

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENTS AND  
INDO-CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS IN VANCOUVER:  
IMPLICATIONS OF MODELS OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE  
FOR INTERCULTURAL TRANSACTIONS

by

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### Abstract

The present dissertation seeks to ascertain the implications of contrasting models of social exchange for intercultural transactions, specifically, for transactions between Euro-Canadian social service agents and Indo-Canadian immigrant clients. In so doing, it meets a two-fold objective to apply social exchange theory to intercultural exchange, and to examine the cultural context of agent-client relationships. The research involved three basic steps: development of an analytical framework, identification of the agents' and clients' models of social exchange, and identification of the patterns of transaction obtaining between the agents and clients.

The analytical framework developed explicitly and simultaneously incorporates three modifications to classic social exchange theory suggested by symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, and transactional analysis. It posits culturally specific values as underlying each actor's perception of an exchange situation. It posits culturally specific goals as underlying each actor's exchange decisions. And it posits culturally specific modes of transaction as underlying manifest exchange behaviour.

Accordingly, the identification of the agents' and clients' models of social exchange entailed the identification of their values, goals, and transactional modes. For social service agents, according to the social service literature, the rights and responsibilities of the individual constitute an ultimate

value. To realize this value, agents pursue the goal of client self-fulfillment, ideally through the transactional mode of professional mutual exchange. For Indo-Canadian clients, according to the ethnographic literature, the honour of the family unit constitutes the ultimate value. Honour accrues to the family which fulfills its dharma or ascribed duties of self-sufficiency, caste-purity, and service to others. If service from others is required, it is best transacted in the mutual exchange mode which characterizes friendships.

A comparison of the two models of social exchange suggests that difficulties in the Euro-Canadian agent/Indo-Canadian client relationship will emerge where agent transactions are perceived by clients to impinge on family honour, and where client transactions are perceived by agents to impinge on the rights and responsibilities of the individual. The patterns of transaction, identified through interviews with 40 Indo-Canadian clients, 37 Euro-Canadian agents, and 21 Indo-Canadian agents, tend to confirm this hypothesis. Agents feel frustrated by client resistance to intervention, reluctance to disclose and discuss problems, expectations of direct and continuous advice, and non-implementation of advice that is given. Clients express irritation at agent reluctance to provide personal information, attribution of problems to Indo-Canadian life-style, withdrawal from the helping role, and refusal to accept prestations.

The models of social exchange serve to explicate not only the points of difficulty in the agent-client relationship but also the correspondences between the agents' and clients'



patterns of transactions. Agents who disclose personal information, interpret problems in cultural terms, provide direct or extensive counselling, and accept client prestations tend to report that clients disclose problems to them, discuss problems willingly, implement suggestions, and carry on independently. Consistently, the patterns of client transactions correspond more to the patterns of agent transactions than they do to the ethnic background of the agents.

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

The present dissertation seeks to ascertain the implications of models of social exchange for intercultural transactions, specifically, for transactions between Euro-Canadian social service agents and Indo-Canadian immigrant clients. In Part One, I describe the values, goals, and transactional modes comprising the two parties' social exchange models, and suggest how contrasts between them may affect interaction between their adherents. In Part Two, I describe the patterns of interaction characterizing counselling relationships between Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients, and note the extent to which points of difficulty in the relationships correspond to points of contrast between the posited models of social exchange.

Two related issues emerge as consequences of the central thesis. On a theoretical level, classic social exchange theory proves inadequate to the task of analysing intercultural transactions. I identify and employ three modifications. Secondly, on an empirical, applied level, key social service practices appear counter-productive when used with Indo-Canadian clients. Although changes in these practices are feasible, I recommend changes in the manner of introducing them to clients. Thus, in ascertaining the implications of social exchange models for intercultural transactions, the present dissertation also

identifies certain implications of intercultural transactions for social service practice and for social exchange theory.

