

Padma: They can hardly speak Bengali and all this sort of…they won't know…

Priya: But 'English is the Queen's language'. I also think it's–

Padma: –It's not really a language of the elite anymore. Everyone speaks English. India has the second-largest English-speaking population in the world.

Priya: After whom?

Padma: After the United States.

Priya: And given the population we're probably more educated. Which is also right. Which is the only – otherwise everyone is investing in China and India they…that's why the Chinese are starting to learn English, because the investment, which I think I read somewhere which would have gone to China and which has come to India is only because of the English.

Padma: They will beat us. That's the only advantage we had and we'll lose that.

Priya: Yes. But that's because well we don't want to live in an authoritarian regime! Who wants to live like that?

Padma: They're also loosening up.

Priya: Loosening up is all relative. Loosening up compared to what they did in Tiananmen Square. Not loosening up per se. At least you have choice here. To some extent.

> Padma: Choice between one set of prospects and another.
>
> Priya: No but it's still a choice, Amma. No, you don't want to live in a regime where you're told what you do, where you're told that you can't do this…you have to have choice!

When Padma referred to Priya's statement that Ajit was surprised that everyone in Priya's office also spoke English, through her reference to Bengali she indexed the fact that Indians speak a number of different languages. The implication seemed to be that English filled the role of a common language. Priya went on to poke fun at Ajit's lack of knowledge about English in India by laughing and referring to English as the "Queen's language." This was said in a very mocking tone. By making this derisive reference to "the Queen's language," Priya seemed to be suggesting that Ajit assumed English was only spoken in England. Both Padma and Priya seemed a little bit offended that Ajit was surprised that Indians could speak English.

English was also positioned in a nationalistic light. Padma suggested that "everyone" in India spoke English. Since this is patently not true, we can only infer that Padma was referring to a particular class of people, those who are English-dominant, thus equating this group of people with the entire nation. This tactical synecdoche is not uncommon among the English-speaking elite. For example, an article published in January 2008 in the national English-language daily, the Statesman reads, "the English had a long innings in India following which their language has ceased to be a foreign language, at least not as 'foreign' as French, German or Russian. Children in India these days learn the English alphabet much before they learn the alphabets of their mother tongue" (Chatterjee 2008).

Padma said that "everyone" spoke English, and that India had the "second-largest" English-speaking population in the world, after "the United States." The accuracy of the statement was not as relevant to the conversation as the ideological weight of it. Padma made an ideologically strategic connection between India and the English-speaking United States, which is a country that has global prestige on so many

levels.[25] By suggesting that India is second only to the U.S. in English-language ability, Padma attempted to raise the global prestige of India as well. Priya then commented that Indians were more educated than Americans.

Priya went on to make explicit the link between English ability and global economic success. She stated that Indians used English widely, and highlighted the "advantages" of English ability, by talking about how it leads to "investment." She referred to the economic competition between India and China to support her statement. She then stated that the only reason foreign investment was coming to India and not going to China was because Indians are fluent in English. By stating that the Chinese were consequently beginning to learn English, she indicated that they, too, were aware of this connection between English ability and economic success.

As this conversation shows, English is clearly associated with the Indian nation and nationalism by Padma and Priya, who believe that knowledge of the English language was widespread in India. They disapproved of Ajit's surprise at people's English-language ability, and this was expressed as mockery of his British identity and ignorance of India, despite his Indian roots. They stressed that knowledge of English was a factor in increased global investment in India as opposed to China. In this discourse, English assumes nationalistic importance, and, logically, people who speak English aren't just helping themselves, they are helping the *nation*. The next part of the conversation emphasized this nationalistic discourse, when Priya pointed to another way in which India had an "advantage" over China, by turning to systems of government. She commented that China has an "authoritarian regime" to highlight how the Indian nation is better, even if it didn't have the competitive edge of English ability anymore.

Priya provided moral justification, enacted through a reference to the Tiananmen Square massacre and consequent indexing of the value of democracy, for India being a

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[25] At the same time, anti-American sentiments are quite widespread among elites in India.

"better" nation. Thus, over the course of this brief conversation, English-speaking ability is transformed discursively. It began in the realm of individual ability and choice, as shown through the idea that "everyone" in India can speak English. It ended in the realm of national pride, democracy, free markets, and globalization. At the same time, the possibility of individual choice (another virtue of modern democracy) is highlighted, and seems to be a source of national pride, as Priya says "you don't want to live in a regime where you're told what you do, where you're told that you can't do this…you have to have choice!" Thus, in these dominant discourses, English is tied to quintessentially neoliberal ideas of globalization, democracy, and freedom of choice.

Paul Kroskrity (2000) notes that language ideologies represent the interests of specific social groups and link social hierarchies and forms of talk. However, linguistic ideologies are used to reify homogeneity, rendering some groups and practices invisible (Irvine and Gal 2000; Kroskrity 2000). This is particularly true in nationalistic enterprises, and can often lead to social inequality. As Roma Chatterji (2003) states, in the process of creating cultural (and therefore linguistic) unity, some members of the nation are privileged over others. Thus, some potential members of the nation-as-community may be excluded if they are not part of this cultural/linguistic essence. In this case, English ability is equated with nationalism, and thus the small group of people who are English-dominant come to stand for the entire nation, effectively Othering everyone else.

"English is an International Language"

In dominant English-language ideology in India, English speakers rank higher than non-English speakers, and thus learning English comes to be seen as a way to be upwardly mobile. Part of the justification of this discourse is nationalistic, and part of it is in terms of the international market. The idea that English is of national importance follows from the idea that it has international importance. This is a significant historical

shift from India in the 1950s and 1960s, when post-Independence fervor focused on Indian languages, even if quite fractiously. The biggest shift is in the claiming of English as an Indian language, which allows the English-dominant to take a nationalist pride in it. The importance given to "globalization" and "neoliberalism" in popular discourse identifies a certain economic path India is taking toward international economic success—that of being able to compete on the international market.

As the previous section demonstrated, English becomes very important within this nationalist discourse. This discursive connection between English ability and nation/world/global economy is at the core of English-language ideology in India today. Thus, incorporating language into studies of globalization in India is of critical importance. However, studying young people's perspectives on globalization is equally important. Sunaina Maira (2004) states that youth culture is a very important site of the manifestation of anxieties and desires associated with globalization. She also suggests that globalization research has not "intersected deeply enough with that on youth culture, whether in education, the social sciences, or cultural studies" (2004:205). An emphasis on young people's ideas and attitudes toward globalization and all that it means to them provides important new insight into studies of language, new economics, and global change.

New Transnationalisms

Given that English was firmly linked to mobility in public discourse, and that the government school students aspired to upward mobility, but lacked access to English, I was curious as to how they related to the language. Almost every government school student I spoke to, interviewed, or surveyed, responded to the question of why English was important with the answer "because it is an international language." This was seen to be a sufficient answer in itself, needing no explanation. I usually responded with some form of "so what?" to which students would respond, patiently, "it is an *international* language." I was trying to understand what the "international" aspect of English could

mean to students who did not speak it. Did they want to go abroad? Did they want to work in call centers? Why did they care? How did it affect them? It took me a while to see that they were wrapped up in discourses of English-language ability and global possibilities. To them, globalization and liberalization were key elements in a movement toward transnational possibilities. For the government school students, English was promise—English was *hope*. The conversations reproduced below give some sense of how desperate these students' desires were, and how invested they were in the idea of mobility through English. The first conversation is with students from Government English (GE), and the second with students from Government Hindi (GH).

LMP: Āp socte hain ki English jānnā zarūrī hai?

    Do you think it is necessary to know English?

GE1:   Yes, ma'am.

LMP: Kyon?

    Why?

GE1:   Ma'am kyonki English ek international language hai.
    Aur voh har jagah use hotī hai.

    *Because English is an international language. And it is
    used everywhere.*

GE2:   Tere ko kyā fāydā huā?

    What advantage does that give you?

GE1:   Ma'am globalization me zamānā badal rahā hai.

    With globalization, times are changing.

The students struggled to explain why English was important, returning repeatedly to the twin themes of "globalization" and "international." I struggled to understand an argument that seemed very circular. Later that year, I had almost the same conversation with the students from Government Hindi. It was almost eerie how these

students, who did not know each other at all and had almost certainly never interacted,

used almost the same words when talking about English.[26]

LMP: Angrezi jānnā zarūrī hai?

Is it necessary to know English?

GH1: Hān!

Yes!

LMP: Kyon?

Why?

GH2: Ma'am uskī international market me bahut value hai.

It has great value in the international market.

GH3: Ma'am English zarūrī hai kyonkī mostly kām English me hī hote hain. Agar ham b'hār kī country se contact karnā cāhenge English me hotā hai. Lekin zarūrī nahīn hai kī English hī important hai, hamārī apne languages bhī important hain.

English is needed because most work happens in English. If we contact (someone from) another country, it will be in English. Although our languages are also important.

GH1: Ājkal ma'am English international language hai.

These days English is an international language.

GH4: Apnī matrabhāshā ke alāvā aur dūsrī bhāshāon kā bhī gyān hotā hai aur kahīn bhī ham jā sakte hain, dūsre deś me hame bahut sārī madad mil saktī hai usse.
[*It gives us knowledge of other languages besides our mother tongue and wherever we go, in other countries, we can get a lot of help.*]

GH3: Ma'am English aisī bhāshā hai jo bahut sāre deśon me bolī jātī hai.

English is such a language, it is spoken in many countries.

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26 Although I would have to do further research on this issue (and I plan to), I believe that these students are repeating discourses they have heard/seen in the media or other public arenas.

GH4:   Aur sab jānte hain.

And everyone knows it.

GH5:   Yadī āp Hindi bolte hain, Bharat me reh ke, to agar koī bāharvālā ātā hai to āpko sirf bolegā kī iskō sirf Hindi ātī hai. Hindi to sabko janmsidh ātī hai jo bhī Bharat me rehtā hai. Parantu voh socegā ki isne sīkhā kyā hai? Uske bād agar isne kuch sīkhā hī nahīn to fir kyā fāydā. Isīliye agar English bole to socenge kuch sīkhā hai isne.

If you speak Hindi, living in India, if a foreigner visits, he will say "this person only speaks Hindi." Everyone who lives in India speaks Hindi at birth. But he will think, "what has this person learnt? If he hasn't learnt anything after Hindi, what is the point?" That is why, if we speak English, they will think we have learnt something.

There are three very interesting sets of ideologies at work in GH3's statement, that "most work happens in English." The first is that "work" (or work worth having) takes place in English. The second is that the international language of communication is English, and the third, that English is not a part of "our own languages" (discussed below). These students went round and round the idea that English was an international language. Time and time again I would ask them what that meant to them, and time and again they would reiterate that it was an international language. They equated it with learning, with education, as GH5's last statement revealed. To them, knowledge of English was some kind of holy grail. GH3's statement, "although our languages are also important," was tacked on almost as an afterthought, as an obligatory qualification. Moreover, this statement reveals that this group of people did not think of English as an Indian language. To the students from the government schools, English was something they needed to learn to become richer, smarter, more successful, get a better job, make a better marriage, and communicate in a transnational environment. Their invocation of "globalization" and "international" at appropriate discursive moments indicated that they were aware of the dominant discourse linking English and national success. However, to reproduce that discourse would have been to acknowledge that there was no space in it

for them. Therefore, their reproductions were incomplete, or perhaps simply palimpsests. Skipping over the nation altogether, they disregarded what knowledge of English meant for the nation, and moved on to what it meant for *them*—hope? desire? escape? the freedom to dream? Viewing English in a transnational rather than a national light allowed them to imagine possibilities for themselves that were not permitted within dominant English-language discourses. Focusing on the "international" aspect of things permitted them dreams of a future unbounded by local hierarchies of class or caste.

<div style="text-align:center;">English and Empowerment</div>

Dominant discourses about poorer people who did not speak English were constructed in terms of two themes—empowerment, and quality of education. People from English-dominant backgrounds tend to overwhelmingly identify as upper class or upper middle class, and tend to be upper caste as well. They participate in elaborate discursive structures that stress the importance of English, its superiority over other languages, and its correlation with quality education. Languages have symbolic power— they are associated with specific positive or negative values (Bourdieu 1995; Rahman 2002). All linguistic forms and variables are arranged in a hierarchy of value determined by people in a shared social universe. These values are established in systems of ideas and beliefs about a language and the people associated with it. Social uses of language are hierarchically organized to reproduce a system of social differences (Bourdieu 1995).

Language use and its ideological interpretations create group identity formations (Briggs 1998; Woolard 1998). Ideologies allow the creation of indexical relationships, which are then organized and explained in terms of a specific social order. Thus, these discursive correlations set up by the English-dominant are expressed in the form of the economic advantages of knowing English, or simply as the equation "English = better education." Moreover, they often say that English leads to "empowerment," although the form this empowerment takes is uncertainly defined. In this section, I demonstrate how

the association of English with empowerment is highly ideological and perpetuates a hierarchy in which the English-dominant rank above the English-excluded.

The Ideological Lure of English

Maya, the mother of a student from English Convent, was firm in her belief that learning English could raise a person's socioeconomic status. She said, "It is important for poor people to know English because it gives them some kind of empowerment moving into society." She told me a story about a friend of hers, who had rented "her servant quarters" to a cycle rickshaw driver with a family of five. She said, "my friend believed in helping his two girls help themselves—so she kept talking only in English for all the twenty-four years they lived there. End of story—the girls switched to an English-medium government school. Both sisters graduated and now hold good jobs, and so they married slightly higher economic status boys."

It is easy to see how class, gender, and language ideologies play a role in these arguments. The first point Maya made was that knowledge of English led to empowerment, helping people move into "society." The implication here is that true "society" is only available to people who aren't abysmally poor, and who can speak English. She used a "real life example" to support her story, telling the story of two girls who were the children of a rickshaw puller with a large family. She drew an almost stereotypical picture of a very poor man burdened with a large family, including at least two daughters, and a benevolent upper class woman who helps them improve their lot by teaching them to converse in English, as a way to "help themselves." Thus, English became a tool of self-improvement for poor people. The girls' knowledge of English permitted them to switch from what one assumes is a Hindi-medium school to an English-medium one. It is clear, though, that their poverty continued to restrict schooling choices—they moved to another government school. Given what I found in the government schools I studied, I cannot imagine this school was any better in terms of quality of education.

The persistence of class and gender ideologies was most clearly revealed in Maya's last statement. When she said they hold "good jobs," it is very easy to imagine that sentence ending in "for people like them." Despite their supposed English-language ability, it was clear that a government school education would only get them so far, and "empowerment" is purely relative, and still within the safe parameters of class hierarchy. Maya made no mention of the enormous potential for alienation that comes with language-related mobility attempts (see Chapter One). The hypergamous nature of the entire enterprise was revealed at the end. All this—the years of English conversation, the switch to English-medium, and the good jobs—simply meant that the girls could marry slightly up. However, as Chapter Seven of this thesis shows, even as English-language education permits hypergamy, other social factors such as class and caste constrain how far up one can go. Empowerment, whatever it may be, is thus severely limited.

"Empowerment" and Othering

This idea of empowerment is thus a strong ideological lure, held out to poorer people as a way they can become richer (to put it very simply). For example, an advertisement published in the Statesman's Sunday Magazine in May 2008 for an English training institute called Veta proclaimed the institute's plans to "reconstruct" India "from the grassroots" by teaching rural Indians English (Figure 4). It read, "we can definitely observe a positive attitude developing among the people in these remote towns. It seems they have finally woken up to the importance of speaking and using good English. We believe that with the kind of expertise we can rightly claim we have and as the market leader in spoken English Training in India, we can successfully take up the onerous task of training these people to speak correct and fluent English, thus empowering them to face the challenges posed by the booming economy as they migrate from small towns to bigger cities in pursuit of employment" (Veta 2008).

The language used in the advertisement was blatantly patronizing. Given that it was published in an English-language daily, it is clear that their audience was not their

prospective students. Words such as "finally," "woken up," "remote," "onerous," and "these people" are all negative, presenting an impression of sleepy, bucolic villagers who need to be helped out of their pastoral, vernacular lifestyle. These words are a smooth lead-in to others—"woken up," "empowering," and "challenges." The interlocutors are clearly intended to be English-dominant urban dwellers, complicit in the project of "empowering" non-English speaking small town hicks, whether they like it or not. The efficacy of the "empowerment" process is irrelevant. The English-dominant discourse about empowerment described here is one within which which language inability (easily rectified) is the only thing holding poorer/lower caste people from being on par with upper class or upper caste people. Therefore, it is posited, the best way for them to empower themselves is to learn English.

This discursive construction completely obscures the fact that the upper castes and classes have been oppressing the lower castes and classes for centuries. Fernandes observes that access to jobs, even in the new "globalized" market, depends on a person's "ability to access particular forms of cultural and social capital (for example, English education, credentials of higher education), as well as on durable structural inequalities and identities such as gender or caste that track individuals into particular segments of the labor market" (Fernandes 2006:xxxi).

However, we need to be aware of what *kind* of English education leads to jobs and mobility. English, in India, is a way to maintain difference, as it has long been. Varma (2007) puts it bluntly, if somewhat brutally, in a discussion of English in post-independence India, when he says that English became a way to exclude social Others. The Indian "middle class," he says, set the norm for language, while the "lower middle classes" could only aspire to it. He says, "the ability to speak English with the right accent and fluency and pronunciation was the touchstone for entry into the charmed circle of the ruling elite. It was criteria for social acceptance. Those who could were

People Like Us. Those who could not were the others, the "natives", bereft of the qualifying social and educational background" (2007:64).

NOTICE BOARD

English for everyone
Veta, Asia's largest spoken English training academy owned by Amoha Education Pvt. Ltd. announced the launch of VetaOne, a new venture aimed at reconstructing India from the grassroots.

With VetaOne, the academy plans to emulate its success in towns with one-lakh plus population.

Announcing the launch of the initiative, Major K V Rajan, executive director, Veta, said, "Today the socio-economic scenario in semi-rural India is far from satisfactory. There is rampant unemployment and people are largely dependant on non-permanent earning opportunities.

Nevertheless, we can definitely observe a positive attitude developing among the people in these remote towns. It seems they have finally woken up to the importance of speaking and using good English. We believe that with the kind of expertise we can rightly claim we have and as the market leader in spoken English Training in India, we can successfully take up the onerous task of training these people to speak fluent and correct English, thus empowering them to face the challenges posed by the booming economy as they migrate from small town India to bigger cities in pursuit of employment."

Small town India is flying high. With growing awareness among youth and their parents, small town students nowadays are embracing growth-oriented professions. Such professions are no longer solely the choice of metro-bred youth.

Small town students are today becoming pilots, fashion designers, cricketers, software professionals as well as pursuing various other career-oriented opportunities. They aspire to lead decent lifestyles and keep pace with the changing times.

But at the same time, thousands of people who aspire for such jobs at various organisations fail to make the cut as they lack good English speaking skills. The conversion rate, i.e. the ratio of the total number of applicants to the number of applicants who meet the requirement on spoken English standards for such jobs is usually very low. Rejection on the basis of spoken English skills represents the largest rejection rate in the entire recruitment process.

VetaOne aims to cater to this segment of small town aspirants.

"With excellent guidance and support from the management, VetaOne promises provide a lucrative opportunity for those who have entrepreneurial drive and enthusiasm to set up their own businesses in small towns," said Rajan.

Veta today offers customised courses for various levels of learners. Similarly, the material for the VetaOne course would be original content developed and prepared by experts at Veta. The course is customised and content relevant and will be constantly modified and updated according to changing trends in communication.

The study material package developed by a panel of experts aims at training students in linguistic structures and vocabulary. The study material includes a lot of "Do it yourself" and provides a specific and detailed study programme.

veta ®
Experts in English Training

Figure 4 The Veta Advertisement

At an institutional and systemic level, access to English in general and privileged varieties in particular are very restricted. Anjali Puri (2008) says that important issues need to be addressed when it comes to teaching English in India. Are there enough teachers? Are they qualified to teach English? Can they actually speak English? What

kind of English are they teaching? Jeffrey et al (2008), in their study of Bijnor in North India note that none of the purportedly English-medium schools in Bijnor taught wholly or dependably in English. As the next section shows, one of the fundamental ways in which access is restricted is through schooling.

English and Quality Education

The other part of the "empowerment" ideology—that English education is a good education—must also be questioned. This discursive construction might even be a little more dangerous to the English-excluded, because it affects the quality of education they receive. By equating English-medium education with a good education, teachers in English Convent perpetuated a social hierarchy that places the English-dominant above the English-excluded. The fallout of this ideological mechanism, unsurprisingly, is a scathing contempt for those who are thus excluded—an act of linguistic discrimination.

"Dumbing down" English

English teachers who are from well-to-do backgrounds and upper caste are not interested in teaching students who are not from English-dominant backgrounds. They are also contemptuous of curricula that do not privilege English-medium education, referring to these as "dumbed down." This phrase is almost always used by them to describe changes in the level of English taught—changes that, in fact, might make English more accessible to students who are not from English-dominant backgrounds. As Puri says, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) textbooks, which aim to teach "communicative" or 'functional' English, are described by teachers as "dumbing down" English lessons.[27] She quotes a teacher as saying, "this populist, infantile

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[27] I believe this means teaching a variety of English that would aid in everyday communication, rather than, for example, Romantic poetry. In other words, since syllabi are common among all CBSE schools, the English taught might be aimed at those who are not English-dominant, which leads to accusations of "dumbing down" from those who are.

approach to English helps no one, not the children who know English, nor those who are struggling with it" (2008:74).

Although these teachers might not consciously intend this, such discursive constructions work to preserve the power status quo in Indian society. The teachers in English Convent drew direct connections between a "good" education and an English-medium one. I observed some classes run by Mrs. Bhan, the senior school English teacher in English Convent. She was disdainful of her students' English language ability, although they seemed perfectly fluent to me. She would even repeat class assignments in Hindi, although her Hindi was, ironically, not fluent at all, as a sarcastic reference to their supposed lack of comprehension of English. She said that the syllabus had been "dumbed down," and therefore she did not teach the assigned syllabus, but developed her own. She said, "these kids are woefully ignorant. They can't construct a full sentence in English. They are not from English-speaking families. The quality of students and curricula is dropping."

This connection between an inadequate emphasis on English because of a "dumbed down" syllabus and poor quality of education was brought up time and again by teachers in English Convent. Mrs. Ramaswami, a teacher in the senior school, tried to explain this to me. She stated that fluency in English was not important in India, but then went on to say,

> Fluency has advantages. It is necessary for success. A lack of fluency is a handicap. English has an influence on people's impressions. English-language ability is associated with class difference. There is definite deterioration in education due to changes in syllabi. Now students' command over language is limited. With social mobility, more people have access to education, to government jobs. They set the curricula, and they are not so particular about English-medium schools. The government is dumbing down the syllabi, making curricula easier, and so the standard of education is falling.

Mrs. Ramaswami drew a very clear connection between class and English-language ability, although she did not elaborate on it. She suggested, essentially, that

people who were more fluent in English would be considered upper class.[28] Some

students from the government schools also held to this opinion. For example, when I

asked what they would think about someone who spoke fluent English, the students from

Government English responded, "That he is civilized. You can tell their class from that,

when they speak English. People think, if he cannot speak in English, they think that he is

from low class or something." As Fernandes notes, the middle classes in India are linked

with the "distinction and sociocultural capital associated with English linguistic

identity…Gaining access to membership in the new middle class in liberalizing India…is

not merely a question of money but of linguistic and aesthetic knowledge and

respectability" (2006:34).

Mrs. Ramaswami was disparaging about upwardly mobile people who were not

English-dominant. She suggested that the reason quality of education was dropping was

because "such people were gaining control of positions where they could influence

syllabi preparation. Being less interested in English, they did not focus on it, and hence

the quality of education is falling." The teachers in English Convent believed that their

school should serve the "middle classes." Mrs. Ramaswami said, "the government

schools cater primarily to lower classes. The public schools are not interested in the

masses. English Convent is for the middle classes." The identification of these "middle

classes" (by which, I suspect, they meant the upper middle or even upper classes) with

English-language ability led to the construction of a specific language ideology. Teachers

believed that the school was meant for the children of the English-dominant upper middle

or upper classes. As LaDousa says, "prior to the 1970s, English-medium education was

associated with elite families who could afford to attend them and provide their children

an atmosphere for the inculcation of attributes necessary for attendance. The latter

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[28] Although in this context she was speaking specifically about adults, I think she would have
said the same about youth as well.

qualification always included a student's already-established competence in English (and preferably the parents' too)" (LaDousa 2004:644). Thus, the emphasis on being from an English-speaking family is a particular feature of upper/upper middle class English-language teaching in India.

Teaching and Language Discrimination

The teachers at English Convent were distressed about what they saw as the falling quality of education, specifically propelled by the admission of children who were not from English-speaking families and by the lack of focus on English literature in the syllabi. As a corollary, some of these teachers did not think that part of their job was to teach English to those who did not already have a firm grasp of it. Ramanathan (1999) suggests, in the context of college teachers in Gujarat, that this is an institutional mechanism that disrupts the education of people who are not from English-speaking backgrounds. She particularly refers to teachers of English Literature, who complained that they were not trained to teach English grammar, and, therefore, shouldn't have to teach students who were not from English-medium backgrounds.[29] Rama Mathew, of Delhi University's Central Institute of Education commented that teachers believe that children from non-English households had poorer learning abilities, and referred to them as having "mud in their heads" (Puri 2008:74).

Some of the teachers in English Convent believed that students who were not from English-dominant backgrounds should not be in a convent school. I spent an afternoon with some teachers from English Convent's middle school section. They asked me about my project. Then Mrs. Chawla, a middle school teacher, said to me, "I want your advice." She proceeded to tell me about a seventh-grade student whom, they said, "couldn't cope." She said, "she is weak in English. Can you recommend a government or

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[29] The assumption presumably was that such people should not (or could not) enjoy English Literature.

other Hindi school for her? Her parents are not well educated. They are Hindi-speaking. The child is distraught and failing. Her written English is okay, one-on-one is okay. But she is failing. She can't speak."

I was a little flummoxed. I failed to see the problem. I asked the teachers again about her English-language ability, and again they told me that she could write and speak to them individually just fine. They explained that she couldn't communicate effectively in the classroom. It occurred to me that she might be shy, and I suggested this to them. "No," they said, "she is not from an English-medium background. She should be in a government school." I tried, again and again, to get them to see this from another angle, but they were certain of the "problem." I eventually suggested to them that, rather than a government school, they might recommend another private school to her parents. I was uncomfortable with making any suggestions, but they would not let me go unless I made one. I picked the option I thought least detrimental to the child's future and, realizing that I was not about to lead them toward any epiphanies, left it at that.

Their attitude was discriminatory. Practices of linguistic discrimination are often socially acceptable, naturalized, and used to mask other forms of power play in society, such as racism or gender discrimination (Hill 1998, 2008; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). Languages become emblematic of political affiliation, or of social, moral or intellectual value (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). Language ideologies (especially those deriving from colonial situations) serve to create, perpetuate, and mask social differentiation. One particular aspect of language discrimination in India has to do with the varieties of English spoken.

Speakers who lack competence in a linguistic form are excluded from the social domains in which this form is privileged (Bourdieu 1995). Language reflects and reinforces social values, provides taxonomies, and has the power to construct and represent social reality. This power is related to the production of discourses, which "create and express the belief system, the world view, by which we judge everything"

(Rahman 2002:40). As Susan Gal states, "control of discourse or representations of reality occurs in social interaction, located in institutions, and is a source of social power" (1991:177). Languages are linked to power relations, to "group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology"—they are links between "social structures and forms of talk" (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994:56,55).

Prescriptivism, British English, and the Politics of Variety

> Other day I'm reading newspaper
> (Every day I'm reading Times of India
> To improve my English Language)
> How one goonda fellow
> Threw stone at Indirabehn.
> Must be student unrest fellow, I am thinking.
> Friends, Romans, Countrymen, I am saying (to myself)
> Lend me the ears.
> Everything is coming –
> Regeneration, Remuneration, Contraception.
> Be patiently, brothers and sisters [Ezekiel 2000].

The above quotation is from Nissim Ezekiel's poem, The Patriot. Ezekiel was well known for his (accurate but parodic) use of Indian Englishes in his poems, and even such a brief excerpt reveals some of the discourse variations present in Indian varieties of English.[30] These include, among others: collocations and deletions; omission or addition of articles; semantic shifts; new word orders; passive voice; borrowing; and interrogative forms (Murali 2006). Because of these differences, Indian Englishes may sound "odd" to speakers of other kinds of Englishes. The "mocking" of Indian English, especially certain varieties, has a history. Aravamudan notes that in Victorian times, Indian Englishes were ridiculed by the British as "Baboo English" or "CheeChee English."[31] He comments that the "baboo stereotype—from Rudyard Kipling to Peter Sellers—features a singsong

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[30] "Goonda" is someone who is socially disruptive. "Indirabehn" refers to Indira Gandhi.

[31] A "baboo" was an Indian who worked for the colonial government.

accent, clownish head-nodding, pretensions to erudition, credentializing anxieties, a moralistic tone, a liberal use of clichés and mixed metaphors, and incongruous literal translations into English from the vernacular" (Aravamudan 2006:4).

In a similar vein, many elite English-dominant Indians reject all varieties of Indian English other than the one they speak, and persist in referring to that variety (which may not be the same for all English-dominant Indians) as the only correct one. For example, English-dominant Indians from the north of the country will often make fun of South Indians' English accents. A "joke" I heard as a child went like this: "how does a South Indian spell moon? Yem, yo, yo, yen." The reference was to the addition of a "y" sound in front of vowel sounds in the word-initial position, a noticeable feature of some South Indian English dialects. South Indians are not behind in returning the favor, frequently deriding the level of education of North Indians, particularly Punjabis, and describing them and their language as "earthy" at best and "crass and *nouveau riche*" at worst (see Dwyer's typology of classes, Chapter Four). "Earthy," in this case, is often not a compliment, because it indexes farming, which is derided by such South Indians (usually from the intelligensia) as unintellectual and therefore unintelligent work.

How Language Ideologies Work

As I have stated earlier, language ideologies are about more than language (Fairclough 2001; Gal 1998; Kulick 1998; Spitulnik 1998; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). They embody connections between language and social life (Gal 1998). They are about power relations and the legitimization of power, the creation of difference, and the creation of cultural stereotypes (Spitulnik 1998). Stereotypes are "beliefs about denotata of a word or expression that are not derived from strictly linguistically mapped sense categories but that, notwithstanding, give descriptive backing to use of the term" (Silverstein 1998:127). They are used with reference to specific groups, in specific social hierarchies. They mark certain linguistic features and link them to groups of people. This process entails iconization—linking linguistic features to social groups to make it seem as

though these features describe the essence of those groups (Irvine and Gal 2000, Rahman 2002).

Language ideologies determine which linguistic features are marked (Schieffelin and Doucet 1998), and whether they are positively or negatively valued. It is important, therefore, to understand the related processes of stereotyping and ideologizing, the "cultural logic" whereby people relate language use to "apparently diverse categories as morality, emotions, aesthetics, authenticity, epistemology, identity, nationhood, development, or tradition" (Gal 1998:323). Language ideologies have hidden agendas—they may be about political, social, or economic interests. They are thus "socially, politically, and/or linguistically significant" (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994:60). Languages often become metalinguistic symbols for group identities, functioning as symbols, also, of political commitment or social value (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994).

Thus, it is not just English that is valued by the English-dominant, but particular varieties of English. Learning English for "empowerment" or upward mobility, therefore, becomes exceptionally difficult. First, the English-excluded have to gain access to English-language education. Next, they have to gain access to a privileged variety. Finally, if they come this far, they have to hope that the variety they learn (in itself a demanding process) is one which is privileged in the contexts in which they intend to use it. Privileging specific varieties of English can affect how English teachers view their students.

Prescriptivism in Teaching

Mrs. Mehra taught English to the junior school section of English Convent. She had been teaching since 1977, and was due to retire. She complained of the changes she had seen in English curricula over the years, which she related to the loss of "British grammar," which she valued positively:

> I was born in the late forties. Then things were different. We still
> had a lot of British teachers, nuns, sisters, who insisted on good
> quality English. Nowadays a whole lot of public schools have

mushroomed, and these public schools are basically run by business owners.[32] So their interest is more so in the profit they would make out of education as such. But convents, what they were and what they are, there is a marked difference in the quality of education they impart. The joy of English as a language is missing. It's more of matter-of-fact, you learn, and you express yourself or you just give it up in your exams, put it across in your exams, and you get marked for that and you get away with the feeling that you are good at it. But they are not as well versed with the English language as such. The curriculum has dumbed down, in the sense, there's no formal grammar left. I don't believe in grammar being mathematics, but English grammar needs to be done in the typical British way. Not so much in the Indian or the American way. The British way would mean that you use the correct tenses, you use the correct 'will, shall, I, may, can' in the correct context. So quite often it's accepted because you have people who listen to you, and they make you feel that yeah, whatever you are trying to convey is just about enough. If there were people around to tell you that there are better ways of expressing it… and once a child is made conscious, she won't make that mistake again so easily.

Mrs. Mehra made quite a few points here that are of interest to someone who analyzes language ideology. She was prescriptivist, and in a very particular way. She said that British English was preferable over Indian or American English, suggesting that the latter weren't quite grammatical. This kind of prescriptivism is common among older, English-dominant Indians although, with the introduction of cable television and American TV shows, it is changing among younger people. Mrs. Mehra was very troubled by what she saw as the deterioration of English because of television. She was particularly concerned about code-switching between English and Hindi, which she believed was a problem compounded by television:

Children find it hard to express themselves, so quite often they switch from English to Hindi and Hindi to English. And matters have been made worse by the television, by the commercials, by the serials, where they use English words to their convenience. Whereas I am of the firm belief, if you start a conversation in a certain language, it's nice to complete the conversation in the same language. Rather than mix, which is here and there. But unfortunately they say "caltā hai, ho jāegā," you know, whenever

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[32] I'm not certain of the veracity of this statement.

you are short of words, you use all kinds of local language, and that's the saddest part.[33]

Mrs. Mehra's belief that British English was the appropriate standard, and that English should not be "mixed," stems from a very specific ideological position on language in India. Much of the linguistic discrimination relating to English arises out of the idea that there is a "standard" English that is correct, while all other forms are deviations from the norm. English use tends to be ordered hierarchically, based on an indefinable British-American "standard." Language is intensely political, and English is marked by hierarchical assumptions of "standard" versus "non-standard" and the idea of a British-American standard against which the rest of the world's Englishes can be measured. This hierarchical system carries with it much sociopolitical baggage. A "British standard" is a bit of a fallacy, since British English varies by class, region, and ethnic origin. The idea of a "British" standard itself thus masks many different kinds of Englishes, just as the idea of an "Indian" English masks both the internal differentiation in English use in India as well as the exonormative status hierarchies to which Indians' use of English is subject. Millar (Afendras et al. 1995) argues, therefore, that promoting the idea of a standard by its very nature implies discrimination against somebody.

Ideological power is evident in processes of standardization of language deriving from European monolingual language ideologies (Silverstein 1996; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994), where "institutional maintenance of certain valued linguistic practices…acquires an explicitly-recognized hegemony over the definition of the community's norm" (Silverstein 1996:285). Michael Silverstein (1996) says that, in the U.S., a particular variety of "unaccented" English (as spoken by white Midwesterners, for

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[33] The phrases literally mean "everything goes" and "it will get done," but are often used to indicate a supposed Indian cultural lackadaisical attitude toward getting anything done. This attitude, with likely roots in colonial prejudices, is often expressed by elite Indians to explain why they think India is not yet a significant world economic power—"nothing gets done, and if it does, it isn't done well." I don't believe Mrs. Mehra's choice of those phrases was accidental.

example) is seen as the standard. This "monoglot standard" (Silverstein 1996) is positively valued and conceived of as superior to all other linguistic forms. It is naturalized such that certain linguistic features are associated with specific groups, and social institutions' promotion of the standard is seen as rational. In a similar process of naturalization, "lack" of the standard is viewed negatively, although it is a "lack" only because the standard is viewed positively, as "natural." In the United States, for example, non-white Americans often express concern about their "accents" (Urciuoli 1996), which do not meet the monoglot standard. Moreover, the naturalization and internalization of the ideological association of "non-white" with "accent" means that many white Americans will hear "non-standard" English even when such is not the case (Hill 1998; see Rampton 1992 for a discussion of similar processes among white Britons). Thus Hill (1998) suggests that a racial hegemony is created, where whites are seen as normal, and the racialized populations are marginal and need monitoring. Social institutions such as schools and news media work to maintain this hegemony, cementing the ideological power of the monoglot standard.

The problematic category of "standard English," which is often unclearly defined, is not entirely sustainable. As Rajendra Singh (Singh et al. 1995) says, showing that one English, for example, "Indian English," differs in some lexical, syntactical or morphological way from, say, "British English" is only a way of assuming and exemplifying the binary classification—not of justifying or proving it. Cross-cultural variation in language performance may be explained by examining the relationships between grammatical and/or phonological patterns and cultural norms. Social knowledge of group as well as discourse conventions influence how members of different groups speak, and how they perceive each other. Language use is related to context. This does not mean only that language varieties develop in specific contexts of use. It also means that speakers may switch varieties depending on context.

As Voloshinov (1973) states, understanding therefore involves recognizing the linguistic form used in terms of a particular context created by belonging to the same linguistic community. When these conventions differ, comprehension of meaning is jeopardized. When the difference is compounded by an unequal power relationship, language attitudes towards different varieties translate into value judgments that can affect how groups of people are perceived. In order to be comprehensively and mutually intelligible, interlocutors must share certain discourse features that signal meaning: verbal conventions, flexibility of these conventions, and common modes of functioning of linguistic devices (Gumperz et al. 1982). When they don't, ideologies about which variety is "better" may develop.

Responses to Linguistic Discrimination

Within the Indian context, people who are not English-dominant are quick to pick up on linguistic discrimination and on language ideologies that link language ability and social position. As I will describe further in Chapter Five, government school students are well aware of private school discourses that depict them as lower class and badly educated. They respond to this by creating their own discourses around class and education, an important feature of which is the disparagement of private school students. The students from Government Hindi, in the conversation reproduced below, make negative comments specifically about English-speaking people.

GH1:   Government school English school se jyādā behtar hai.
        Kyonki vahān par concle-bāzī bahut hoti hai. Isīliye
        apnā English-medium school thoḍe pasand nahīn āte
        hain.

        Government schools are better than English schools.
        Because there is too much phoniness there. That is why
        we do not like English-medium schools.

GH2:   Jyādātar unme mostly English bolne vāle hote hain,
        dikhāvaṭī hote hain. Ek matlab voh socte hain ki jo voh
        karte hain voh paḍhte hain bas voh hi hain, aur koī kuch
        nahīn hai. Auron ko samajhte nahīn hain, jyādātar.

> *They mostly have English speakers, they are show-offs.*
> *They think that what they do and what they study is the*
> *best, everything else is nothing. They don't understand*
> *other people, mostly.*

GH3:   Yeh Angrejī vāle hote hain, nā, dūsrōn ki respect kabhī
nahīn karte. Matlab jo purāne sanskār hote hain, nā,
unkī zyādā respect nahīn karte.

> *These English speakers, they never respect other*
> *people. They don't respect our old traditions.*

These student discourses demonstrate that government school students are aware that they hold inferior social positions in terms of dominant ideologies. They are also conscious of the fact that English-language ability (or lack thereof) is perceived (by students in the private schools) as a central factor in their "inferiority." Although they do not quite internalize this sense of inferiority, they certainly buy into the idea that learning English will level the playing field, because they are aware that it is the dominant ideology. This does not stop them from attempting to subvert dominant language ideologies and emphasizing difference, by which means they try to change their position in the ideological hierarchy.