By way of introduction, I first establish the parameters of the basic research problem in relation to the literature which addresses it. I then define the theoretical framework within which I analyse the problem, and indicate the methods used to research it. Finally, I discuss the nature of the basic research conclusions, and note their limitations.

### Basic Research Problem

My academic interest in explaining the relationship between Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients arises from a personal concern about indications of dissatisfaction with that relationship expressed by both parties. In establishing the parameters of the academic research problem, I am influenced by the nature and scope of the empirical situation.

In 1975, when I returned to Vancouver after a two-year stay in India, I was struck by the extent to which Indo-Canadians were singled out by the media as abusers of social services. They were said to be "milking the system," and "ripping it off" (see Indra, 1979: 179).<sup>1</sup> At the same time, Indo-Canadians known to me personally recounted incidents in which they or their friends felt rudely or unjustly treated by Euro-Canadians representing various social service agencies. Again, in 1979 while interviewing directors of agencies, I heard repeatedly that Indo-Canadians constituted the most problematic clientele. They were the "chronic complainers" and the "belligerent

requestors." Yet I was also aware of Indo-Canadian efforts to establish self-help mechanisms which would replace "unsympathetic" Euro-Canadian sources of help.

Obviously, relations between Indo-Canadian clients and Euro-Canadian agents were, and to a large extent still are, troubled. Before a troubled relationship can be improved, the sources of the difficulties must be understood. In my view, the explanations offered by agents and clients are "necessary but not sufficient" to provide such understanding. On the one hand, it is generally accepted that Indian culture discourages the acceptance of assistance from anyone outside the intimate circle of family and close friends. How then do Indo-Canadians come to be perceived as service abusers? On the other hand, social service professions stress empathy, openness, and caring. How then do they give the impression of being rude and unsympathetic? In other words, the reasons given by agents and clients for their negative relations are not explanations at all; they are part of the relationship which begs explaining.

Thus articulated, the research problem at hand lodges squarely in the field of intercultural social service. As an area of research, the field has developed relatively recently. One survey of four major social work journals published between 1947 and 1961 notes that only three articles deal "even remotely" with services to immigrants (Kent, 1972: 42). Although anthropological and sociological studies of immigrant cultures were available during this period, they were not incorporated into social service policy or practice (Devore and Schlesinger,

1981: v). Instead, the helping professions relied heavily on principles of psychology to inform their approaches to all clients, regardless of cultural background (Triseliotis, 1972: vii).

In retrospect, social service professionals attribute the influence of psychology over that of anthropology to the strength of egalitarian ideals embedded in North American and British culture at the time (Jenkins, 1981: 4). All persons were to be treated equally, in accordance with certain precepts about basic needs and desires. Such ideas linked well to the then prevalent image of society as a melting pot (Green, 1982: 3-4). Any differences between immigrant and non-immigrant clients would soon disappear through a process of assimilation. Even the more recent, and supposedly more Canadian, pluralist image of society did not dispel the belief that all people were entitled to and desirous of the same kind of help when in similar circumstances.

With the dramatic increase in non-European immigration of the past twenty years, the need for anthropological input to the social services has become apparent. Many scholars now recognize that the basic assumptions of the helping professions are those of a particular culture (Kent, 1972: 45). To be truly egalitarian -- a culture-bound ideal in itself, but one which has survived -- social service agents must provide assistance to people in ways which are culturally acceptable to them (Green, 1982: 4). The goal of service, client self-fulfillment, remains the same for all clients, but the means to this end may have to

vary considerably.

Recent works in transcultural nursing (Leininger, 1978; Spector, 1979), multi-cultural social-work (Cheetham, 1981; Green, 1982), and cross-cultural counselling (Kleinman, 1978; Pederson et al., 1981) attest to the readiness of the helping professions to apply anthropological understandings to their respective services. In general, the literature provides ethnographic information on particular cultures pertinent to the problems which the various services address. Thus, a nurse may learn about Haitian childbirth customs; a childcare worker may realize the obligations of a Chinese daughter-in-law, and a high-school counsellor may understand the aspirations of a Greek student's parents. To a lesser extent, the literature also focusses on the need for social service agents to sensitize themselves to their own cultural biases (Herberg, 1982; Mayes, 1978; Mizio and Delaney, 1981; Sikkema and Niyekawa-Howard, 1977).