<u>Language and Mobility</u>

Privileging English-medium education and English-language training because of perceived economic value can create, and has created, significant linguistic, social, economic, educational, and emotional fissures in Indian society. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) observe that when a dominant ideology of market value is placed on some sort of pedagogic product, the groups that have been educated according to such ideologies are likely to feel that their own cultural attributes and achievements have no value, either in terms of a labor market, or in terms of cultural capital. Such has been the case with the English-excluded in India.

Power and language are intrinsically connected, and to understand this connection, we have to understand how power is "instantiated in talk, how it gets

activated, and how it may be resisted" (Thornborrow 2002: 7). One of the strongest aspects of power lies in the ability to define –or redefine—social reality (Gal 1992), or to develop *Weltanschauungen*. Critical to this process of redefining social reality are language ideologies, which serve to set up differences (often based on other aspects of social identity such as race or gender), naturalize them, and essentialize them into crucial elements of social structure. Thus, to fully understand social power, we must understand its relationship to language, and to understand the relationship of language and power, we must examine the "cultural mythography" (Ramaswamy 1993:685) of language—in other words, language ideology.

Studying language ideologies in India today is critical for our understanding of contemporary Indian power relations. Varma states, "competence in English has become the single most important yardstick of a person's eligibility for negotiating the opportunity structure that can be availed of in a modern economy" (2007:66). Current language ideologies draw on discourses about globalization. However, the ways in which these discourses of globalization are adapted and used by people who are English-dominant or the English-excluded are very different. Dominant language ideologies depict English as a path to group mobility. They link knowledge of English to success on a global economic stage, and thus to discourses of nationalism and progress of the nation. This positive aspect of dominant language ideology applies only to the English-dominant. As far as the English-excluded are concerned, dominant ideology is more negative. They are presented as people who must empower themselves through learning English—in other words, English brings mobility to the masses. However, access to English-medium education and privileged varieties of English is restricted.

The Social Consequences of Linguistic Mobility

What happens when children from socioeconomically underprivileged backgrounds *do* get access to English-medium education? Do their backgrounds matter?

Although I do not have enough data on this topic, I believe that (unfortunately) backgrounds do matter. Richa Nagar (2006) describes her move from a Hindi-speaking non-elite family to the exclusive, English-medium La Martiniere school as a struggle to translate two worlds. A friend of mine related two anecdotes, which describe parental concerns about being alienated from a child who is educated in English (a concern children also have, as shown in Chapter One).

> My gardener, who lives in our garage and takes care of my house and my parents too, is in his late twenties. He has a two-and-a-half year old son. He migrated from the rural areas in Purulia, where he used to be a farmer. Both he and his wife have been educated till the ninth grade, but in the government district schools which are in the vernacular. So, now he wants to educate his son and came to my mother to ask where to send his kid—a local vernacular government school or an English-medium school. He thought English-medium schools mean more opportunities for his son in the long run. But he was afraid. He wouldn't be able to teach his son or help with homework if it was an English-medium instruction. His wife was worried that she would have a distance between herself and her son because of the language. My mom and I finally suggested that they should try the government school which had Bengali-medium instruction, but did very very well in terms of the Board exams and the competitive exams. In another story, five doors down, there is an elderly middle class couple who had a family living in their garage. The mother is a housemaid, father a driver. Their only son was eight years old when they moved in. The elderly couple loved the little boy and took it upon themselves to give him the best possible education. They had him admitted to a pretty well-established local school that taught in English. The boy's homework would be assisted by the elderly couple. He was even given clothes, a cycle to ride to school like many other middle class boys in the locality (except, his parents were not middle class). On one occasion, in his ninth grade, the school demanded that his parents come to the annual parent teacher meeting, since this was the year before the Board exams. The elderly couple were vacationing in the U.S., with their own son. So, his mom went to the school, the first time in her life. A few days later, the boy hanged himself in the tiny garage, unable to bear the taunts and cruel comments of his classmates who realized when they saw his mother, that he was NOT part of their class.

I want to include these anecdotes not just as demonstrations of how the path to mobility through language and education is not smooth, but also to show how, in themselves, these anecdotes are part of complex discursive constructions that defy the

"English=upward mobility" equation by suggesting that it is not an appropriate path when other things, such as class background, remain the same. Another friend of mine, who is from a rural Dalit family, told me that all his English ability, higher education, and scholarly successes have no meaning when he returns home to his village. There, he is still the low-caste son of a low-caste family, and the same friends who attended college with him and cheerfully eat with him in the city will practice ritual avoidance of him in the village. While I was horrified at what I thought was willful cruelty to a friend, he didn't question their "friendship." He simply accepted the way it was in the village, albeit sorrowfully and angrily.

Conclusion

In India, English has a certain kind of positive value that has persisted, albeit in different forms, since colonial times. It is valued both culturally and economically. I don't think this valuation, in itself, is necessarily a bad thing. However, it has certain consequences, not the least of which is the comprehensive social subjection of the English-excluded by the English-dominant and by powerful ideologies about the importance of English. In turn, this has led to a rising demand for English training, English-medium education, and a vulnerable "market" of English-excluded, mobility-desiring youth. Given that there are these alternate discourses of (one might say) the "consequences" of learning English, we have much to learn from non-dominant ideologies of language in India. English-excluded people are not included in nationalist discourses of English and world glory, nor do they (usually) feel pride in English as an Indian language. On the contrary, they see it as a foreign language, and are often quite resentful of the importance given to English in India. However, they acknowledge this importance, and therefore see English as a path to individual mobility, a way to escape local and national power structures and move into a transnational imaginary, in which they do not occupy subordinate positions. If they restrict their imaginings of English to

the nation, they risk being judged, not by English ability, but by the same things they have always been judged by—caste or class.

By occupying a different discursive space, they change how they relate to English and the privilege associated with it. Thus, using the same language and drawing on similar discourses of globalization, two very different ideologies about English in India and linguistic mobility emerge, from two very different subject positions. At the same time, they are aware that their imaginings of linguistic mobility are limited by their access to English (or to privileged varieties of English). The conflict between aspirations and awareness produces some highly contradictory discourses of language and mobility, in which this sense of conflict is very apparent.

CHAPTER FOUR: MONEY, MORALITY, AND MIDDLE CLASS IDENTITY

In this chapter, I demonstrate how middle class identity is positively valued and all my interlocutors claimed middle class membership. However, their definitions of middle class varied significantly, depending on their family income and occupational backgrounds. Poorer students emphasized characteristics that cannot be quantitatively measured, such as morality, over quantifiable characteristics, such as income. Thus, they engage in discursive mobility by emphasizing "difference" over "hierarchy" (Gupta 2000). They do this in an attempt to change how they are perceived by those around them and to justify the social positions they occupy. At the same time, they aspire to membership in other groups or classes. Processes of discursive mobility thus become complicated, conflicted, and contradictory, as I demonstrate here.

Class as Ideology

The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that, by 2025, the middle classes in India would include over 580 million people (Varma 2007). Yet, as Leela Fernandes (2006) points out, these groups have not been subject to comprehensive academic research. Academic scholarship has tended to focus on the size of the middle classes, their composition, their role in liberalization, or their participation in consumption practices, rather than on their internal differentiations or cultural and political practices (Fernandes 2006). For example, Christophe Jaffrelot and Peter van der Veer (2008) say that although the middle classes in India can be divided into upper and lower based on occupation and standard of living, patterns of consumption must also be taken into account. They suggest that the middle classes are uniting around a single homogeneous pattern of consumption, such that they will become one more or less homogeneous group.

To fully understand class dynamics in India, we must understand how people classify others and self-identify as members of a particular group. There is more to class

than consumption, although consumption patterns may be key in mobility efforts. The middle classes in India are also based on "religion, caste, and kinship" (Béteille 2001:74), as well as on language. As Sherry Ortner says about the United States, class is not "an objectively defined object in the world, but a culturally and historically constructed identity" (1998:3), an idea also proposed by Bonnie Urciuoli (1993). Following Carol Upadhya, therefore, I suggest that the term "middle class" is basically "an ideological construct that has become a primary category of social identity for a significant section of the Indian population" (Upadhya 2008:59). Therefore, I try to understand class in the cultural terms given to me by my interlocutors, and not just in terms of externally imposed parameters such as income, occupation, or consumption practices. Drawing on material given to me by my interlocutors, I incorporate eight elements into this analysis: income, occupation, education, caste, gender, geography, material culture, and morality. Language, which is a key element of class identity politics, is a running theme through these elements.

Understanding different groups' class ideologies gives us insight into the ideological bases for social action and interaction. In this chapter, I will examine students' ideas of class and class difference. As Jonathan Parry says, "the most powerful influence on the kind of childhood one has is class" (2005:297). I'd also like to make a broader comment on scholarship on mobility, aspirations, and youth. Jay MacLeod (1987) observed, in his work in the United States, that youth from working class backgrounds tended to have depressed aspirations. He said that about his interlocutors that "they were a group of boys whose occupational aspirations did not even cut across class lines" (1987:2). I would like to suggest here that we need to refine this idea a little. The government school students I spoke to did not aspire to working class jobs. They wanted to do more. However, their aspirations *are* influenced by their awareness of opportunities. They did not, though, ever lose faith in their education, or its purported

ability to help them be upwardly mobile, even as they were aware that it might be qualitatively poorer than private school education.

<div style="text-align:center">Middle Classness as a Positive Value</div>

Middle class identity is positively valued, and students in all three schools are invested in being perceived as middle class. There is, however, a fundamental difference in how they define middle class. Students in English Convent and Government English, on average, belonged to slightly wealthier backgrounds than the students from Government Hindi. Table 1 shows the range of parental incomes for all three schools. Although the numbers do not permit any responsible statistical tests, it is clear that students from Government Hindi came from the poorest families. Students from Government English and English Convent came from wealthier backgrounds. Inasmuch, they were comfortable with the idea that income, occupation, and wealth were key elements in determining class. Students of Government Hindi, by contrast, were poorer than the other students. Therefore, in their definitions of middle class, moral codes featured more prominently than wealth or occupation.

Sara Dickey (2000a) notes, in her work about domestic servants and their employers in South India, that it is not in the interest of people who are lower in class hierarchies to see difference as absolute and unchangeable. However, they are also aware that it can be very difficult to rise within this hierarchy. Therefore, as with the domestic servants she studied, and as with the government school students I studied, "they frequently pose the realm of morality as an alternative hierarchy to class in which they, not the wealthy, are enviably positioned" (2000a:56). This emphasis on unmeasurable attributes as defining features of class is not peculiar to India. Urciuoli (1993) found, in her research in New York, that her interlocutors were defining middle class identity in terms of agency, of "knowing how to do things" (Urciuoli 1993: 206).

School	Minimum Parental Income per month	Maximum Parental Income per month	Number of Parental Responses
Government Hindi	Rs. 5,000	Rs. 10,000	21
Government English	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 50,000	5
English Convent	Rs. 40,000	Rs. 200,000	5

Table 1 Range of Parental Incomes for All Three Schools

Defining "The Middle Class"

Jaffrelot and van der Veer state that "the middle class is a notoriously elusive category. It is defined almost by default, as 'what-is-in-the-middle', between the upper layers of society and the plebian masses" (2008:11). Leela Fernandes states that the boundaries of the middle classes are "delineated through a set of public discourses, cultural narratives, and economic shifts" (2006:31). Middle class identity, she says, is organized in terms of symbolic practices, which, in turn, are shaped by the existence of the English-dominant elite. This elite—the original Indian middle class—is English-dominant (Dwyer 2000; Sheth 1999), controls India's cultural values, and legitimizes this control through control of social institutions (Dwyer 2000), including schools. In this section, I discuss some of the scholarship on middle classes in India, and introduce my interlocutors' ideas on middle classess.

The Synecdochic Middle Class

Pavan Varma (2007) lists the people who belonged to the post-Independence middle classes, and this list can be applied to contemporary popular definitions as well. He excluded poor people working the agrarian sector, manual laborers (skilled or unskilled), lower-level clerks and government employees. He also excluded wealthy business owners or capitalists, landownders, and erstwhile royalty. The middle classes, in his definition, included upper-level government employees, professionals, merchants, teachers, educated peasantry, and university students. Popular discussions of the middle

class in India tend to refer to the urban, professional middle classes, leading to "a slippage between a particular segment of the urban (metropolitan) middle class and the middle class in general, which is a much wider group that includes the rural middle class and urban middle class" (Fernandes 2006:xvii). In this way, the term "middle class" becomes something of a synecdoche, referring as it does to only to a part of the whole. That is, the term is usually used to refer to the "white collar salariat" (Jaffrelot and van der Veer 2008:12). This synecdochic "middle class" is very important in Indian economics and cultural politics, because "it is the darling of the official discourse and policy makers" (Jaffrelot and van der Veer 2008:19). It becomes even more imperative, therefore, to present information that stresses the heterogeneity of the middle classes.

The Heterogeneous Middle Classes

By using "middle classes" rather than the singular "class," I emphasize the fragmented nature of this group, which is all too often elided when the term "middle class" is used. As André Béteille states, "the class we are dealing with is not only very large but also highly differentiated internally to such an extent that it may be more appropriate to speak of the middle classes than the middle class in India" (2001:73). Even within the category of the urban middle classes, there are distinctions between those who refer to themselves as middle class. A critical element of this distinction is that while they may self-identify as middle class, they may not perceive each other as middle class. For example, the students in all three schools I went to referred to themselves as middle class, although there were significant differences in the income and occupation levels of their parents. Thus, as Ortner says, class "must be examined within a discursive field of related terms of social identity and social difference" (1998:3). Although her work was based in the U.S., like Ortner, I operate at the level of "culture, ideology, discourse, *habitus*" (Ortner 1998:7), in the "realm of discourse, that is, of how people talk about themselves and others, and of the larger shape of the discursive field from which people draw their categories" (Ortner 1998:7)

In terms of commonly used parameters, the middle classes may be distinguished by income, occupation, language, and cultural practices, including consumption. Rachel Dwyer (2000), for example, uses the term "middle class" to cover a wide range of groups, including bureaucrats, professionals, and small and large businessmen. She identifies three sub-sections of the middle classes in India: the old middle classes, which are the professional or service elite, are dependent on an earned salary, and have a lot of educational and cultural capital, usually having an advanced education. She says that they are generally English-dominant, control India's cultural values, and legitimize this control through the institutions they operate and control, such as governmental and educational institutions. The second section she identifies is the new middle classes, which are rich, have high-consumption patterns, and have risen from the lower-middle class. She says that they have economic, but not cultural, capital. They know English, but speak other languages such as Hindi, or they use "Hinglish" and code-switch frequently. She also comments that they self-identify as upper class, though the old middle classes call them *nouveau riche*. The third section, which she calls the lower middle class, has smaller assets of cultural, educational, and economic capital. It is, though, marked by aspirations to increasing such capital. Its members try to achieve these aspirations through self-help, education, English acquisition, and specific consumer choices (Dwyer 2000). On closer examination, though, things become even more confusing, and I introduce some of this confusion—students' self-perceptions—in this next section.

Claiming Middle Class Identity

For the people I studied, the middle classes are endowed with positive value, and belonging to them is a good thing. Inasmuch, *everyone* I spoke to declared themselves to be part of the middle classes. Everyone else was either lower or upper class, both of which were negatively valued. Nobody I spoke to admitted to being upper class, although some students in English Convent admitted that others might consider them to be upper

middle class. In the same way, not a single one of my interlocutors referred to themselves as lower class. In Government Hindi, which has the lowest average parental income, some students said they supposed they could be considered "lower middle." Others immediately disagreed, and said they were, at worst, "middle middle." Ortner (1998) noted a similar issue in her research on class in the United States—people she thought were "working class" identified as "middle class," while others who called themselves middle class acknowledged that they were actually "upper middle class." Urciuoli (1993) also observes that, in her research in New York, people she assumed were poor self-defined as middle class. One of the most interesting things about all of this was that all the students I spoke to, in each school, seemed fairly certain they belonged to the same class. When I asked them what class they belonged to, they would discuss it by asking each other "what class do *we* belong to?" and would turn back to me with a consensus. They came from a range of backgrounds, even within schools. I know for a fact that one of the students in English Convent was from a considerably poorer background than her friends. However, one of the factors involved in class, in their discourses, is membership in particular kinds of school, which I discuss in detail in the next chapter.

The Contradictions of Class Identity

Seeking to portray themselves as middle class, the students of the government schools were aware that their disadvantaged backgrounds did not fit with popular notions of the middle class. They could—and did—refer to themselves as "garīb" (poor) in the same breath as they said they were middle class, because, in their discourse, middle class identity was defined in terms of moral values or idealized cultural practices rather than wealth. Imputed with moral codes and values, "middle class" becomes an adjective, describing a particular state of moral behavior, as well as a noun, describing a category of people.

Many people, especially those involved in advertising and marketing, spend much time and effort on trying to establish the exact parameters of the middle classes in India.

Income, occupation, education, and consumption patterns remain some of the primary elements of these measuring processes. Studies have shown that, in India, parental income, occupations, and education levels affect children's scholastic achievement (Singhania et al. 1987). However, categories such as income and occupation are of limited use in understanding the middle classes in India (Ahmad and Reifeld 2001). As my data show, my interlocutors did factor these variables into their definitions of class. Then again, the definition of these variables differed from group to group, school to school, and sometimes from individual to individual.

Béteille (2001) suggests that the most basic occupational distinction between the middle classes and the lower classes is that the middle classes do not engage in manual labor. Students from Government English and English Convent believed that the middle class was, essentially, a white-collar salaried class. In Government Hindi, however, most of the parents were small traders or manual laborers with varying degrees of skill. Yet, they firmly defined themselves as middle class. This attachment to middle class membership is an attempt at discursive mobility, almost a Sanskritization effort of sorts.[34] They are attempting structural mobility, attempting to change the system, rather than positional mobility, moving within an accepted hierarchy (Srinivas 1995). In order to sustain their claim to middle class membership, these students needed to invest in the idea of a middle class that was defined by moral codes rather than income, occupation, or education level. If we accept their claim to being middle class, accepting the internal ideological differentiation of the middle classes becomes even more imperative.

With differences in income, occupation, and education, come differences in social and cultural capital (Béteille 2001). It is these differences that the students in Government Hindi are attempting to challenge through their discourses on class. In the end, "middle

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[34] Srinivas defines Sanskritization as a process whereby a lower "caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high…caste" (1995:6).

class" remains a very fluid and slippery category, adopted by almost every group and reworked to support their claims to middle classness. Given that middle class identity was positively valued, students wanted to portray themselves as part of the middle classes. Since they could not fit into conceptions of the middle classes which centered on higher income or occupation, they altered these definitions to fit the identities they already occupied.

Class, therefore, is a mutable category that is defined through other kinds of self-definition—where one wants to be is just as important, in self-depiction, as where one actually is. As Ortner notes, "either way, there is almost no "there" there; to be plain middle class is almost always to be "really" something else, or on the way to somewhere else" (1998:8).[35] This is not to say that there is no such thing as class. There are certainly socioeconomic inequalities in every society, and class serves to index them (Béteille 2001; Ortner 1998). However, class must be understood as an identity category (Ortner 1998), and not just as socioeconomic quantifiable parameters. Inasmuch, it is difficult to define, because these definitions will vary from group to group and person to person.

Income: Students' perspectives

There were two sources of discourses on income and class in my research. The first were the students I interacted with. Although this formed the major portion of observed and elicited data on income, teachers also generated and reproduced significant class ideologies that affected schooling practices, and I discuss these as well in this chapter.

For the students of Government English and English Convent, income was a key element in determining class. Maya, from Government English said,

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[35] Once again, although Ortner is talking about the U.S., I find the statement to be equally applicable in the Indian context.

High class to bilkul hī ho gaye nā when the parents are earning one lakh per month like twelve lakh per annum.[36] Yahān pe middle class me jyādā se jyādā āp school ke pūre average bhī lagāoge to mostly bahut kam bacce honge jinkī father-mother kī total milāke income sāl me pānc lakh tak pahunctī ho. To yeh difference kartā hai high class and middle class me.

High class is when the parents earn one lakh per month like twelve lakh per annum. Here, in the middle class, even if you average the entire school you will find very few students whose total parental income reaches five lakhs per year. This is the difference between upper and middle class.

The students I spoke to often started squabbling about what the income parameters of class should be. I highlight here two conversations, with students from Government English and Government Hindi. I was attempting to ascertain their opinions on class and income variation. In each school, I was speaking to a group of about ten students.

Income and Class in Government English

In Government English, students became very vocal and an argument swiftly ensued. They began to negotiate the income parameters of class and eventually reached a consensus.

LMP: To income level kitna honā cāhīye upper middle class hone ke liye?

How much should the income level be to be upper middle class?

GE1: Upper middle class? Above forty thousand.

GE2: Hān, forty thousand.

Yes, forty thousand.

GE3: Forty thousand? Pāgal hai?

Forty thousand? Are you mad?

GE2: Fifty? Sixty? One lakh?

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[36] A lakh is a hundred thousand.

Fifty? Sixty? One hundred thousand?

GE3: One lakh.

One hundred thousand.

GE1: One lakh per year? Per month?

One hundred thousand per year? Per month?

GE3: Per month, per month, hān.

Per month, per month, yes.

GE1: Upper class aur bhī jyādā ho saktā hai. Lower to around earning jo unkī hotī hai do hazār se tīn hazār utnā hotā hai.

Upper class [income] can be even more. The lower [classes] earn about two thousand to three thousand.

GE3: Cal, cal! Poor hotā hai voh!

What rubbish! That's a poor person![37]

GE1: Vohī, lower.

That's right, lower [class].

GE4: Hān bhai, low hī kah rahā hai yeh.

Yes, he is talking about the lower classes.

GE2: Aur jo lower middle class hotā hai, voh hotā hai pandrah-bīs.

And the lower middle class is fifteen-twenty.

GE3: Nahīn, nahīn, bīs se ūpar kar de, tīs tak.

No, no, make it more than twenty, up to thirty.

GE2: Pacīs?

Twenty-five?

GE3: Tīs.

Thirty.

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[37] That is the colloquial meaning. "Cal" literally means "go."

At this point, everyone else broke into a call of "lagāle, lagāle" (fix it there), and they agreed on a number.

Income and Class in Government Hindi

In Government Hindi, by contrast, the middle classes were not divided into upper or lower by income. They talked about only one middle class, and considered themselves part of it. Their income-based definition of middle class corresponded with the lower middle class income parameters set by the students of Government English. However, the gap between their "lower" and "middle" classes is only five thousand rupees a month, a smaller gap than that of the students from Government English.

LMP: To middle class logon kā jyādā se jyādā kitnā hogā income?

So what is the maximum someone from the middle class will earn?

GH1:   Ma'am das se pandrah.

Ten to fifteen [thousand].

GH2:   Ma'am das se bārah ke ās-pās hī hogā.

It will be around ten to twelve.

LMP: Aur lower class?

And lower class?

GH1:   Lower class me sabse jyādā mahīne kā das hajār.

In the lower class, the maximum is ten thousand per month.

As the two conversations show, income-based ideas of class vary among the students of Government English and Government Hindi. In Government English, the students decided that the lower classes earn about two to three thousand a month, the lower middle classes about thirty thousand a month, and the upper classes one hundred thousand rupees a month. In Government Hindi, the students suggested that the middle

classes earn about ten to fifteen thousand rupees a month, while the lower classes earn at most ten thousand rupees a month. Their income aspirations seem similarly depressed. When asked how much they would like to earn, no one went over fifty thousand rupees a month.

LMP: Acchī tankhā kitnī hotī hai? Āp kitnā kamānā cāhte haĩ?

What is a good income? How much would you like to earn?

GH3: Paintīs hazār.

Thirty-five thousand.

GH4: Bārā hazār se ūpar.

More than twelve thousand.

GH3: Minimum fifty!

At least fifty!

This disparity might have something to do with their socioeconomic backgrounds. The students of Government Hindi came from poorer backgrounds than the students of the other two schools. Over fifty percent of the twenty-two parents surveyed in Government Hindi earned between five to ten thousand rupees (about one to two hundred dollars) a month. Among the parents of Government English, most earned between ten to fifty thousand rupees a month. Thus, the students of Government English, most of whom had a very good idea of how much their parents earned, placed themselves squarely in the lower-middle class bracket. The students in Government Hindi were quite aware of their poorer status. Although they placed themselves in the lower class bracket in terms of income, they referred to themselves as middle class, creating a contradiction which they balanced by emphasizing a moral code as a more critical element of middle class identity.

Income: Teachers, Money, and Culture

I was curious about how government school teachers perceived their students in terms of class, and what effect it had on their teaching. Their conversations were very revealing. I asked the principal of Government English, Mrs. Rawat, about her school demographic, and she told me,

> Seventy percent of our seats are reserved for children from lower economic groups, which is 1.25 lakh or less. So most of their parents are either petty shopkeepers or Group D employees in the government, some of them clerical, or drivers, for instance. In the government departments.[38] So mostly this is what constitutes our student group. In fact, I see that there are some children coming from the jhuggis as well.[39]

The teachers in both government schools were, in fact very conscious of the socioeconomic backgrounds of their students, and their perceptions had a bearing on how they treated their students. This was particularly true in the case of Government Hindi.

"Lower Class" and "Low Interest"

The socioeconomic background of students was used by many teachers to explain why the students do not "do well" in school. Lakshmi, the Economics teacher in Government Hindi, referred to her students as "low" when explaining why they underperformed. Slightly startled, I asked her what she meant by that. She clarified that she did not mean they were low in terms of IQ, but rather in terms of class. Being from the lower class, she said, explained why they were not interested in studies. "They have too many outside problems and responsibilities. The girls need to cook and look after the home, and the boys work outside the house." She told me that some of the students I interviewed pulled rickshaws, although she did not specify which ones. I was not entirely

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[38] Generally, in the Government of India, Group D employees are those who perform manual labor or work as janitors, drivers, and so on. Group A employees are officers recruited directly through national exams. Group B are other officers, usually those who rise through the ranks. Group C are the clerical staff.

[39] Literally, "jhuggi" means hut, but the term "jhuggis" in the plural often means "slum."

sure what to make of this information, and kept it in mind while talking to the students.

Data gathered through interviews, surveys, group discussions and observation revealed

that the girls did not spend school time on household chores. The boys did not, in general,

take part in household chores. Only two boys worked outside the home. One boy

delivered newspapers before school and the other worked part-time, as a delivery boy in a

courier company.

 The PROBE Team (1999) described this as one of the myths relating to why

many children do not attend school, and I think it can be applied equally well to the

question of why teachers think their students underperform.[40] The myth is that children

are not interested in school or do not do well because they work outside the home. As the

PROBE Team found and, as my research showed, the percentage of students working

outside the home was actually very small. As I spent more time in Government Hindi, I

realized that there was a definite discourse among the teachers centered around the model

of the student who was burdened with poverty and therefore disinterested in studies.

Some teachers, like Lakshmi, drew on the discourse, it seemed to me, to engage in a

sense of superiority through perceptions that their teaching is a kind of charity. Such

feelings of charity can create a whole new power relationship, which layers over the

existing teacher-student relationship. Others, like Mrs. Gupta, the principal, suggested

that students had no interest in learning, that they were only interested in the free

uniforms and scholarship money given to poorer students. She told me that the students

in her school were "very difficult and uninterested in studying." This attitude had a large

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[40] The PROBE (Public Report on Basic Education) Team is an interdisciplinary team of academics who prepared a report on the state of schooling in north India, based on research in over a thousand households. The team consists of Anuradha De, Jean Drèze, Shiva Kumar, Claire Noronha, Pushpendra, Anita Rampal, Meera Sampson, and Amarjeet Sinha. They state that they wanted to present "an authentic picture of the schooling system as parents, children and teachers experience it" (1999:2). The survey was carried out from September to December 1996 in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh (PROBE Team 1999).

impact on how she dealt with students and their parents, especially those students who *did* work outside the home.

Schooling as a Dominant Cultural Imperative

One day, as I was sitting in Mrs. Gupta's office and talking to her, a teacher came in with a student and his mother. The student was in the tenth grade (an important examination year) and had been absent for three months, off and on. His mother came in to ask that he be excused, saying he was sick. Mrs. Gupta refused to accept her excuse. She told the mother that long absences in the tenth grade were unacceptable. She bluntly told mother and son that a "poor student" would lower her school's grade average. She asked him why he had been absent for so long, telling him that if he kept it up, she would expel him ("nām kāt dūngī"). The mother stepped in, repeating that he was sick. At this point, she produced a medical certificate. The teacher interjected, saying that the certificate was only for the last nine days, not for the previous three months. The mother repeated that he was sick. The teacher and the principal started shouting at her, and I began to feel a little sorry for the mother. The student, perhaps unable to bear his mother being shouted at, spoke up. "Paise kā problem thā, kām pe jānā thā" [*It was a financial problem, I had to go to work*].

The student tried to explain what seemed to be a genuine problem—his family was short on money, and he needed to step in to support them. However, Mrs. Gupta only became angrier. She told him that she wouldn't have this in her school; if he wanted to work he could work and not attend school. She asked his mother why she said he was sick if he was working, to which the lady insisted that he was sick, not working. Eventually, they left, and Mrs. Gupta told the student that she would expel him if he missed any more classes.

As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) state, institutionalized educational systems work to maintain the power status quo in society. That is, they reproduce the cultural order which allows the dominant classes to stay dominant. One way in which this

happens is in the simple fact of schooling being mandated for children as an everyday activity. This is an area which is ripe for research. The school system in India, as in most other countries, is designed around the socioeconomic lives of the richer classes, where children are not, and do not need to be, economic contributors to the family. There is, instead, a dominant cultural imperative to educate children, often enforced by law. Moreover, regular, daytime schools (at least in India) tend to be better than evening schools, both in terms of teaching as well as infrastructure. The dominant educational system is not designed to accommodate families where children must work to ensure the family's survival, and alternative educational systems are either not recognized or are much too disadvantaged to be successful. Poorer parents see children who work not as "child labor," but rather as dependable members of the family who contribute to family survival (PROBE Team 1999).

The dilemma of poorer parents, whether to send a child to school (educating them) or to work (exploiting them?) is not represented in schooling systems in India, and they offer no adequate solution. I am certainly not advocating the repeal of laws protecting children from exploitation, or saying that children do not need to be educated. I'm also not saying that many students in the schools I studied stayed away from school to work. I am pointing out, though, that poverty is a serious impediment to schooling. Therefore, the perspectives and needs of poor families must be kept in mind, and solutions to their problems found, if poor children are to participate eqally in school life. As I said, this issue is underresearched, and the more research that is done, the more information will be available toward a solution.

The Stigma of Poverty

Students from Government Hindi are often first-generation schoolgoers from fairly poor families. Their parents may be unable or unwilling to support their education. Teachers, who are part of the dominant educational system, often consciously or unconsciously stigmatize or single out poorer students, and no facilities are provided to

help them with their studies. Consequently, many of these students never quite catch up to the others, do worse than them, the teachers stigmatize them more, and so the cycle continues. Mr. Sharma, the Math teacher in Government Hindi, told me, "the first generation of learners is always slow." Lakshmi also used the word "slow" when discussing her students. Many of the teachers I spoke to in the staff room also described their students as "slow" or "dull," which I found a bit surprising. Neither through my conversations with the students nor in my observation of their classes did I find any evidence that they were unintelligent or disengaged. Quite the contrary, I was impressed with their level of engagement with the curricular material, their keen awareness of the outside world, and their desire to learn as much as they could. The teachers seemed more disinterested in their duties than the students did, which might have had some impact on students' academic performance.

The income-based class difference was used to explain purported "cultural" differences in attitude toward education on the part of the students as well as their parents. As Vatsala, the English teacher at Government Hindi told me, "there are cultural differences. Teaching these students, the government school, it is like teaching to students of a different culture." It is conceivable that there were cultural differences between teachers and students. However, it is the interpretation of these differences which is problematic—they are usually prejudiced stereotypes. Subrahmanian discusses how stereotypes about social others affect teachers' belief in how well they could be taught, in the context of Dalit and Adivasi students in India.[41] She says, "almost all the schools exhibited serious forms of stereotyping with respect to Dalit and Adivasi

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[41] "Dalit" refers to the groups which were outcastes under the traditional caste system. This term is used for the people previously referred to as "untouchable," historically the most oppressed caste groups in India. Gandhi called them Harijans, but this term is also not used anymore. Adivasis are the indigenous minority population of India. The term is often used to refer to populations previously known as "tribal." *Adi* = original, *vasi* = residents. Adivasis are included in the list of tribes in the government's "Scheduled Tribes."

children's educatability. The 'polluting' everyday lives of Dalit children in particular rendered their children less suited to the world of letters—they were uniformly regarded as academically weak simply because of who they were" (2005:72).

In the government schools I studied, these generalized "cultural differences" supposedly made poorer students more likely to skip school and less likely to pay attention when they were in school. Their parents were supposedly more likely to be disinterested in their education. Mrs. Gupta said,

> Most of the children are from the slums, and neither they nor the parents are interested in school. They get five hundred rupees for the uniforms, and I would like to give them the uniforms, but I have to give them the cash. Drunken fathers come to collect it, though I have told mothers they should come. They spend the money on booze, and the students are left with no uniform. The most I can do is threaten to suspend the students till they come in uniform, but it doesn't work. Nothing helps. They get money for uniforms, for books, there are minority scholarships, Ladli scheme.[42] So they only come to school for money, not to study. They know that if they don't attend for ten days, they are automatically expelled, so they skip nine days and attend the tenth. We can build a good building. We can give them all the facilities they want. But we cannot make them interested. We cannot make them learn. When we first built the school, within two days, twenty taps were stolen. These are the sorts of children we have. Anything small they can steal, they will. These are the kinds of children we have. What can I do with them?

Conversely, students from richer backgrounds were supposedly equipped to do better than poorer students. Said the principal of Government English, "when their parents are well-off, it gives them that confidence that their parents are well-placed or at least in places where they have access to the big shots, and when they are confident, they do well." Thus, in the government schoolteachers' discourses, poorer students were predisposed to do worse in school than richer students.

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[42] A government scheme that pays parents to educate their female children. A certain amount of money is deposited in a trust fund for the girl, and she may access it when she turns eighteen or finishes school.

<u>Occupation</u>

As mentioned earlier, students from Government English are more likely to associate class identity with occupation than students from Government Hindi. This, I believe, has to do with their socioeconomic backgrounds and parental occupations. In Government Hindi, at least thirty-five percent of the fathers worked as unskilled manual labor, and eighty-six percent of mothers did not work outside the home.[43] The ones who did work outside the home did so in service industry jobs, such as in beauty parlors. In Government English, by contrast, nearly half of the fathers worked for the state or central governments in white-collar positions. Eighty percent of the mothers did not work outside the home. The mothers who did work outside the home worked in white-collar positions, such as teachers, or in government jobs, such as with utility companies. In both schools, mothers did what Mohanty (1997) calls "women's work"—jobs which are ideologically constructed as suitable for women in terms of "notions of appropriate femininity, domesticity, (hetero)sexuality, and racial and cultural stereotypes" (Mohanty 1997:6).

Government Jobs

In both government schools, there was a definite discursive link between government jobs and middle class identity. Government jobs, in India, have long been considered safe, secure, and high-status jobs. Varma states that "a job in government had a special appeal. It had an aura of power and authority and made one a part of the establishment. This was of considerable importance to those who had traditionally been unrepresented…A job in government signified status, security of tenure, and, given the

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[43] For all these figures, N=21 for every school. These were based on student surveys. I should also add that it is not my perception that housework has no economic value. However, popular discourse in India does not yet adequately value women's work at home, and it is largely discounted as an occupation. Desai and Jain note that women's work at home is "rarely considered economic…although such activities are highly productive" (1994:117).

pervasive level of corruption, opportunities, for those so inclined, to make money"
(Varma 2007:123).

Moreover, there is a direct ideological association between government jobs and
"quality" education. Jeffery et al. state that "for many parents, the prospect of secure
government employment is sufficient reason to pay for higher levels of education"
(2005:47). Within government jobs, there are different levels, which can correspond to
differing levels of status valuation. For example, Maya, from Government English, made
a clear connection between middle class identity and central government jobs rather than
state government jobs.

> LMP: Jaise agar koī define karnā cāhta ho ki jobs aise hote
> hain middle class me, to jaise shopkeeper ho yā …?
>
> *If someone wants to define the middle class saying jobs
> in the middle class are like this, like a shopkeeper or…*
>
> Maya: Normally governments employ hain sāre.
>
> *Normally everyone is a government employee.*
>
> LMP: What level of government employee?
>
> M: Like ummm Krishi Bhawan me, Sardar Patel Bhawan
> me.
>
> *Like in the [Ministry of Agriculture], in the [National
> Human Rights Commission].*

The students of Government English were also clear that not just any job in the
central government would do. They differentiated between the officer-level civil service
bureaucratic jobs, and the lower-status jobs of the officers' secretaries, assistants, and
clerks. Their parents tended to work in clerical postions, but they aspired to the higher
jobs. They declared jobs requiring manual labor, such as driving a cycle rickshaw, to be
"bad" jobs.

> LMP: Acchā job kyā hogā? Matlab IAS me, kī IPS me kī
> matlab PA/PS kī –

What is a good job? Meaning the IAS or IPS or a PA/PS job.[44]

GE1:   − Sāre, magar IAS behtar hogā.

All of them, but IAS will be better.

GE2:   Nine-to-five, with good income.

A nine-to-five job, with a good income.

LMP: Examples?

For example?

GE1:   Government job at a higher post.

An upper-level government job.

LMP: Acchā, jaise government me clerk kā job ho. Calegā?

Okay, like a clerk in the government. Will that do?

All: Nā, nahīn calegā.

No. That won't do.

LMP: Kyon nahīn?

Why not?

GE3:   Agar voh insān uske lāyak hai to voh calegā. Qualifications itnī hain, itnī nahīn hai uske pās to use usī kī satisfaction karnā paḍegā. Bāt hai har ek insān kī apnī ek cāhat hotī hai. Koī chote sapne to soctā nahīn kī yār main clerk hī banūngā.

If someone is good for only that, then it will do. If they aren't well qualified, they will have to be satisfied with that. But every person has their desires. Nobody dreams small, that they will only be a clerk.

LMP: Kaunse kām acche nahīn hote?

What jobs are not good?

GE3:   Rickshaw calānā

Driving a rickshaw.

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[44] Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police service, or a Personal Assisant or Private Secretary. The first two are high-level civil service bureaucracy jobs, the latter two are secretarial postions.

GE4:   Auto calāne kā?

Driving an autorickshaw?

GE3:   Nahīn, nahīn, cycle.

No, no, a cycle [rickshaw].[45]

GE4:   Laborer kā kām.

Working as a laborer.

Low-status Jobs

The students of Government Hindi were a lot less direct about class and occupation. When I tried to elicit their thoughts on the connection, they hedged around the topic. Realizing they might be uncomfortable, I decided to approach the issue another way. I asked them what jobs their parents did. This covered a range of skilled and unskilled low-paying jobs, such as driving, welding, construction, tailoring, and small-scale shopkeeping. None of these jobs are high-status. These students were aware that their parents worked in low-status occupations, and that these jobs were undervalued in Indian society. Manish, a very bright student in the twelfth grade said, "unko bahut jyādā kām karnā paḍta hai, aur uske according paisā kam miltā hai! Society aise kām ko value nahīn kartī" [*They have to work very hard, and get paid very little for the work they do. Society does not value such work*].

Although they defended their parents' occupation, they also aspired to better things. When I asked if they would like to do the same work as their parents did, the answer was resounding "no!" The only exception was a girl who said she would like to be a beautician, like her mother. When I asked her why, she replied, "Ladies ke liye yeh acchā kām hai" [*this is a good job for women*].

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[45] See Figure 4

Figure 5 Students going to school in a rickshaw

I asked the students, as I did in Government English, what they thought a good job (acchī naukrī) would be. I received a variety of replies, all of which pertained to white-collar occupations.

LMP: Acchī naukrī kyā hotī hai?

         What is a good job?

GH1:   Government job

         A job in the government.

GH2:   Teacher

         Teacher.

GH3:   Software engineer

         Software engineer.

GH4:   Acchā kām kā matlab over twenty thousand
         income per month.

*A good job means an income of over twenty
thousand per month.*

Only one student made any mention of money, and his monetary ambitions were singularly depressed, falling below the level the students from Government English classified as lower middle class.

Education

Language and Class in Education

Pre-colonial indigenous education in India was restricted to a small section of the population, usually upper caste male children (Shukla 1996). These systems of education were either assimilated or destroyed with the arrival of the British. Macaulay, in his Minute on Indian Education, declared the need to "raise up an *English-educated middle class* who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern" (Jaffrelot and van der Veer 2008:14, emphasis added). An English-language education thus became a point of entry into colonial power structures. Eventually, English became critically important both socially and culturally. Schools modeled on the English system of education were sought after, especially by the "old literati, some new subordinate trading classes, and landlord type associates and agents" (Shukla 1996:1345). English-medium education was critical to the creation of a new Indian middle class and the intelligentsia (Fernandes 2006; Karat 1972).

Faust and Nagar (2001) suggest that the two systems of education in India, English-medium and regional language-medium, are distributed among the middle and upper classes, and lower classes respectively. They also say that English-medium education can lead to to upward mobility, contributing to the formation of a discursive, symbolic, and material divide between those who have such education and those who do not. Groups that did not participate in English-language education, such as lower castes or Muslims, were at a massive disadvantage (in colonial and post-Independence India)

when it came to participation in the middle classes (Fernandes 2006). Of course, all of this depends on how you define the middle classes.

Education and Class Identity

The students I spoke to in the government schools drew a connection between education and class, where a higher level of education corresponded to a higher level of class. The students in Government Hindi ranked low in the school hierarchy put forward by students of all three schools. They themselves did not believe their schooling was up to the standards of the other two schools. They placed a higher priority on education, both in terms of class valuation and as an avenue for mobility. The students in this school did not explicitly comment on their parents' educational levels, but drew a connection between incomplete educations and low status. They stated that people who did not complete their tenth grade would always stay in the lower classes. A point to be noted in this conversation is that the first student who responded to my question, GH1, began by explaining that the minimum level of education required to be middle class was a high school degree or a bachelor's. He was interrupted by another student, GH2, who reduced the necessary condition to the tenth grade. These students do link education and class, but their necessary conditions, or education levels, for middle classness are quite low. I can think of two possible reasons they did this. First, they are aware of their parents' educational levels, and factored them into their calculations. Second, they were affirming their own status as middle class, since all of them had passed their tenth grade exams, but were also presenting themselves as middle class.

> LMP: Upper class me education level kaisā hotā hai?
>
> *What is the education level in the upper class?*
>
> GH1: Education pe depend kartā hai. Jo nīce tenth se lower hote hain, voh nīce hī kehlāenge. Matlab lower-income. Aur uske ūpar jo twelfth pass hote hain aur graduate hote hain –
>
> *It depends on their education. If they study less than the tenth, they will be considered low. That is, lower-*

> *income. And those above that, those who have passed*
> *the twelfth grade and graduates—*

GH2: −Tenth pass.

> *—Those who have passed the tenth grade.*

GH1: Tenth pass, voh middle me ā jāenge. Aur jo ūpar A-grade hote hain, voh PhD hote hain aise M. Com, MBA, higher education vāle.

> *Those who have passed the tenth grade, they will be in*
> *the middle [class]. And the higher [class], they are the*
> *ones with higher education, the PhDs, M. Coms, MBAs.*

The students from Government Hindi also suggested that it was a particular kind of education that was important. For instance, one student suggested that he would do a regular BA, not a BA (Honours).[46]

GH3: Ma'am main kuc honors nahīn karūngā BA hī karūngā!

> *I won't do any honors degree I will do just a BA.*

GH4: Khālī BA karke kyā hai?

> *What will you do with just a BA?*

GH5: Compounder kī naukrī, yār!

> *He will work as a compounder.*

As is seen here, the others immediately derided him, essentially telling him he would not get a good job after that. They told him he would become a "compounder," indicating that he would not have any skills.[47]

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[46] In Delhi, there are two broad categories of BAs. The first, BA (Honours), are courses which are specialized. They are done in specific subjects, such as math or sociology, and admission to such BAs requires higher average percentages in the school-leaving exams. Students who do not do well in their final exams often enroll in general BAs, which are not subject-specific and require lower school-leaving exam marks. Thus, there is a stigma attached to the general BAs.

[47] Someone who packages and dispenses medicines in a clinic. Interestingly, this position does require some skills and training, although it is a relatively lower-status job as compared to government jobs.

Parental Education

There was a wide discrepancy in parental education in both schools, which might have had an impact on the students' school performance. Singhania et al. (1987) correlated mother's education level to children's scholastic achievements (more than father's education level), and they also found that the education level of parents had a greater influence on the school performance of girls than boys.[48] I found a correlation between parental income level and status of occupation on the one hand, and parental levels of education on the other. This correlation seems perfectly plausible, but we must keep in mind that India has vast numbers of educated unemployed or underemployed people, that education does not always lead to a good job, and that factors other than education (such as a network of contacts) are involved in achieving high-income, high-status occupations. Therefore, the correlation cannot be a causal relationship in all cases.

In English Convent, fifty-eight percent of the fathers had a master's or professional degree, while thirty-three percent of them had a bachelor's. All of them had completed high school. Of the mothers, all of them had completed high school, fifty percent had a master's or professional degree, and one had a Ph.D. (the only one in my sample). In Government English, about fifty-two percent of the fathers had a bachelor's degree, while thirty-eight percent of them had a master's degree. Ninety percent of the mothers had at least completed high school. Of that ninety percent, thirty-five percent had a bachelor's degree, and twenty-five percent had earned a master's degree. In Government Hindi, by contrast, about sixty-two percent of the fathers had an education level of only between the ninth and twelfth grades. Almost seventy percent of the mothers had not been educated higher than the eighth grade.[49]

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[48] Since the study was focused on pediatric health, they do not say why. They also acknowledge that their study is correlational, does not inquire into causation, and therefore should be carefully interpreted.

[49] These were based on the student surveys, and N=21 for each of the schools.

The students from Government Hindi stated that parental education was very important to the development of the child, and key to mobility efforts. GH5, one of the students I spoke to, used the phrase "jo middle class hain, jinke mā-bāp paḍhe-likhe nahīn hote" [*the middle classes, whose parents are not educated*]. This reinforces the idea that these students were invested in affiliating themselves with the middle classes, and eliding the socioeconomic disadvantages that might place them outside this category. They suggested that parental education created a home environment within which education was valued and children would learn better. This somewhat contradicts another statement they made, that upper class parents did not care about their children (in Chapter Five, and in the section on morality later in this chapter).

LMP: Education level kitnī honī cāhiye? Farak paḍtā hai uskā?

How much education should people have? Does it make a difference?

GH4: Hān. Agar parents educated honge, to voh bhī baccon ke sāth educated bāten karenge agar educated nahīn honge to educated bāte nahīn kar pāenge.

Yes. If parents are educated, then they will have educated conversations with their child, and if they are not educated, they will not be able to have educated conversations.

GH5: Jis tarah se upper classes hote hain to unke liye sārī suvidhāen bhī hain. Ghar me bhī pūrā vaise hī vātāvaran hotā hai, to unhe jyādā problems nahīn ātī. Bachpan se unke mā-bāp bhī isī tarah se bolte hain to unko usī level pe ā jātī hai. Parantu ma'am jo middle class hain, jinke mā-bāp paḍhe-likhe nahīn hote, aur unke pās untī suvidhāen bhī nahīn hotī ki voh kisī institute me jāke sīkh pāen, to ma'am is vajah se unko thoḍī kam reh jātī hai. Isī vajah se, yehī kāraṇ rehtā hai ki jo upper classes hote hain, voh improve jyādā hote hain. Aur middle class kī kam.

The upper classes have many facilities. Their house atmosphere is such, they don't have many problems. Their parents talk to them like this (in an educated way) so they also reach that level. But the middle classes, whose parents are not educated, who don't have the facilities to go to a (tutoring) institute, they stay down.

> *This is the reason, the upper classes improve more, and*
> *the middle classes improve much less.*

They also said that a lack of parental education was the reason that the upper classes advanced fast and the middle classes (meaning themselves) advanced much more slowly.[50]

Education and Mobility

The final word on class, mobility, and education came from the students of both Government English and Government Hindi. I asked the same question in both schools—"āpko lagtā hai ki paḍhne se log baḍh sakte hain?" [*do you think people can progress through education*]. I reproduce here two answers, one each from Government English and Government Hindi, which are both quite similar.

GE4:   Ma'am āj ke time me sirf paḍhāī ek cīz hai, jis se lower classes upper classes me jā sakte hain.

> *In today's world education is the only way in which*
> *lower classes can move into the upper classes.*

GH3:   Paḍhne se hī. Cāhe middle hai, upper hai, lower hai, garīb hai.

> *Only through education. Whether you are middle class,*
> *upper class, lower class, or poor.*

The answer, as is seen, was an unequivocal yes, indicating their whole-hearted belief that education was the key to social mobility.

Status Symbols

Dickey (2000b) observes that class, in India, is an important marker of identity, rank, and political power in India, distinct from caste (though it may overlap), and with its own distinct hierarchies. Poor people mark class off in terms of rich and poor, while

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[50] They did not distinguish between mother's and father's education in this context, although in other conversations these students said it was important for women to be educated so that they could teach their children well (see Chapter Seven).

middle-class and upper-class people demarcate classes as lower, middle, and upper classes. Both symbolic markers (clothing, education, hygiene) and economic markers (income, assets, occupation) are used to identify class (Dickey 2000b), and consumer goods are a significant marker of a higher class position (Dickey 2000a). Following from Dickey's argument, it would seem that identifying and adopting symbolic and socioeconomic markers of higher class identity can thus significantly contribute—or be perceived as contributing to—class mobility. Symbolic markers (including material culture) are ideological tools that work to reinforce dominant class ideologies.

Class and Material Culture

The students I spoke to often discussed class in terms of material culture. That is, specific classes were associated with specific material objects, such as cars, airconditioners, and so on. The upper classes were also associated with the employment of domestic servants, an association also noted by Dickey (2000a) in her work in urban South India. The students in both government schools referred to the upper classes as "high society" as often as they used the phrase upper class. "High society" was, though, a term of derision. It was used in banter as an insult, and used seriously to indicate a lack of work ethic, or a life that was too easy, as in this conversation:

GE1:   Itnī garmī me middle class ke family ghar ke andar
        pankhā lagāke baiṭhī rehtī hai –

        *In this heat middle class families have only fans in their
        houses.*

GE2:   –Middle class me bhī AC hotī hai!

        Middle class [families] have airconditioners!

GE4:   Mere ghar me AC hai.

        There's an airconditioner in my house.

GE5:   Iske ghar me AC hai!

        There's an airconditioner in his house!

GE6:   To tu high society hai!

> *Then you are high society!*

GE1:   High society ke pās har cīz kī suvidhā uplabdh hotī hai.

> *High society people have every convenience available to them.*

GE4:   Kyonki unke daddy-mummy lāke de dete hain

> *Because their parents buy it for them.*

GE7:   High society me log hote hain ghar ke kām karne ke liye. Middle class family me hame sab kuch khud karnā paḍtā hai.

> *In high society they have people to work for them in the house. In middle class families we have to do everything ourselves.*

Class and Cars

When I asked them about what the differences between classes were, I got a long response about the different kinds of cars associated with different classes. The compact cars and hatchbacks were associated with the middle classes, while the upper classes were associated with the larger sedans, which are often branded luxury cars in the Indian market. Having a car—any car—was a marker of, minimally, middle class identity.

LMP: Middle class me aur upper class me antar kyā hai?

> *What is the difference between the middle class and the upper class?*

GE1:   Ma'am unke pās Mercedes Benz hai mere pās Maruti hotī hai.

> *They have Mercedes Benz, we have Marutis.*[51]

GE2:   Voh bhī nahīn hai!

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[51] The Maruti Suzuki car company was the first to produce easy-to-drive cars in India, and provided competition to the heavy, outdated Ambassadors and Premier Padminis, which were the only options available before Maruti entered the market in 1983. They introduced the Maruti 800, a small, compact 800cc car, which revolutionized driving in India, especially for women. Although Maruti has subsequently expanded into other car segments, the term "Maruti" generally refers to this small, cheap model, which is considered an entry-level car.

We don't have even that!

GE3:   Mere Papa ke pās bhī scooter hī hai!

My father has only a scooter![52]

LMP: Agar lower middle class kī ho to gāḍī kaise hogī?

What kind of car will someone from the lower middle class have?

GE1:   Maruti.

GE4:   Zen.[53]

GE3:   Santro[54], matlab do se cār lakh ke nīche hogā.

A Santro, that is something below two to four lakhs.

LMP: Upper middle class ho to?

If they are upper middle class?

GE4:   Jitnī bhī Honda[55] ke ho. Honda kī gāḍī.

Any Honda car.

GE6:   Ma'am dekho, sīdhī sī bāt hai. Amīr jo hote hain, nā, amīr jo hote hain. Unke pās bahut paisā hotā hai, karoḍon kī jāydāt. Middle class me kyā hotī hai, na, gāḍī-vāḍī to sabke pās hotī hai. Jiske pās nahīn hotī voh middle se lower ho jāte hain.

See, it's a straightforward thing. Rich people have lots of money, estates worth millions. In the middle class, everyone has a car. People who don't, they are lower class.

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[52] See Figure 5 for pictures of such "middle-class" vehicles—scooters, motorbikes, a Maruti van, and, in the background on the right, a Maruti 800.

[53] Another Maruti model, slightly larger and more expensive than the 800.

[54] A Hyundai compact hatchback, more expensive than the Maruti Zen.

[55] Honda is a relatively new entrant to the car market and many of its cars are marketed as "luxury cars."

Figure 6 Vehicles outside a "middle-class market" in South Delhi[56]

This association of upper class identity with larger cars was almost universal. A friend of mine, a well-educated and successful professional woman, insisted that she could only drive around in a large, luxury car. I pointed out that she could not afford to buy one, and a smaller car would give her better mileage, to which she replied, "yes, but a bigger car *looks better,* and that's more important."

<u>Geography</u>

Another aspect of class distinction was geography. Where a person lived, according to the students, was a clear marker of what class they belonged to. Thus,

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[56] So described by many of the people who use it. This market had grocery stores, plastic goods stores, and stores for anything else one would need to run a household, including electronics, cars, and luxury goods. It had fast food chains such as McDonald's and Pizza Hut. It even had a bookstore, although it was only a small pavement stall.

geography or locality became a kind of symbolic capital, which could be leveraged to contribute to the set of characteristics which determined class membership.

"Good" and "Bad" Neighborhoods

In this conversation, I asked the students for examples of a "good, middle class" neighborhood. They listed the larger, more affluent South Delhi neighborhoods (Defence Colony, Friends Colony, New Friends Colony and South Extension), but also listed the neighborhoods in which they lived, such as President's Estate and Vikaspuri.

> LMP: To acchā middle class neighborhood kyā hogā? Jaise Dilli me mānlo.
>
> *So what is a good middle-class neighborhood, like in Delhi?*
>
> GE1: Ma'am Dilli me manlo Noida
>
> *In Delhi, Noida.*
>
> GE2: President's Estate
>
> GE3: Vikas Puri
>
> GE1: Defence Colony, Friends Colony
>
> GE2: New Friend's Colony
>
> GE1: Ma'am South Ex

When I asked them for examples of neighborhoods which were not good, they told me that older neighborhoods (purāne area) were not good, such as Old Delhi and Valmiki Basti.

> LMP: Aur jo acchā ilākā nahīn ho? Uskā kyā example hogā?
>
> *And what is an example of an area which is not good?*
>
> GE1: Purani Dilli.
>
> *Old Delhi.*[57]

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[57] Old Delhi has a large Muslim population, so this might also have been a comment on Islam.

GE2:   Valmiki Basti!

GE3:   Jo bordering ke side se ā jāte hain, Seelampur

The ones on the border, like Seelampur.

GE2:   Matlab purāne area jitne bhī hain aise

Meaning, older areas, all of them which are like that.

Neighborhoods as Disadvantage

GE3 explained to me that children from such areas would never learn anything, because the "atmosphere" was not good.

GE3:   Vahān ke rehan-sehan me bacca thoḍā…kuc nahīn sīkhegā.

In that atmosphere, living like that, a child will learn nothing.

In other words, income or occupation aside, mere residence in such a neighborhood, in their discourse, caused so much disadvantage that a child would not be able to overcome it at all. In this case, the status of the neighborhood was of primary importance. As is discussed in Chapter One, movement out of such neighborhoods into higher-status neighborhoods is, consequently, an element of mobility.

Gender and Morality

The students from the government schools identify one key aspect of middle class identity as control over women's sexuality, which I introduce here and will discuss in more detail in the next chapter. Fernandes says that middle class political identity in India was caught up in "discourses of respectability, moral regeneration, and social reform…middle class preoccupations with respectability took on specifically gendered forms as they were coded through normative models of female chastity and morality" (Fernandes 2006:11, 13). Katharina Poggendorf-Kakar (2001) also states that the ideologies of female chastity, and *pativrata*—the pure and perfect wife who is devoted to her husband and submissive to his will—are important themes in shaping middle class

identity in India. She suggests that this dates from when the middle classes were predominantly high caste. These values, and the concomitant control over women's sexuality, were critical to the maintenance of caste purity. They persist because the "identity formation of young, middle-class women continues to be based on traditional role assignments" (Poggendorf-Kakar:133). As Varma states, "more middle class women are going to college and taking up jobs, yet traditional gender stereotypes prevail, even among those who claim to be emancipated" (2007:xxxiii).

The government school students I spoke to reproduced this discourse effortlessly. Each time I asked them if there were cultural differences between the classes, I received an answer centered on female sexuality. Both girls and boys participated in these conversations, and both sets of students produced this discourse, but it must be noted that, in both government schools, my focus groups consisted of far more boys than girls, and the boys were certainly far more vocal.

Class Rationalizations and Morality

Dickey notes that "class identities in urban south India are frequently oppositional and morally charged" (2000a:31) and that "the moral tone of class images is likely to derive from the need to rationalize or oppose each player's position in the hierarchy" (2000a:55). My research indicates that this seems to apply equally to Northern India. I reproduce here a conversation I had with four boys from Government English. Interestingly, the "upper middle" category was used almost interchangeably with "upper class." The students' replies indicate that they believe that the upper classes are too lax with their daughters, and the lower classes too restrictive. A combination of chastity and independence seems to be the acceptable middle class norm for them.[58]

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[58] This ideological privileging of "middle class" women bears a resemblance to Partha Chatterjee's (1989) discussion of three colonial-era stereotypes of Indian women, and thus might have a long history in India. Two of the stereotypes Chatterjee describes were negative—that of the morally suspect "Westernized" woman who did not care for house and home, and that of the lower class, vulgar, sexually promiscuous woman who was oppressed by men. The positive

Morality and "Upper Class" Girls

Students from Government English stated that the main difference between the classes has to do with sexual behavior. They said that girls from the upper classes were badly behaved, i.e. sexualized.

LMP:	Are there cultural differences? Lower middle, upper middle, aur upper class me?
	Are there cultural differences? Between the lower, middle, and upper classes?
GE1:	Bilkul hain.
	Absolutely.
GE2:	Bandī ko le āte hain.
	They bring girls home.
GE3:	Vahān pe laḍkiyon ke aise jeans-veans pehnnā nahīn allowed hai, lower middle class me, aur upper middle class me voh night out karte hain.
	In the lower middle class, girls aren't allowed to wear jeans, and in the upper middle class, they stay out all night.
GE4:	Normal bāt hai. Unke parents bhī aise karte hain.
	It's a normal thing for them. Their parents also do that.
GE2:	Yahan par laḍkon ko bhī ghar pe rakhā jātā hai aur vahān laḍkīyān bāhar ghūmtīn hain.
	Here [in the middle classes] they keep the girls at home, and there (in the upper classes) they gallivant.
LMP:	Jaise kaise?
	How so?
GE4:	Jaise ma'am ham tuition jāte hain aur sīdhā ghar. Laḍkiyān hoti hain voh gāḍīyān me āyengī, aur kehngī

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stereotype was the nationalist ideal—the middle class woman who was formally educated and yet able to participate in "traditional" Indian values (in other words, normative gender roles).

calo ghūmne calenge. Aur ham laḍkon ko apne ghar se restriction hotī hain.

Like we go to our tutoring classes and then straight home. These girls show up in their cars, and say "let's go out." And our families place restrictions on us boys.

The students from Government Hindi were very vehement about upper class girls being "spoiled." They explained this to me in the context of a rave in Mumbai, which became famous for being raided by the police, who arrested over two hundred people.[59] The case was much publicized in national newspapers, and excited a lot of public comment about morality.

GH1:   Upper class ki laḍkiyān hotī hain voh sārī bigḍī hotī hain. Abhī āpne Mumbai me sunā hogā wave party, hai nā madam?

Upper class girls are all spoiled. You must have heard of the wave party in Mumbai?

GH2:   Rave party

L: Hān

Yes

GH1:   Rave party. Madam voh sārī upper class kī ladkīyān thī jinke pās paisā thā. Amīr ghar kī aulāden thī. Middle class kī laḍkiyān yeh kar nahīn saktī kyonki unki – unke sanskār bhī acche hote hain, aur unko parents kā pūrā time miltā hai. Unko yeh pūrā batāyā jātā hai ki yeh acchī bāt hai yeh būrī bāt hai. Par upper class kī laḍkiyon ko yeh nahīn batāyā jātā. Unke pās parents ke pās time nahīn hotā. Voh kahīn USA me hote hain kahīn England me. Kahīn apne kām me busy hote hain. To apnī socte hain bas voh.

They were all upper class girls with money. Children of rich families. Middle class girls couldn't do such a thing because they have good values, and their parents' attention. They are told, "these are good things, these are bad things." But upper class girls aren't told these things. Their parents don't have time. They are either in

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[59] A rave is a specific kind of party or dance event, featuring electronic music such as trance or house, and often perceived as involving party drugs such as Ecstasy.

*USA or England, or busy with their own work. They
only think of themselves.*

The students from Government Hindi used this story to suggest that upper class

girls attended such parties because they had too much money and too few values. Upper

class parents, in this discourse, did not have enough time for their children, and so were

not able to teach them the difference between right and wrong.

Morality and "Lower Class" Girls

Although "too much freedom" for girls was a bad thing, and associated with

upper class loose morals, there was such a thing as "too little freedom," and it was

associated with lower class identity. The young men I spoke to, in this conversation,

described how residents of Old Delhi, a neighborhood that was classified as "not good"

or lower class (primarily, I suspect, because it was a largely Muslim neighborhood),

exerted control over everything their daughters did.

LMP: Āpko lagta hai laḍkiyon me aur laḍkon me, betīyon me aur betōn me, middle class me farak –

Do you think there is a difference in how boys and girls, daughters and sons [are treated] in the middle class?

GE1: –Nahīn!

No!

LMP: Lower middle class me?

In the lower middle class?

GE2: Hān hotā hai. Lower me hotā hai ki matlab sirf beṭā cāhte hain.

Yes, there is. In the lower class they want only sons.

GE4: Aur bhī lower me bilkul laḍkiyon ko ghar se bahār nahīn nikalne dete. Dabāke rakhte hain.

And in even lower classes they don't let their girls out of the house. They oppress them.

GE1:   Purānī Dilli me vahān pe laḍkīyān ekdam suit-vūt me aur unka nikalnā ghar se bāhar bhī manā hotā hai.

In Old Delhi, the girls always wear salwar-kameez, and they are not allowed to leave the house.

GE2:   Agar usko school me ānā ho, cāhe voh twelfth me ho, phir bhi uske parents stand tak choḍne āenge.

If she needs to come to school, even if she is in the twelfth [grade], her parents will come to the bus stop with her.

GE1:   Uskā bhāī school choḍne āegā use.

Her brother will bring her to school.

Thus, they stated that the only classes which treated their women appropriately, and in which women behaved appropriately, were the "middle classes."

Class and the "Good Mother"

In Government Hindi, they focused on the theme of the good mother. Raj, from Government Hindi, said:

Mā anpaḍh ho yā paḍhī-likhī ho, jaise bhī ho lekin voh apne bacce ko hameśā yehī bolegī ki betā tū paḍh. Is liye jo middle classes ke hote hain unko apne baccon kī parvāh hotī hai kyonki unko patā hai ki sirf main hī uskī karne vālī hūn. Magar jo upper classes hote hain unko parvāh nahīn hotī kyonki unko patā hai ki ghar me naukar hai, fridge me sab kuch rakhā huā hai to bacca sabkuch khud hī khā legā. Aur ma'am main is bāt se bahut khuś hūn ki upper classes me nahīn paidā huā hūn, middle classes me paidā huā hūn. Nahīn to main bhī unkī tarah ghamanḍī hotā.

Whether a mother is educated or not, she will always encourage her child to study. Mothers from the middle classes care about their children because they know they are the only ones who will care about them. But mothers from the upper classes do not care, because they know that there are servants in the house, there is food in the fridge, so the child can look after himself. And I am happy that I was born into the middle classes, not the upper classes. Otherwise I too would have been arrogant like them.

This young man suggested that middle class mothers cared more for their children than upper class mothers, and were, consequently, better, more self-sacrificing mothers. The idea of the self-sacrificing woman, whether wife or mother, is a recurrent theme in

Hindu mythology and public discourse, and is replicated in the class discourses of the students from the government schools. The idea held by the government school children, that middle class parents were somehow better than upper class parents, surfaced time and again, and will be discussed a little more in the section on middle class values below.

Feminism in English Convent

The girls from English Convent, though, saw no need to police their sexuality. As I will discuss further in Chapter Five, this is largely because they held a somewhat different set of values to be important. They refused to accept such discourses on chastity, subservience, or sacrifice. Although I was not able to have many conversations with them on these topics, the ones I did have would invariably begin with them making some adverse comments about patriarchy. They formulated the gendered aspect of class in terms of discrimination against women. For them, the route out of discrimination was education and working outside the home. They considered the upper classes to be more discriminatory toward women than the middle or lower classes, suggesting that upper class women were less likely to be able (permitted) to work outside the home. They said there was "discrimination in all classes and, in some areas, it is more rigid in the upper classes. Upper class women can be very conservative, whereas in middle class more and more women are working so they also become a very important economic part of society." Thus, they drew an equation between women's freedom from oppression and access to wage labor, and identified these as important middle class values.

Middle Class Values

Jaffrelot and van der Veer (2008) have suggested that members of "the middle class," regardless of origin, share similar social attitudes and values (also see Sheth 1999). It has also been suggested that, because "the middle class" dominates the media, the bureaucracy and the corporate world, it has had the greatest influence in shaping

public discourses on social values (Hasan 2001). It bears remembering that when scholars refer to "the middle class," they are usually indexing white-collar professionals, who might, conceivably, share similar cultural values. It is more likely, though, that persistent public discourse has created a model of ideologically powered "middle class values," which has been propagated by the media, and now has become the *sine qua non* of middle classness. For upwardly mobile people, as with Sanskritization, the movement into the middle class thus involves the adoption of these "middle class values," in particular, those centering on the behavior of women.

As I show in this section, the class discourses of government school students and the convent school students were fractals—"simultaneously the same and different…fundamentally both fragmented and interrelated" (Green 2005:17). This poses an interesting problem for researchers of class (in India particularly, but also more generally). If we analyze class as an identity category rather than as a group with definite socioeconomic parameters, how, where, and why do these identity categories converge and diverge? A more detailed inquiry into these patterns of identification would tell us much more about class ideologies than we can currently learn from analyses of consumer behavior and lifestyles.

Defining Class: Student Perspectives

The students in the government schools defined class in terms of values. Apart from the various differences between classes mentioned in the context of schools, which I will discuss in Chapter Five, the government school students I spoke to identified a few other values they thought were critical to middle class identity, or which the upper classes lacked. Among these were discipline/control, an interest in family, hard work, respect for others, and religiosity.

The students in English Convent did not define class in this manner. These students defined middle classness as "being comfortable." Sarika said , "they're neither very well off nor are they close to being destitute." Mariam, a twelfth-grade student,

echoed her, saying "we are comfortable. We don't have financial problems, and neither are we filthy ultrarich. We have enough to keep us going. Honestly, we are upper middle because we can fulfill our needs and plus we have some luxuries. The middle class is content with what we have."

They divided class groups in India into lower class, lower middle class, upper middle class and upper class. Sarika, an eleventh-grade student, who identified as upper middle class, distinguished these groups on the "basis of access to resources, basically on a basis of economics. So obviously, the upper classes would be much, much better off than the rest. Being economically well-off would imply a head start in terms of getting education and vice versa." They defined the middle classes by their middleness—as the group that "falls between the two extremes, the rich and the poor. They are a class of people between the lower classes and the upper classes. Usually, people in the middle class are working professionals, like doctors, lawyers, teachers, and so on."

Discipline

The students believed that middle class parents taught their children the value of discipline, and "controlled" their children better.[60] This topic of "control" often came back to money, with the students from the government schools declaring that too much money was a bad thing. In their discourses, too much money implied that parents did not have enough time for their children. They substituted money for attention, and children did not learn the values of discipline and hard work. The students from Government English explained that discipline was a key middle class value.

> LMP: Values kyā kahenge hain āp middle class ke kyā hote hain?
>
> *What would you say are middle class values?*
>
> GE1:   Discipline.

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[60] See Chapter Six for a more detailed discussion on this idea of "control" by parents.

> *Discipline.*

LMP: Kaisā discipline?
Discipline how?

GE2: High society me control nahīn hotā baccon pe. Matlab middle class me ghar me unkā control hotā hai, baccon ke ūpar. Ek control hotā hai, hāth se nahīn jāte jiske…

In high society they have no control over their children. In middle class homes they have control over their children. Control should be there, so that children don't get out of hand.

GE3: Middle class me parents baccon pe dhyān dete hain. High society me bacca matlab paisā māngtā hai voh kitne rupees cāhiye uske parents de dete hain kuch bhī kare cāhe uske parents ko koī matlab nahīn.

In the middle class, parents pay more attention to their children. In high society, children ask for money, their parents say how much. They don't care what they do with it.

Girls from English Convent also offered "discipline" as the cardinal value separating them from students in secular private schools. This was a coded reference to having some measure of control over one's sexual behavior (see Chapter Five), but it was also a reference to physical, bodily discipline—sitting in particular ways or designated spaces.

Overindulgence in the Upper Classes

The students in Government Hindi said that upper class children were overindulged by their parents. Kailash, a student from the eleventh grade, tried to explain it to me, suggesting that children of rich parents did not learn to work hard, because their parents bought them whatever they wanted, when they wanted it.

> Ma'am suno, ek bāt hai. Upper family me aisā hotā hai ki bacca soctā hai ki sabkuch milā huā hai, bigaḍ jātā hai bacca. Ab jaise ki āp dekhoge jahān develoment nahīn jis area me, vahān ke log bahut paḍhne me tez hote hain. Kyonki unko suvidhāen nahīn hotī aur voh mehnatī hote hain khūb. Aur ma'am sārī suvidhā ho to kyā mehnat karegā? Voh to leṭā rahegā bistar me.
>
> *Listen. In the upper class, children think they have everything; they become spoiled. In areas that are not as developed, people are*

*very good at their studies. Because they do not have facilities, and
they are very hardworking. If they have every convenience, why
will they work? They'll just stay in bed all day.*

Students from the government schools attributed this behavior to parenting
failures among upper class families. In turn, these parenting failures on the part of upper
class parents to a perceived general "lack of family values" among the upper classes,
which I discuss in the next section.

The girls from English Convent considered good manners to be a central middle
class value. Thus, in their discussion of the differences between classes, a lack of
manners among the upper classes featured prominently. Like the students from
government schools, they attributed this lack of values to too much money, and to upper
class children being overindulged: "it is a class difference. The very rich get everything
they want. If they don't get what they want they'll chuck a big tantrum and scream and
shout." In a slightly different way than the government school students, therefore, they
also replicated the discourses of bad behavior among rich people, and of upper-class
parents' inability to teach their children "middle-class" social values.

Family Values

The government school students stated that people from the upper classes did not
concern themselves with people outside their immediate families, while middle class
people had more concern for everyone around them, not just their families and friends.
Almost contrarily, other students claimed that upper class families did not share strong
bonds. The family, which they stated was of central importance to the middle class, was
perceived to be a weak institution among the upper classes. Once again, too much money
was held to be at the root of this lack of "values."

> GE1: Late night parties karte hain. Jo family ke relations hote
> hain, jyādātar jitne acche āpko middle class me
> milenge, family relations utne high society me nahīn
> milte.

> *They party late at night. You won't find good family relations in high society like you will in the middle class.*

GE4:   Aur high society ke andar laḍāīyān bhī bahut hotī hain. Kiske vajah se? Paise ke vajah se. Tensions bahut hotī hain.

> *And in high society they also fight a lot. For what? For money. There is too much tension.*

GE3:   Hān, high society me sirf apne se matlab rakhte hain jitne members hai apne ghar me. Aur apne immediate family ke alāvā voh family ke kisī problem me to interfere bhī nahīn karte.

> *Yes, in high society they are only concerned about their immediate family, and do not worry about anyone else's problems.*[61]

GE1:   High class family me jo husband-wife kā relation hotā hai voh ek sāl se zyādā nahīn tiktā.

> *In high class families, couples don't stay married more than a year.*

GE3:   High societies me family relations itne nahīn hote. Hālākī high societies me friends kī jyādā ehmīyat hotī hai, family kī kam. Hamāre me friends kī bhī hotī hai, par family kī bhī hotī hai. First priority hamāri family kī ātī hai. Unme thoḍā families relationship hotā hai, itnā baḍā nahīn hotā. Matlab main yeh nahīn keh rahā ki har kisī me hotā hai, par agar hundred per cent chances me dekhe to sixty-seventy per cent aise honge ki family relationship, bonding, weak ho.

> *In high society, family relations aren't as strong. They care more about their friends. We care about our friends, too, but our family is our first priority. I don't say everyone is like this (in upper classes), but sixty or seventy percent of families have weak bonds.*

The students from Government Hindi were also of the opinion that upper class children were spoiled because they had too much freedom to do as they pleased. The

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[61] It is anthropologically interesting that these students considered a concern with others, even strangers (to the point of "interfering") to be a positive value, while it is quite a negative in much of the United States. This might have something to do with the differing ideas on privacy in both countries.

comment, however, did not arise in the context of value differences. GH1, who offered

me this opinion, was responding to a question on whether there were *cultural* differences

between classes. These differences also included religion and respect for other people,

where government school students berated the upper classes for their lack of respect for

"Indian tradition."

LMP:	Āpko lagtā hai kī sanskritī me, vyavahār me, farak hotā hai?
	Do you think there are cultural or behavioral differences?
GH1:	Ma'am, agar middle class aur upper class ko ek sāth rakhā jāe to usme āpko jyādā difference nahīn patā lagegā agar āp culture ko nā dekhen. Lekin culture ko dekhen to middle class me phir bhī hai, jo upper class me nahīn hotā. Kyonki unko jyādā chūṭ milī hotī hai. Lekin middle me yeh hotā hai ki hamārā culture caltā rehtā hai, aur jyādā chūṭ nahīn dete. Islīye culture caltā rehtā hai.
	If you put the middle class and upper class together, there is no difference, if you don't look at culture. But if you look at culture, then the middle class has it, and the upper class doesn't. Because they get too much license. But in the middle class, we have more culture, because we don't get as much license.
GH2:	Ab yahān pe ham choṭī-choṭī cīzõ pe bahut dhyān dete haĩ. Jaise bhagwānjī kī pūjā karnā ham roz subah pūjā vagairāh karte hain. Aur voh vahān pe koī itnā dhyān nahīn detā. Unko patā bhī nahīn hotā hai India ke customs kyā hain.
	We pay attention to the small things. Like praying to god every morning. They don't bother as much. They don't even know what Indian customs are.
GH3:	Jo middle class kā baccā hotā hai voh apnī teachers kā hameśā respect karegā aur voh sabkuch apne se baḍe ko baḍā samjhegā. Magar jo upper classes hain, har kisī kī to nahīn, magar jyādātar me yehī dekhne ko miltā hai kī apne āge voh aur kisī ko kuch nahīn samajhtā.
	Middle class children respect their teachers and those older than them. The upper classes—not all of them, but most—they don't think anyone is greater than them.

The girls from English Convent also stated that there were substantial cultural differences between the classes, and also identified these in terms of "family values," although the values differed. In response to a question about whether they would consider marrying someone from a lower class, Mariam said that she would never be able to fit in with such a family. She suggested that there would be too many cultural differences, and said she did not think any of the girls would be able to live with "someone like that" without problems. Sarah, who was also part of this conversation, agreed, saying "I saw this case recently at the police station, this couple, they were lower middle class. The husband had gotten drunk and beaten up his wife. He had an extramarital affair and he has two kids, and the wife was more educated than the husband, so that's why she came to the police station but also why they were having troubles. So the differences you could see in this couple only."

In addition to using this story as an example of how "lower middle class" family values were different from upper middle class ones, Sarah used this story to explain her view that couples from different classes had too many differences to make a marriage succeed.[62] An important part of this story is that the wife is more educated than the husband. Education is perceived as a key element of class identity for all classes, and, to Sarah, mismatched education was a clear indication that the marriage was doomed.

Arrogance in the Upper Classes

Students also discussed another recurring theme, that of the purported arrogance of the upper classes. In Chapter Five, I show that all students were very concerned about how they were treated by students from other schools. The government school students believed that private school students were arrogant, and that they were looked down upon by students from private schools. These schools roughly correspond to class groupings

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[62] See Jyoti Puri 1999 for an interesting discussion of Indian women's ideas on marriage across classes. Puri notes that "middle class" women are reluctant to marry across socioeconomic class for fear of cultural incompatibility.

and these feelings were replicated in discussions of class. During discussions on middle class values, Rima, a twelfth-grade student from Government English, interrupted everyone else to say that upper class families looked down on lower class families and did not respect them. Middle class families, she said, did not differentiate between those with money and those without.

> High society ke andar aisā hotā hai ki jo lower class family ke log hote hain, nā, to unkī kadar nahīn karte. Jo apne ās-pās ke friends hote hain zyādātar unkī madad karte hain aur middle class family ke log zyādā koī bhī ho, madad kar detā hai. Aur koī aisā voh hī nahīn rehtā ki yār yeh amīr hai yeh garīb hai, aisā kuch ham middle class family ke log ke bīc me hotā nahīn hai.
>
> *In high society, they do not respect people from the lower classes. They only help their close friends and family, while middle class families help everyone. We don't differentiate between rich and poor.*

The girls from English Convent also described the "upper classes" as arrogant, as opposed to themselves. They noted that a characteristic of middle classness was "we are not egotistic about the things we have." When asked to elaborate on this idea of arrogance, the girls began to describe what they considered "typical upper class behavior"—"upper class kids look down on the upper middle class and make fun of what you are wearing. I don't like them. They are snooty rich and competitive. They compare family rank as well—I'm higher, you're lower." Like the students from government schools, when asked about value differences between classes, these girls compared themselves to people they considered richer than them. In every case, the comparison was favorable.