However, with one significant exception (Green, 1982), few studies examine cultural factors as they pertain to the agent-client relationship itself. Many authors note in passing that immigrant clients may not be familiar with social services (Ferguson, 1964; Vikram, 1981), and others emphasize the stigma attached to seeking help outside the family (Great Britain, Community Relations Commission, 1976; Selyan, 1978). American scholars in particular weigh the effects of racial differences on agent-client interaction (Banks, 1971; Erikson, 1979), while British and Canadian studies usually mention language as a major

barrier (Association of Directors of Social Services, 1978; Head, 1979). But the relevance of cultural differences to the nature of agent-client interaction remains, for the most part, unexamined.

This omission is somewhat surprising given the long-standing interest of the social services in agent-client relationships, and the centrality of human interaction to social science thought.<sup>2</sup> Social service agents strive to establish rapport with clients; students of cross-cultural communication identify culturally specific approaches to social trust and liking (Johnson and Johnson, 1975). Service agents hope to foster client initiative and input; social scientists indicate culturally specific modes of self-assertion that go unrecognized in intercultural contexts (Triandis et al., 1968). In the social services, the success of a helping relationship may depend on the effectiveness of a negotiated contract between agent and client; in the social sciences, styles of negotiation are found to vary considerably across cultures (Glenn et al., 1977). In sum, social science has much to offer the field of intercultural social service, not only by placing the problems of clients in their cultural contexts, but also by providing a cultural perspective on the agent-client relationship itself.

The present study focusses on the relationship between Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients, not on the problems which the clients have. However, the relevance of cultural factors to client problems on the one hand and to agent-client relationships on the other is difficult to

differentiate within the context of a given helping relationship, or even a number of relationships concerned with similar problems. For example, nutrition counsellors may fail to "reach" families, either because of culturally specific beliefs concerning diet, or because of cultural differences in modes of helping behaviour, or both.

To isolate the cultural factors pertaining to the agent-client relationship from those pertaining to the clients' problems, I examine the patterns of interaction between a variety of social service professionals and their Indo-Canadian clients (see Appendix A). The term "social service agent" refers not only to a wide range of individuals employed as social workers, but also to community health workers and school workers. The services rendered all entail counselling, but they address themselves to various educational, health, and family-related problems. Thus, I identify patterns of interaction which manifest themselves between Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients regardless of the employment context of the agent or the problem of the client.

I examine the agent-client relationship in cultural terms not just because such a focus has been overlooked to date, but also because I believe its omission seriously impedes intercultural social service in practical, applied terms. The need to understand what happens between an agent from one culture and a client from another may be seen in the dissatisfaction of clients, especially in their perception of agents as "rude" and "unsympathetic." The need is also

expressed by some agents from immigrant cultures, persons who call for an alternative to the "professional/ client relationship in which the client is made to feel inadequate.... leaving himself/herself open to manipulation" (Sondhi, 1982: 72-73). Most convincingly, the need to understand the dynamics of intercultural helping relationships is evidenced by the Euro-Canadian agent who states: "I know about Indian child-rearing [practices]. I just can't get through to the parents."

### Theoretical Framework

The present dissertation analyses the problem of the relationship between Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients within the framework of social exchange theory. Social exchange theory has long been utilized by anthropologists and other social scientists to account for human interaction. In 1907, Georg Simmel wrote:

Most relationships among men can be considered under the category of exchange.... [E]very interaction is properly viewed as a kind of exchange (quoted in Levine, 1971: 43-44).