Honor

Gyan, from Government Hindi, also suggested that the middle classes placed a greater importance on honor than on money. In this case, honor was adherence to tradition or custom. Gyan used the example of funerary ritual. Thus, honor was tied to the performance of ritual, regardless of financial implications.

> Middle class apnī ijjat kī jyādā socte hain, paise cāhe jitnā ho jāe, unke ūpar udhār bhī caḍh jāe. Phir bhī. Ijjat hotī hai, nā? Ijjat ke cakkar me sab kuch karte hain. Jaise kisī kī death hotī ho to agar unke pās paise bhī nahīn hain, nā, to bhī udhār leke kisī se sab ko bhojan karāte hain. To voh apnī jo apne pichlī rītī-rivāz calte ā rahe hain unko bhī banāe rakhnā cāhte hain āge tak.
>
> *The middle classes think more about their honor, no matter how much money it takes, even if they fall into debt. They will do anything to maintain honor. If there is a death, even if they have no money, they will borrow it from someone and have the funerary feast. So they want to maintain older rituals and traditions.*

Being able to fulfill social obligations, even if one goes into debt, thus becomes a positively valued attribute of middle class identity. This attitude can also be seen, perhaps more starkly, in matters of wedding expenses and dowry (see Chapter Seven). Families will often go into massive debt to offset the cost of socially expected wedding rituals and events. Students in the government schools stressed the importance of practicing "Indian" values or traditions as a way of affirming middle class identity.

The students in English Convent also mentioned honor as a middle class value, though they were referring to sportsmanship. They stated that the middle classes were honorable, while the upper classes (exemplified by students from other private schools) were dishonorable, as evidenced by the fact that they cheated at sports and were encouraged to do so by their teachers.

<u>Class and Caste</u>

In any discussion of class in India, caste must be included, because they "closely interact in the social life of India and exert a strong influence over the identity of the middle classes" (Jaffrelot and van der Veer 2008:17). I use the term "caste" here to refer to the functional unit of caste, *jati*. Srinivas defines castes as "hereditary, endogamous groups which form a hierarchy and…has a traditional association with one or two occupations" (1995:3). As he notes, these endogamous groups, called *jati*, are the level at which caste relationships occur. *Varna*, or the broader caste groups of Brahmin,

Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra, and the "outcastes" are rigid categories of limited utility (Srinivas 1995). *Jatis* are less rigid, and are marked by a certain ambiguity with regard to relative positions in the hierarchy (Srinivas 1995).

During colonial rule, the nascent middle classes began to emerge (Ahmad and Reifeld 2001). In the early post-Independence period the formation of alliances between the English-educated upper-caste urban elite and the landed peasantry who formed the regional elites led to the creation of these middle classes (Fernandes 2006; Sheth 1999). These new middle classes were characterized by an interest in English-medium education and "modern" professions. The middle class upper castes fused ritual and socioeconomic high status into an impregnable position of power (Sheth 1999; Varma 2007). Membership in the emerging middle classes was symbolized by consumption patterns, "modern" English-language education, "non-traditional" occupations, and a collective and individual consciousness of middle class identity (which, as this chapter shows, is highly variable). Inasmuch, it was open to members of all castes—at least theoretically. The so-called "lower" castes, however, lost their ritual, functional value, and, without any kind of socioeconomic resources, were not able to gain entry into the middle classes.[63] Thus, they remained at the bottom of both old and new hierarchies (Sheth 1999). For example, as Guru (2001) points out, there was no nineteenth century Dalit middle class because the main path to middle classness, which was participation in British colonial bureaucracy, was closed to Dalits. They could only work as manual labor.

Caste in Urban Areas

There is some discussion, in scholarship and popular discourse on India, about how caste is steadily being displaced by the general confusion and leveling of caste hierarchies in anonymous, metropolitan urban settings. Sheth (1999) says that the most

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[63] The reference to "lower" here is based on the dominant Brahmanical hierarchy of castes. It has been actively resisted and challenged through the years. The notion of "hierarchy" in India is discussed in Chapter Six.

fundamental of these changes is the creation of a new caste-based political identity. While castes were organized in vertical hierarchies in the dominant hierarchical system, in the new order castes that occupied similar positions in different local hierarchies began organizing horizontally, forming various national organizations and affiliations. These horizontal affiliations had their roots in a new discourse of equal rights. Oppressed castes began movements for upward mobility by attacking the ritual ideological bases for the caste system. This Sheth refers to as the secularization of caste—the detachment of caste from its ideologically derived ritual basis, and the politicization of caste-group identity (Sheth 1999). The most fervent movements were by the Dalits, who, as outcastes, have been oppressed even by the castes lowest in the dominant Brahman-at-the-top hierarchy (Teltumbde 2009). Varma (2007) also suggests that caste, while important in urban areas, is not all-controlling. It is also not as much a factor in employment. Thus these scholars believe that caste groups in contemporary urban India function in ways similar to kinship group—more as indicators of cultural identity than as indicators of ritual status in a rigid occupational hierarchy (Sheth 1999).

I agree that the growth of urban India has weakened rigid caste hierarchies, with the biggest change in caste practice being that the middle classes do not rigidly follow commensality rules (Béteille 2001).[64] However, I am not willing to dismiss it from the organization of urban social life altogether. Sheth (1999) makes a persuasive argument for the transformation of caste hierarchies in India into a new form of social stratification that presents the appearance of a class order. Hence, like Dickey (2000a), I am more inclined to examine how class hierarchies, identities, and attitudes reflect caste behavior. For example, it is fairly common, in urban India, for employers to refuse to permit domestic help to sit on chairs or the bed, allocate separate dishes and cups for their use,

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[64] Rigid caste rules do not permit people of different castes (or sub-castes) to eat together. Ritual pollution flows upwards so, for example, Brahmans may cook for castes "lower" than them in the hierarchy, but may not eat food prepared by any other caste.

and give them leftover food or old clothes. These actions are appropriate within a "traditional" caste hierarchy because of ritual pollution rules. In urban environments, caste may be irrelevant in that employers and servants may be unaware of each other's caste affiliations. However, the rules of pollution are transferred onto class systems, albeit with a slight twist. Employers will frequently refer to servants as "dirty," and offer this as explanation for why they need to keep material goods separate. In fact, the rules of ritual pollution are still very much in place, but they are simply translated as *literal* pollution, hence the discourses of "dirty" servants who do not bathe, live in slums, carry germs, and so on. The bodies of those who are considered to be lower in the power structure are still considered dangerous and polluting.

Caste and Education

What are the implications of this for education? For one thing, education remains an area of challenge in reversing caste wrongs, especially in rural areas. As Subrahmanian says, "despite improvements in Dalit and Adivasi literacy levels in independent India, they remain among the most educationally deprived sections of Indian society" (2005:62). Teachers often maltreat or abuse children who are from oppressed caste groups, blaming them (and their parents) for poor academic performance (Page 2005; Subrahmanian 2005), even when the problem is poor quality teaching. The transference and translation of caste discrimination onto class hierarchies also finds its way into educational systems. Dickey (2000a) comments that some of her interlocutors said that negative behaviors among members of the "lower classes" (such as fighting and a lack of reasoning) are conveyed to their children not just as learned behaviors, but also as inherited traits, just as in dominant caste ideologies. Many teachers in the government schools I went to seemed to share this attitude, and the result, as I have described in various places in this thesis, was severe discrmination against poor students. Such students were often treated as though they were *inherently* incapable of learning or of being taught.

Thus, although caste is not overtly present in the urban school communities I studied, it finds its way into behavior through the practice of patterns of caste discrimination in class systems. By a lack of overt presence I mean that it is not present overtly purely relatively to other examples of more blatant distinction. For example, religion and regional affiliation were areas of blatant difference, and were remarked upon quite often by students. Fourth-grade students in Government English pulled a classmate up to my chair and said, "isko dekho. Christian hai" [*look at him. He's a Christian*], for all the world as though the poor child was a show-and-tell exhibit. In Government Hindi, when a twelfth-grade student was trying to talk to me, other students shouted him down, telling me, "iskī bāt mat suno. Yeh Madrāsī hai" [*don't listen to what he says. He is a Madrasi*]. The term Madrasi is a perjorative, applied to anyone from South India.[65] Caste differences were not as obvious, but were made prominent by their very absence from discourse.

The students from English Convent did not mention caste at all. When I broached the topic, they did not have anything to say, and the conversation died out in a few minutes. In the government schools, although caste was discussed, it was mostly from the perspective of the upper castes. These discussions were also not very in-depth, and students did not talk much about caste, even when questioned. In fact, I managed to elicit very little information from students on caste, although the information I did get was very telling. It was largely upper caste boys complaining about government caste-based affirmative-action policies.[66] Mani, a student from Government Hindi, suggested that the lower castes were not deprived because they were actually very rich.

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[65] Upon being informed by me that I was a "Madrasi" as well, the students went silent for a minute and then said "par āp Dilli ke hain" [*but you are from Delhi*]. My status restored in their eyes, my South Indian identity negated, the conversation proceeded on its previous course as though the interruption had not occurred. The other boy remained silent through these proceedings.

[66] These policies, which began to be implemented in earnest in the early 1990s, "reserved" a certain percentage of government jobs and seats in educational institutions for people who were

> Sahī me bataen lower caste kī income ab jyādā hai. Jaise āp le lijīye Jāt log. Jāt jo unke – āte to lower caste me hain, par unke ghar dekhiyegā. Ghar sabse baḍe-baḍe ghar unke hote hain Dilli me, aur sabse jyādā plot unhī ke hote hain.
>
> *Truth be told, the lower castes have more income now. Take the Jats. They are lower caste, but look at their houses. They have the biggest houses in Delhi, and the most land.*

Mani's argument, though flawed, touched on the controversy surrounding caste-based reservations in India. The Jats, a prominent North Indian caste group, have been a dominant caste for hundreds of years. M. N. Srinivas (1987) defines a dominant caste as a group which, although they may not be high up in the traditional caste hierarchy, is numerically preponderant and has enough socioeconomic power to put it in control of local politics, culture, and economy. Nevertheless, the Jats are classified as an "Other Backward Class," or OBC, in many states in India.[67] In 1999, the government of Delhi classified them as an OBC (Express New Service 1999).

Other students also echoed Mani's argument. A young boy who had sneaked into the twelfth-grade classroom while I was talking to them spoke up during the discussion. He said, "yeh SC, ST, OBC hote hain, vaise caste me nīce jāte hain. But unhe hī jyādā facilities milte hain. Aise upper income rehte hain." [*These SC, ST, OBC groups, they may be lower in caste, but they get more opportunities. That is how they have high incomes*].[68] Rahul, another twelfth-grader, was more open in his discontent over reservations: "yahī hai, nā, lower caste me acchī post jyādā milte hain, acchī job jyādā

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part of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, or Other Backward Classes (see footnotes below). Thus, "reservations" refers to such caste-based affirmative action.

[67] A category reserved for groups the Government classifies as "socially or educationally backward," which entitles them to twenty-seven percent reservation in central government jobs. This term is used for groups which are "formally above the SCs in the caste hierarchy but nonetheless suffering from social and economic disadvantages" (Jeffrey et al 2008:38), although that may not be true of OBCs which are locally dominant castes.

[68] "SC" and "ST" refer to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, other government classifications of historically oppressed groups which are entitled to reservations as well.

miltī hai" [*it's only this, that the lower castes get better jobs*]. Gaurav, another student

from Government Hindi, was the only other student to offer comment on this issue. He

said, "yeh scheduled caste hote hain lekin yeh vaise to middle class hote hain. Lekin yeh

jarūrī nahīn hai ki sāre middle class ke hain. Usme bhī upper class ke bacce hote hain"

[*they are scheduled castes but they are middle class. It's not that all of them are middle*

class. Some of them are upper class].

It has been my experience that the upper castes, in urban areas, are not overly

concerned with caste politics except to complain about reservation policies. This is

probably because they largely interact with each other, and, not being oppressed like the

Dalits, have nothing else to complain about when it comes to caste. The most widespread

anti-reservation argument is that admissions and hirings should be based on merit, not

ascribed status. This is a somewhat specious argument for upper caste or upper class

people to make. Upper class or upper caste identity has, for hundreds of years, been an

entry into privileged positions. As Varma (2007) says, the Indian elite isn't invested in

the idea that merit is a functional criteria for access to valued social resources only when

all people concerned are able to compete equally. Rather, they seek to maintain their

control over social privilege. Thus he says that the Indian elite only began to talk about

merit when this control (which was theirs by the mere fact of their birth into certain

groups) was challenged.

Although caste may no longer be central to urban socioeconomic life, this

interchange between the students clearly shows that the dominant castes still have the

upper hand in Indian society. It seems unlikely to me that there was no one from a

depressed caste group in the nearly one hundred students I spoke to in the government

schools, or even in the fifty or so that I had extended conversations with. I can only

conclude that these students were effectively silenced by the vocality of the upper caste

students, who were often loudly protesting the very reservations that allowed their

classmates to be in school.

However, we must be cautious about classifying all Indian depressed groups into one group. Many of the affluent "backward" castes are complicit in the oppression of poorer Dalit groups (Teltumbde 2009; Varma 2007). For example, Mullick (2007) relates how the Uttar Pradesh government assigned land for a school for the lower castes. The school was scheduled to be built in a village dominated by the scheduled castes. Some members of local OBC groups influenced the education department to relocate the school to another village, one dominated by the OBCs.[69] The story demonstrates that even so-called "lower" caste groups are highly internally differentiated, that caste is highly political, and that these politics can affect children's education. Moreover, as Jeffrey et al (2008) point out, unequal access to education and employment opportunities can increase processes of class formation within caste groups. This is another area that needs further research.

As I have shown, rather than assuming that caste has vanished in urban institutional settings, it might be more fruitful to investigate if it has taken on other, less visible forms, such as the insidious caste/class denigration described here.

Conclusion

Even though my interlocutors had widely divergent ideas on middle class identity and membership, they held one cardinal element of middle class ideologies in common. Students from all three schools believed that the middle class was the most neglected group in India, and suffered the most in hard times. Gautam, from Government English, said "middle class ko koī nahīn puchtā" [*no one asks after the middle class*]. His plaintive statement was repeated, almost verbatim, by Kiran from Government Hindi: "garībon ko

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[69] The scheduled caste groups apparently had enough money to build their own private school, which they did. Then they sent their children to it. The government school that was hijacked by the OBC groups eventually had to shut down because it did not have enough students. The government started supporting the private school, and now supplies the free midday meal, supposed to go only to government school, to the private school.

aur amīron ko hī puchte hain, ham to kahīn ke nahīn hote" [*they only ask after the rich and the poor, and we are left with nothing*]. It may seem that the students of English Convent would be ideologically distant from any perspectives held by the students of the government schools. However, Kiran's statement, in turn, resonated with something Mariam, from English Convent, said: "also, when any change, for example, the recent recession, happens, it is the middle class who're usually affected more. The very rich and the very poor are usually unaffected."

As this chapter has shown, class is a highly ideological category. It is singularly hard to define, and more internally differentiated than is indicated in popular discourse. Middle class identity is a positively valued category (by those who claim to be in it), and most of my interlocutors identified as middle class. Their definitions of middle class varied greatly, being based upon income, occupation, education, residence, material culture, gender, morality, and, to an unnaturally lesser extent, caste. The students of each school had their own ideas on middle class membership, and, as it turns out, their definitions would exclude the students of the other two schools. At the same time, students from the government schools and English Convent used the same terms, albeit in different ways, to discuss class differences.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOLS

How do students from government and private schools experience schooling differently? How do they negotiate these differences? This chapter examines eleventh and twelfth-grade students' discourses about the differences between government and private schools. In it, I demonstrate that there is much variation in how students from different schools experience education and, consequently, in how they relate to the world around them.

Rationalizing Difference

Students from the government schools present contradictory views on their own education and aspire to "better" schooling, i.e. private schools. They perceive themselves as occupying lower social positions (in terms of a class hierarchy) than students from private schools. At the same time, they attempt to present these positions as "better" in terms of their participation in certain privileged "middle class values," which they believe students in private schools lack. They thus create a subaltern ideology of superiority, set up in direct opposition to dominant discourses of inferiority, which are perpetuated by students from private schools.

When students from the government school discuss how they are "better" because of their "middle class" moral behavior or values, they are attempting to redefine how they are perceived by others. When it is only measurable variables such as income which are discussed, they note that they are perceived as "lower" class than students from private schools. In order to rationalize their social positions, therefore, they have to engage in complex strategies of discursive mobility which emphasize characteristics other than measurable variables.

Students in the private school also consider themselves to be middle class, but they are less conflicted about their schooling and social positions. They define middle

class morality through a different set of social values. Another important facet of perceived difference is in teachers' attitudes toward students and schooling. Government school teachers are universally held to be less dedicated to their jobs than private school teachers, and less likely to contribute to their students' success. Parenting is also linked to class, as mentioned in Chapter Four. Government school students believe that parents of private school students are negligent in their parental duties, contributing to the perceived lack of morals in these students.

Discursive Mobility

In this chapter, I want to draw attention to the discourses of government school students, which are extremely contradictory. I believe that this reflects their desire to rise in the dominant class hierarchy, measured in terms of income or status of occupation. Yet, as described above, they do not want to be seen as "lower class" or undereducated, or in any way lesser than the people like whom they aspire to be. Therefore, they attempt to present themselves as "better" than they think they are generally perceived. I suggest that, as a consequence, mobility is an intensely complicated process for those who are attempting it. It is fraught with contradictions because, by its very nature, it implies that people who attempt mobility have to acknowledge that the positions and identities they currently occupy are not good enough. What happens, then, when they try to defend those positions, and demonstrate that they are, in fact, better than the ones they aspire to? It seems that these contrary positions cannot be reconciled, but the notion of discursive mobility allows us to imagine how these students are both operationalizing mobility and defending their social positions.

Schooling and Ideology

Schools are social institutions based on social power structures. Through their ideologies, discourses, and practices, they embody power relationships such as those of

class, race, gender, and nationality. They are means of social construction, and are "conventionalized social structures which organize resources, behavior, and meaning in certain ways that can be defined by social groups in order to advance their interests" (Heller in LaDousa 2005:461). To study a social institution requires that one understand the devices and practices that control and organize individuals, structures, and discourses according to specific regimes of power. Therefore, we must analyze institutions in terms of three themes: the historical processes that affect particular configurations of power (such as colonialism), underlying ideologies, and the ways in which these ideologies influence the formation of individual and group social identities (Bevir 1999). Schools, rather than equalizing opportunity, can actually reinforce inequality by socializing children to occupy the same positions as their parents (Macleod 1987; Jeffery 2005). They do this by emphasizing difference and, as Paul Willis notes, "it is the aspects of differentiation in the makeup of an institution…which allow it to play a successful, if mystifying, role in social reproduction" (1977:63).

Schooling and Difference

Dell Hymes (1972) states that it is ridiculous to think of children coming to school somehow cognitively or linguistically "deprived," yet they are, in some senses, disadvantaged, if the languages and contexts they are competent in are not the same as those they are expected to be competent in at school. Therefore, we should inquire into "how linguistic and cultural difference is disadvantage—not because of its inherent characteristics as human practice…but because of specific social and institutional conditions" (Collins 1988:306). These conditions manifest as social practices and discourses, including schooling practices, and schooling practices often involve punishment of behavior that is non-normative (see Chapter Six).

In other words, the divergences in themselves are not a problem; it is how they are evaluated, judged, and dealt with, or invested with meaning, that becomes problematic (Collins 1988; Labov and Robbins 1969). In many schools, these processes of evaluation

are erased, and social *difference* becomes social *disability*. Exposing and reversing this erasure is the first step toward equality in institutional processes, and in understanding what examining schools can tell us about social structures and social transformations. Hymes notes that cultural differences can create problems in the classroom: "the classroom is an expression of community norms, beliefs, values, aspirations…often enough it is a battlefield of contention between conflicting conceptions of such things…It was and will seem reasonable to many for the stigmatized individual to make the adaptation" (1972:xxxiii-xxxiv).

Examining schooling practices with an eye to identifying such ideological processes reveals the operation of social power structures and the construction, maintenance, or resistance of ideological power bases in wider society. Studying schooling discourses and practices can give us critical insights into the intentions behind, and ideological bases for, educational and socialization projects (Kapferer 1981). For example, the emphasis on organizing knowledge and appropriate school behavior according to ideologically determined standards ensures that students who do not subscribe to those standards must either learn them quickly ("assimilate") or fall behind. One consequence is that they can be marked as inferior by adults and peers.

Mutual Antagonisms

In Government English, teachers frequently humiliated students who did not perform up to these ideological standards as well as other students. They were reviled in front of their peers, with statements like "iskā kuc nahīn ho saktā. Koī kām kā nahīn hai, aur kuc banegā bhī nahīn" [*Nothing can be done for him. He is useless, and he will never become anything*]. These students were frequently referred to as "nikammā" (useless). Often, they seemed to me to be simply very shy. However, the standard for intelligence revolved around how confident a student was and how well they were able to replicate textbook knowledge (what, in my school days, I called the mug-and-puke method). As Jeffery notes, the "education system in India rewards rote-learning, not creativity"

(2005:26). Teachers also judged students by the investment their parents were able to make in their education, both in terms of time as well as money. The humiliation, more often than not, therefore also included the child's parents: "parents bhī koī kām ke nahīn hain. Bulāo, to āte nahīn hain. Parents interested nahīn hain, to ham kyon interested hon?" [*Parents are also useless. If you call them (to school), they don't come. If the parents are not interested, why should we be?*] For poorer parents, taking the time out to visit the school on a working day is a luxury they literally cannot afford. Moreover, many of the students I interviewed were first-generation schoolgoers, and their often uneducated parents felt that they had nothing to contribute to their child's education.

Teachers and parents tended to actively dislike each other, or at least be extremely distrustful of each other. Their relationships were fraught, disrespectful, and mutually antagonistic. As other scholars have noted, both groups often accuse each other of not doing enough toward students' education (Subrahmanian 2005). Teachers in the government schools, as mentioned earlier, would frequently say bad things about students' parents, and parents were vocal in their disapproval of teachers' behavior. These teachers also strongly asserted what the PROBE Team calls "the myth of parental indifference" (1999:14). Jeffery notes that "educators may see the family as an inferior or backward space for education" (2005:31). When teachers place the blame for students' poor academic performance on the parents, this exonerates the teachers and schools of their failures (Page 2005, Vasavi 2003). Parents, in turn, often attemped to place all blame on teachers, thus absolving themselves of any responsibility for poor student performance.

Schooling and Resistance

While institutions and identities are certainly linked, people are able to manipulate institutional practices to redefine the nature of this link (LaDousa 2006). Processes of schooling are, therefore, concurrently processes of maintenance of *and* change of social structures, practices, and discourses. Precisely because schools are embedded in local

power structures, they also serve as loci for resistance and attempts toward changing the status quo (Foster 2000; Rival 2000; Sutton 2000). In effect, schools are also arenas (and agents) of social change, and, as will be discussed in this chapter, concomitant changes in discourse and social practice can occur both as resistance and as a result of resistance. One way to understand power relations is to begin from strategies of resistance and opposition, which are an integral part of power relations and, as such, inseparable from them (Foucault 1982). Thus, "schools represent contested terrains marked not only by structural and ideological contradictions, but also by collectively informed student resistance" (Giroux in Pathak 2002:3). The strategies of discursive mobility I discuss here may also be seen as strategies of resistance to dominant discourse about kinds of schools and socioeconomic group identity.

The students of Government English and Government Hindi exemplify those strategies of resistance. Aware that they may be perceived as being of lower status, or more poorly educated than their private school peers, these students produce discourses that depict them as possessing what they consider to be critical positive "Indian, middle-class values"—respect for elders, a control over their own sexuality, a cohesive family, an ethic of hard work, and so on. These students use these discourses to create new representations of their social positions, to set up "alternative maps of social reality" (Willis 1977:26). These values, in their discourses, are lacking in students who attend private schools. Examining these discourses of difference and their areas of similarity and dissimilarity is important because they provide us with a window into processes involved in the formation of identity and alterity, and into the role of power in these processes. They show us that the same people, or groups of people, can be variously powerful and powerless in different contexts. Dickey and Adams comment on this in their discussion of domestic workers and employers' relationships:

> These commentaries produce relational images of identity—
> notions of self and other that are constructed in relation and
> opposition to one another within hegemonic social systems. Such

> identities are necessarily fluid, positioned, and contingent…Like the relationships that give rise to them, they are also continuously negotiated and constructed in tandem through "we-they" contrasts. Systems of power cannot be understood as *systems*, we argue, unless we include multiple and simultaneuous points of view. Given such a perspective, examining the interactive processes of identity formation requires spotlighting multiple hegemonic positions, something few ethnographic studies have endeavored [2000:2, italics in original].

The discourses of differences between schools that I describe here correspond to discourses on the differences between classes decribed in Chapter Four.

Colonialism and Schooling

As stated earlier, depending on local cultural hierarchies, some schools will be more privileged than others (Baker 2000; Faust and Nagar 2001; MacLeod 1987). In this section, I will expand on the differences between private schools and government schools. In India, private, English-medium schools are more privileged, have higher status, and are more in demand (and much more expensive) than regional-language government schools (Faust and Nagar 2001; LaDousa 2006). This has to do with both the effects of British colonialism as well as of neoliberalism and an increasingly globalized economy (see Chapter Three). As a consequence, richer children tend to attend private schools, while poorer children tend to attend the government schools. This class-divided education system of private and government has contributed to uneven socioeconomic development in India (Faust and Nagar 2001), where the disparities in education work to preserve the class status quo.

Colonial Policies

Colonialism resulted in the privileging of English-medium education in India, beginning with the British Raj and a number of legislative procedures which eventually led to an association between the English language, access to power, and elite identity that continues in India. These include such well-known policies as the Charter Act of 1833, Macaulay's infamous Minute, and Wood's Educational Dispatch. The Charter Act

of 1833 allowed Indians to be employed by the East India Company—high-status employment – only if they were proficient in English. Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education aimed to create a new class of people who would be "Indian in blood and colour, but English in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Cutts 1953). Macaulay's Minute was significant because it established a discourse about English as the best medium for conveying modern, scientific knowledge (Pennycook 1998; Vaughier-Chatterjee 2007). Wood's Educational Dispatch of 1854 made English the language of higher education in India (Agnihotri and Khanna 1997; Kachru 1983; Sinha 1978).

Colonialism also produced ways of thinking and being that "permeated…[the] discourses of colonial nations" (Pennycook 1998:2). The European, and consequently the European's language—in this case, English—were perceived as superior to the colonized. These colonial constructs have remained in the ex-colonies, continuing to be reproduced in a variety of institutional settings, and the discursive constructions of Self and Other derived from English-language ability are especially persistent (see Chapter Four). By directing attention to the effects of colonialism in post-colonial societies, we can understand many things: the attitudes in such societies toward education, the production and perception of knowledge, the social meanings of legitimized curricula, educational value systems, and resistance and opposition to schooling practices (Pathak 2002).

Karat (1972) suggests that English-medium education was critical to the creation of a new Indian "middle class" and the intelligentsia. The colonial English education system was oriented toward the creation of an administrative class, based in historically upper caste groups who simply switched from the languages they already studied, like Persian and Sanskrit, to English.[70] English-language education created and reinforced a

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[70] While my focus here has been on the growth of English as a language of authority since colonialism, it must be noted that there have been other such languages of authority in India, such as Sanskrit during pre-Muslim empire times and Persian under the Mughal rulers.

"social, cultural, economic, and discursive divide between the English-educated and the majority" (Faust and Nagar 2001:2878).

A Linguistic Class Divide

The association of private schooling with wealth and English-medium education has led to a greater positive value being placed on it than on government schooling. When all these elements collide, it means that students from private schools and students from government schools can have entirely different post-school trajectories. Thus, Jeffery et al. note that in Uttar Pradesh, newly rich landlords and farmers use their disposable incomes to give their children a private school education., and "the futures they imagine for their children are largely urban, preferably metropolitan or abroad; they favor English-medium schools, and the school subjects (science streams, especially computing) that will lead to their sons' admission into some prestigious English-medium engineering or medical colleges, or into IT careers; and for their daughters, marriage to a man who has broken out of small-town life" (2005:47).

Students, in general, are well aware of this socioeconomic and linguistic divide. I asked a student from Government Hindi what the difference was between government schools and private schools. He replied, somewhat cynically,

> Agar upper family hai to voh apne baccon ko private school me dākhilā dilāenge. Ab lower matlab middle family hai to sarkārī school me dākhilā dilāenge. Aur unke yahān śuru me English bolī jātī hai aur hamāre yahān thoḍe middle school me.
>
> *If it's an upper-class family, they will enroll their children in a private school. If it's a lower, I mean, middle class family, they will enroll them in a government school. And there they speak English right from the beginning, here we learn a little starting in middle school.*

A particular experience from my fieldwork brought home to me how stark the divide was, and how stigmatized a Hindi-medium education can be. Thinking about locating a third school for research, it struck me that a private, Hindi-medium school might be an interesting comparison. I started asking the locals in my area if they knew of

such a school. Regardless of economic background, but especially if they were from poorer families, my question was met with bewilderment and laughter. Ram, a young man who worked in the apartment complex where I lived, was explicit in his reply. Laughing, he shook his head at me and said, "Dīdī, aisī koī cīz nahīn hai. Kaun pāgal paisā degā Hindi-medium me paḍhne ke liye?" [*Elder sister, there is no such thing. What mad person would pay money to study in a Hindi-medium school?*] In fact, private, Hindi-medium schools (or schools which teach in other regional languages) do exist in Delhi. I simply couldn't locate one initially. I found it fascinating, however, that there was this idea that regional-language education was free, and one only paid for English-language education. Were people willing to pay for it because it was positively valued? Were the others so negatively valued that people didn't think they should be paid for?

Educational Policies in Contemporary India

Education was not a guaranteed right in India until 2009, when the Government of India passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. This Act, as its name indicates, guarantees free (and compulsory) education to all children between the ages of six to fourteen, until the eighth grade (Gazette of India 2009). This Act is very important because, prior to this, education was neither assuredly free nor mandated. Moreover, the Act also protects the interests of disabled children, which is very rare in India. The Act also mandates a certain number of minimum school days in the year (two hundred from grades one through five and two hundred and eighty for grades six through eight). This, I think, I like most of all. When I was doing my fieldwork, one of the government schools worked only one hundred and eighty days— only ten in October, and not just due to the Diwali/Dussehra holidays.

In India, states have a certain measure of autonomy when it comes to education. Most states have their own State Boards of Education. The CBSE, or Central Board of Secondary Education, is under the control of the central (federal) government, and is generally considered the most prestigious board, which means CBSE schools are

considered to be better quality than state board schools. All recognized schools in Delhi come under the purview of the CBSE. Students are permitted to attend primary schools once they are five years old. The National Council for Educational Research and Training, or NCERT, also administered and controlled by the central government, provides assistance and training to central and state government educational institutions (such as boards). It also plays a large role in determining syllabi. As such, while states may take certain decisions about curricula, the National Curriculum Framework, established by NCERT, recommends core curricular elements for all recognized schools in the country. At the upper-primary and secondary school levels, these include: three languages (the regional language, English or Hindi, and another modern Indian language); mathematics; science (physics, chemistry, biology); social sciences (history, geography, and civics, plus economics at the secondary level); fine arts (including music and dance); and physical education (NCERT 2000).

<u>Ideologizing Difference: Private Versus Government</u>

Government schools are funded ninety-five percent or more by state or central governments, and usually teach in the local (state) official language. However, there is a significant difference in the quality of education offered by public and private schools in India (Kingdon 1996).

Primary Differences Between Private and Public

Government (public) schools are usually poorly funded and infrastructurally disadvantaged. The schooling system is thus increasingly privatized, leading to the development of a private, English versus government, non-English dichotomy (Shukla 1996). As this chapter shows, however, there is more to this dichotomy than language and infrastructure. Vaugier-Chatterjee comments on how systematic inaction by state governments has led to the decline of regional-language government schools and a focus on English-medium education: "the proliferation of English-medium schools is partly the

consequence of the failure of state governments to provide decent facilities and and viable futures for mother-tongue education, coupled with their failure to promote the regional languages in administration, industry, and business" (2005:116). The fees of private, English-medium schools tend to be higher than those for government schools (LaDousa 2005). Inasmuch, children from richer or more elite households have a better chance of attending such schools (Kingdon 1996). Government school students in India are thus likely to be poorer than their private school counterparts. Government schools are less likely to teach in English and more likely to be short of funds, low in infrastructure, and have a politicized curriculum (Jeffery and Basu 1996). Private schooling, therefore, is seen as an opportunity to achieve a "better" education than would be available from state schools (LaDousa 2007).

Typologies of Schools

There are many different kinds of schools in India. Dua (1993) identifies four kinds of schools in India: central schools (English-medium schools run by the federal government), "public" (private, non-Catholic) and convent schools (for the affluent classes), government schools (for poorer and lower-middle-class children), and private schools. Except for the government schools, the others are largely English-medium, and the differences in quality and medium of education become highly significant when it comes to higher education. The educational system is thus dominated by the values of the dominant (and English-dominant) class.

My interlocutors had their own typology of schools (see Figure 6). The first level of division, based on primary source of funding, was into private and government schools. The private schools were all English-medium, and they divided them into "public" and "convent" schools. "Public" schools, in India, are actually private schools, but are largely secular, while the convent schools are Christian, usually Catholic. I will not be using the term "public school" again in this sense after I explain this typology, since it might confuse a reader not familiar with this usage. Government schools were

divided by language into English-medium and Hindi-medium. The English-medium schools were further divided into central schools, state schools, and municipal schools. The Hindi schools were divided into state schools and municipal schools. This typology did not account for religious schools that were not Christian or private schools which were not English-medium because these schools were completely ignored by my interlocutors.

SCHOOLS
(SOURCE OF FUNDING)

PRIVATE
(ENGLISH-MEDIUM)

PUBLIC
(SECULAR +)

CONVENT
(CHRISTIAN)

GOVERNMENT

ENGLISH-MEDIUM

CENTRAL
(FEDERAL)

MUNICIPALITY

STATE

HINDI-MEDIUM

STATE

MUNICIPALITY
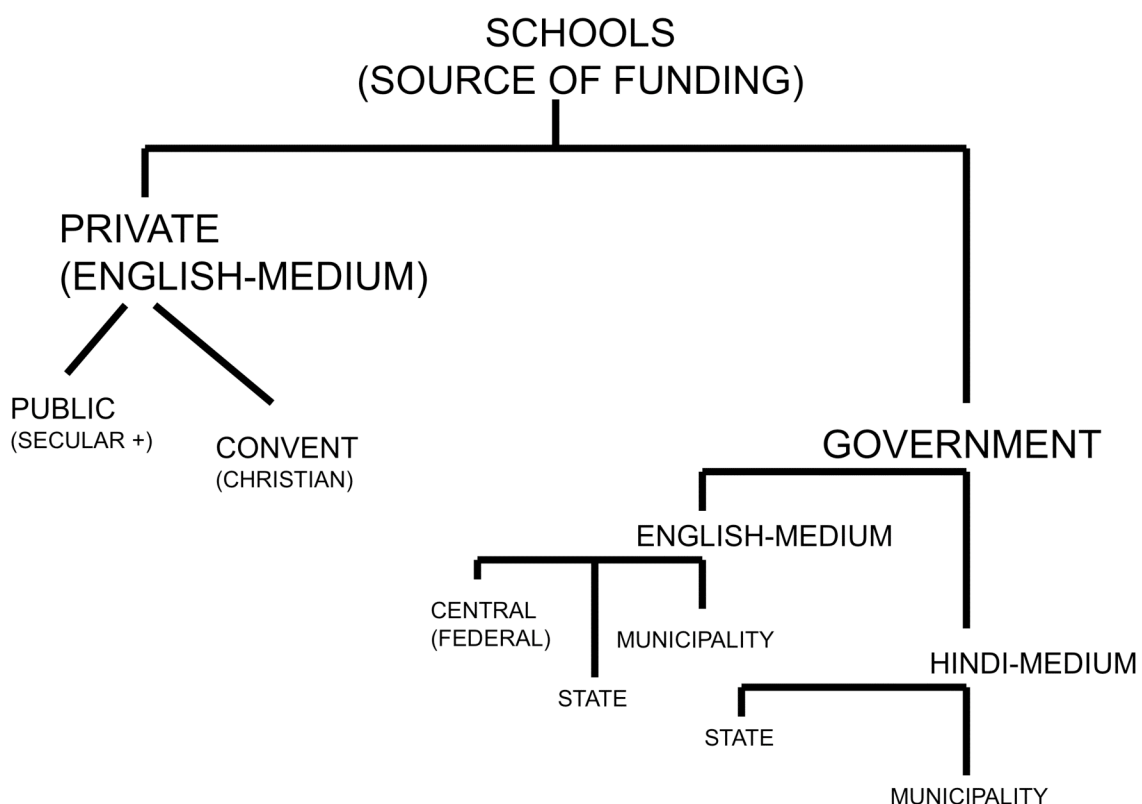
Figure 7 Students' Typology of Schools

Figure 6 shows how these schools are ranked by the students from all three schools. At the very top are the English-medium private schools, where the "public" schools rank above the convent schools. Among the government schools, the English-medium schools again rank higher than Hindi-medium schools. Among government-run

English-medium schools, the Central Schools (Kendriya Vidyalayas) rank the highest, followed by the municipality schools, such as Government English, followed by the schools run by the state government. Among the Hindi-medium government schools, though, state schools, such as Government Hindi, ranked higher than municipality schools.

These rankings (shared by students from all three schools) were clearly on the basis of academic reputation, as the students repeatedly told me that the "best education" was available in private, English-medium schools. However, when I asked government school students what the *differences* between these schools were, these rankings were turned on their head. The students I interviewed described the differences between these schools along three axes—moral codes focusing on student behavior and parental involvement, differences in teachers' attitudes, and differences in English-language ability. As shall be shown, there was a stark discursive divide between students from the government schools and students from the private school, reflecting their divergent socioeconomic backgrounds and perceptions of themselves and each other. Both sets of students had set up systems of discourses that allowed them to present themselves as somehow better than students from all other kinds of schools. However, in the case of English Convent, dominant social ideologies (of class, schooling, and other privilege) were on the side of the students, and they were able to ignore the need to rationalize their social positions and comment on other things they considered important, such as sportsmanship.

Student Behavior

The first area of difference is in student behavior. Within this category, there are three specific themes that emerge—work ethic, sexuality, and attitudes toward students from other schools. The first two themes are central to the subaltern class discourse set up by the students from the government schools. These students are aware that they are

perceived as somehow lesser than students from private, English-medium schools. In order to challenge this perception, they create an elaborate discourse on the importance of being Indian and "middle class." Based on what they told me, membership in this group is predicated on participation in an "Indian middle class" value system, the two central elements of which are hard work and control over one's sexuality. Both these themes follow from the idea of obedience to one's parents. Mythologized through stories like that of Shravan Kumar, loving and obeying one's parents are critical elements of ideal Indian identity.[71] Following from this set of values, children must work hard, both to respect parental sacrifices, and so that they can support parents in their old age. Also related is the idea of respecting parents by controlling one's sexuality and marrying a partner of their choosing. In these discourses, students from government schools are good, middle class Indian children, while students from private schools are upper class, or "high society," and have no respect for Indian values or culture.

Work Ethic

In keeping with this discourse of ideal Indian children, students from both Government English and Government Hindi noted that since their parents were poor, they had more to gain from success, and therefore worked much harder than private school students. Rahul, from Government English, said,

> Garīb ghar kā bacca government school me ātā hai. Usko lagtā hai ki hame kuch bannā hai. Jo private school me hotā hai, unhe lagtā hai bāp kā paisā hai, kuch bhī karo. Public school me hī nām ātā hai, drugs aur cocaine kā. Government school me kabhī bhī nahīn āegā, āpne sunā bhī nahīn hogā.
>
> *A poor child attends government school. He feels he has to make something of himself. A private school student thinks that his father has money, he can do what he likes. You only hear about drugs and cocaine in public schools. It's never happened in a government school, you wouldn't even have heard such a thing.*

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[71] The mythological boy who carried his parents around on his shoulders.

In other words, private schools students, because they were wealthy, indulged in bad behavior. Government school students also felt that private school students did better in school and in competitive exams because their parents could afford private tutors, while government school students did not have that option. This, they stated, put government school students at a disadvantage, because these schools have less facilities and poorer infrastructure. As Vidur from Government English put it,

> Voh home tūition lagā dete hain ākhir me jab paper āne lag jāte haĩ. Three hundred per hour. Ham nahīn lagā sakte hain. Isīliye voh school me itnā dhyān nahīn dete, hame paḍhnā paḍtā hai.
>
> *They hire home tutors at the end (of the year), when the exams come around. At three hundred (rupees) per hour. We can't hire them. So they don't pay as much attention in school, and we have to study.*

This phenomenon of "tuition" is very common in India, and is quite a problem in many parts of the country. Teachers may not teach adequately in class, forcing students to pay for private tutoring in order to pass their exams. Often, these "tuition classes" are conducted by the same teachers who did not teach well in school. Jeffery et al. (2005) comment that in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, students' schooling was privatized because of "tuition." Teachers would complain that students attended these classes rather than school. Some teachers wouldn't attend school, teaching instead at tutoring institutes, or falling asleep during school classes, fatigued from working in two places. Teachers were also accused of teaching badly in school so that students would have to attend their tutoring sessions.

Nitya Rao, in her research in Jharkhand, shows how private tutoring is used to make up for state schooling, but in a very gendered way. Poor parents would enroll all their children in state schools, so that they could get the free midday meal. However, they would also enroll their sons in private schools, and those were the schools they would actually attend. Daughters would attend the government schools, and also get tutoring. Thus Rao says, there was a "widespread adoption of private tutoring as a supplement to

state school provision, with children receiving tutoring likely to perform better and stay in school…it is also cheaper than investing in private education" (2010:175).

The students of both Government English and Government Hindi considered the lack of adequate infrastructure, including good teachers, to be one of the major failings of government schools. Private schools, being more expensive, are able to provide better educational and extra-curricular facilities for their students. Poor teaching and worse facilities in government schools imply that, if those students want to do as well as students from private schools, they have to work twice as hard.

Parental Attitudes

The class-associated moral parameters of difference set up by government school students included parents, as described in Chapter Four. These discourses are highly conflicted. Government school students believed that the parents of private school students spent less time and effort on their children than the parents of government school students. They suggest two reasons for this: that often both parents work, and therefore they have less time for children, and that, in general, these parents are less concerned about their children. Students from both government schools suggested that such parents were too busy with their own lives to give their children attention, and that they substituted it with money instead:

> Baccon ke sāth zyādā interact nahīn karte hain. Parents ke pās bhī
> time nahīn hai, baccon ke pās bhī time nahīn hai. Aur like hamāre
> me ham log even time spend kate hain cāhe thoḍā hī ho.
>
> *They don't interact much with their children. Parents don't have*
> *time, and neither do children. Among us, we spend time with each*
> *other, even if it's just a little time.*

Rashi, from Government Hindi, also felt that such parents encouraged arrogance in their children (a characteristic they associated with the upper classes), and tried to minimize interaction with poorer students from Hindi-medium schools:

> Parson hī hamāre yahān friend ek batā rahī thī ki uski jo friend the,
> voh thoḍe upper-class ke the. Kām karne vālī thī unke baccon ke

sāth khelte the to unke dad ne kahā ki 'tum acche school me paṛhte ho English school me paṛhte ho tum inke sāth kyon khel rahe ho?'

Just the day before yesterday one of my friends was telling me, she had a friend, who is somewhat upper-class. They used to play with the children of her domestic help. Then her father said, 'you study in a good school, you study in an English school, why are you playing with them?'

However, government school students' discourses on "middle" and "upper" class parents reflect the contradictions of discursive mobility attempts. At the same time as they said that upper class parents were not good parents, they felt that they, too, suffered because many of their parents were uneducated or undereducated.

Public school me kyā hotā hai jyādātar parents par depend kartā hai. Kyonki private school ke jo bacce hote hain unke parents kāfī graduate hote hain. Aur hamāre government school ke kuch hote nahīn hain, aur kuch hote bhī hain. Private school me kyā hotā hai, vahān pe pūrī responsibility bacce ke ūpar nahīn hotī. Kam se kam fifty percent responsibility hotī hai ki uske parents usko support karte hain. Lekin government school me bahut aisā hotā hai ki bacce paṛhnā cāhte hai lekin yā to parents ke income nahīn hotī kī voh āge baḍh pāe. Yā phir family support nahīn hotā. Isīliye āj ke time me private school ke bacce jyādā āge baḍh rahe hain

What happens in a public school depends mostly on the parents. Because private school children have parents who are graduates. In our government school, some parents are, and some aren't. In a private school, children aren't responsible for everything. Their parents give them at least fifty percent of support. But in a government school, it happens a lot that a child wants to study but either the parents can't afford to pay for the child's continued education, or the family is not supportive. That's why private school students do better.

Parents who were educated, they felt, were able to help their children and students did not have to work as hard.

Sexual Behavior

The second discursive theme is sexual behavior. Students from both government schools said that students from private schools were "bigḍā hua" (spoiled, or sexually active). They asserted that students from these schools were highly sexual. Aryan, from Government English, said about convent schools,

> Bacce vahān pe jyādā jaldī mature ho jāte hain. Jo kisī insān ko kuch particular age pe karnā cāhiye voh kuch zyādā pehle age pe karne lag jāte hain. Matlab kuch bhī, kisī bhī field me. Jaise kī bigaḍne ke field ke andar, har cīz ke andar. Samajh gaye, na?
>
> *Children there mature early. Things that people should do at particular ages, they start doing at an early age. In whatever area. In the area of getting spoiled, in all areas. You understand, don't you?*

Condemnation of this behavior, as discussed in Chapter Four, seemed to fall mostly on girls: "Laḍkiyān jyādā bigḍī huī hotī hain. Gandī cīze kartī hain" *[(Upper class) girls are more spoiled. They do bad/dirty things*]. Students of both schools made specific references to Southside School, a large private school with many branches all over Delhi. Students of Southside, I was informed, were oversexed, always having sex on the school premises, recording it on their cell phones, and sending it out over the internet. Southside was described as a school that, while very good in academics, was an exemplar of the sexualized bad behavior common to upper class children. The government school students attributed this supposed degenerate behavior to money and power. Students from private schools belonged to powerful families and paid higher tuition fees, and therefore could get away with more in school. Thus, they had all sorts of freedoms—sexual, behavioral, and financial. Gopal, a twelfth-grader from Government Hindi, said,

> Voh principal ko jyādā paise dete hain apnī. Isīliye principal kuch nahīn kehtā. Voh principal ko gālī dete hain, teacher ko gālī dete hain. Hame fees kam denī hai. Hamne fāltu kuch boldiyā to hamārī to…!
>
> *They give the principal more of their money. So the principal doesn't say anything. They abuse the principal, abuse the teachers. We have to pay less fees. So if we say anything bad, (we'll be in trouble).*

It must be noted here that the government school teachers had a very cynical attitude toward the self-professed virtuousness of their students. Although government school students portrayed themselves as sexually inactive, innocent, and aware of "Indian" moral values, their teachers rejected this view. Mr. Sharma, a teacher from

Government English, told me that his students indulged in "indecent behavior,"
including, according to him, having sex with their cousins. He said this was a result of a
"loss of Indian values," and ascribed that to the advent of cable television in India. Based
on my observations and extensive amounts of time spent with the twelfth grade of
Government English, I did not think they were sexualized in their behavior. I was, in fact,
pleasantly surprised by the complete lack of sexual innuendo or teasing in their
conversation, which I found to be good-natured and egalitarian. When I remarked upon
this to Mrs. Rawat, their principal, though, her response surprised me: "You don't know
anything," she said darkly. "You don't know anything. They are tricking you. These
children, they get up to all sorts of things. Boyfriends, girlfriends. If you look the other
way, they will be all over each other." This mutual distrust and antagonism marked
almost all teacher-student relationships in the government schools, although it might be
relaxed for individual teachers or students. Many of the government school teachers I
spoke to were firmly convinced their students were indulging in all manner of sexual
and/or drug-related acts, and lost no time in telling me that I was incredibly naïve to
believe otherwise.

The teachers in English Convent did not ever mention their students' private lives,
and the students themselves did not dwell much on them. As I describe in Chapter Four,
for English Convent students, good manners, honor, and sportsmanship were much more
important than moralistic sexual codes. The students from English Convent distinguished
themselves from private, non-religious schools, stating that students from those schools
were rude, ill-behaved, and cheated at competitive sports. They emphasized that convent
school students were better behaved and more focused on "values" than public school
students. The values they considered important, however, were slightly different from
those held to be important by government school students. They judged students from
other schools on their education, how good the teachers in those schools were, and how
they interacted with students from other schools, and sharply separated themselves from

public schools through one cardinal value, discipline. Discipline, here, was clearly identified with bodily control. While "discipline" included such things as sitting straight, not talking in class, or maintaining lines, it also had a sexual connotation, albeit one different in degree from the government schools. Riya, a student from English Convent, expounded on this to general agreement from her classmates: "discipline. That's the big difference. Definitely we would not do some of those things that happen in public schools." This was a coded reference to Southside School, which they made explicit a little later (see below).

Dating was frowned upon in the government schools. In English Convent, though, the students stated that it was a good thing to have friends who were male, as long as one knew "where to draw the line." When I pressed them on what the "line" was, they exhibited some embarrassment. When urged, they discussed it among themselves for a few minutes and then informed me that the line was "no drugs, no drinking, and no smoking." When I asked them if it was okay to have boyfriends (which was frowned on by the government school students) one of them said, "Boyfriends are okay, but there must not be physical relationships, and it must not be the first priority. There are other, more important things." Others disagreed somewhat, suggesting that sexual relationships were okay, that some families didn't mind, and that not all boys were bad. However, they, too, brought up Southside, and said that "what goes on there is too much." They used Southside as an example to describe how students from convent schools were better behaved and "more disciplined" than students from public schools. In their case, it wasn't the supposed sexual acts that Southside students indulged in that was the problem, it was the *excesses* to which they were alleged to have taken them.

Attitudes to Other Students

The third theme of difference brought up by students was attitudes toward other students. Government school students considered the convent schools to be good schools academically, but stated that students from those schools "have ego" (are egotistical).

They said that convent school students were over-proud of their schooling, and wouldn't interact socially with people from a Hindi-medium school or people who speak primarily Hindi. Gyan, a student from Government Hindi, said,

> Most of them unke andar ego ho jātā hai. Ki matlab jaise yeh chote log hain Hindi me bāt karte hain, aise school se paḍhe hue hain to inse bāt nahīn karnī. Voh thoḍe rude-type me bāt karte hain.
>
> *Most of them are egotistical. They think that people who speak in Hindi are unimportant people from bad schools, so they don't want to talk to us. They talk to us rudely.*

The girls from English Convent, in turn, were dismissive of government schools, stating that students in those schools were lazy and not interested in studies, although they said that government school students were more down-to-earth and had better manners than public school students. They also viewed the government school students as somehow socially "backward," saying that their families would not allow them to marry someone from a lower class and, for their own part, none of them would consider marrying someone "conservative" or "not cosmopolitan." In their own way, the students of English Convent were as negative about government school students as the latter were about them.

The Incongruities of English

Many of the ideological roots of contemporary Indian schooling practices lie in colonialism. The consequences are highly stratified systems of education, curricula determined by non-indigenous ideologies of "modernity" and "progress," and widening socioeconomic divides. Thus, schooling systems even today perpetuate colonialist ideologies, discourses, and goals, and legitimize social inequalities (Faust and Nagar 2001). In their colonies, the British set the agendas for education. In the process, "English" came to signify a language as well as new type of schooling, "modern" and "scientific" (Kumar 2001). Existing indigenous modes of thinking and knowing and,

through them, indigenous ways of being, were radically altered through new schooling practices (Cohn 1996). One of the consequences is an overwhelming importance placed on the English language and on English-medium schooling.

Dislocated Stories

The influence of colonialism on schooling practices can sometimes have somewhat bizarre results, especially when *what* is being taught has no cultural context *where* it is being taught. Kumar recounts an incident where she was asked by an enthusiastic teacher in Banaras (in North India), "what is a tuffet?" and "why is London Bridge falling down?" (1998:41). In Government English, the walls in the fourth grade classroom were hung with charts with European rhymes and poems that had no meaning for the children studying them. They dug into Alice in Wonderland and Little Red Riding Hood with more enthusiasm than understanding, unable to place such stories in any sort of cultural or familiar context.

Figure 8 Curly Locks (GE)

Some stories were adapted to aid understanding, but I am uncertain of how successful these attempts were. For example, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* was called *Curly Locks and the Three Bear*. The story was depicted on the boards in the fourth grade classroom, and the bears and Curly Locks all wore Indian clothes (Figure 8). However, when I asked the students to tell me the story, what emerged were very garbled accounts, and the students began to argue with each other about what the story was. Eventually they returned to their favorite occupation, and asked me to tell them the story instead (which I did, replacing "Goldilocks" with "Curly Locks"). The grammar in *Curly Locks* also left much to be desired, such as the dropping of the "s" from the plural "bears" in the title.

Privileging "Fluency"

The students of both government schools emphasized that it was very important to be able to communicate fluently in English. Many reasons were offered as to why it was so important, including the necessity of English for higher education, especially in the sciences. Although the sciences can be studied in Hindi, the students stated that a lack of familiarity with English scientific terms could lead to isolation from the international scientific community. English was also linked to professional success, because it "gives a good impression." Sakshi, from Government English, stated that if she heard someone speaking English fluently, "first impression hogā ki he or she maybe belongs to public school" [*the first impression will be that he or she has studied in a public school*].[72] Studying in a private school, being discursively tied to English-medium education, was also linked to professional success. English, they believed, was key to a well-developed personality: "English se hamārī personality develop hotī hai. Jaise agar ham interview dene jā rahe ho, ham Hindi ke bajāī English me bole to usme jyādā impression bantī hai" [*Our personalities develop, knowing English. For example, if we go for an interview, if*

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[72] In this case, meaning a private, secular school.

we speak English instead of Hindi it presents a better impression]. Personality, in this context, refers both to general knowledge as well as to the ability to impress people.

A lack of fluency in English was considered disadvantageous. A student from Government English was blunt about it.

> Ājkal demand aisī hai ki you must know English. Agar English nahīn ātī to gaye. General log yahī socte hain ki iske ba<u>gh</u>air job nahīn milegī acchī jagah me jaise MNC. Voh yahī socte hain, isliye voh apne baccon ko English jyādā sikhāte hain.
>
> *Nowadays the demand is such that you must know English. If you don't know English, you're done for. In general, people think that without this you won't get a good job, such as in an MNC.[73] They think like this, that is why they educate their children in English.*

Students from Government Hindi echoed this sentiment:

> Ājkal English bahut zarūrī hai. Har jagah par. Jaise kisī job ke liye apply karne jāte hain, to vahān par agar koī government job ke liye jāte hain…to uske liye English zarūrī hai kyonki agar hame English nahīn ātī nā …agar job mil bhī jāe to use koī fāydā nahīn hogā.
>
> *English is necessary today. Everywhere. For example, if we apply for a job, if we go for a government job, English is necessary for that because if we don't know English, then even if someone gets the job, it won't be of any use to him.*

The girls from English Convent, almost all of whom consider English their first language, reinforced this idea. They suggested that regional-language education led to occupational restrictions, especially geographic ones, because of the diverse languages spoken in India. They referred to English as "India's *lingua franca*," stating that it was very useful and very important for admission to a good college. They also emphasized the ideological connection between fluency in English and "good" education, saying that, if they met someone who was not fluent in English, their first impression would be that they had not studied in a very good school, or that they were not very educated.

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[73] Multinational corporation.

Laughing apologetically, they said that they would think such a person was a "gavār" (hick). "You know the word gavār. It's kind of not fair, but we all use it. Maybe the person is more intelligent, but the social stereotypes we all have, you know, that that person doesn't know English means he or she is a gavār, somehow inferior." When asked if they could befriend someone who was not fluent in English, they replied, "Absolutely. In fact, perhaps we could help them improve with their language." Thus, their attitude toward people who were not English-dominant was somewhat condescending, seeing them as people who needed "help."

The Struggle for English

LaDousa (2005) notes that, while Hindi is associated with a particular region, English is associated with an urban, upper class, educated identity. Thus, a discursive opposition is created between Hindi-medium (nationalistic/backward) and English-medium (unpatriotic/progressive) schools (LaDousa 2005). This really depends on whose point of view one is considering. In Chapter Three, I show that, for English-dominant Indians, English-language ability was actually considered nationalistic. These ideologies about English inform and direct public discourse, to the extent that English-medium education becomes viewed as the perfect path to social mobility (see Chapter Three).

However, there is more to English-medium schooling than a simple official designation. According to the students of all three schools, English has to be spoken all the time to reinforce language-learning. This divide between official designation and reality was stark in Government English. Although it is English-medium on paper, I found that much of the instruction and interaction occurred in Hindi. The principal, Mrs. Rawat, struggled to ensure only English was spoken in the school, but told me rather helplessly, "the teachers are not comfortable in English. I tell them to speak in English only, but they won't do it." Many students in their final year of school were unable to construct a complete sentence in English. When I asked them, in Hindi, to say in English "main Angrezī bolnā cāhtā hūn" [*I want to speak English*], the sentence came out as an

emotionally charged, and perhaps more apposite, "I want English." Mayank, a twelfth-grader from Government English, said, unhappily, "Main standard twelve me hūn aur I don't know Angrezī very well" [*I am in the twelfth standard and I don't know English very well*]. The students in Government English did not think their school was genuinely English-medium because, at the end of their school life, they couldn't speak English well, and because the teachers don't speak to them in English.

They were also afraid to use the little English they do know, because they thought they would be laughed at. Even within their peer group, knowing that the only way to gain fluency is to practice, they wouldn't use it, and would tease anyone who attempted to speak English. Said Priyanka, "kabhī ham English me bolne bhī cāhe, to bacce honṭe dete hain. Ki oye hoye, English bol rahī hai, āj to, yeh!" [*If we ever try to speak in English, other students tease us, saying oh, she's speaking English today*]. I asked them why they would do that, and they replied "śuru se atmosphere nahīn hai" [*right from the beginning, there has been no (English-speaking) environment*]. They blamed their teachers, saying, "Encouragement bhī nahīn miltī nā, ma'am. Koī teachers bhī to nahīn boltī ki hān English me bāt karo merī period me" [*we don't get any encouragement, ma'am. None of the teachers say, 'speak in English in my class'*].

Teacher Trouble

Government school students present contradictory perspectives on their teachers, expressing satisfaction with them in one breath, and bemoaning the quality of their teaching in the other. This might have been because they were afraid I would report them, but, more likely, was because they were genuinely torn when it came to assessing their teachers. I found, in both Government English and Government Hindi, that there was a wide discrepancy between teachers in terms of ability and interest. Some teachers in the government schools were brutal about their students, others seemed disinclined to do their jobs, while yet others were deeply involved in their students' lives and focused on

their best interests. In English Convent, almost all the teachers I spoke to seemed interested in their jobs, and students expressed no dissatisfaction with any of them, outside of the inevitable grumblings about some teachers being boring or strict. Teachers, in turn, complained about the lack of interest in learning among students, but in general demonstrated none of the deliberate cruelty or resentment that I sometimes observed in government schools.

Teacher Behavior

Government school teachers were also often lackadaisical about their work. On a very hot day in July, I was sitting in the teachers' lounge in Government English, when the power went out. The room became fairly hot and stuffy. The English teacher left to go teach her class, and came back ten minutes later. Surprised, I asked her what happened and why she left class early. She put her feet up on a chair, fanned herself, and stated simply, "It was too hot. Too hot to teach." The class she was scheduled to teach was the twelfth grade, which, at the end of the year, would be taking their Board Exams. These are nation-wide, competitive, school-leaving exams. Students' admission to colleges depends on their results in these exams, and it is imperative that they are well-prepared for them. Yet, on this, as on other occasions, this teacher felt comfortable brushing off her teaching because she didn't feel like it. I also observed this same teacher answering her cell phone in class, conducting a casual conversation while her students waited for her to finish and continue teaching. On numerous occasions in Government English and Government Hindi, I observed teachers in the principal's office, explaining to them why they needed to leave school to go perform other duties or errands. More often than not, this permission was refused, but they kept trying. On one day, following the principal of Government English on her morning rounds, we counted nine teachers who simply hadn't shown up. While some individual teachers were very dedicated and worked hard at their vocations, at a systemic level, teaching in the government schools needs an overhaul. Trying to elaborate on such an overhaul is not within the scope of this

dissertation, but one major step in this direction would be to make teachers more accountable.[74]

Student Views on Teachers

Such abandonment simply did not happen in English Convent, and government school students were aware of the difference. Part of the problem was attributed to the teacher-student ratio in government schools. Rohit, from Government Hindi, said,

> Vahān ke teachers baccon pe jyādā dhyān dete hain. Private school me nā, class me muśkil se paccīs yā tīs bacce baiṭhte hain. Par government school me ek class me sāṭh bacce baiṭhte hain. Ab agar ek teacher bacce ko pānch minute detā hai, to sāṭh ke sāṭh baccon ko to paḍhā nahīn pāenge.
>
> *Teachers (in private schools) pay more attention to their students. In a private school, there will be at most twenty-five or thirty students in a class. But in a government school, there are sixty students in a class. Now if one teacher gives five minutes to each student, they won't be able to teach all sixty students.*

As a matter of fact, there were about forty to forty-five students in each of the classes I visited in the government schools, and not many fewer in the convent school. Government school students felt that teachers in their schools were less invested in their students: "Concerned bhī nahīn hai, baccā paḍhe, nā paḍhe, sīkhe, nā sīkhe, ghar baiṭhe" [*they're not concerned, if the child studies, doesn't study, learns, doesn't learn, or stays at home*]. They were a little afraid to comment on their teachers, worried about retribution in the classroom. The most honest and frank conversation Government English students had with me about their teachers was only on the condition I kept it "off the record," but it conveyed a sense of their despondency with regard to their education. At other times, they talked to me about how their schooling was inadequate, saying that

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[74] This issue of accountability takes many forms. In the U.S., for example, things are at the other extreme. There are various schemes to measure teacher performance by student achievement, such as the infamous No Child Left Behind. As I discuss in Chapter Eight, this is a complicated evaluation, as it holds the teacher completely accountable for student performance, and discounts other contributing factors such as home environment, parental efforts, and students' own effort and interest.

their teachers were not interested in teaching, that they were rude to the students and humiliated them, telling them they were no good. My personal observations bore this out, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Rohit, from Government English, said,

> Teachers kā kyā hotā hai? Voh apnī Maruti cars me ātī hain, do-tīn periods unhe free milte hain, jahān unko paḍhāne kā man nahīn kartā, vahān voh aise hī baiṭh jāte hain, har period me unke chāi-coffee unke liye bantī rehtī hai. Unkī life to bahut comfortable ho jātī hai, baccon se.
>
> *What do the teachers care? They come to school in their Maruti cars, they get two-three periods free. When they don't feel like teaching, they just sit it out. In every period someone makes tea or coffee for them. Their life is much more comfortable than the students'.*

Expressing their own disenchantment with the teaching profession, the teachers in Government English apparently told their students not to become teachers when they grow up: "Teachers hamāre khud kehte hain kabhī teacher mat bannā. Khūb gāliyān khānī paḍhtī hain, face to face, muh pe muh" [*our teachers themselves tell us never to become a teacher, that you have to listen to abuses to your face*].

Such mutual dissatisfaction did not seem to exist in English Convent, where the students were quite happy with their own teachers. However, they, too, were very contemptuous of government school teachers. They said that the poor quality of teaching in government schools was because teachers there could not be fired, "so they just laze around in their staff rooms doing absolutely nothing. Teachers are not teaching at all, there's complete chaos in the schools, there's absolutely nothing happening, they're not learning anything!" They correlated poor teaching to low passing percentages every year. "In government schools, only two or three students pass (exams) every year, out of a class of one-fifty." The other problem, they believed, was a lack of fluency in English: "kids are not fluent in English, they don't come from English-speaking families, and neither do the teachers." This lack of fluency seemed to correlate, as far as the convent

school girls were concerned, with a lack of competence and ability. To them, it served as an adequate explanation of poor education in government schools.[75]

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

Schools, like all other social institutions, are culturally contingent, ideologically based, and reflect existing social hierarchies (Durkheim 2000; Henry 2000; Hymes 1972; LaDousa 2005; Pathak 2002, Rival 2000). Education is both an index of socioeconomic status as well as an axis for the organization of other such indices (LaDousa 2000). It cannot be separated from class, national, ethnic, gender, or other such interests, and schooling tends to promote the interests of socioeconomically dominant groups (Pathak 2002). Schools "create publics" (LaDousa 2000:15), allow social groups to formulate or reinforce their identities (LaDousa 2002), and strengthen and legitimize social hierarchies and inequalities (Faust and Nagar 2001; Pathak 2002; Sutton 2000). They are a way by which societies and nations both imagine and reproduce themselves, making control over schooling systems, curricula, language of education, and pedagogical techniques critical to the maintenance of social, political, economic, and symbolic power (Sundar 2004). Formalized schools are arenas where dominant groups can reinforce their power over other groups (Rival 2000).

Despite their seeming disapproval of private schools, almost all the government school students felt that they were desirable. This is because there is a definite dominant discourse which devalues government schools. These students were definite that they would send any children they had to convent schools, which had a slightly better reputation than public schools. Despite the "bad things" that occur in public schools, they said that they would like to attend those schools, given the chance. Thus, discourses

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[75] See Chapter Six for a discussion of why teachers might be hostile to students in government schools.

emanating from the upper echelons of society can become hegemonic. Subrahmianian (2005), for example, comments that in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, where she did her research, upper caste people believe government schools have declined because of increased numbers of Dalit and Adivasi students. Dalit parents, in turn, reproduced the upper caste discourse that private schools were better that government schools, although they had never visited private schools and could not articulate how, exactly, they were better. In other words, government schools students are very conscious of the dominant discourses of prestige and ability surrounding private schools, and would prefer to participate in them, if they could.

At the same time, their attempts for discursive mobility and strategies of resistance of dominant discourse cannot be discounted. As this chapter has shown, government school students work hard at setting up discursive structures which devalue private schools. These discourses of resistance are structured around ideas of morality, and are thus, as Gupta (2000) would put it, unrankable. Juxtaposing these two sets of discourses also demonstrates the contradictory nature of discursive mobility.

CHAPTER SIX: CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, GENDER, AND CLASS

It was the kind of afternoon that defines Delhi summer for me—hot, dry, and soporific. I was in a fourth-grade classroom in Government English, observing a class being taught by Lajjo, the English teacher. Perched on a tiny desk, I sat in a corner of the classroom, facing the children. Lajjo occupied the only adult-sized chair in the room. The children were quietly working on an in-class assignment, which they were taking up to Lajjo to be graded. The ceiling fan overhead swished a soft lullaby, and the rather large lunch I had just eaten was making me very sleepy. I fought to keep my eyes open, reminding myself that I was here to do fieldwork. Muttering to myself, I fell into a half-sleep, pencil drooping in my hand.

Suddenly, I was jerked awake by the unmistakable sound of a slap. I looked up quickly and saw a group of children standing near Lajjo's table. They were all looking fearfully at her, and sympathetically at a little boy who was walking back to his desk, right cheek reddened. As I tried to gather my overheated, sleep-addled thoughts, Lajjo started yelling at a burly little boy who stood in front of her. He took a deep breath and spread his feet apart a little, visibly bracing himself as she swung her arm around. She slapped him so hard he rocked back on his heels. Shaking with anger and shock, unable to bear it, but unsure of what I could do, I fled the classroom, feeling ashamed of my silence. I thought about reporting her and weighed it against jeopardizing my research. Lajjo was an important interlocutor whom, up until then, I had really liked. I felt a fierce protectiveness toward the small children I had seen being hit, and could hardly speak for how angry I was.

That evening, I sent a frantic email to my committee members, and received sympathetic and calm replies. Eventually, I decided to tell the principal about it. She shrugged helplessly. "I tell them," she said. "What can I do? I tell them. I know it goes on. I try to stop it. It is not permitted. They don't understand. Then the media, they will

latch onto this, and we will be the villains." She was extremely reluctant to discuss further, perhaps because of the negative attention cases of corporal punishment have been getting in the Indian media in recent years.

This chapter is a discussion of corporal punishment in the schools in which I conducted fieldwork. It is a discussion of how students from private and goverment schools experience schooling differently. It is also, however, a comment on how boys and girls experience schooling differently, drawing attention to the fact that class is only one of the social differences that influence schooling practices—gender is another. I use corporal punishment to describe one important area of difference between private and government schools, namely, the teacher-student relationship. As described in Chapter Five, students from all three schools suggest that the quality of teaching is better in private schools than in government schools. This idea of "quality" includes not just actual teaching, but other forms of teachers' interactions with students.

I use the case of corporal punishment to show how a social phenomenon— violence being used to enforce hierarchy—is incorporated into schooling practice. This is a particularly overt example of how social hierarchies play out in school environments. I also show how class is a factor in determining who is subject to violence. Third, by using the case of female teachers who beat male students in the name of achieving "respect," I show how dominant social ideologies of gendered identity formation, role expectations, and social behavior infiltrate schooling practice, how teachers express them, and how students internalize them. Finally, I use the case of uniforms to show how hierarchies are enforced through somewhat arbitrary controls over students' bodies, and describe student resistance to such control.

Defining Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment was not something I set out to investigate. It was just so all-pervasive I couldn't ignore it. Children, parents, and teachers all brought it up in

conversation, even when I was talking about something else. I realized that any discussion of schooling in India was incomplete without a discussion of corporal punishment. What is corporal punishment? Morrell suggests it is "the purposeful and frequent infliction of pain by those in authority in a formal and ritualized way in an institutional setting" (2001a:140). This can encompass a wide variety of meanings, ranging from beatings or canings to sexual abuse of students. I use the term to refer to non-sexualized acts of physical violence, by adults in authority, upon students' bodies.[76] This includes acts of physical assault, such as beatings. It also includes punishments that are not direct acts of physical aggression, such as running laps or standing for long periods of time. It does not include non-physical acts of violence, such as verbal humiliation or harassment. It does not include violence by students against each other, except where directed by an authoritarian adult as part of punishment.

Humphreys (2008) lists a number of countries where corporal punishment is banned but the practice persists, including South Africa, Zambia, China, Japan, and Egypt. Corporal punishment is banned in India as well, but is not uncommon, and is often very violent. In April 2009, Shanno Khan, a young girl of eleven, died in Delhi. Her teacher had allegedly punished her for not knowing her English alphabet by beating her, then making her stand in the sun for hours. Shanno slipped into a coma and died a few days later (Bhowmik 2009). In December 2005, Akanksha, who was only seven years old, died from a blow to the head. Her classmates said that the teacher, Amar Singh Dohrey, beat her because she did not bring her Hindi textbook to school. He was arrested for culpable homicide not amounting to murder (NDTV 2009). Bhowmik makes note of the widespread nature of corporal punishment in India when she says, "according to a

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[76] While some studies of corporal punishment in schools (and not necessarily in India), e.g. Humphreys (2008), include discussions of the sexual aspect of corporal punishment, I believe that sexual violence upon young people needs to be kept analytically distinct from non-sexual violence, because it is a very particular kind of violent power with connotations that do not adhere to non-sexual violence.

2007 joint study by UNICEF, Save the Children and the Indian government, 65% of school-going children have faced corporal punishment" (2009).

<div align="center">Hierarchy, Obedience, and Violence</div>

Why is corporal punishment so common in India? Part of the answer to this question, I believe, lies in the related ideas of obedience and hierarchy. Corporal punishment is usually a response to "disobedience" of some sort, whether it is doing an assignment incorrectly or not wearing the correct uniform. The demand for obedience is a central aspect of the assertion of hierarchy in Indian society.[77] Lack of obedience is, therefore, a sign of disruption in the hierarchy, and is usually punished through violence.

Hierarchy in Studies of India

The concept of hierarchy, when it comes to studies of India, has a controversial history that is perhaps best expressed through the debates surrounding Dumont's (1980) classic study of caste in India, Homo hierarchicus. In it, Dumont suggests that hierarchy is the central organizing principle of the structure of Indian society, and that it is guided by the (sacred) distinction between the pure and the polluted (Appadurai 1986; Dumont 1980; Khare 2007; Marriott 1969). By identifying hierarchy as a sacred principle of social organization, he distinguishes it from more profane socioeconomics, and thus separates ritual status from socioeconomic or political power (Dumont 1980; Marriott 1969). Thus, Dumont says that the existence of systems of value-driven hierarchies are "independent of…the distribution of power" (1980:20). In his scheme of things, hierarchy is naturalized and becomes the *sine qua non* of Indian society: "to adopt a value

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[77] Appadurai points out that "certain anthropological images—such as hierarchy—become hegemonic in, and confined to, certain spaces" (1988:45). This does not mean that hierarchical relations do not exist in other countries or cultures. Race, for example, is a form of institutionalized hierarchy in the United States, expressed both in face-to-face relations as well as in less intimate ways, e.g. . It does mean, though, that anthropologists must be aware of such "topological stereotypes" (Appadurai 1988:46) and incorporate this awareness into their analyses.

is to introduce hierarchy, and a certain consensus of values, a certain hierarchy of ideas, things, and people, is indispensable to social life…It is understandable and natural that hierarchy should encompass social agents and social categories" (Dumont 1980: 20).

Dumont's treatise on caste in India met with fierce criticism that continued for a few decades. In the original <u>American Anthropologist</u> review article, McKim Marriot pinpoints one of the basic problems with Dumont's analysis—its very narrow focus. He says, "how is the whole pattern of a civilization to be seen when the concepts through which it is viewed refer only to small, opposing parts of the whole and at different levels of reality? The content of the putative caste ideology of India is narrowed until it refers only to sacred, religious ideas and finally, only to the one idea of purity-pollution" (1969:1169). Arjun Appadurai describes Dumont's conception of hierarchy as essentializing, exoticizing, and totalizing as he says, "hierarchy, in Dumont's argument, becomes the essence of caste, the key to its exoticism, and the form of its totality" (1988:41). Dumont's perspective was skewed, being intensely Brahmanical, scriptural, and top-down (Marriott 1969).

Fetishizing hierarchy in this way leaves no space for acknowledging resistance by those lower in the hierarchical system (Appadurai 1986), nor does it account for individuality in personhood, subsuming all behavior under hierarchy (Mines 1988; Ram 1992). André Béteille (1979) also comments that presenting India as rigidly hierarchical and resistant to change allowed it to be seen by European colonizers as a colony— something that could not govern itself. Dipankar Gupta (2000) notes that there are probably as many hierarchies in India as there are castes, and no caste, however low on these hierarchies, either sees itself as low or accepts the reasons for its status. He comments that the hierarchy set forth by the caste system can only be accepted as universal "provided one takes on the prejudices of the particular caste that is elaborating this hierarchy" (2000:35). Hierarchy, in effect, needs to be unpacked, not assumed, taking into account other axes of power such as language, class, gender, age, and so on, and also

taking into account how ideologies of social difference work to enforce dominant hierarchies.

Reframing Hierarchy

But let us not throw the baby out with the bathwater. The concept of hierarchy may yet be useful in analyzing India. As Appadurai (1988) says, hierarchy is a characteristic of Indian society, although how it works is a matter of some dispute. Béteille notes that "Dumont constructs a picture of an elaborate hierarchy of castes in which each individual is kept in his place not by means of punishment or the arbitary exercise of power, but through the universal acceptance of the values of a hierarchical order" (1979:540). However, hierarchy doesn't exactly work this way, and therefore must be understood not as some sort of reified Indian universal, but in terms of local practice. As Dickey and Adams state, "the particularities of hierarchy are always culturally constructed" (2000:3). What if we turn Dumont's formulation on its head, and see hierarchy not as a naturalized, decontextualized system of values, but as a highly contextual, locally determined, ideological device for the maintenance of arbitrary power? In other words, hierarchy is not an intrinsic feature of Indian culture, but it is an ideological tool used to preserve the interests of dominant groups. It is to the benefit of dominant groups to create hierarchical structures, with them at the top, and enforce these through structural, symbolic, and physical violence.

Thus, hierarchies are naturalized and given scriptural, ritual, and religious credence, people who are "lower" in these hierarchies are systematically subjugated through the exercise of social, economic, and political power, and the transgression of hierarchical rules can lead to physical violence. In this conception, hierarchies are expressions of power and ideology. They work to reinforce power structures, and are enforced through violence. The very fact that violence is needed to enforce these hierarchies exposes what Dickey and Adams have called "the fragility of hegemonies" (2000:7)—there are always multiple representations, points of view, and contestations in

every hierarchical system. In the case of female teachers hitting male students, it is not

the fragility of the teacher-student relationship which is in question, whatever they might

say. Such violence is an expression of feminine responses to patriarchy and masculinity,

as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Hierarchies in India operate along various axes—among them, caste, class,

language, gender, and age. These hierarchies are overt and govern social behavior and

role expectations, so maintenance of these hierarchies means everyone must follow the

rules. These rules differ from group to group and role to role—"the nature of the

hierarchy, of dependence and relative positioning…is generalised through reiterations in

dispersed contexts" (Chopra 2004:42).

Transgression and Violence

The values of dominant groups determine and enforce hierarchies. For example,

in India intercaste (or interreligious) marriages are socially proscribed. Transgression of

the rules often meets with violence, so we must "shift our gaze and move from imagining

violence as a breakdown in the social order—something gone wrong—to seeing it as the

sign of a struggle for the maintenance of certain fantasies of identity and power" (Moore

in Rydstrøm 2006:332). Thus, intercaste or interreligious couples are sometimes killed,

brutalized, or ostracized in Indian contexts. In January 2008, an Indian immigrant in

Chicago, Subhash Chander, burned to death his daughter, son-in-law, and three year-old

grandson because she had married without his permission (Wax 2008). Prem Chowdhry

(1997; 2007) notes that intercaste and intracaste marriages, which violate social norms,

are frequent. In rural India, they as frequently are punished by illegal (but socially

sanctioned) violence, usually upon both the husband and wife, but always at least upon

the woman. This violence is generally committed by other villagers (Chowdhry 2007).