The first scholar to analyse social exchange as a means of explaining social behaviour was Marcel Mauss (trans. 1954). Like the structural-functionalists who adopted his approach, Mauss emphasized a normative or institutional obligation to give, to receive, and to repay a gift. The "norm of reciprocity" became accepted by some students as both binding on the individual and universal to mankind (Gouldner, 1960). As such, the analysis of



exchange concerned a given group's set of rules, and the implications of these for group structure (Levi-Strauss, 1969).

Other scholars, notably Homans (1958; 1961), argued that cultural norms and institutions are but the consequences of individual psychological factors, especially motivation. Between the moral injunction to exchange and actual exchange behaviour lay the process of individual decision-making (Barth, 1966). In making a decision, people acted to maximize their rewards and to minimize costs (Belshaw, 1965). Thus, the study of exchange behaviour required the analysis of individual choice and strategy.

Reconciling the institutional and individual approaches to exchange are suggestions that one "emerges" from the other in chicken-and-egg fashion (Blau, 1964). Human interaction should be considered in light of its institutional "before" and "after" (Arensberg, 1972). By focussing on the properties which emerge, the analysis of transactions links individual behaviour with its institutional context (Kapferer, 1976).

Social exchange theory, particularly as developed by transactional analysis, appears well suited to the study of social services generally and agent-client relationships specifically. Recent publications in the field of social service attest to the applicability and relevance of social exchange concepts. Paul Wilding (1982) provides an extensive review of the literature pertaining to the "power" of the service "giver" over the service "receiver." Edward Wynne (1980) analyses the social security system of the United States as a system of

"reciprocity":

Each act of delivering a donation and each subsequent return of a counter-donation constitutes a transaction, while the complete sequence of donation and counter-donation constitutes an exchange (p. 10).

As far back as 1968, R.J. Lawrence published "A Social Transactional Model for the Analysis of Social Welfare." In it he argues that services to clients are "products of interactive processes between the consumer and producer" (p. 51). The client "enters into the transaction to achieve some goal. Usually he does so at some specified cost" (p. 55).

However, despite the demonstrated suitability of exchange theory for the study of social services, students of intercultural social services rarely refer even in passing to its concepts. This may be due in part to the preoccupation in the field with the cultural context of client problems. Since the agent-client relationship is not examined, the explanatory potential of social exchange theory is not pertinent. But the omission of such concepts as goal, cost, and transaction may also be due to the fact that social exchange theory has not been, and in its classic form cannot be, applied to intercultural situations.

The confinement of classic social exchange theory to homogeneous cultural contexts rests on the underlying assumptions which it makes. As one analysis points out (Michener et al., 1977: 524), "theorists as far back as Edgeworth (1881) have found it useful to make restrictive assumptions regarding

the exchange processes." Michener et al. identify four such assumptions:

1. All persons in the system have full information about the interests in and control over events [i.e. commodities or services].
2. All traders are guided by rational self-interest and seek to increase their gains.
3. Persons' interests are stable and not subject to change.
4. Events are divisible.

As stated, the first three assumptions cannot be made with regard to transactions between persons of different cultures. The greater the differences between the cultures, the more critical it is that the assumptions be explicitly recognized and modified before concepts of social exchange are applied.

The first assumption, that of full information, most obviously requires modification for intercultural transactions, particularly when one of the interactants is a recent immigrant to the country in which the exchange takes place. The immigrant has an idea or perception of "what the others want and what the others control" (Michener et al., 1977: 524). But his perception may vary considerably from the perceptions of those others, and from the objective "facts" of the situation. Conversely, the interactant of the country of immigration, a Euro-Canadian social service agent in this instance, does not always "know" what an immigrant client wants or controls, but he may believe that he knows.

Michener et al. regard the second assumption, that of self-interest, as the most critical and limiting one of social exchange theory. They credit Meeker (1971) with having placed the concept of self-interest in perspective:

[P]ersons can adopt any of several motivational orientations in face-to-face interaction. In addition to self-interest, these include altruism, competition, group gain, equity, status congruity, reciprocity, etc. (Michener et al., 1977: 526).