Violence, thus, is used to enforce caste, gender, and kinship norms. Chowdhry also

comments that these norms (and the hierarchies that go with them) are enforced through

ideas of tradition, honor, and culture, and "the more vocal opposition and violence is

traceable to those social groups which stand to benefit most by bolstering these cultural

ideas" (1997:1019). She gives a few examples of such violence (from Haryana and

western Uttar Pradesh), which are all terrifying in their rage, intensity, and publicness,

and in the fact that the perpetrators almost always went unpunished, one of which I

reproduce here:

> Perhaps the most shocking of the lot is the Mehrana murder case of March 1991. Roshni, a jat girl of village Mehrana in western UP, ran away with Brijendra, a low caste jatav boy, assisted by his friend. All the three were caught. The jat panchayat sat in judgment on them.[78] Under its decree, they were tortured the whole night, hanged in the morning and then set on fire, two of them still alive. The entire village was witness to this savage and brutal murder [Chowdhry 1997:1020].

Stories of the murder of couples who have married out of caste abound in the

India news media, and most are truly horrifying. In November 2003, a young man,

Jasbeer, was murdered in Delhi. In front of his wife and mother-in-law, his hands and

legs were chopped off with swords before he was killed. The killers were members of the

Rajput community, to which his wife Geeta belonged. Jasbeer himself was a Jat, and the

Rajputs who killed him were angry that he had "dared" marry into their caste (The Hindu

2004).

It seems apparent that in dominant hierarchical constructions obedience is a

marker of respect—for the hierarchy, for those above one in the hierarchy, for one's place

in it, and for Indian "culture" and "tradition." When children obey parents, they are

indicating their respect for their parents. When wives disobey their husbands, they are

being disrespectful of them. The infliction of violence upon those who do not obey, and

thus do not conform to hierarchical structure, is not uncommon in India. Parents beat

children, teachers beat students, husbands (and indeed, their entire families) beat and

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[78] "Jat" refers to caste (or functional caste or subcaste groups). A panchayat is a village council, so a jat panchayat is a caste council, usually represented by members of all the castes present in a village.

burn wives, and employers abuse servants. This is not restricted to India. Morrell (2001a) notes that corporal punishment in South African schools was a symbol of the dominance of males over females, teachers over students, and adults over children.

Bourdieu and Passron comment that one of the functions of pedagogic work is to keep order, or reproduce social power structures, so that it "tends to impose the legitimacy of the dominant culture on the members of the dominated groups or classes, and to make them internalize, to a variable extent, disciplines and censorships which best serve the material and symbolic interensts of the dominant groups or classes" (1977:41). Violence—whether physical, symbolic, or structural—is a means of enforcing obedience and hierarchy, and is therefore a central element of socialization processes.[79]

While it is important to distinguish between these different kinds of violence, we must also bear in mind that they are all used as mechanisms of dominance and control. For example, Merry (2001) describes how state responses (or "regulatory mechanisms") to legal transgressions can range from rehabilitation or corporal punishment to spatial constraints such as restraining orders. When gender scholarship focuses on Foucauldian structural violence (or even the structural roots of physical violence), it tends to lose focus on violence in its raw, physical form. In this chapter, I draw attention back to physical violence and my concern is for the very immediate effects it has on children and youth.

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[79] There are other avenues for generating obedience. One of these is medication. Opponents of Ritalin in the U.S. suggest that it is used to make (even healthy) children more obedient and tractable; that it pathologizes normal hyerpactivity among children; that ADHD is a sociocultural condition which has been medicalized precisely so that impatient parents and teachers can drug children into social conformity; and that the disappearance of other methods of disciplining children has compounded the problem of their being drugged into obedience (Miller and Leger 2003).

The Teacher-Student Relationship

While there is a lot of research on how violence is used to enforce caste or gender norms in India, there is not enough on how it is used to enforce age hierarchies, especially in schools. Emphasizing obedience as a marker of respect for hierarchy applies to children as well. Jambunathan and Counselman observe that "Indian parents lay a great deal of emphasis in their parenting practices on familial bonds, dependence on and loyalty to the family, obedience, religious beliefs, and achievement" (2002:658). They value obedience and conformity (Raina and Raina 1971; Rajagopalan et al. 1992) as a demonstration of respect. In the government schools I visited, teachers would frequently complain to me "bacce sunte nahīn hain" or "bacce mānte nahīn hain." These literally mean "children don't listen (to us)" or "children don't accept (what we are saying)," but the meaning they convey, and are intended to convey, is "children don't obey." The equation of obedience with listening and acceptance gives us a clue into what kind of obedience is demanded as well—it must be unquestioning. To hear is to accept and obey.

Teaching as Maintaining Order

Why are teachers so invested in unquestioning obedience, and why does disobedience meet with violence? Krishna Kumar (1991) suggests that there might be a historical reason, dating back to colonial India. Under colonial rule, teaching became a low-paying, low-status, government job, and involved a lot of clerical work. Syllabi were fixed by an external authority, and teachers were not expected to do much more, in the classroom, than ensure the students learned (by rote if necessary) what was in the prescribed texts. Their main tasks in the classroom, therefore, were to preserve order and make sure students learned the prescribed content. These patterns, Kumar notes, still persist. Syllabi are still externally determined, even in private schools. Teachers are still "powerless subordinates" in departments of education. Thus, Kumar says,

> Freed of the urgency to reorganize knowledge in interesting ways, the teacher persists with the task of maintaining order in the classroom to facilitate safe and speedy delivery of the prescribed

> content…classroom management, by sundry pedagogical techniques, becomes his supreme concern…The prescribed curriculum and textbook serve as the backdrop against which the drama of dictatorial power over docile children is played. The syllabus and the textbook conceal the teacher's lack of professional power, they are the "givens" of the situation. The children do not know that their teacher is a feeble servant of the authorities who determine what knowledge the teacher must teach; nor do they perceive him as a mere delivery man. For them the teacher is the man on the spot with all the power in the world to force them to do what he wants. They do not know that their teacher hides his powerlessness behind the mask of being all-powerful [1991:87-88].[80]

Corporal punishment, in India, is an acceptable way to socialize children into obeying those above them in a hierarchical structure (Segal 1995; Hunter et al. 2000) such as parents or teachers. Many Indian parents, in fact, consider it a *necessary* tool for socialization of children (Hunter et al. 2000). As Kumar says, in Indian families, "authority discourages any form of challenge or dissent. Independent decision making, questioning and criticism are usually not among the traits encouraged in children by adult members of the family" (1991:91). Thus, unquestioning obedience is integral to the maintenance of adult authority in India, and violence is one of the ways in which it is enforced. Resistance, if it is to be successful and unpunished, must be quiet and discreet.

The Role of Class

I noticed that there was no corporal punishment in English Convent. The most common punishment for breaking rules was fining. While watching students there practice marching for the Independence Day event (August fifteenth), I noticed the only instance of even the threat of violence, and it was definitely not serious. Shanta, the "Games teacher," was trying to get a group of giggling girls to quieten down and march in line. She broke a small twig off a tree, stripped it of its leaves, and shook it at a section of slow-marching students. The students, who had been watching her the entire time,

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[80] Krishna Kumar uses the generic he, and I have let it stand.

burst into laughter at what seemed to be an old joke. She leaned over and whacked them a couple of times with the twig, and the entire group erupted into giggles. She turned away, smiling. The entire incident mocked the idea of corporal punishment. Shanta did not really need the threat of punishment to assert her authority, and her relationship with the students seemed joking rather than adversarial.

What made English Convent different from the government schools? Two major differences were gender (it is all-girls) and income—it caters to a far richer section of society than the government schools. I began to wonder if the difference was gender or income. I did not have any data on boys' schools that catered to wealthier students. I thought of asking my friends who had attended a Catholic boys' school whether they had experienced any punishment in their school, and they answered in the affirmative. Nikhil, who is now in his early thirties, attended a well-known, upper-income Catholic boys' school in Delhi and graduated in the mid-nineties. I asked him if he remembered being punished in school. This was his reply:

> Yeah, there was a lot of caning involved through the years. Since early on I would say. The first time it happened to me was in Class III. Guys who were out of uniform during PT class were caned sometimes.[81] Mostly well deserved I'd say. There were a few times when it wasn't. But that was very rare. We were also made to walk barefeet all day if our shoes were incorrect, or have our hair chopped off (a bit) if it was too long. But none of this was without a warning beforehand. I do recall G— complaining once about wrist pain. So there definitely must've been some tying. Sometimes when we had really misbehaved we'd get a whacking. All-in-all we were whacked quite a bit, as well as some other stuff. But to tell you the truth, I think that to an extent it was good that that happened. It made us stronger. If it had to happen all over again, I wouldn't change a thing.

Although further research is certainly needed, this anecdotal evidence indicates that it is often gender that directs corporal punishment in Delhi schools—who is

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[81] Physical training, what would be called "gym" in the US. Many schools require students to wear a separate uniform for PT.

punished, how much, and how. Furthermore, power in schools operates on different axes (such as age, gender, and rank) that vary from school to school. Given that all the students and most of the teachers in English Convent were female, the gender dynamics were very different from those in the government schools.

However, this does not mean that class was not a factor in punishment. The students in English Convent tended to be from richer (and more powerful) backgrounds than those in the government schools. Social disadvantage, whether class, race, or caste, is a central factor in determining which children get punished and how. Subrahmanian (2005) notes that Dalit and Adivasi children in India can suffer more corporal punishment in schools than upper caste children. In the United States, race seems to be a factor in corporal punishment. It is legal in twenty-one U.S. states, and regularly practiced in thirteen (CNN 2008).[82] A study published in the nineties found that over ninety percent of American parents were likely to use corporal punishment on their children (Dietz 2000). The most frequently punished children in schools were African-Americans, who accounted for only 17.1 percent of the national student population, but formed 35.6 percent of those who received coporal punishment in schools (CNN 2008). Income and education also determined which groups inflicted corporal punishment on their children. Dietz (2000) notes that, in the United States, people with lower income or less education were more likely to use corporal punishment on their children.

Apart from being a factor in who receives or doles out punishment, class difference opens the door to some other possibilities for punishment as well. Rather than function through corporal punishment (or medication), English Convent adopted financial punishment. They were able to do this because of the class background of the students. Such punishment would have been meaningless in the government schools, where

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[82] The thirteen states in which it is practiced are Missouri, Kentucky, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee and Florida (CNN 2008).

students who could not afford to pay fines would likely have simply dropped out. In English Convent, since the burden of fines is on the parents, the school is punishing them rather than the students. Thus, the relationship of punishment and restitution is between the school and the parents, and the children do not bear the burden of punishment, at least in the school. One presumes, though, that parents would eventually tire of paying fines and visit some sort of discipline upon an errant child.

Differences in socioeconomic positions lead to differences in socialization. Seymour (1976), for example, in her discussion of child-rearing practices in Bhubaneswar in Orissa, notes that lower-class children received erratic attention from their wageworking mothers, were looked after by a number of different caregivers (including erratic caregivers in the form of older siblings), and received little to no attention after they turned three. They responded to this lack of attention by using "negative techniques" of attention-seeking, such as hitting, teasing, or breaking things. Differences in socialization will lead to differences in acceptable standards of behavior, which become all too important in the classroom. For example, Heath (1983), in a study of three working-class communities in the Piedmont Carolinas, explored the effect of preschool home environment on the ways that language structures were learned, which affected performance in the classroom. "Mainstream" (white, "middle class") language values were the norm in classrooms. Heath noted that communities which did not subscribe to those values faced more difficulties in their schooling than the community which did. Thus there is often a conflict between a community's social and discursive practices (what they teach children) and a school's formalized, institutionalized practices (Collins 1988), and this difference can affect how teachers teach students.

Another consequence of class difference is social power. While my friends in the Catholic boys' school informed me that they did endure corporal punishment, it was different, ideologically, than that endured by the boys in the government schools. First, I believe the roots of such punishment are different. Rather than being located in the

assertion of social difference between teachers and students (discussed below), it is located in the maintenance of an enforcement of "discipline" that has colonial roots, one that is specifically oriented toward masculinity (hence its absence in Catholic girls' schools). Vivekananda, for example, emphasized heterosexual, virile (Hindu) masculinity as a response to the ideological feminization of the colonial subject (Roy 1998). And MacDougall says about Doon School, "the colonial discourses of imperial Britain celebrated the ideal of strong physical manliness in contrast to the stereotyped image of the ineffectual, even feminised male subject. One of the objectives of Doon School was to counter this colonial view…the image of the new, masculine Indian man was to be built upon a regime of bodily practices borrowed from British schools" (2005:126). I think, therefore, that private, all-boys' schools shape masculinities in different ways than government, co-educational schools.

Second, and perhaps equally important, in a private, Catholic, boys' school the relationship between parents and teachers is usually different than in a government school. A parent who is wealthy, aware of his or her rights, and has socioeconomic power is a very different proposition from one who is poor, unaware of his or her rights, and powerless. Should their child be abused, the options available to the latter are limited, and the parent might not even be aware of them.

Vasavi (2003) suggests that the abuse of children by teachers might (among other things) be due to the fact that there is often a significant social gap between them. Poorer students may be first-generation schoolgoers or from oppressed caste groups, while teachers may be from the upper classes or privileged castes. Thus, teachers may be insensitive, resentful, and abusive toward these children, and believe that they are ineducable (Vasavi 2003). In the government schools, as described in Chapter One and later in this chapter, teachers were extremely disdainful and disrespectful of parents. I believe this is due to the social differences between them, teachers being from slightly wealthier or better-educated backgrounds. Combined with parental powerlessness, as in

the government schools, this led to a rampant violence upon children that was virtually unchecked, despite laws preventing such behavior.

<div align="center">Teachers' Justifications for Violence</div>

Teachers have very strong opinions on corporal punishment. I was a little startled at how many teachers hit children, and how many of the others expressed a wistful desire to be allowed to hit them. I didn't speak to many teachers who, during the course of our conversations, didn't say some version of "if I could only give them one jhāp" (slap). Some even surprised me. I spent at least one day a week, for the entire duration of my fieldwork, talking to Uma, with whom I had become friends. Uma's nephew was an alumnus of Government English, and she was his guardian when he studied there. She was also a teacher in a government elementary school. I talked to Uma about the corporal punishment I saw in the schools, and we discussed how it was a bad thing and not good for children. She seemed to have very progressive views toward children's education and disciplinary measures. Our last meeting was the week before I returned to the U.S. We talked a little bit about my work, and she said, "you know, you can't hit little children." I agreed wholeheartedly. "But," she said as I picked up my bag to leave, "sometimes they need one tight slap before they will listen!"[83]

As mentioned earlier, I didn't really seek out conversations about corporal punishment, other than with Uma. They just happened. I was sitting in the staff room in Government Hindi one morning, waiting to observe a class. Two teachers were sitting there, discussing their students. Over tea, they talked about how difficult their students had become. I reproduce their conversation here, using GHT (for Government Hindi Teacher) and a number to differentiate between them. The conversation was in English.

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[83] The phrase "one tight slap" is commonly used in Indian English to refer to slapping someone very hard.

Both teachers were women. GHT1 was a few years younger than I, in her mid-to-late twenties, and GHT2 was in her early fifties. As tended to happen during my research, I spent more time with the younger teachers, and GHT1 had invited me to sit in the staff room while I waited to observe her next class. As they spoke, I wrote down their conversation. Reconstructed from my fieldnotes, this is an almost verbatim account.

GHT1:   In co-ed schools, we cannot control boys without corporal punishment.

GHT2:   At least this is not a public school. In public schools, they are very indisciplined. Especially in Southside School, there they are very bad.

GHT1:   These children are influenced by European culture. They watch all these movies and TV, and students are rude to teachers. The new "international" schools are just places for rich people to hide their black money. They are not interested in teaching the students anything. Parents also have no time for kids, when both are working.[84]

GHT2:   When we were in school, they punished us for every small thing. Now the Education Officer comes to school, and he talks to the kids. Then they complain about the teachers, especially those who have been strict with them. The EO doesn't hear the teachers' side of things, so students can cause trouble for teachers. We are not allowed to "humiliate" the students.

LMP: How do you discipline them?

GHT2:   *(Slapping her hands together in a namaste)* We beg them. We are reduced to begging them. They say one in hundred teachers beat children too much, but the other ninety-nine are good, yet they too are punished. Not being able to punish students means students don't respect us anymore.

GHT1:   Everyone is worried about humiliating the students. No one is worried about how they humiliate us, and we can't even respond.

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[84] This came from two female teachers, both of whom work and agree that teaching is a 24/7 job.

Teachers often framed punishment in terms of "humiliation" or "insulting" their students, and insisted that this was the only way to discipline them. They complained that government rules and parental protests did not permit them to humiliate students any more, and left them with no means of "controlling" them. A teacher from English Convent said, "parents don't want their children to be 'insulted' by being scolded in front of friends. We can't punish them also—teachers have no authority anymore. If we scold them, the parents say their child is depressed. For everything now the child is depressed. You can't say anything only.[85] When I was in school, you would get one tight slap."

It became clear to me that most of the teachers I spoke to in the government schools (but not in the convent school) were very antagonistic toward their students. While they might have liked individual students, they talked about students as a whole in a very negative way, and a lot of their attention was focused on maintaining their position in the school power hierarchy. It seemed to me that they believed the only way to do this was to oppress their students—at least a little bit. Schools are complicit in this process— they "model, permit and shape violent attitudes and behaviors, they encourage students to accept that certain levels of violence are normal and natural" (Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997:126). Investigating why and how violence occurs in schools provides insight into the ways in which ideologies of social difference are enacted in schools.

<div align="center">Gendered Aspects of Corporal Punishment</div>

Radhika Chopra observes that violence is "a whole mode of articulation, a bodily language through which something specific is being said. It is essentially a communicative language of gestures" (2004:52). It is a language that is easily understood, and is used to keep people "in their place." Such violence is often gendered, and corporal punishment is no exception. The curious thing about the corporal

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[85] The word "only" is often used in Indian English for added emphasis.

punishment I observed, though, was that in neither of the government schools was there physical punishment of girls, but female teachers overtly talked about achieving respect and "controlling" boys through violence. Malini, a teacher in Government Hindi, said, "boys must be beaten. Not too hard, but female teachers cannot assert their authority unless they can beat boys—otherwise they won't respect us." Other female teachers agreed with her.

I found this discursive production fascinating because of its basic premise, that a woman, because she is a woman, cannot get respect from a man, or even a boy. To hear this from well-educated professional women was somewhat astonishing, and to see the repercussions of this belief—violence upon young men—was even more upsetting. If men use women to "prop up and extend their masculine selves" (Osella et al. 2004:14), what are these teachers doing but using men to prop up and extend their feminine (professional) selves? Thus we arrive at a very important question relating to this gender relationship—what is their conception of femininity and why do they feel the need to exert power through violence? Despite the superficial appearance of disruption of normative gender behavior (women being violent toward men), their rationale for the need for this violence tells us that such is not the case.[86] These teachers, through their violent behavior and their justifications for it, are "colluding in their own subordination" (Kumar 2007:133). Their aggressive femininity, in fact, is a corollary of hegemonic masculinity (see below) and, as De Neve notes, "the very existence of a hegemonic model can undermine the power of individual men, or of men of particular social groups

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[86] The teachers' justification—that they would not otherwise be respected, is defied by the very actions, and the muteness of student response to them. If, in fact, teachers were not respected by students, students would not take such punishment lying down. The fact that teachers could do what they did, that students did not protest to teachers, and that schools did not penalize teachers for breaking the rules (and the law) indicates to me that their authority as teachers was not in any danger.

in as much as it can be 'hijacked' by dominant women and applied to their own purpose" (2004:64).[87]

The interesting thing here is that it is women who are inscribing masculinity, not men. This is important because, as Connell and Messerschmidt say, "focusing only on the activities of men occludes the practices of women in the construction of gender among men (2005:848). Or, as Kenway and Fitzclarence observe, "masculinities cannot be fully understood without attending to their relationship to femininities within the broader scope of patriarchy. It is therefore important to identify the sorts of femininities which unwittingly underwrite hegemonic masculinity" (1997:120). It also points to how boys (especially poorer boys) experience schooling very differently from girls, and that this is not always in their favor.

Two themes emerge from female teachers' discussions of how women can only control masculinity through violence. First, masculinity in its natural state is wild, aggressive, disobedient, and unable to follow rules. Second, femininity is a condition that lacks respect and authority. Teachers, in this discursive construction, do not get respect because they are teachers. Male teachers command respect because they are male, and female teachers, who lack respect and authority because they are female, must demand respect through violence.

Female-to-Male Violence

While many studies have been done on corporal punishment, they usually focus on punishment in the home (Hart et al. 2005; Humphreys 2008). Research on gender violence in schools tends to focus on sexual abuse or harassment (Leach and Humphreys 2006). Discussions of gender and corporal punishment are often framed in terms of violent masculinity or the victimization of women. Inasmuch, they tend to focus on male-male violence or male-to-female violence. Discussing the gendered aspects of corporal

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[87] Such is the case with the violence done by mothers-in-law to their daughters-in-law in India.

punishment, for example, Leach and Humphreys state, "corporal punishment of female students has been rationalised by some girls as socialising them to become obedient mothers and wives, while the harsh beating of male students by male teachers is interpreted as the dominant male asserting authority over the younger male, and a toughening up process as a rite of passage into male adulthood. In contrast, female teachers are said to prefer chastisement to caning" (2007:111). However, it is important to consider other forms of gender relationships in coporal punishment as well.

Of the studies done on corporal punishment in schools, none that I have read deal specifically with female-to-male violence. Scholars such as Humphreys (2008) and Morrell (2001a) have commented that male students are resistant to corporal punishment from female teachers. In the government schools I visited, however, female teachers were the only ones who hit students, and they only hit male students. These beatings were justified in the name of the need to "control" boys, and by stating that male students would not respect female teachers except through violence. After some asking around, I have concluded that female teachers hitting male students is not, in fact, as uncommon as it would seem from the scholarly literature, at least in India. At the same time, the academic literature on corporal punishment in schools is sparse, and therefore does not account for all the elements of this phenomenon.

Violence, Masculinity, and Schooling

More attention needs to be paid to violence in schools. As Nita Kumar says, "the notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' in the Indian context are particularly relevant to childhood socialization and need to be further investigated" (2007:113). Matthew Gutmann says, "through investigation of the vagaries of gender identities amid the realities of gender oppression, we may come to better understand the persistence of gender variations and instability among enduring patterns of inequality" (1996:4). Corporal punishment in Indian schools is an issue investigated more by news media, and its gendered (nonsexual) aspects are systematically investigated very rarely, if at all.

Schools play a role in the creation and perpetuation of gender norms (Bénéï 2005; Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997; Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli 2003; Morrell 2001a). Kumar notes that "a gendered history of education reveals that there are multiple discourses: women were formed by men through a discourse of reform and the 'private', and *men were formed by women through a discourse of motherhood and family*" (2007:139, italics in original). Studying gender behavior in schools reveals other ways in which masculinities and femininities shape each other.

Masculinities in schools are an underresearched topic (Morrell 2001a). Further, we have to juxtapose other forms of hierarchy, such as age, onto gender hierarchies. In scholarship on Europe and America, there has been some equation of sexual and political domination, such that marginal sexualities are the most widely studied form of marginal masculinities (Kandiyoti 1994). I wish to draw attention, through my work here, to the fact that heteronormative young men can also be extremely socially marginalized, and suffer physical and structural violence as a result. These young men are marginalized because they are *poor*, and it is their poverty and their youth which allows them to be subject to violence.

Schools which follow the pattern of violence I describe here are complicit in the violent shaping of masculinities. This raises an important question that goes beyond human rights issues of violence in childhood and adolescence (although these are also significant)—how are young men socialized into normative masculinities, and what are "the implications of these dynamics for the reproduction of patriarchal power?" (Jeffrey et al. 2008:32). We must also remember, as Morrell (2001a) observes, that while aggressive and violent masculinities do emerge from schools with harsh punishment systems, corporal punishment is not necessarily always associated with the production of violent masculinities. For example, my friends who described undergoing corporal punishment in school to me are all well-adjusted, non-violent men. In other words, it is

the context of corporal punishment that is important, and investigating these contexts and the kinds of gender performances associated with them is necessary.

Figure 9 Government English boys performing masculinity for the anthropologist

Morrell says, "school masculinities are implicated in school violence as is corporal punishment because they both in different ways make acceptable certain forms of violence" (2001a:154). What consequences does it have for gender relations in India to naturalize violence between men and women, and to teach young men that violence is an acceptable method for demanding respect and "controlling" others? Moreover, what consequences does it have for gender relations between men and women *and* men and men to teach young men and women that masculinity is some sort of wild thing that must be controlled, and that such control is only possible through violence?

<u>Theorizing Masculinity</u>

Masculinity in South Asian Studies

Apart from the work of scholars such as Joseph Alter (2002), Radhika Chopra (2004), Caroline and Fillipo Osella (2004), Craig Jeffrey and Patricia and Roger Jeffery (2008), and a handful of others, masculinity is a rather under-researched field in South Asian studies. As Jeffrey et al note, " discussion of masculinity in the global south has lagged behind analysis of women's position…men are present in the South Asian ethnography, but they are generally not the explicit object of study and the gendered nature of their behavior is rarely problematized. Moreover, where anthropologists have considered issues of masculinity in the South Asian literature, they have tended to present formal models of masculine behavior which were not analyzed as products of gender power" (2008:19). This is not to say that we don't learn about masculinity from these studies. However, feminist studies should be more invested in studying masculinity, because "in some feminist theory, the relationship between power, ideology, and masculinity is depicted as one of uniformity" (Gutmann 1996:20). Our understandings of masculinities and gender relationships need to be much more nuanced.

Thus, "an adequate explanation of the reproduction of patriarchal relations requires much closer attention to the institutions which are critically responsible for the production of masculine identities" (Kandiyoti 1994:199). For example, as I show in this chapter, some kinds of masculinities might be subject to tremendous oppression by some kinds of femininities, which, in turn, is behavior that rises from the oppression of women. This is worth investigating, as are the questions of why this is so, how it is possible in a patriarchal system, and what impact it has on normative gender roles and relationships.

Types of Masculinities

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note that not all masculinities are equal. They distinguish hegemonic masculinities from subordinate ones. Hegemonic masculinities, they say, are normative masculinities. All other masculinities are subordinated to them, as

are femininities. They embody "the currently most honored way of being a man" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832). Therefore, if we are to study functional (as opposed to idealized) patriarchy, we have to examine how it reproduces itself within, and not just between genders (Kandiyoti 1994). Masculinities and femininities are performed and enacted through bodies and discourses.

Masculinities in the Government Schools

I observed at least two broad kinds of accepted masculinities at play in my schools. The first was what I call *unchallenged masculinity*—that of the male teachers and administrators. This masculinity was never called into question. Male teachers were endowed with authority simply by virtue of being established males. As the female teachers in the government schools told me, "male teachers don't need to hit boys." This is similar to the kind of masculinity that is involved in men who "protect" women by accompanying them outside after dark. In these cases, the mere presence of an established male is presumed to be enough to deter other, predatory men from endangering the woman.[88] The school boys, on the other hand, endured a kind of *malleable masculinity*—one that needed to be forged and beaten into shape. Masculinity, in this way, is inscribed onto boys' bodies through violent behavior.

Student Complicity

Students were often complicit in the punishments. Such complicity ranged from incorporation into the surveillance and punishment programs, such as among "prefects," to complete absorption of the ideology of violence. Morrell comments that "physical

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[88] As an interesting corollary, established masculinities can be incorporated into gender struggles, because they are assumed to be powerful and influential. An example is the widely publicized "Bell Bajao!" (Ring the Bell) campaign in India, which calls on men *and boys* to join the fight to stop domestic violence (Breakthrough). The intent is admirable, and they seem to be somewhat successful. However, the assumption behind the campaign, that men, and even boys, can have more power over stopping domestic violence than women (while it might be true to some extent) is difficult to accept.

punishment cannot continue without the willingness of students to receive it, the willingness of teachers to inflict it, and the insistence of parents that it be given" (2001a:155).[89] Students will thus often justify and accept the violence done to them. The boys I spoke to, by and large, agreed with Malini's assessment that boys needed beating. Mayank, a student from Government Hindi, explained to me that boys needed to be hit to be controlled. He elaborated, "ma'am, laḍkon ko control me rakhnā cāhiye. Laḍke to hote ji aise hain. Bacce bhī nā, harāmjāde hain. Lekin unko control karnā easy hai. Thoḍā mār-vār ke kābū me kar sakte hain" [*you have to keep boys under control. That's just the way boys are. Children are bastards. But it's easy to control them. Beat them a little and you can control them*].

Girls, apparently, did not require to be controlled through physical violence. This was explained to me by male students as well as by female teachers. Gaurav, a student in Government English, said, "Laḍkiyon ko māro to unko bahut burā lagega" [*if you hit girls, they feel very bad*]. Malini said that girls only needed to be scolded, not beaten, and this would scare them into submission. Another teacher disagreed, stating that because of increased media influence, girls were now not afraid of scolding, and had become "bolder." They both agreed, though, that girls could not, and should not, be hit, and that physical violence was unnecessary in "controlling" girls.

The notion of control through violence involves, at a very basic level, breaking the child in some way, mentally if not physically. Kenway and Fitzclarence state that "the idea of breaking the child's will by force or connivance in order that he or she can be controlled is no stranger to education, which is structured around the power relationships between adults and children" (1997:128). The canvas for these power relationships, in

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[89] He also notes, though, that parents, teachers, and students are not unanimous in their opinions of corporal punishment (2001b).

schools, is the students' bodies, which are sites for the inscription and expression of power.

<p style="text-align:center">Uniformity, Conformity, and Discipline</p>

One of the primary excuses for corporal punishment was that the student was "out of uniform." Since it is an important justification for violence, in this section I discuss the roles of uniforms in maintaining school hierarchies, and how they are used to justify violence.

On a foggy morning in October 2008, I stood near the field in front of Government Hindi. The entire school was outside for assembly. The students sat facing a small stone stage. Mrs. Gupta, the principal, was directing the assembly. I was standing with a group of male teachers off-stage, behind her, not too far from the school gates. I was idly staring at the barbed wire on the school walls and wondering, as I did each time I was in school, why it looked like a prison (see Figure 2). As the assembly ended, I got my answer. A group of young boys, not older than six or seven, performed a well-choreographed escape. Two rather tiny boys broke away from the line of students re-entering the building and made a mad dash for the gate, their little arms and legs pumping wildly as they ran. The gatekeeper charged toward them, but at the last minute one little boy veered off and around him, escaping through the gate. As the gatekeeper caught the other little boy, he started to yell at him. Taking advantage of his distraction, about four or five more little boys ran through the open gate. The little boy who had been caught waved cheerfully at the receding backs of his partners in crime, wriggled free of the furious gatekeeper, and trotted back inside the building.[90]

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[90] I watched the whole incident, considerably amused. On further reflection, it occurs to me that a large part of my amusement focused on the thought "little boys!" I need to think about this issue more, but does the idea that "boys will be boys" (common in India as many other places) affect how the behavior of male children is viewed? Perhaps there is some cultural expectation that boys will be naughty or "bad" and, if so, does this erase the inappropriate behavior of girls? In other words, it is worth thinking about whether, when girls and boys do the same things, the same

I turned back toward the other students and watched them go back inside school after the assembly. There were lots of students still standing outside. I asked a teacher why they weren't being allowed in. He informed me that they had come late to school, and were going to be punished. I saw a female teacher hitting an older boy repeatedly over the head. He was much taller than she was, and much bigger, but he stood there, head bowed, expressionless, as she hit him harder on the head. His friends retreated to the foyer and watched unhappily. A few minutes later, he was sent home for being out of uniform. In the far corner of the field, I saw other students doing "uṭhak-baiṭhak" (holding their ears, squatting, then standing again repeatedly) as punishment for wearing the wrong uniform.[91] The school apparently had two uniforms, and they were in blue on a white uniform day. Other students were being chastised for wearing the wrong shoes, or for uniforms that were not perfectly clean. I pondered the injustice of asking impoverished young men to keep white uniforms clean. White, if it is to stay white, is a color that can only be worn successfully by the rich.

Uniformity as Discipline

Most of the punishments received by boys in the government schools were for being out of uniform. Thus, uniformity (both in the sense of being in uniform and of being the same) emerges as a central value in schools, one that is directly tied to disciplining of the body. Control over students' bodies is a fundamental aspect of institutionalized schooling. It is "the focal form through which discipline was taught and learnt" (Bénéï 2005:142). While authoritarian adults exert control over students' bodies, students are also expected to control their own bodies. They are taught to sit still, sit in certain positions, or restrict themselves to specific places. They are required to dress their

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behavior in boys will be received well or badly as compared to girls, and what the cultural roots of such perceptions might be.

[91] It literally means "getting up-sitting."

body in ritualized, prescribed ways. Adherence to these rules and rituals is a demonstration of "respect"—for the teacher, for the school, and for the rules. It may also be framed in broader terms, such as respect for the country, or for society. Jeffery (2005) states that children learn about respect through everyday rituals in the classroom, such as paying attention to the teacher and not questioning him or her. They also learn about adult power through punishments, which inculcate "discipline," as do assemblies, lines, and uniforms.

Thus, we may borrow from Foucault in <u>Discipline and Punish</u> (1977) to state that the body is a primary focus of power relations (although he is talking about penal justice in Europe), that "systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain "political economy" of the body: even if they do not make use of violent or bloody punishments, even when they use "lenient" methods involving confinement or correction, it is always the body that is at issue…But the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (1977:25). In a school, these power relations have multiple dimensions—teacher/student, older/younger, female/male. The fact is, though, that students (even in English Convent) are obligated to do what teachers tell them to do. While individual students may actively resist school power structures, teachers have an institutionalized, unshakeable power over their students (especially when those students have no space for redress), and thus over their students' bodies.

Uniformity as Punishment

Institutional rules about posture, space, and uniform train students to conform. Individualism is proscribed and nonconformists are punished. Such punishment, too, is inscribed upon the body. For example, when I attended (Catholic) school, the most frequent transgression was being out of uniform. Various levels of punishment ensued, depending on the number of times a student had transgressed the rules. First offences

were usually let off with a scolding. Repeat offenders could find themselves standing outside the principal's office for hours on end, possibly with their hands in the air, or running laps around the field. Unpolished shoes could result in having to walk around in socks or bare feet all day, even in the cold or rain. I recollect being punished a number of times in high school for not pinning my hair up off my face, once with the same "uṭhak-baiṭhak" punishment meted out the government school boys.

MacDougall (2005) describes the "change-in-break" punishment in Dehradun's residential Doon School. Meted out for minor infractions, it involved changing one's clothes several times a day during breaks. Boys were also punished by having to wear all their uniforms at once, or running laps in those layers of clothing. Thus MacDougall says "school uniforms become not only indicative of social relationships but also a way of controlling, concealing, and exhibiting the human body, reflecting correspondingly complex motives in those who institute them" (2005:134). For Bénéï (2005), uniforms are an important element in the regulation of students' bodies, especially with regard to enforcing timetables. She notes how, in the Hindu military school she studied, students negotiated their everyday activities in different uniforms. Each activity—sports, classes, or meals—had its own uniform. Thus, students developed a sense of "sartorial timing" (Bénéï 2005:144) that was linked to ideas of discipline and order.

As MacDougall's (2005) description of change-in-break shows, clothing was also used in corporal punishment. Thus, uniforms become both the means to maintain order (through arbitrary standards to which conformity was expected) and the way to punish a departure from it (using uniforms in punishments such as change-in-break). I would like to suggest a third way of looking at this—that wearing uniforms can be punishment in itself. They are often highly unsuitable to the climate. In India, they are often (even in richer private schools) made of some blend of cotton and a synthetic fabric. This means that they are excruciatingly uncomfortable in the summer. Girls have it a little easier than boys in this regard—although both sexes are reduced to sweltering in their uniforms,

many schools have girls wearing loose salwar kameezes. Boys, though, are in pants and shirts, and often have to contend with ties. The necessity of staying in uniform means they cannot take the ties off, no matter how hot it is. Very few schools are air-conditioned. Thus, the very act of wearing the uniform can be an act of physical and mental punishment.

Student Resistance to Uniformity

Despite the punishments they are likely to receive, uniformed students all over the world have found ways to modify, alter, or embellish their uniforms. Meadmore and Symes state that "ever since their introduction, pupils have always expressed a degree of ambivalence about the dress and appearance standards demanded by schools. Often the ambivalence has developed into acts of defiance, particularly prevalent when the dress standards of the school are at loggerheads with those in the community, designed to pinpoint the object of their discontent. Dissent and resistance as counter-conducts will necessarily occur when a certain conduct is made mandatory" (1996:217).

I noticed many students stretching the limits of their uniforms. In English Convent, students did not always wear shoes or hair accessories prescribed by the uniform code. The girls in the government schools, though, were always scrupulously in uniform, although they sometimes rolled up their sleeves in Government English. I never saw one of them receive any kind of punishment or scolding for being out of uniform and, indeed, I rarely saw them out of uniform. The boys were quite another matter. Raj, a student from Government English, said,

> Ma'am aisī bāt hai. Jaise isne tie nahīn bāndhī. Thoḍī loose haī. Confidence vālī tie? PT ma'am āegī. 'e bacce idhar āo'. Itne cānṭe mār degī nā". Kehte hain āvārā kī tarah ghūmtā hai yeh.
>
> *It's like this. Like, he hasn't knotted his tie. It's a little loose. You know, the confident tie? The PT teacher will call us, "come here child." She slaps us so much. They say "he is roaming around like a vagabond".*

Raj's statement is more than a complaint about the PT teacher. He makes a reference to "confidence vālī tie," which is essentially a loosely knotted tie. Like other examples of uniform modifications, loosely knotted ties seem to function as a rejection of school authority by relaxing the rigidity of the uniform and asserting personal, or peer-determined style. In my own high school days, we attempted to make our horrendous uniform slightly less unfashionable by hemming up the bottom of the *kameez* to a few inches above the knee and ensuring the uniform was a half-size too small.[92] Needless to say, the school authorities frowned mightily on this. Nevertheless, students continued to modify their uniforms, testing the limits of how much individuality would be allowed. Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli discuss this appropriation and reworking of the uniform by a student most evocatively:

> He is a living, moving, text: his strutting and swaggering, his school backpack adorned with stickers and keyrings, remnants of his other world, his real world…His embodied self is a collection of signifiers: the scuffed and muddy black shoes; the greyness of trousers disrupted by grass stains and mud on the knees testifying to a lunchtime of football on a damp and well-trodden oval; sleeves rolled up to display the biceps and patches of green grass stains and streaks of mud strategically positioned on his arms; the blue and white striped shirt both tucked in and hanging out around his hips; the breast pocket ripped so it lies gaping open…[2003:14].

In Government English, the boys often loosened their ties or rolled up the sleeves. Their hair was often styled in ways that surprised me. One boy, for example, wore a fauxhawk the entire time I was doing my research there. Another clearly spent a lot of time gelling his hair into an Elvis-like curl over his forehead. Shoes were often not uniform either, and clearly, the boys spent time and effort on deconstructing their uniforms at least a little bit.

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[92] The *kameez* is the long shirt that is worn over the loose pant, or the *salwar*. The *salwar-kameez* is a North Indian outfit.

Teacher Responses to Resistance

The principal of Government English was inclined to turn a blind eye to lesser transgressions when it came to the uniform, unlike other teachers in the school. "It's so hot, Lavanya," she said, "and they make these poor boys wear ties. Nothing will happen if they loosen them a bit, or undo their top button. They will be a little cooler. As long as they keep wearing them."