Without dismissing the possibility that individuals may idiosyncratically act on motivations other than that of self-interest, it is important to realize that actions motivated by any one of the orientations listed above may be considered by the actor to further his self-interest in so far as the orientation is defined as an acceptable goal within his culture. For example, an individual whose culture esteems altruistic behaviour may decide that it is in his best interest to declare that he desires no return for something he has given. If the receiver is from a culture which deems altruism foolhardy, the giver will be regarded as a fool, lacking in strategy to promote self-interest.

Limitations imposed by the third assumption, that of stability of interests, have been partially overcome by the introduction to exchange theory of the concept of emergent properties. Properties which emerge from one set of transactions redefine the situation before the next exchange occurs. Stability of interests is assumed only for one sequence of give-receive-return. Depending on the outcome of that exchange,

perception and hence behaviour may vary in subsequent interactions.

Thus amended, the assumption of interest stability serves the purposes of intercultural transactional analysis with one further modification. A shift in interests may manifest itself not only in response to properties emerging from previous exchanges but also in response to shifts between different cultural modes of transaction. As Miller points out (1982: 182):

[A]ll minority group people in this society are bicultural at least. The percentage may be 90-10 in either direction, but they still have had the task of integrating two value systems that are often in conflict.

A conflict between cultural systems of values may result in an actor's employing a transactional mode from one culture in one exchange, and a mode from his opposite's culture in a subsequent exchange.<sup>3</sup> To return to the example given above, an individual whose culture posits altruism as a goal may choose to pursue self-interest on one occasion by acting altruistically. On another occasion, he may decide it is in his best interest to act according to what he perceives to be the goals of the culture of his exchange partner. The shift in behaviour may be due to properties emerging from the previous exchange: perhaps the transactant failed to receive the non-material return he expected for altruism. But behaviour may also shift simply as a function of the interactant's awareness of alternative transactional modes.<sup>4</sup>

To summarize, the first three assumptions of social exchange theory as identified by Michener et al. must be modified as follows for the analysis of intercultural exchange relationships:

1. Each person has a perception about his and others' interests in commodities or services which is based on culturally specific values.
2. Each person makes decisions guided by rational self-interest as defined by culturally specific goals.
3. Each person's behaviour reflects culturally specific transactional modes, and may shift as the cultural point of reference shifts.

In other words, classic social exchange theory makes another assumption, one which underlies the others. It assumes that parties to an exchange belong to the same culture, and that they therefore agree on the values of exchange commodities, on the goals defining self-interest, and on the modes for transactional behaviour. As Befu puts it (1977: 259), the cultural context "is that part of an exchange model which is assumed as given in so far as the model is concerned."<sup>5</sup> When applying social exchange theory to intercultural relationships, however, the cultural context cannot be assumed. It is not a "given."

The analytical frameworks employed by many contemporary exchange theorists accommodate one or another of the three modifications suggested for classic social exchange theory.<sup>6</sup> For example, in Kapferer's edited volume Transaction and Meaning (1976), the contributions by Gilsonan (pp. 191-219) and by Cohen

and Comaroff (pp. 87-107) focus on ways in which actors control each other's perceptions of exchange situations through the manipulation of information or the manipulation of self-image. The authors rely on a symbolic interactionist or phenomenological approach which holds that actors interpret each other's behaviour and react to it accordingly (cf. Blumer, 1969; Schutz, 1966).

Also in Kapferer, the contributions by Marriott (pp. 109-142) and by Parkin (pp. 163-190) focus on the cultural contexts within which exchange decisions are made. Parkin in particular stresses that an individual's "choices are based on a notion of rationality in the terms of the particular culture" (1976: 165):

The distinction is essentially (and not merely analogously) the classical Saussurian one between parole, by which individual creativeness is manifested in unique utterances, and langue, which paradoxically directs this creativeness by requiring it to be expressed by reference to, though not necessarily in slavish imitation of, an existing body of grammatical rules (1976: 164).

Parkin and Marriott rely heavily on ethnographic detail to account for the exchange behaviour of actors.

Finally, Kapferer himself and also the articles by Handleman and by Strathern speak to the need to re-evaluate an exchange situation at each juncture of a transactional sequence. Handleman (pp. 223-275) illustrates how behaviour of exchange partners may feed back into their relationship, altering it over time. Strathern (pp. 277-287) directs attention to the changes

in transactional behaviour affected by changes in the larger socio-cultural environment. Both authors utilize the concept of emergent properties to facilitate the processual analysis of exchange.

Thus, if considered corporately, the analytical frameworks employed by contemporary exchange theorists accommodate all three of the modifications to classic social exchange theory identified above. The introduction of a phenomenological or symbolic interactionist approach serves to identify subjective perceptions according to the cultural values of interactants. Attention to ethnographic detail places exchange decisions in the context of culturally defined goals. And the concept of emergent properties provides a mechanism by which shifts in cultural modes of transaction may be recognized, and their impact evaluated. If considered individually, however, the analyses of most exchange theorists may be seen to focus explicit attention on only one or another of the modifications identified.

I believe that the explicit focus on one modification and the neglect or implicit assumption of the others is possible because symbolic interactionists, ethnomethodologists, and transactional analysts seldom address themselves to intercultural situations.<sup>7</sup> Were Gilsenan's Lebanese to interact with Canadians instead of with each other, their kizb or lying would still be symbolically meaningful, but in different ways to different parties, not within the "cultural universe as a whole" (1976: 191). Similarly, if Marriott's Indians refused to