In Government Hindi, though, Mrs. Gupta was a lot less forgiving. I was sitting in her office one day, drinking endless cups of tea and "hanging out," when a teacher brought in a student who was not wearing regulation shoes. Mrs. Gupta started yelling at him, asking why he was not in uniform. He replied that these were the only shoes he had, and he could not afford other shoes. She got even angrier, it seemed, and said that he had been given money to buy shoes, and he could go home and come back when he had done so. When he left, she turned to me and quite calmly told me that it was very likely that his father had "drunk the shoe money." I was bemused. "But why, if you knew that, did you yell at him and send him home?" I asked. She shook her head at me. "He was out of uniform," she replied, "and that cannot be permitted." My research in Government Hindi was marked by numerous little instances of such rigorous adherence to rules in the face of abject poverty among students, and I concluded that a contempt for their poverty was part of the reason.

Parental Views on Punishment

I encountered diverse views on corporal punishment among the parents I spoke to. Some parents felt that children should be disciplined in school through corporal punishment. I spoke to three fathers, whose daughters all studied in Government Hindi, who thought their children needed to be hit more in school. "Bacce mārne se hī sīkhte hain," they said—children only learn through hitting. They complained about the quality of teaching, saying that teachers wouldn't teach, and children were playing outside all

day rather than studying inside. I reproduce here a conversation with them. Parents are indicated with GHP, for Government Hindi Parent, and a number.

> GHP1: Ghūmte rahenge, kyā paḍhenge?
>
> *If they keep wandering around, when will they study?*
>
> GHP2: Phir unko aise bulāte hain, "ae! Andar āo!" Bas. Aisī thoḍī hoegī śāsan.
>
> *Then they call them, "come in!" That's all. How will they control them like this?*
>
> GHP3: Hamāre zamāne me, bāns ke harī chaḍī hotī thī, khūb mārte the.
>
> *In our time, they had canes of green bamboo and hit us a lot.*
>
> GHP2: Baccon ko mārnā cāhiye, dāṇṭnā cāhiye.
>
> *You have to hit children, scold them.*
>
> GHP1: Dekho, thoḍā śāsan to karnā cāhīye. Unko thoḍā sā ḍar paidā ho jāe. Ek din maro, das din hāth dikhāke ḍar jāengī.
>
> *See, you have to dominate them a little. So they are a little afraid. Hit them one day, and the next ten days they will be afraid if you just raise your hand.*

Parents are often participants in the culture of violent punishment. Hunter, et al.'s study in rural Maharashtra reveals that mothers subjected their children to all sorts of punishment, including "threatening the child with ghosts or evil spirits, tying the child's hands and feet, hanging the child by hands or feet, forcing chili pepper into the child's mouth, threatening to burn, threatening to beat, pulling hair, kicking, withholding food, calisthenics, and forced kneeling for a period of time with some added burden, such as in hot sand or holding a brick in each hand: (2000:440).

Studies conducted among "middle-class" professionals in India show that almost fifty-seven percent of parents surveyed participated in what they called "normal" methods of punishment—slapping and spanking. About forty-two percent participated in

"abusive" punishment, such as kicking or biting, and three percent admitted to "extreme" violence, such as using or threatening to use a knife or gun on a child (Hunter et al. 2000; Segal 1995).

Other parents do not approve of physical violence. Subrahmanian comments, in her work on Dalit and Adivasi students in India, that "individually, parents voiced reservations about the frequency and severity with which teachers hit and humiliated children. Most parents would withdraw the child from school, or children would drop out rather than face what they regarded as unnecessarily severe corporal punishment" (2005:74).[93]

After the incident in Lajjo's classroom, I retreated outside to the front yard of the school. The school let out shortly after, and most of the students left. Some of the young ones from Lajjo's class were running around the yard, waiting for the rickshaw that would take them home. I sat on a stone bench and chatted with Reena, a young mother whose daughter was in Lajjo's class. She was busy copying a homework assignment from some other student's book into her daughter's notebook. I asked her what she was doing. "Copying this assignment," she said. "My daughter will get it wrong, and she will get scolded. She is not very good in studies, you see. And if I don't keep track of her work, she won't tell me what she needs to do." I watched in some bemusement as she systematically did all her daughter's homework for her, chatting with me about her family and my project all the while. I asked her what she thought of the school. "I don't like it," she replied. "I don't like the teachers. They don't do their work properly, and they hit the children. Why should I have to do my daughter's homework? They don't do their jobs, but they are quick to raise their hands. Like that Lajjo." At this point, some of

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[93] Although I have been thinking about whether the movement away from corporal punishment (to other forms of punishment) is some kind of attempt at "modernization," I am not sure that this is the case. Although it might seem so from public discourse, especially here in the U.S., the data do not indicate any lessening in corporal punishment, and I am reluctant to draw correlations between class or race and conceptions of "modernity."

the children running around paused to join in the conversation and tell her what happened in Lajjo's classroom earlier. Reena shook her head angrily and went back to writing. "I'm going to let her finish this year," she said, "and then I'm going to move her to another school. I don't care how good this school's reputation is, or about the English-medium. This is not a good school." I asked Reena why she didn't complain to the principal, if she felt so strongly about it. "What good will it do?" she said. "She won't do anything, and all that will happen is the teacher will trouble the child more." I learned, over time, that very few parents complained about corporal punishment for fear that their child would endure further suffering in the classroom.

<u>Student Views on Corporal Punishment</u>

While many students believed that boys needed to be beaten, most of them told me that they would respond to firmness that wasn't violent. They said that they liked teachers who taught well, were fun to talk to, and took an interest in their students, while still being firm with them and maintaining a distance. "Friendly but not friends" is how the students put it. The students of Government English started talking to me about this one day, when one of their number had been hit by a teacher for something fairly trivial. I asked them what they would like to see in a teacher. I specifically did not ask them about corporal punishment initially, although their minds were on it. These were all boys; there were no girls present during this conversation.

LMP: How should teachers behave with stūdents?

GE1: Friendly to honā cāhiye.

They should be friendly.

GE2: Jab zarūrat hotī hai to hī mārnā cāhiye.

They should hit only when it is necessary.

GE3: Agar galtī kare to mārnā cāhiye.

If a student makes a mistake, they should hit.

GE4:   Agar galtī kare.

If he makes a mistake.

LMP: Galtī kyā hotī hai jo mār lāyak ho?

What are the kinds of mistakes that needs hitting?

GE1:   Jab kām nahīn kartā ho.
If he doesn't do his work.

GE2:   Unke viśvās ko toḍnā. Jaise voh hame paḍhāte hain aur ummīd karte hain ki agle din yeh bacce yād karke āte hain…
Betraying their trust. Like, they teach us and hope that we will go over it for the next day.

The students began their conversation by telling me that they would like friendly teachers who would only hit with good reason. This points to two things. First, that the boys felt that they were being unjustly punished and, second, that some punishment is acceptable. This is not unusual. Many studies, and not just in India, have shown that some students feel hitting students with reason is justifiable (Humphreys 2008; Morrell 2001b; Rydstrøm 2006). These students, though, were clear that hitting is permissible only if a student has done something wrong. Their definition of "wrong" was also quite narrow, because they restrict it to not doing schoolwork. However, as the next segment of the conversation reveals, they were also conscious of the potential for chaos if teachers are not strict with their students.

I attempted to elicit from the students their ideas on good teachers by asking them what kind of teachers they would be, if they were teachers. The first response, from GE3, affirmed other students' ideas of the need to "control" students.

GE3:   Teachers ko śuruvāt se hī baccon ko tight rakhnā cāhiye varnā phir voh agar śuruvāt me teacher apnā phir thoḍā control ḍhīlā rakhtā hai baccon pe, to bacce zyādā hī shouting vagairah karne lagte hain aur kuch bhī ultā-sīdhā karne lag jāte haĩ. Aur phir teacher ko zyādā pareśānī hotī hai bādme paḍhāne me. Aur bacce phir kuch zyādā hī harkate karne lag jāte haĩ. To śuruvāt me hī baccon par thoḍā control rakhnā cāhiye.

Teachers should control their students right from the start, otherwise if the teacher does not have tight control over the students from the beginning, then the children will shout more and start to do irregular things. And then the teacher will have more trouble teaching later. And the kids will get up to all sorts of antics. So there should be control over the kids right from the beginning.

Other students reflected on the need for teachers to "love" students. This led to a disagreement between GE3 and the rest of the students. As seen above, GE3 clearly had firm ideas on the need for control and discipline. He was skeptical of the possibility of students obeying a teacher for love. This prompted a heated discussion on the power of love (forgive the cliché) among the boys, which degenerated into heavy melodrama on the one side, and dismissive cynicism on the other. I had to intercede, and the discussion was suspended. Although it may seem like these boys are drawing on film dialogues (which perhaps they are) and that they are engaging in joking behaviors, they were, in fact, very serious.

GE1: Agar madam main teacher hotā to baccon ko bahut pyār se paḍhātā. Unko itne pyār se paḍhātā ki jo main kehtā voh karte.

If I were a teacher I would teach with lots of love. I would teach them with so much love they would do what I said.

GE3: Pyār se kehtā aur voh karte?

You would tell them lovingly and they would do it?

GE4: Kyon nahīn karte?

Why wouldn't they do it?

GE1: Karte!

They would do it!

GE3: Hmmm.

GE2: Pyār se hī to duniyā caltī hai!

The world runs only on love!

GE5: Jo patthar ko piglā saktī hai aur pānī ko patthar kar saktī hai!

Which can melt stone and turn water into stone!

GE2: Pānī me āg lagā saktī hai!

Which can set fire to water!

GE3: Yeh sab kahāvat hai, hotā nahīn hai yeh.

These are all just sayings. Things don't happen that way.

The government school boys' desire for "love" from their teachers was particularly poignant when compared to the easy, joking relationship the girls from English Convent seemed to share with their teachers. The desire for "love" is one that seems to mark the need for greater flexibility in the classroom and in teacher-student relationships. Jonathan Larson (2010) notes that in Slovakia, the teacher-student relationship was seen as emblematic of students' future dispositions as citizen subjects in relation to the state. He says that many people claimed that socialist-era classrooms were marked by "dehumanizing" and "alienating" hierarchical relationships. Teachers were accused of focusing on students' reproduction of content authored by others, rather than encouraging innovation. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, these discourses began to focus more on the role of "love" in the classroom. Larson notes, though, that one of the pragmatic effects of "love" and "democracy" in a school is the fear of (or actual) loss of authority of the teachers, and thus raises an important question—are "love" and hierarchy (or "control") incompatible in a classroom? Moreover, what does "love" mean, practically and symbolically?

Conclusion

In this chapter, I raise some issues which directly affect how people relate to each other within the school as an institution. First, I have tried to suggest some reasons for why and how corporal punishment takes place in schools. It is an instrument for

enforcing a number of hierarchies, the chief ones being those of class, gender, and age. Violence by teachers is an exercise in power and, where students and their families are particularly powerless, teachers exert such violent power even more. Corporal punishment, then, is an important way in which students in private and government schools experience schooling differently.

Second, I demonstrate that students' bodies are an important focus of this violence. Students are trained to behave in certain ways and dress in certain ways. That is, they learn to order their bodies in prescribed ways. Deviating from these norms leads to punishment, and these punishments are often inscribed on students' bodies as well.

Finally, I suggest that one of the roots of corporal punishment is the importance placed on obedience in Indian society, where obedience and adherence to rules ensures maintenance of existing hierarchies, and violence punishes transgression (real, perceived, or potential).

CHAPTER SEVEN: EDUCATION, GENDER, AND HYPERGAMY

I first met Lajjo on a hot July afternoon in New Delhi, India, in the school I call Government English. She wore a yellow salwar-kameez and a wide smile, and quickly went on to become the person I shared lunch with everyday. Lajjo was a bright young woman, twenty-four years old at the time I met her. She had a B.Ed. and an M.A. in English Literature, and was working on her M.Phil. She taught English to elementary school children in Government English. She was unmarried when we met, and her family was trying to arrange a suitable alliance for her.

Women and Hypergamy

This chapter is a discussion of education and gender. Specifically, it is a discussion of education, social mobility, hypergamous ambition, and their relationship to arranged marriage and dowry processes, presented from one woman's perspective, rather than from the perspective of social structure. I use this chapter to discuss how mobility may take different forms depending on social context and an individual's social position. In this case, hypergamy is a form of mobility, and Lajjo attempted to use her education to increase her chances of hypergamous mobility. However, as this chapter also shows, education does not always have the benefits imputed to it. Lajjo's attempts at educational mobility backfired, and she was not able to achieve the level of hypergamous mobility that she had hoped for, because she was *too* educated. This chapter thus highlights the inherent contradictions of women's attempts at using hypergamy as a goal of educational mobility in India, and shows how structural constraints limit how far women can go in their hypergamous desires.

At the same time, Lajjo's education allowed her some measure of involvement in the affinal decision-making processes and, although she could not marry as "high" as she liked, she was certainly able to marry "higher" than she could have were she not so

highly educated. Finally, In the hypergamous culture surrounding arranged marriage, English becomes an added element of hypergamy. In Government English, the boys I spoke to were willing to marry a woman from a Hindi-medium school. However, the girls were not, stating flatly that it would be beneath them to do so. Lajjo's English education and her work as an English teacher conferred status on both her and her family, but immensely complicated her search for a groom.

Defining Hypergamy

M. N. Srinivas (1987) defines hypergamy as a woman's marriage to a man of a superior grade or clan, but within the same *jātī*, or functional caste group. As I show here, hypergamy may reflect women's own social or economic aspirations, and not necessarily the aspirations of male kin with which she must comply. In effect, there are two kinds of hypergamy—socially ordained hypergamy and individually desired hypergamy. The former is an aspect of Indian arranged affinity, where cultural norms state that the groom must always be "better" than the bride—taller, better job, better education, higher income, better family, and so on, and also organize marriage in terms of familial caste and class position, land ownership, and employment. The latter is an aspect of individual aspiration—a woman's wish to marry a man who can match or exceed her educational and professional qualifications, usually as a move toward social mobility. This individually desired hypergamy is, in India, deeply influenced by socially ordained hypergamous cultural norms.

Women's Roles in Hypergamy

However, as Lajjo's story illustrates, individual hypergamous desires can easily outstrip socially ordained parameters, leading to imbalances in the affinal alliances, and either the individual desire, or the social norm, must give way. Examining individual choices can also demonstrate the availability of options within arranged marriages. Meena Khandelwal observes that "arranged marriage has long stood as evidence of South Asian women's lack of autonomy, emotional contentment, and sexual satisfaction"

(2009:585) and has been stereotypically perceived as "loveless, empty, patriarchal, and without choice" (Khandelwal 2009: 585 n. 1). As Khandelwal notes, this is not necessarily true. Even within arranged marriages, women can, and do, exercise choice. Inquiring into individual decisions, therefore, is a critical step in understanding and de-exoticizing arranged marriage and the cultures that follow it, and in understanding the active roles women can take in their own marriages within such systems. Raheja and Gold caution that "if we fail to hear Indian women's self-affirming voices or to appreciate their own sense of what constitutes a good life or to see how they skillfully negotiate their chance for such a life, we perpetuate the mistaken assumption that these women have completely internalized the dominant conventions of female subordination and fragmented identity" (1994:xxxiv). Examining how women negotiate their marriages can give us important insights into social process, social change, and the nature of the social phenomenon being studied.

Lajjo is a highly educated, professional woman with a good job. She has lofty hypergamous ambitions for herself. She separated her own status (self-defined by her education and professional successes) from her family's status (defined by her in terms of their caste status, land ownership, and occupations). She believed that, given her educational and professional achievements, she should have been able to marry a man of commensurate accomplishment and ability, regardless of familial status (but within the same caste group). Her family's status and financial capacity, though, do not permit her to marry as high as she desired. Nevertheless, her aspirations and achievements have allowed her a far better marriage than other women from her village have been able to make.

Gender and Education

The effect of education on women is marked by much contradiction. In India, as in other developing countries, women's literacy and education are considered markers of

women's "development" and "status" (Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994). Page notes that "in Indian government policy discourse, women's empowerment is presented as a national priority…A strong relationship is perceived between elementary education and socio-economic development…and education is valorised as a tool for the elimination of inequalities based on gender, caste, or ethnicity" (2005:179). At the same time, schools can reinforce gender inequalities. Jeffrey et al comment, about schooling in western Uttar Pradesh, that "parents characteristically send their daughters to school to groom them for their future roles as wives and mothers and instill restrictive notions of femininity" (2008:7). Girls' behavior in co-educational schools tends to be muted. The girls from English Convent believed this, and I found it to be true. In Government Hindi, the math teacher (a man) encouraged his students to speak up. "Sher bano," he said, "be lions." Pointing to me, he added, "inkī tarah" [*like her*]. But when the girls did try to speak up, the boys shot them down. "Why do you want to know what they think?" they asked me, "all they are going to do is leave school and get married." Given the way the boys invalidated everything they said, I wasn't surprised at the girls' silence in the classrooms.

Too Much of a Good Thing?

Women with more education, at least a secondary education, are less likely to marry early than undereducated women (Singh and Samara 1996). While this may be true, it begs the question of whether the education of women is necessarily a good thing for them, in terms of their affinal relations. I realize that this is a somewhat controversial statement, but in a social milieu that is neither prepared for the changes in status that come from women's education, nor prepared to accept them as positive, too much education for women can actually become a social liability (Liddle and Joshi 1986). Lajjo had high ambitions, both professionally as well as for her marriage, but found that her pursuit of the former jeopardized the latter. Poggendorf-Kakar remarks that, in India, the "modern woman, who wants to achieve social respect and success, has to understand how to diplomatically balance individual desires and conventional expectations" (2001:134).

Thus, even as she broke away from accepted gender norms in terms of level of education and age at marriage, Lajjo did not even think about breaking with more rigidly enforced social norms such as caste endogamy. Had she done so, she might actually have been able to marry the kind of person she wanted to marry.

Lajjo has been unable to completely fulfill her hypergamous ambitions because of the nature of ritualized exchange in arranged marriages. While her education and wage work took her above the level of other women in her village, her caste and class status ensured that her family could not meet the dowry demands for the kind of husband to which she aspired—a complex relationship of caste and class affected her choices, as will be explained in this chapter. Lajjo was disappointed in the matrimonial choices available to her, and described the most attractive choice among them as a "compromise." Yet, the fact that she had a choice at all was a result of her higher status, which was a result of her educational and professional successes. The point I am making here is that the relationship of education level to marital possibilities for women in India is extremely complicated. We cannot understand it in terms of statements like "better educated women have difficulty finding husbands" or "better educated women get better husbands," because both statements can be true. The education of women can be both good for them and bad for them. Therefore, if we are to draw a relationship between hypergamous mobility and educational mobility for women in India, it must be delicately and sensitively drawn, paying attention to the finer nuances of mobility possibilities and structural realities for women.

A Brief Note on Gender and the Individual in Kinship Studies

Henrietta Moore (1988) comments that anthropological studies of kinship and marriage have, historically, centered on either their domestic aspects, or their political and legal aspects. By focusing on the ways in which marriage and kinship relate to the arrangement of, or access to, resources, and by organizing around male control of these

resources, older studies have elided the role of women. She says that "the traditional analysis of kinship systems in anthropology largely ignored women, especially as independent social actors or initiators" (Moore 1988:60). As Patricia Uberoi observes, "kinship studies have become pathologically isolated from the real stuff of social life" (1992:35). Studies of kinship and marriage in India, likewise, tended to ignore the role of women (Fruzzetti 1982).

Women in Early Studies of Kinship

Louis Dumont's influential work on marriage relations in South India (1983), for example, concerned itself with categories of alliance, kinship terminology, hierarchy, and ritual, with no mention of the possibilities of negotiation these systems afford to individuals. In this perspective, marriage doesn't really take place between individuals—it takes place between "categories, which regulate the repetition of intermarriage, or…the marriage alliance" (Dumont 1983:viii). Women, in this perspective, are important only insofar as they are the commodities of exchange. Individual agency, either of women or of men, is irrelevant. Robin Fox (1967) analyzed kinship from the perspective of groups, and stated that kinship systems "divide people into categories of kin and then define marriageability in terms of these categories. They define descent…and legislate alliance" (Fox 1967:2). Fox's discussions of exchange, alliance, and descent also took place at a systemic level rather than an individual one and the "exchange" idea has met with heavy criticism from feminists.

The most famous critique of kinship-as-exchange came from Gayle Rubin (1975), in her discussion of Lévi-Strauss' work on kinship. She suggested that, since Lévi-Strauss' work centered on the idea that women are exchanged between men, the idea of sex oppression was implicit in his theory—but he didn't see it. In his conceptual scheme, women are gifts, and marriage is a form of gift exchange. However, if it is women who are being exchanged, then relationships are forged between the men who exchange them, and women gain nothing by the link. They are, in effect, commodities rather than partners

in the relationship (Rubin 1975). This concept of exchange of women is insufficient if it is used as the main tool of kinship analysis, and is an "obfuscation if it is seen as a cultural necessity" (Rubin 1975:177), because many other relationships are forged in kinship, apart from the "exchange" of women.

David Schneider (1968), in his study of U.S. kinship, described the kinship system as a system of symbols and meanings, focusing on the creation of cultural meaning rather than on comparing kinship groups or examining kinship terminologies (Carsten 2004). He suggested that older anthropological kinship studies had a historical Euro-American bias that could not be applied cross-culturally (Carsten 2004; Yanagisako and Collier 1987). He argued, also, that kinship has historically been defined in terms of biological relations (Schneider 1984). Inasmuch, since gender ideology infiltrates ideas of sexual and biological relations, Schneider's insight is key to locating gender ideology in kinship studies (Yanagisako and Collier 1987). However, he, too, stated that his work should not be understood to be about what Americans actually say, think, or do (Schneider 1968), drawing attention to systems rather than individuals.

To overlook individual actors and their actions, while understandable in terms of what these scholars were trying to achieve (a comprehensive analysis of kinship systems), was a serious lacuna in earlier kinship analysis. This is especially true, given that marriage and kin relationships are frequently manipulated to allow individuals access to resources otherwise denied to them (Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994). Women, particularly, having less access to such resources than men in patriarchal systems, often find that they have to use kin networks or marriage choices to modify their status options (Bernal 1994).

Feminist Kinship Studies

Feminist scholarship provided fresh perspectives on kinship and marriage, highlighting the role of the household in production, reproduction, and primary socialization, shedding new light on marriage alliances, marriage payments, the status of

women in affinal relationships, and studying kinship and affinity from women's perspectives (McKinnon 2001; Uberoi 1992). Kinship has a strongly material aspect, because "the exchange of goods and services, production and distribution, hostility and solidarity, ritual and ceremony, all take place within the organizational structure of kinship" (Rubin 1975:170). Examining marriage and affinal relationships can give us insight into the socioeconomic aspects of kinship, because marriage and property are "the social relations which create and sustain kinship and household forms" (Moore 1988:64) and, by extension, wider society.

Janet Carsten notes that "the study of gender played a crucial role in the gradual shift of attention in anthropology from the functioning of social institutions to the symbolic construction of persons and relations" (2004:59). However, the symbolic aspect of gender ideology has a material reality, and these collide in the body of the social individual. To understand the relationship between the symbolic or cultural and the socioeconomic, we must understand the experiences of the social actor, and the strategies they employ to negotiate everyday life (Moore 1988). As Margaret Trawick says in her beautifully peopled Notes on Love in a Tamil Family (1992),

> Kinship organization…was much more than 'social structure', a
> stable architectural framework through which generations passed.
> It was also a form of poetics, a set of biomechanical equations, a
> web of deep-seated longings. It could hardly be called a 'structure'
> at all, for protean variability in form was intrinsic to it, and it was
> composed of those things that structural anthropologists are always
> trying to get away from—*unique and unpredictable human
> personalities* [Trawick 1992:7, emphasis added].

Mukhopadhyay and Seymour (1994) suggest that analyses of women's education in India need to take into account the relationships between kinship and education, which, until recently, have been of little interest to anthropologists. However, studying these relationships are important, given that, in India, educational decisions are made by the entire family, educational expectations are gendered in favor of boys, and ideas of honor and gendered role expectations make the education of girls a difficult social problem for

families. In consequence, as this chapter will show, the education of women above socially "appropriate" levels, while an important step in the overall development of women, may have serious consequences on kinship and affinal relations and, hence, on women themselves.

<div align="center">Women, Education, and Marriage</div>

The relationship between gender and education is complicated, yet little anthropological attention has been paid, until recently, to connections between women's education and family, marriage, kinship, or sexuality (Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994). While it may seem self-evident that educating women improves their status in society, this may not be true. Women may not see education as something that gives them greater freedom, nor may they actually desire greater autonomy (Jeffery and Jeffery 1994). Thapan (2005) states that many of the urban, slum-dwelling Delhi women she spoke to had contradictory views on education. On the one hand, they felt that they were disempowered because they were uneducated, since it restricted the kinds of jobs they could do. On the other hand, they did not see the need for formal education, since they believed they would not need it in their primary roles as wives and mothers. Education may also may contribute to *loss* of women's autonomy. Jeffery and Jeffery (1994) point out that, in parts of rural North India, educated girls need larger dowries, and education can become a way to domesticate women into "new forms of patriarchy" (1994:157). Studying these connections is vital to understanding how women experience (or don't experience) benefits from education.

During the course of our interview, Lajjo told me about her desire to better her social position through education and about the struggles she faced as she clashed with gendered role expectations in her village and in her caste group. In the end, she managed to complete her education, find a good job, and even pave the way for girls in her village to be educated. However, Lajjo's education is a stumbling block in her marriage

endeavors, as she finds she now has an unusually elevated status for women of her social position. Though she intended to use her high level of education as leverage for hypergamy and social mobility, she found that things didn't work out quite as she expected.

Patriarchal systems "generate social pressures for conformity" (Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994:7). In India, women are often educated toward hypergamous mobility. That is, parents often educate girls with the primary purpose of assuring them better marriages (Chopra 2005; Jeffery et al 2005; Page 2005; Subrahmanian 2005). Thus, many girls often drop out of school early to get married or stay home and work (Page 2005; Subrahmanian 2005). By moving outside the realm of accepted behavior and identity for women, Lajjo changed the ways in which she experiences both consanguineal and affinal kinship. Her mobility attempts through education have alienated her from the former, and ensured difficulties with the latter. She no longer associated, or wished to associate, herself with her extended kin in the village, and viewed them, and village life, with some contempt. She saw herself as socially and economically superior to people in her village, and desired to cement this new high status with a socially advantageous (and upwardly mobile) marriage. While hypergamy seemed like the obvious channel for her newly developed status, social constraints of family, class, and caste intersected in the form of dowry, and prevented her ambitions from being realized.

At the time I interviewed her, Lajjo had been teaching at Government English for one year. She was a from a small village I call Hukumgaon, in the state of Haryana, which shares a border with Delhi. Lajjo came from a conservative village and caste group, with strict ideas on how much to educate women. That she has achieved as much as she has is quite remarkable. Her father, who was a college lecturer, was a major source of support in her struggle to complete her education. As Steve Derné (1994) shows, many fathers in India tend to be more concerned with arranging their daughters' marriages than with assuring that they have access to good jobs. They recognize that higher education

may get in the way of caste and class-appropriate marriages, and such paternal support of educational aspiration is somewhat rare, especially among conservative, rural groups. In these groups, women tend to marry earlier than their urban counterparts (Singh and Samara 1996). Paternal support, by contrast, can be a critical factor in women's ability to pursue higher education, as described by Nagar (2000) and demonstrated by Lajjo's story.

Gender and Marriage in Rural North India

In north India, women are often secluded and have less autonomy than women from south India (Jeejeebhoy 1998). In the state of Haryana, anti-women attitudes are very common (Mehrotra 2006). Bhupendra Yadav states that Haryana is "a very, very patriarchal society" (2000:4383), with a number of ideological and physical restrictions on women. Women also suffer more social inequalities than men in Haryana. Yadav points out that there is a significant gap in the sex ratio in Haryana, largely due to female foeticide and that there is a gap of almost twenty-three percent in literacy rates between Haryanvi men and women (Yadav 2001). He notes that, since 1990, more women than men are enrolling in institutes of higher education (Yadav 2000). However, he cautions that this does not necessarily mean empowerment for women, as many of these institutes in Haryana are organized along caste lines, and students, upon graduation, may be highly casteist, even if they weren't so earlier (Yadav 2000). Therefore, for example, a Dalit woman, even if she is highly educated, may still suffer caste atrocities. Moreover, education does not correlate with employment for Haryanvi women, since less than twenty percent of Haryanvi women work outside the house, as compared to more than eighty-five percent of men (Yadav 2001). Lajjo, in fact, is an admirable exception.

Freedom of Choice

U. Kalpagam (2008) discusses the freedoms available to women in marriage and marriage choices.[94] She notes that rural women aspire to changes in their personal life choices, such as the freedom to work outside the home, wear clothes they like, and marry who they want. At the same time, she notes that marriages are still arranged by parents (something daughters felt was appropriate) and are endogamous to the caste group. Marriage outside the caste group, as discussed in Chapter Six, can result in extreme violence upon the couple in question. Kalpagam comments that "forbidden love attracts wrath and vengeance because it tries to break barriers that maintain the separation and hierarchies of caste. Inter-caste marriages more than any other blur the boundaries of caste and shake its foundations, for the reproduction of the caste system requires the maintenance of these boundaries" (2008:54). Caste boundaries are firmly maintained through caste endogamy and caste exogamy often has violent consequences. Thus, Kalpagam says that freedom is only "up to a certain limit" and, as she says, "if by empowerment we understand autonomy, the ability to assert and exercise choice, the ability to understand social-structural constraints and yet not feel compelled to be constrained by them but to think of ways of exercising freedom and living life freely, then it is clear that for these women who understand the issues, the domain of freedom needs to be enlarged both socially and psychologically" (2008:61). In situations where caste is rigidly practiced, young women like Lajjo may not even think about marrying outside caste.

The Yadavs

Caste played a large part in Lajjo's life, and in her quest for a husband. She belonged to the Yadav caste and was from a landowning family. M.S.A. Rao (1964) notes that the Yadav caste group includes several different sub-groups with historically

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[94] Her research was based in Allahabad district in Uttar Pradesh.

different occupations and positions in the caste hierarchy, allied by belief in their common descent from the mythical Yadu dynasty (to which Krishna was said to belong), and by their traditional occupation as cowherds or milk sellers. Yadavs may also be landowners or cultivators. The Yadavs are classified by the government of India as OBCs, or Other Backward Classes (Rao 1964). Today, the Yadavs are a highly significant political group. The category of OBC is supposed to include historically socially or educationally deprived classes, which, therefore, lack equal access to socioeconomic opportunities. Entry into this category is part of a highly politicized process, and doesn't always reflect the actual socioeconomic position of the group in question. The Yadavs, for example, have often been the politically dominant castes of their region, and today, they are a highly significant political group. This is not to say, though, that all Yadavs have been rich and powerful. Even so, many Yadavs from the region Lajjo belongs to are landowners, and are locally dominant castes. Like many other groups in North India, the Yadavs of Haryana place many restrictions on their women, not the least of which are related to education and age at marriage. These restrictions tend to be stricter in the villages. In Lajjo's village, girls were educated until the eighth or tenth grade, and then they had to get married.

Women in Lajjo's Village

Changes in the Village

Lajjo's village had seen many changes over the last ten years, which worked to ease people's workdays, especially women's, and provided leisure time, which could be filled by education. A significant change that gave women more time away from work was the availability of piped water. Earlier, women used to have to walk a few kilometers every day to get water for the home. Now, all houses either had water connections, or access to irrigation facilities in their farms. There was also better communication in the village. When Lajjo lived there, there were no newspapers, very few televisions, and

fewer phones. Now, she said that everyone had a television, mobiles were common, everybody had cable, and newspapers were widely read.

Lajjo said that life in the village used to be very hard, but now it was easier, and girls didn't have as much work to do. When Lajjo attended school in Hukumgaon, she had an early morning routine. She would wake up, walk a few kilometers to fetch water, herd the animals, chase the birds off the crops, clean the house, and then go to school. Now that there was more money in the village, the farmers hired people to do these things. Since they spent less time working in the fields and houses, children could focus more on education. More money and better communication also improved the quality of education in Hukumgaon. Where there used to be only one government school, there were now three or four private schools as well. There was more awareness of the value of education.

Women's Education

However, part of Lajjo's marital difficulties stemmed from being "overeducated" for her caste group and gender. It is generally understood in most of India that a woman should not be more educated than her husband, and that she should marry within her caste (Derné 1994; Mukhopadhyay 1994; Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994; Srinivas 1996).[95] The hypergamous nature of North Indian marriages also meant that Lajjo had to marry someone who, like her, was from a landed family (as, indeed, she wanted to). Lajjo's problems, therefore, arose from being an educated Yadav woman from a landed family.

> Gharvāle dukhī ho rahe hain…ek voh hai nā, caste system bhī hai.
> Jaise main Yadav hūn. To hamāre hain nā, laḍke, to kam paḍhte
> hain hamāre caste mein. Jinke jaise jamīn vagairāh property hai nā,

---

[95] It should be mentioned that marriages in the U.S. also follow principles of endogamy and hypergamy. Khandelwal (2009) notes that marriages in India are arranged by families around sociological factors such as education, family status and so on, while marriages in the U.S. are organized around individual factors such as attraction or common interests. However, she states that in both countries, compatibility is essential to the marriage, and class and education are key elements of compatibility.

to voh paḍhte kam hain. Aur jinkī hotī hai, nahīn hotī, voh paḍhte hain. Ab aisa dekh rahe hain, property bhī ho aur baccā paḍhā acchā bhī ho. Aisī kam miltī hain. Phir mil bhī jāte hain to jaise unknown hote hain, to unknown ke sāth bahut muśkil ho jātā hai.

My family is unhappy. The other problem is the caste system. I am a Yadav. Men of our caste don't study very much. Those that have property don't study much. Those that don't, study. Now we are looking for someone who has property and is well-educated. These are few and far between.

As is common in India, the more educated a woman is, the smaller her circle of potential husbands becomes (Srinivas 1996). Lajjo's family struggled to find a man who had land as well as an education. Those that they located had no common familial or village connections through which her security, and their worthiness, could be assured. "Unknowns," she called them, stating that "unknown ke sāth bahut muśkil ho jātā hai" [*things become very difficult with an unknown*]. Marriage is usually conducted between families or villages with already established affinal connections, and rarely with completely unknown families (Fruzzetti 1982; Karve 1992).

Out-migration for Education

Lajjo was the first girl from her village to finish high school. In fact, when she attended high school, she was the only girl from her village to do so. Since her village had only one school, and that ran only until the eighth grade, she had to move to the nearby small town of Ramnagar to finish her schooling. Her fellow villagers were deeply disapproving of her actions. There was much talk about how a young single girl was leaving the village, going to town, attending college, and staying in a hostel, all of which were scandalous things and much disapproved of. She said,

Dekho, hamāre gāon me jahān kī main hūn, vahān English kā to nām hī nahīn hai. Jaise śurū me hamāra gāon jaise ek type se backward type ka hi thā. To jaise śurū me main first year plus-one me āyī thī na, hamāre jaise college hai, to main single laḍkī thī jo…Thodā bahut virodh bhi huā, matlab virodh aise āge se to koi nahīn bolta, picche se bolte hain log ki koī Ramnagar paḍhne jāti hai akele laḍkī. Aisa thā. Phir plus-two me huī phir aur bacce āne lage, do-tīn sāl huī logon ne dekhā ki calo bhai, acchā kām hai paḍh rahe hain. Phir aur āṇe lag gaye bas merā ab to voh paḍh

> gayā bas thoḍī sī matlab trend-sa paḍh gayā hai ki laḍki ko bhi
> paḍhānā hai. Mereko bahut khuśī bhī huī ki calo meri vajah se huā.
>
> *See, in my village, there was no sign of English. Earlier, my village
> was backward. When I began plus-one, I was the only girl
> who…there was some opposition, but not to my face.[96] People
> would say, behind my back, that a girl is going to Ramnagar alone,
> to study. That was how it was. Then I came to plus-two, and
> children started coming (to school). Then after two-three years
> people started saying okay, it's a good thing they're studying. I
> started a trend, that girls are also educated. I am very happy that
> this happened because of me.*

Srinivas (1996) comments that the migration to urban areas is an essential precondition of rural women changing their status. Small villages are unreceptive to women's desires to challenge conventional gender roles. These transitions are most easily made in big cities where the women are not constrained by living within extended kin networks. However, the rural-urban divide is more of a continuum, and the role of small towns in urbanism cannot be ignored. Although Lajjo did have to leave her village, Ramnagar was a very small town, not a big city, and Lajjo managed to finish her schooling. When she did so, and the villagers saw that she was doing well, more parents were persuaded to allow their daughters to finish high school. She said that these days, most girls got the chance to finish school, and parents were more willing to educate their daughters.

Leading by Example

Lajjo also said that had she failed, not finished school, or been unable to get a good job, her failure would have been held up as an example to other girls who wanted to finish school and do something other than get married. She said that the people in her village only thought of education as a path to a job, not as something to be enjoyed for its own sake:

> Dekho, jab hamko kuch mil jātā hai, success jab mil jātī hai, nā,
> koī nahīn pūchta. Cahe kaise bhī milī ho. Jab fail hote hain, nā, tab

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[96] Plus-one and plus-two refer to the eleventh and twelfth grades respectively.

sab unglī uṭhāte hain. Mere ko job nahīn miltī nā, tab to kehte yār itne paḍhe hai, kyā fāydā paḍhane ka. Un logon ke līye matlab yeh ki sirf paḍhne kā matlab job gain karnā hī hai unke liye bas yahī hai, yeh nahīn hai ki jo knowledge milī hai, voh…uskā kyā hai.

See, when we get something, when we succeed, no one says anything. No matter how we get it. When we fail, everyone blames you. If I hadn't got a job, then they would have said, she studied so much, what's the point of educating her. They think education is only for a job. They don't appreciate the knowledge you get from education.

Lajjo blazed a trail for girls in her village, and succeeded in achieving her educational and professional goals. She felt that she had been instrumental in bringing about this change for girls in her village, and was proud of her contribution. The change was perceptible in the number of schools in the village. There were more schools now than when Lajjo was a teenager, and they ran until high school.

<u>Gender and Schooling</u>

As Figures 10 and 11 show, even outside the classroom, boys and girls practice schooling differently. These photographs were taken in the "games" period, and I noticed that all the boys occupied most of the field and began to play a raucous game of cricket. The girls stood in groups and chatted, or sat with me and talked. One girl half-heartedly threw a ball around, but, when no one else joined her, abandoned the effort. The entire experience of schooling is gendered. There were more boys than girls in the "science" sections of Government English. There were more boys than girls in Government Hindi, period. More girls than boys did household chores, according to survey data. Not only are the schooling experiences of boys and girls different, the expectations from their schooling are also different.

Figure 10 Boys playing cricket in Government English

Figure 11 Girl at play in Government English

In much of India, sons, not daughters, are expected to take on the duty of looking after the family and parents once they are adults (Mukhopadhyay 1994) although this idea is slowly changing. Jeffrey et al. (2008) note that when they asked Jat parents in rural north India why they educated their sons, they said it was so they could get salaried employment. This, in turn, was linked to parental security in their old age and their family's social status. Thus, educational priority continues to be given to sons (Liddle and Joshi 1986), particularly in rural areas, and daughters are educated for marriage, if at all (Liddle and Joshi 1986; Mukhopadhyay 1994; Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994). Especially in rural India, daughters are not usually educated for wage work (Jeffreyet al 2008).

Lajjo's story exemplifies this gendered division. A girl's path to education was not easy in the village, and very different from a boy's. There was much gender discrimination in access to education. Education was not considered a wise investment for girls. Girls had much more to lose, therefore, and were pressured to perform better. Boys would continue to be educated even if they failed, or do not do well in school. Girls could not afford to fail. If they did, they were taken out of school immediately. Lajjo used her family as an example, explaining to me how difficult the situation was for girls in her village. Lajjo's father had seven brothers, and she had twelve female cousins. All but two of them were married. Most were younger than she. Only two of them were still in school.