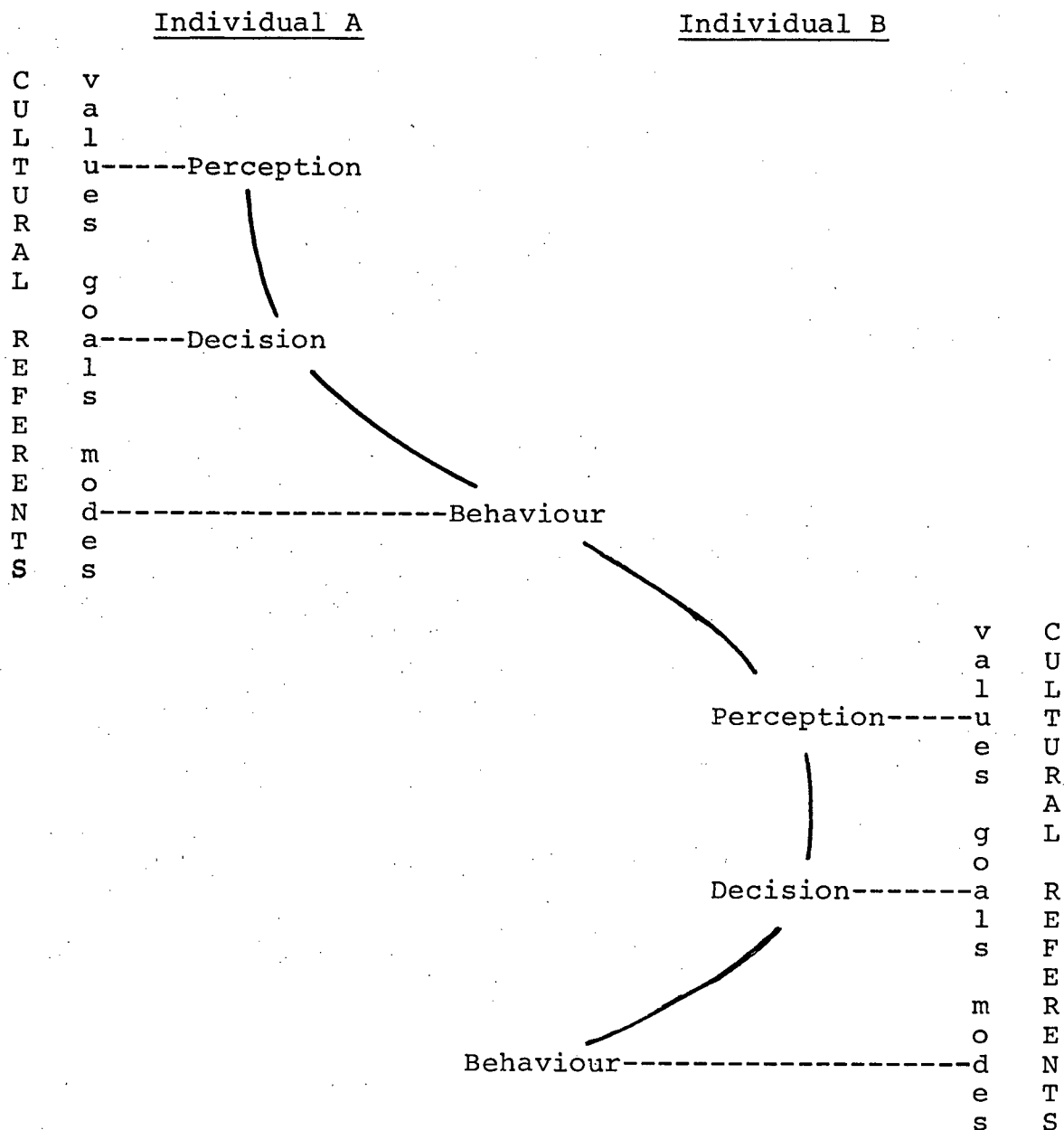


exchange, not with each other but with Canadians, their cultural frame of reference would still explain their actions, but the reactions of their opposites could only be accounted for with reference to the Canadian understanding of transactional behaviour.

In other words, the study of intercultural exchange throws into sharp relief the interconnectedness of cultural values, goals, and transactional modes, and their relevance to the patterns of interaction which emerge in exchange relationships. A theoretical framework for the analysis of intercultural relationships must give equal weight to all three modifications of social exchange theory alternatively emphasized in the literature, and it must do so in such a way as to indicate their relationship to one another. I suggest that the values, goals, and modes of transaction obtaining in a given culture constitute the cultural referents of social exchange for members of that culture (Figure 1). They influence an actor's perception of an exchange situation, hence his decision regarding that exchange, and hence his objectively observable exchange behaviour. Initially, values appear most relevant to the formation of perception, goals most relevant to decision-making, and modes of transaction most relevant to behaviour. But in an on-going exchange relationship, all three referents of exchange ultimately manifest themselves in the observable behaviour of one actor. In so doing, they become properties of the exchange situation on which the opposite actor's perception-decision-behaviour is based.

Figure 1

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF  
INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS



In sum, the theoretical framework proposed for the analysis of interaction between social service agents and immigrant clients differs from that of classic social exchange theory in three ways. First, like the framework of symbolic interactionism, it posits a perception of the exchange situation based on cultural values. Secondly, borrowing from ethnomethodology, it places the decisions resulting from perception within the context of culturally defined goals. Finally, in line with transactional analysis, it examines the exchange behaviour resulting from decisions in relation to cultural modes of transaction which may shift in response to emergent properties.

#### Data Collection

James Green, one of the few students of intercultural social service to focus on agent-client relations as well as on client problems, calls for "research procedures which will identify communication patterns in different ethnic groups as these are manifest in social service encounters" (1982: 16):

Clearly, [such information] will have to come from a variety of sources, including academic research and publications, intensive participant-observation, and detailed consultation with ethnic and minority group social workers (1982: 17).

I use a combination of these sources of information, and also interviews with clients, to explicate patterns of interaction between Euro-Canadian social service agents and Indo-Canadian

immigrants.<sup>8</sup>

My three years in India, one spent in the state of Gujarat and two in the capital city of New Delhi, provide me with a "feel" for the cultural frame of reference of Indo-Canadians from those areas. However, scholarly publications supplement and concretize the hands-on experience. Literature on family relationships (Das, 1976; Vatuk, 1975), caste relations (Marriott, 1976; Orans, 1968) and social services (Desai and Khetani, 1979; Weisner, 1978) all speak to the issue of social exchange as it exists in India.