Education and Alienation

Lajjo felt some alienation from her village and the villagers' expectations from her. Such alienation among working women has been previously noted by scholars. Dinan (Moore 1988) notes that women in white-collar jobs in Ghana often limit their relationships with kin to avoid kinship obligations. Lajjo did not go home very often and, when she did, it was never for more than two or three days. Her education and work took her away from village life, and she felt that she no longer belonged to the village and its

ethos. She said, "main itna jāte hī nahīn. Ab śām ko jātī hūn kabhī jātī hūn ek-do din kī

chuṭṭī hotī hai tab jātī hūn. Yā ek din mil jāti hai." [*I don't go there very much.*

Sometimes I go in the evening, when I have one or two days off, or one day off]. As

mentioned above, she was contemptuous of the villagers for not appreciating education,

referring to them as "backward." She was also contemptuous of farming, asking

dismissively, "kyā rakhā hai un kheton mein? Kuc bhī to nahīn" [*what is there in those*

fields? Nothing at all].

<div align="center">Dowry, Hypergamy, and Education</div>

Every Indian of marriageable age has acquired and internalized some social

"truths" about the process of marriage, and the concomitant ritual and material

exchanges:

> Marriage partners are being urgently sought for them by their
> friends and relations; that a mature girl's reputation and virginity
> are subjects of constant scrutiny and public comment; that their
> chances in the marriage "market" have already been decided by
> their academic choices; that a male student's success in the
> competitive exams will entitle him to a dowry of several hundreds
> of thousands of rupees; that in any case the final clinching of a
> marriage deal will involve material trade-offs of considerable
> dimensions; that wife-givers in these arrangements will be
> expected to pay ritual respect and substantial periodic prestations
> to their wife-takers; and that for women it will often mean a
> traumatic rupture of primary kin relations and a difficult process of
> adjustment to subordinate status in a family of strangers [Uberoi
> 1992:2].

Hindu marriage is a highly regulated process of material and non-material

exchange that must take into account caste, kinshp, and *kanyādān*, or the ritual giving of

the daughter to the groom's family by her father (Fruzzetti 1982; Uberoi 1992), in which

the bride is herself a gift (Fruzetti 1982; Uberoi 2008). Caste is of particular importance,

since caste endogamy, along with hierarchy, is "one of the essential pillars of caste

society" (Uberoi 1992:230). Caste is implicated in all aspects of Indian social life, and in

all forms of social stratification, be they economic, occupational, or educational (Béteille

1992). Through caste endogamy, marriage maintains caste groups and caste status. Dowry cannot be fully understood, therefore, without reference to caste, and both dowry and caste are integral to hypergamous processes in India (Srinivas 1984).

The Kanyādān

Trautmann (1992) notes that *kanyādān* implies the gift of the daughter to the groom's family, maintaining the presumed asymmetry between the bride's family and the groom's family. After the *kanyādān,* prestation takes on a unidirectional flow, from the bride's family to the groom's (Srinivas 1984; Trautmann 1992). If the bride's family were to accept gifts, the value of their "gift" (the bride) declines, as the gift must be without return—that is, it cannot be an exchange, but must be a pure gift (Pocock 1992; Sharma 1992; Trautmann 1992). Implicit in the notion of *kanyādān* itself, therefore, even in isogamous marriages, or marriages between status equals (Uberoi 1992), is the idea of hypergamy (Trautmann 1992; Uberoi 1992). Dumont suggests that this "hypergamic model…separates in terms of status the wife-givers from the wife-takers" (1992:105). Not just the family, but the village that gives the bride becomes of an inferior status than the family and village that takes the bride (Karve 1992; Srinivas 1984). This inferiority is expressed in many ways, not the least of which is dowry. Dowry, given by the wife-givers to the wife-takers, can include cash, immovable and moveable property, personal gifts, durable and other consumer goods, and jewelry (Dube 1997; Sharma 1992; Uberoi 1992). This includes all "cash and goods intended for the groom and his family, including the gifts that cement the engagement, the cost of the wedding reception, as well as gifts that continue to be sent back to the groom's kin every time the bride visits her natal home" (Uberoi 2008:248).

Defining Dowry

Kathleen Gough (1992) distinguished between what she called bridegroom-wealth, or cash given to the groom at the time of the wedding, and dowry, or the jewelry, clothing, and vessels given to the bride by her family at her wedding. However,

acknowledging popular usage, I classify as dowry any payments in cash, goods, or kind, made to the groom's family, and personal items, including jewelry, given to the bride, and solely hers by law, as *strīdhan*, or women's wealth (Caplan 1992; Uberoi 1992). The practice of dowry is banned by law in India. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 makes illegal the giving or taking of "any property or valuable security given either directly or indirectly at or before or after marriage as consideration for the marriage," punishable by imprisonment, or a fine, or both (Caplan 1992:361). However, it continues to survive and, indeed, prosper—largely because people use the language of voluntary "gifts" rather than dowry to discuss this material exchange. This switch in language use disguises the criminal nature of the material exchange, while maintaining the socially sanctioned imperative of dowry. While dowry may include *strīdhan*, a bride often has no control over any of the property or cash that comes with her to the groom's family (Sharma 1992; Uberoi 1992).

Women in India tend to be married into families with status equal to, or greater than, their own (Sharma 1992). The status of a family may be determined by their caste, kin group, occupation, financial situation, place of residence, and so on. This status is also determined by how much money a bride's family is able to pay to the groom's at the time of marriage, and, for the groom's family, by the amount the educational and professional achievements of the groom allow them to demand (Fruzzetti 1982; Gough 1992; Srinivas 1984). A well-educated groom may be able to demand a larger dowry, while a well-educated bride, having to look for a better-educated husband, may have to pay a larger dowry than less-educated women (Derné 1994; Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994). A larger dowry may thus facilitate hypergamy (Sharma 1992; Uberoi 1992) and, conversely, the inability to pay a larger dowry may put a spoke in the hypergamous wheel—as happened to Lajjo.

Lajjo's Dowry Problem

Lajjo's status increased in the village because she did her M.A. in English and was now an English teacher with a government job. These status changes reflected on her family, and their status increased as well. As her family looked for a *riśtā* (relationship or husband) for her, they found that this change in status had an impact on the search. Moreover, Lajjo was an independent woman with a government job, teaching English in a school, and living in a big city by herself. She was also much above the average age of marriage for women in her village. All these factors combined to make it harder to find a husband for her. Educational and professional success, in fact, can reduce the marriageability of women (Mukhopadhyay 1994).

Conversely, it was easy to find husbands for her cousins, most of whom were not educated above the tenth grade. She said,

> Jo mere cacājī aur taūjī ke jo ten laḍkiyān hai, unke liye laḍka dekhā, max ek laḍka dekhā, calo yār pasand ā gayā, kar dī. Ab mere liye māre gharvalon ne bahut jyādā dekh lī nahīn milī. Matlab das-bārah laḍke dekhe hain Pappā ne, yā to voh Pappā ko pasand nahīn āte yā Tāyā ko yā phir mere ko…lekin unka jab hua tab jaise choice nahīn thī. Unke pās choice nahīn thī. Jaisa gharvālon ne dekhā thīk hai, thīk hī hai. Kām khatam ho gayī śādī.

> *My uncles didn't have to look hard for their ten daughters. They saw one boy, maybe two, and got them married. My parents have been looking a long while for me, ten, maybe twelve boys. Maybe my father didn't like them, or my uncle, or even me. But for my cousins—there was no choice…the girls didn't have any say. If the family liked the boy, the matter was settled, the marriage done.*

Lajjo certainly had hypergamous ambitions, and her education and occupation allowed her, sociologically speaking, to look higher than her sisters in the village. However, she could not look too high, such as among the bureaucrats of India's civil service, because dowry demands would also be too high. Although she would have liked to marry someone from the high-status, much-coveted (both professionally and in marriage) bureaucracy, she was blunt about the impossibility of looking there. When I asked her "civil service me nahīn dekhā, jaise IAS me?" [*did you not look (for a*

husband) in the civil service, such as among the IAS], she replied, with sharp disappointment, "Nahīn! Kahān miltā?" [*no! Where would I get (such a husband)?*].[97] I asked Lajjo what she looked for in a husband. She looked sad, almost rueful, and definitely resigned. "He must have some worth," she said, going on to explicitly express her hypergamous desires which, in the end, were perfectly commensurate with Indian arranged marriage customs and socially ordained hypergamy. "He must be better than me in all things. But where will I get one like that? I will have to compromise on something. We have looked at engineers, policemen, advocates…the talks always break down somewhere."

The Contradictions of Mobility

Lajjo, in her wistful desire for a "worthy" husband, measured this worth in terms of his educational and occupational achievements. Although she was very conscious of her own accomplishments, and measured her status accordingly, her discussion of her dowry situation, however, shows us that her own worth is measured in quite a different way societally. She felt that, per her personal status, she should be able to marry a man of at least commensurate status and ability, regardless of family status. However, practically, this did not hold true. Her educational and occupational achievements, rather than lowering dowry expectations, actually made it harder for her to find a husband within her family's dowry possibilities. It becomes clear (as many feminist scholars have stated), that dowry is not, in effect, an exchange for money invested in education (Caplan 1992; Sharma 1992). The worth of a bride, in fact, is measured by "the amount of material goods and cash her family can provide rather than by the reputation and prestige with which they can endow her, the skills they have ensured she has acquired" (Sharma 1992:353). That is, had dowry been a pure return on money invested in education, Lajjo's

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[97] The IAS, here, refers to the Indian Administrative Service, the top service in the Indian bureaucracy. "IAS" also serves as a generic reference to the civil services or bureaucracy.

education should have canceled out the cost of educating a groom of her choice, and the dowry she would have to pay to a highly educated, well-established groom would have been substantially less. As things stand, her education is irrelevant, except in that it makes her connubial pool considerably smaller and more expensive. Her value is not decided by her education, or her dowry would have been lessened. It is the size of the dowry itself that determines her worth and status (Dube 1997). A high dowry is necessary to familial social mobility—it is a way to enhance the value of the daughter, to make her more attractive in a hypergamous marriage (Stone 2000).

This aspect of dowry exemplifies Fox's comments on hypergamous exchange, using alliance theory—that marrying "down" is a form of condescension, and, indeed, can only be permitted if it is seen as such, and marrying "up," for the woman, becomes a way to increase her prestige but, in order to do so, she must pay for the privilege—in the case of dowry, quite literally. The transfer of women within a dowry system makes them into more than ways of procreation—they are also vehicles for the transfer of prestige (Sharma 1992; Srinivas 1984) and, for women, this becomes the only socially acceptable way to increase prestige.

In the South Asian milieu, the tendency to hypergamy can often mean difficulties for the women at the top of the endogamous caste groups, where there is a dearth of suitable grooms. When people maintain rigid caste endogamy, this shortage has, in far too many cases, led to practices of female foeticide or infanticide, and polygyny (Pocock 1992; Sharma 1992; Srinivas 1984; Uberoi 1992). For women at the top, the only route to hypergamy becomes to push "out," to marry outside the endogamous group. For rigid caste practitioners, this is not an option. Hypergamous practices have thus adapted, so to speak, by acquiring a stronger economic component, that of dowry (Pocock 1992; Sharma 1992; Uberoi 1992). The scarcer the eligible males within the endogamous group, the higher the dowry (Banerjee 2002). However, since prestations from the bride's

family continue throughout the bride's life, it is illogical to marry into a family of such high status that the gift-giving cannot be sustained (Sharma 1992).

Lajjo acknowledged that her status, and that of her family, would make dowry demands difficult, even if she did not aspire as high as the civil services. She said carefully,

> Dahej ki to thoḍā jyādā hī paḍegā, mere ko lag rahā hai. Jaise mere Pappā hain, lecturer hain, mere bhai engineer hai. Aur jaise hamāre jamīn bhī kāfī hai, ghar bhī kāfī acchā banā huā hai, to isse bhī farak paḍta hai. To jaise nahīn dete hain, nā, to yūn kahenge, "dekho Pappā lecturer hain, bhāi engineer hai, khud betī teacher hai, yeh kyā diyā hai?"

> *I think that we will have to pay a lot of dowry. My father is a lecturer, my brother is an engineer. We have a lot of land, a nice house, all of this makes a difference. If we don't give (a big dowry), they will say, "see, her father is a lecturer, her brother is an engineer, she herself is a teacher, what is this they have given us?"*

A number of factors are taken into account when dowry is negotiated—whether the families involved own land, what their "business" or occupation is, the social status of the families, previous affinal alliances, and so on (Fruzzetti 1982). A family that owns land would prefer to give their daughter to another landed family, grooms who have government jobs are preferred (and therefore command higher dowry), and the professions of fathers and brothers factor into marriage considerations (Fruzzetti 1982).

Conclusion: The "Compromise"

Lajjo's story highlights the complex ways in which caste, class, language, education, and gender intersect in the formation of individual identity in India. Change in even one of these variables can affect an individual's identity and social status, leading to complications in fulfilling social norms within established parameters, especially for women. Being an educated, independent woman in a rigid caste structure can have seemingly insurmountable consequences when it comes to highly regulated social events

or rituals such as marriage. Each of these elements that shapes individual identity also has a normatively governed sociocultural aspect, and is a critical element in the "matching" that takes place in an arranged marriage. As Lajjo moved beyond accepted parameters, she drew further and further away from the type of groom that would ordinarily have been sought for her, as were sought for her sisters in the village. Her new-found status permitted her to aim a little higher when it came to a groom. However, while she achieved new statuses, her family's limitations did not alter. While she may have been able to contribute somewhat to her dowry, her higher status, increased age, and elevated educational and professional levels have led to an appreciable increase in the amount of dowry her family has to pay, given the hypergamous nature of Indian marriage. To attempt to marry very high, therefore, is simply not an option—it is not financially viable.

I asked Lajjo if her difficulties with finding a *riśtā* had made her regret her educational and professional ambitions, and how she now felt about her education. She exhibited no regrets, stating that she felt "very good" about her education. "I have awareness. My horizons are wide. I can teach my children. I can do it myself." Being able to "teach" your children seems to be a primary value assigned to the education of women. Many young men in the government schools I visited said that they would like to marry an educated woman, not so she could work outside the home (which was negatively valued) but so that she could help educate their children and help them with their homework.

Lajjo confessed that her family was putting some pressure on her to make a decision with the choices realistically available to her, and seemed resigned to seeing her hypergamous ambitions fall by the wayside.

> Jaise Pappā ne mere Dilli Police ka koī laḍkā dekhā hai. Voh
> graduate hai. To hamāre nā tāūjī vagairāh sab taiyyār hain. Matlab
> property bhī unkī kafī hai, Dilli ke hī hain, tīn-cār plot hain, kheten
> bhī hain, ghar bhī acchā hai. To mere ko yūn lag rahā thā ki sirf
> education yeh uska ek hī point hai sirf voh graduate hai. To cacājī
> sabhī kah rahe hain "betā thīk hai, job to lagī huī hai, ab kahān se
> dekhen, kaise dekhen, phir tere ko pasand nahīn āte laḍkā dikhne

me kaisā hai." To mere ko lagtā hai, kahīn na kahīn compromise karnā paḍegā.

My father has found some man in the Delhi Police for me. He is a graduate. My family, my uncle, everyone is ready. His family also has property, they are from Delhi, they have three-four plots of land, farms, a nice house even. So I feel that his education is the only sticking point, that he only has his B.A. So my uncle, my family they are all saying, "child, it's okay, you have a job, now where can we look, then you won't like how they look." So I think I will have to compromise somewhere.

She thought she would marry the policeman. "I have to compromise," she said again. "I will never be able to get a man of my status."

The familial search for a groom of equal or higher status, as has been shown, is severely compromised when the woman is highly educated. The search can take a relatively long time and, as it progresses, it becomes more difficult, as the woman only gets older. She may also continue her studies and, as Mukhopadhyay (1994) demonstrates, this will only elevate her to a higher status and make the search even more tricky. This is one of the several reasons—others being worries about chastity and fear of a loss of "docility" (Derné 1994)—that many families in India continue to limit their daughters' educations. Marriage is still perceived to be a woman's primary vocation (Kapadia 2002) and Lajjo, despite her high ambitions, is no exception to this rule. Her worry, disappointment, and fears for the future stem from the fact that, although she has broken the rules when it comes to girls' education, she is unwilling to break them (such as caste endogamy) when it comes to women's marriage. Indeed, I do not think such an avenue has even occurred to her, and I do not think she would take it, if it were suggested, for the reasons discussed in this chapter and, as discussed in Chapter Six, because caste exogamy often meets with extreme violence.

Lajjo was caught up in wanting to marry as high as she could dream, and was disappointed in the loss of her hypergamous aspiration. It must be noted, though, that she will be able to marry much better than any of the other women in Hukumgaon. She has been able to contribute to the marriage decision, she will stay in the city and continue

working, and she will be able to marry a "good" man. These may seem like small advances in the face of the larger ones that have yet to be made toward women's equality. Nevertheless, they are significant advances for Lajjo and, when many such Lajjos keep advancing, perhaps the cultural norms that hold them down and prevent their mobility will either advance with them or, eventually, be broken and left behind.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have shown how social difference affects schooling (which in turn affects possibilities of educational mobility), how ideas of mobility vary from group to group, how ideologies relating to English are implicated in all aspects of schooling and mobility, and how an awareness of the limitations of educational mobility produces contradictory discourses about social difference, which are attempts at discursive mobility.

Discursive mobility is a strategy of mobility which involves emphasizing difference (Gupta 2000) real, perceived, or purported. As discussed in Chapter One, Gupta's (2000) discussion of hierarchy and difference highlights emphasizing difference as a mobility strategy, one where unquantifiable characteristics are stressed as opposed to quantifiable (or rankable) ones. Discursive mobility is a response to the possibility of failure of other mobility strategies, and is enacted in tandem with them. As I have shown in this dissertation, government school students pursue the idea of educational mobility, but also engage in practices of discursive mobility. The primary strategy of discursive mobility is a focus on how one's social position is better than the ones aspired to. This is a necessarily contradictory practice, and I have suggested that such contradictions are inherent to mobility practices.

<u>Why Educational Mobility Fails for the Poor</u>

The subaltern discourses of difference created by the government school students are inextricable from the dominant class discourses that they resist, and understanding this is key to understanding how and why social difference is reproduced. Willis notes this link and its importance to social analysts:

> Neither the institutionalised, customary and habitual forms in
> which domination is mediated from basic structural inequality, nor
> the regional forms in which they are broken out of, opposed and

transformed, are recognised for what they are…They have simultaneously both a local, or institutional, logic and a larger class logic. The larger class logic could not develop and be articulated without these regional instances of struggle, nor could, however, these instances be differentiated internally and structured systematically in relation to other instances and reproduction of the whole without the larger logic [1977:60].

Government school students set up complex discursive and ideological structures to reorient their status positions relative to students from other schools. These subversive discourses can best be understood as strategies of resistance to dominant discourses and ideologies, and as strategies of social mobility. However, they are still framed in terms of powerful dominant ideologies. As Jeffrey et al. (2008) state (drawing on the work of Paul Willis), "even when they try to resist dominant structures, young people's cultural productions are always only 'partial penetrations' of those structures: critiques marked by the ideologies of the powerful" (2008:12,13).

Since dominant discourses persist notwithstanding these students' attempts to create changes in ideological structures, this has significant negative repercussions for government school students in the form of lower self-confidence and a lack of awareness of opportunities, which, in turn, leads to depressed aspirations. Madhu Kishwar says, "the dual system of education has taken away so many opportunities from the vast mass of our people that the new generation which is being denied good quality education in English is going to grow up feeling even more demoralized, incompetent, and inferior than the present cohort. In the next few decades, as India integrates more with the global economy, the lifestyles of the Indian elite will become even more alienated from the rest of the people" (2005:212). The poor quality of the education government school students receive also ensures that they leave school less qualified than students from private schools. Therefore, they move into lower-status, lower-income jobs. Their attempts at upward mobility are thus thwarted, and class distinctions are perpetuated through another generation.

Bound by inadequate schooling, lack of awareness, and low self-esteem, government school students are not optimistic about their ability to succeed in college and professional life. Not knowing about any career options off the more popular or well-known occupations such as medicine, law, engineering, or business, they struggle to succeed in the competitive exams that control admissions to such institutes, but are already at a disadvantage due to inadequate schooling. Dickey observes that "both the middle and the upper classes can be distinguished from the poor by their awareness and expectation of personal opportunities in education and employment" (2000a:33). This lack of knowledge, therefore, is a fairly significant indicator of how class affects access to quality of education and (perhaps in consequence) information about educational and employment prospects. As Kumar comments about her research on schools in India, "there are no possible rewards for effort or improvement, only total success or failure, the constant expectation of being judged, of competeing ceaselessly, and for most, of not being good enough" (2007:236). Bright, intelligent, and articulate, these students have been systematically excluded from access to opportunities that could change their lives and prevent the reproduction of persistent class structures and class vulnerability.

I wish to make this very clear—I am not suggesting that there is no point in poor children going to school. That would only lead to their being available for exploitation. Jeffrey et al make the point very succinctly when they say that "a large number of young people in South Asia, especially girls, still lack access to primary, let alone secondary education. These young people typically enter household labor or poorly paid manual, service, or industrial work outside the home, often in grueling and dangerous conditions" (2008:8). If nothing else, schooling will keep children off the streets and out of factories, and give them the hope of achieving more with their lives. Providing them with education gives them some power over their interactions with the world.

However, I do wish to draw attention to the egregiously unequal quality of education received by students who attend government schools. Since many of them are

first-generation learners, they receive little to no support and assistance at home. They learn just enough to look down on their home environments, a viewpoint that school teachers do a lot to reinforce and inculcate. Their schooling is often marked by little or no teaching, and that which occurs is often (though not always) of poor quality. They are frequently humiliated, reminded of their social disadvantages, and their hopes discouraged. Even when there is no deliberate negative action by school authorities, these children are not made aware of educational and career opportunities outside the norm (which, in India, is either a BA or moving into engineering, medicine, or law). Their peer groups, schools, and familial networks are not sufficient to ensure they succeed in their aspirations. The worst part of it is, *they know this*. Yet, they keep dreaming, they keep trying, they keep hoping. Their faith in their education is almost unshakeable, even when they know it is not as good as it ought to be. When governments, parents, teachers, and school administrators encourage this faith, but do not provide the quality of education to justify it, it is an unconscionable betrayal of these young people's trust.

Figure 12 Students playing during recess in Government English

<u>Changing How Education is "Done"</u>

How does one begin to change this? Although my dissertation is not a "policy document," it would be incomplete without my thoughts on how systems of public schooling might be changed. This is a debate that is taking place in the United States as well, especially over the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, better known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (U.S. Department of Education 2009). One of the "pillars" of that Act is accountability, which is a highly controversial topic. Rhode Island's Central Falls School District, for example, fired all the teachers and administrators at their Central Falls High School in an attempt at school reform (Kaye 2010).

How do you begin to hold a teacher accountable for student performance? Finding an answer is a struggle. My first reaction to the idea of teacher accountability was exasperation. As a teacher myself, I am fully aware that there are a lot of other factors responsible for student performance, not the least of which are student ability, inclination, and effort. In the case of students from a poorer or otherwise socially disadvantaged demographic (such as the students in the government schools), other factors are also involved. They may spend a lot of time on housework, chores, or even work outside the home. They may endure compromised health from living in unhealthy conditions, malnourishment, lack of access to health care, or lack of money to pay for it. Their parents may be unable or unwilling to help them with school work, or may simply not have the time. They may not be able to afford external help, or have access to other resources for assistance with schooling (such as external tutors, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five). They may not be familiar with the language in which they are being educated. They may be socially stigmatized, or culturally untrained in ways that would improve their ability to perform to dominant standards of education. However, they are very unlikely to be "slow" or "useless," as the government school teachers believed their students to be.

Yes, teachers must be held accountable. In the government schools, many teachers were egregiously derelict in their duties. They did not teach and they abused their students. The quality of teaching was considerably poorer than in English Convent. At the same time, many teachers worked hard, taught well, and were appreciated by their students. So a number of factors work together to make a school "bad," and all of them have to be taken into account. The single most important one, as in the case of English, is the fact that there are dominant cultural standards of education which determine what students should know, when they should learn it, how, and how they should be tested on it. Students who are not familiar with the cultural modes through which formal schooling is imparted, such as those in the government schools, will automatically be considered "worse" students that those who are. For example, as I have shown in this dissertation, English-medium education is privileged in India. This means that schools which are not English-medium, not matter how good the quality of their education, are "worse" than ones which are. Once a school has a certain stigma attached to it, say, of being a Hindi-medium government school, it will not usually draw to it teachers of high caliber. Those assigned to it might resent it, and not teach as well as they could. Indeed, some of the teachers I spoke to in Government Hindi expressly told me they wished they could teach in a better school. Lakshmi, the economics teacher in Government Hindi (who called her students "low"), told me she wanted to teach in an English-medium school, and this school was just a job on the way. She struggled to teach in Hindi, and often students would have to help her find the terms she was looking for. She wasn't deeply invested in her job, and her language difficulties were a big impediment to student comprehension. Other teachers, as described in the dissertation, simply wouldn't teach.

Thus, it might be more to the point to consider how ideologies about educational privilege might be changed. Teacher accountability is a place to start, and must be used to weed out teachers who won't do their job. It is *not* a place to stop. What is needed is a systematic overhaul of structures of privilege, but this is a long, slow process. Until then,

governments must invest more in the infrastructure of schools, in ensuring students have the opportunity to meet whatever dominant standards of educational qualifications are currently prevalent, and in promoting alternatives to structures of privilege, because disadvantaged students will rarely meet the standards of the current one. This would involve, for example, imaginative career counseling to government school students, increasing awareness of educational and professional opportunities, and ensuring public sector jobs are more available—and attractive—to non-elites. Finally, more attention needs to be paid to regional languages, and measures taken to increase their worth in the job market. This is the only way (and it will not be easy) that the pressures created by the privilege granted to English will ease, and in which the English-excluded will be able to compete on a level playing field.

<p style="text-align:center;">English and Privilege</p>

In this dissertation, I have discussed at length the ways in which English and English language education are ideologically linked to structures of privilege. As mentioned, there is a historical association between English and power in India which has its roots in India's British colonial ancestry (Chapters Three, Four, and Five). This association continues, and, in contemporary India, has been reinforced by ideologies which link English to success in a "globalized" world, as I describe in Chapter Three. The privilege accorded to English, and English of specific varieties, by dominant ideologies creates significant fissures in Indian society, with the English-dominant on one side and the English-excluded on the other.

What this means for education is this: so long as English continues to occupy this ideological position of power, English-medium education will continue to be considered "better" than other mediums of education. Since English is a valued social resource, it is not easily available to social have-nots. Even when it seems to be easily available, such as with the numerous English-language "shops" which are sprouting up all over India, it

really isn't. An important aspect of English-language ideology, as I show in Chapter Three, is that it has to be considered "fluent." As Puri (2008) notes, these shops don't teach the kind of English that is considered necessary for social mobility, because they don't give the English-excluded access to privileged varieties of English.

What does this mean for linguistic mobility efforts? Very simply put, it complicates them immensely, as, indeed, it is meant to. As I show in this dissertation, the response of the English-excluded is to reframe discourses of English and mobility to suit their ends. As I emphasized in the introductory chapter, my object in this dissertation is not just to show how ideologies of education and mobility are influenced by social privilege and difference, but also how people who desire mobility *respond* to these ideologies.

Future Research

As I did research for my dissertation, and as I wrote about it, I realized that there are a few areas which require urgent research. The most compelling area, to me, is the commodification of English. In this dissertation, I discuss how crucial English is to structures of privilege, and how ideologies of the English language influence social perceptions of status, occupation, schooling, and social worth. In later research, I would like to expand my research into how these ideologies work in tandem with ideologies of globalization. Specifically, I would like to study ideologies and practices relating to English-language "shops" in Delhi.

My dissertation research reveals that government school students see English as a path to upward mobility. However, their access to English-language education is severely limited. Even when they do learn English, they do not have access to privileged varieties and dialects. English is being promoted as a means for social advancement by the Indian federal and state governments, international aid agencies, development organizations, and public disocurse. However, structural disadvantages such as class and caste, and powerful

language ideologies that privilege specific varieties of English prevent poorer students who are not from English-dominant backgrounds from successfully participating in linguistic mobility.

Drawing on my dissertation research, I wish to further explore English-language ideologies in India in two areas. Firstly, the policy perspectives about English education in India bear exploring. Who formulates these policies, what are they, and how do they get implemented? Who benefits from them? Second, I would like to study the English-teaching institutes that have sprung up all over India. Why are there so many of them? Who attends them? What are students' aspirations? Do they learn English? Does it help them professionally or otherwise?

Many of these institutes are not equipped with qualified teachers or adequate infrastructure, yet they continue to proliferate in response to high demand. I would like to inquire into the kinds of language ideologies that propel such successful commodification of the English language, leading to new pressures on the poor and English-excluded in terms of mobility efforts.

<u>Conclusion</u>

This dissertation is based on research conducted in three schools in New Delhi, India. It is a comparative study of the relationship between social difference, education, and mobility, focusing on the ideological aspects of this relationship and how they affect discursive practice. My focus has been on poorer students from government schools. In the introduction, I examined student perspectives on mobility, their desires, beliefs, and fears. I discussed how education does not necessarily lead to mobility and explored some of the structural obstacles to successful mobility. Through my dissertation, I showed how language (specifically English) is a critical element of ideologies of educational mobility. I also showed how mobility can mean different things to different people, depending on their social positions (Chapters Three and Seven). I showed that class is a significant

factor in defining schooling experience, and that subordinate social groups are at a major disadvantage when it comes to receiving a good education (Chapters Four, Five, and Six). I demonstrated that gender is also an important element in the differential experience of schooling (Chapters Six and Seven), and that the effects of educational mobility attempts may not, in fact, always be positive (Chapter Seven).

I must clarify that I am not saying here that all attempts at educational mobility fail. They might very well succeed, depending on what kind of mobility is aimed for. The point I am making is about educational mobility as an *ideology*—it limits options, determines the direction of practice, and defines the parameters of possibility in such a way as to maintain the privilege of those who are already privileged. The utility of education as a strategy for mobility, therefore, is also severely limited, and, as I have shown in this dissertation, the ideology of educational mobility preserves and protects social difference.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF INDIAN STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES

India has twenty-eight states and seven Union Territories. Union Territories are under the control of the President of India and are administered by someone appointed by him. The President is India's Head of State. However, the government is headed by the Prime Minister, currently Dr. Manmohan Singh. All states have their own governments as well, headed by a Chief Minister. The National Capital Territory of Delhi is a Union Territory, though it has its own government and legislative assembly. The capital of India is New Delhi, an area within the NCT.

The States

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Arunachal Pradesh
3. Assam
4. Bihar
5. Chhattisgarh
6. Goa
7. Gujarat
8. Haryana
9. Himachal Pradesh
10. Jammu and Kashmir
11. Jharkhand
12. Karnataka
13. Kerala
14. Madhya Pradesh
15. Maharashtra
16. Manipur

17. Meghalaya

18. Mizoram

19. Nagaland
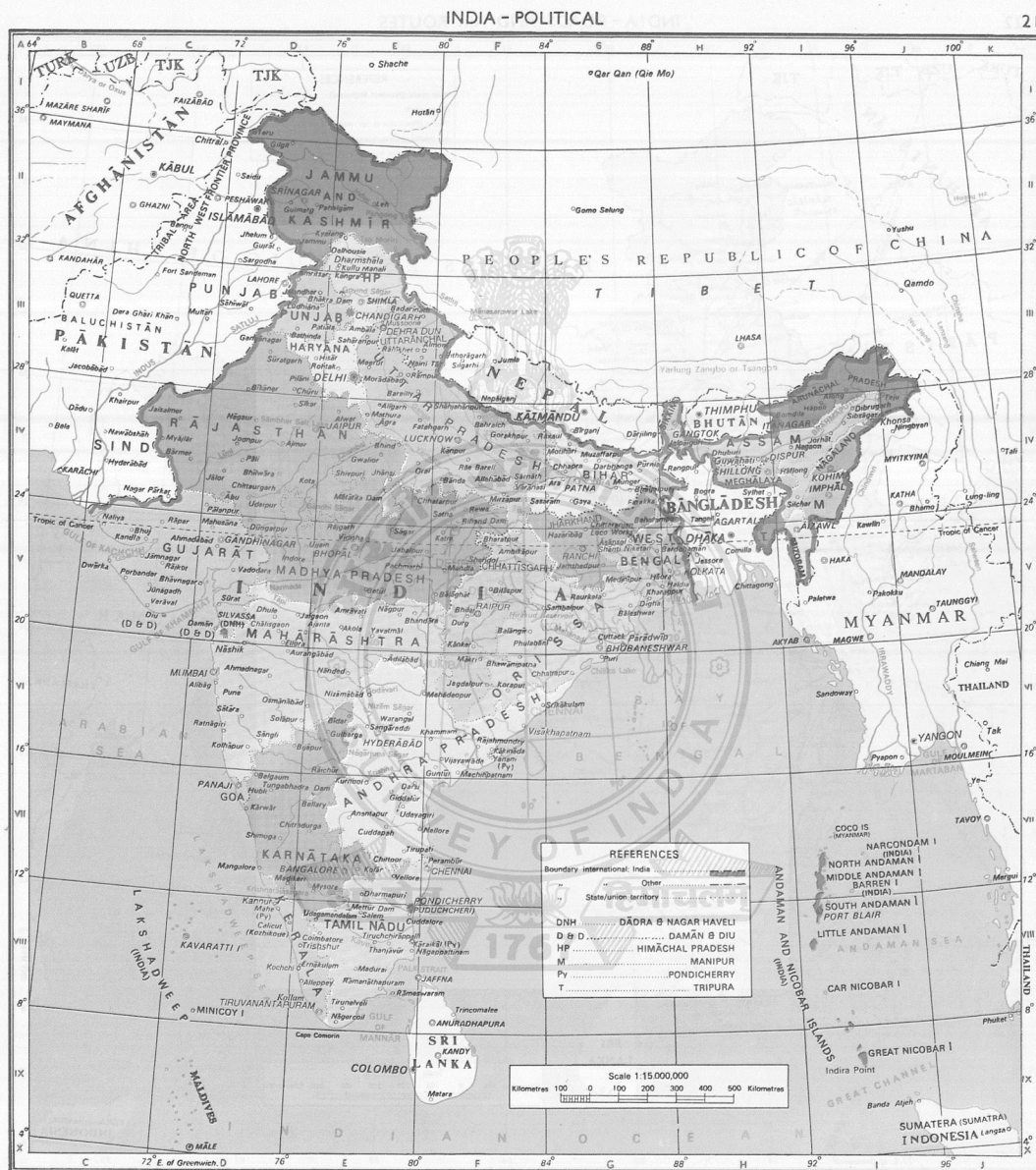
20. Orissa

21. Punjab

22. Rajasthan

23. Sikkim

24. Tamil Nadu

25. Tripura

26. Uttarakhand

27. Uttar Pradesh

28. West Bengal

The Union Territories

1. Andaman and Nicobar Islands

2. Chandigarh

3. The NCT of Delhi

4. Dadra and Nagar Haveli

5. Daman and Diu

6. Lakshadweep

7. Puducherry

Source: http://india.gov.in/knowindia/state_uts.php

APPENDIX B: MAP OF INDIA

APPENDIX C: PARENTS SURVEY

Name (optional): _____   Age: _____

Gender: Male/Female (please circle one)   Contact # _____

Are you willing to be interviewed individually? Yes / No (please circle one)

1. What is your current family income (in rupees per month)?
    - i.   below 5,000
    - ii. 5,000 – 10,000
    - iii. 10,000 – 50,000
    - iv. 50,000 – 1 lakh
    - v.   1 lakh – 5 lakhs
    - vi. Above 5 lakhs

2. What level of education have you completed?
3. What level of education has your husband/wife completed?
4. What job do you do?
5. What job does your husband/wife do?
6. How many children do you have? _____ boys, _____girls
7. How old are they? (please add more if required)
    - i.   _____ years
    - ii. _____ years
    - iii. _____ years

8. What school do they go to, or, if they have finished school, what school did they go to?
9. Do your daughters do housework?
10. Do your sons do housework?
11. Would you let your daughter work outside the home? What kind of work should she do?
12. What kind of person would you like your child to marry?
13. What kinds of jobs would you like your children to have?
14. What kind of job would you like your son-in-law to have?
15. What kind of job should a daughter-in-law have?
16. What languages do you speak?
17. What languages do you speak at home?
18. What kind of people do you think speak English?
19. What kinds of jobs do people who speak English have?
20. Why do you want/not want your children to learn English?
21. Would you enroll your daughter in an English-medium school? Why/why not?
22. Do you think learning English will help you/your children? If so, how?
23. Who should be responsible for housework and care of children? What if both parents are working?

APPENDIX D: STUDENTS SURVEY

Name (optional): _____   Age: _____

Gender: Male/Female (please circle one)   Contact # _____

Are you willing to be interviewed individually? Yes / No (please circle one)
1. What level of education has your mother completed?
2. What level of education has your father completed?
3. What job does your father do?
4. What job does your mother do?
5. How many brothers and sisters do you have? _____ brothers, _____sisters
6. How old are they? (please add more if required)
    a. _____ years
    b. _____ years
    c. _____ years

7. What school do they go to, or, if they have finished school, what school did they go to?
8. What would you like to do after you finish school (college and job)?
9. Do you work when not in school? What job do you do?
10. Do your sisters do housework?
11. Do your brothers do housework?
12. Do your sisters or brothers work outside the house? What work do they do?
13. What languages do you speak and which do you use at home?
14. What language would you like your husband/wife to know and what language will you teach your children? (Please rank 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)
15. Do you think it is important to know English?
16. What kind of people do you think speak English (impression)?
17. Do you think girls need as good an education as boys?
18. What kind of job do you think is appropriate for girls?
19. Who should be responsible for housework and care of children? What if both parents are working?

APPENDIX E: MATCHED GUISE TECHNIQUE SURVEY

Please rate the speaker on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very little and 5 is very much:

1.	Height	short	1	2	3	4	5	tall
2.	Weight	thin	1	2	3	4	5	fat
3.	Good-looking	little	1	2	3	4	5	lots
4.	Sense of humour		1	2	3	4	5	
5.	Intelligent		1	2	3	4	5	
6.	Good leader		1	2	3	4	5	
7.	Religious		1	2	3	4	5	
8.	Self-confident		1	2	3	4	5	
9.	Kind		1	2	3	4	5	
10.	Good character		1	2	3	4	5	
11.	Good job (steady 9-5)		1	2	3	4	5	
12.	Good income		1	2	3	4	5	
13.	Husband/wife with good job		1	2	3	4	5	
14.	Family-oriented		1	2	3	4	5	
15.	English-medium schooling		1	2	3	4	5	
16.	Upper class		1	2	3	4	5	
17.	Middle class		1	2	3	4	5	
18.	Lower class		1	2	3	4	5	
19.	Stays in a good locality		1	2	3	4	5	
20.	Has a car		1	2	3	4	5	
21.	Is good at housework		1	2	3	4	5	

Please rank the characteristics above (using numbers) as following*:

1. Most desirable in your husband/wife:
2. Most desirable in a son:
3. Most desirable in a daughter:
4. Most desirable in a son-in-law:
5. Most desirable in a daughter-in-law:

* For example, if good income is most important, then kindness, then family-oriented, please write 12, 9, 14, etc.

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