Academic publications also help to map out the cultural referents of social exchange of Euro-Canadian service agents. Studies by Blau (1964) and Goffman (1963; 1969) indicate North American patterns of interaction generally. Numerous other works articulate the specific goals and values of the helping professions (Hollis, 1964; Keith-Lucas, 1972; Perlman, 1979). As it was not practicable to cover all the literature of all the service professions represented in the study, I made an effort to familiarize myself with those texts which Euro-Canadian agents recommended as "good" ones on the subject of agent-client relations.<sup>9</sup>

As an anthropologist, and by personal inclination, I endeavored to establish the "objectively observable behaviour" between agents and clients through participation in their joint activities. For several reasons, however, my opportunities for participant-observation were more limited than I had hoped they would be, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

In the first instance, it was rarely possible to observe first-hand interaction between Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients. The urban setting of Vancouver does not contain a neighborhood where the two parties live or work together. More critically, agency regulations prohibit the presence of third parties at meetings between clients and agents. The few encounters which I chanced to witness indicated how valuable such observations could be, but they were too few to permit generalization.

Participant-observation was further constrained by my inability to "be" an Indo-Canadian client. Several days each week were spent with Indo-Canadians in their homes, temples, or on sites of impromptu gatherings such as school-yards and shopping centres. However, in the majority of these situations my companions were not in the role of clients. Two exceptions bear mention: the four Indo-Canadian interpreters who accompanied me to about half of the interviews with clients were themselves social service agents. While the interaction noted during these interviews was not intercultural, it did provide data on the behaviour of Indo-Canadians as clients within their own cultural context. Secondly, I telephoned each agency whose employees I interviewed, once as a Euro-Canadian inquirer and at least once on behalf of Indo-Canadian clients. Again, although not based on intercultural interaction, the information thus obtained contributed nicely to the overall picture which emerged.

The main opportunity for participant-observation presented

itself in the world of social service agents apart from their meetings with clients. Once a week I served as receptionist for an agency dealing primarily with Indo-Canadian clients. Approximately once a week I attended social service committee meetings, in-service workshops, or conferences sponsored by the various helping professions. On a monthly basis, I participated as a board or committee member in the meetings of three agencies representing respectively government services, private non-profit community services, and private non-profit immigrant services.

The time spent as a participant-observer among social service agents provided me with a "feel" for their cultural frame of reference, much as my years in India had sensitized me to the cultural referents of Indo-Canadian clients. Nonetheless, my inability to observe agent-client interaction first-hand (except by chance), or to participate in it (except as a receptionist), meant that in analysing my field notes I was obliged to rely heavily on the data generated through interviews.

Initially I intended to conduct semi-structured interviews only with Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients. However, pre-tests of the interview schedules indicated that Indo-Canadian agents had to be included. In recalling social service encounters, clients named agents from their own cultural background as often as Euro-Canadian agents, and occasionally distinguished between the two on cultural grounds. Also, in describing their Indo-Canadian cases, Euro-Canadian agents

frequently mentioned having consulted Indo-Canadian agents or having referred cases to them. The interviews with Indo-Canadian agents proved quite valuable, for they shed light on both the Euro-Canadian agents' and the Indo-Canadian clients' perspectives.

Between September, 1981 and September, 1982 I interviewed a total of 98 respondents, including 40 Indo-Canadian clients, 37 Euro-Canadian agents, and 21 Indo-Canadian agents. In so far as Indo-Canadian agents contributed to my understanding of both the agents' and the clients' points of view, it is significant that the total number of agents interviewed (both Indo-Canadian and Euro-Canadian) approximates the total number of Indo-Canadians interviewed (both agents and clients). Details concerning the composition of the three populations and the sampling procedures used in obtaining them are given in Appendix A.

The interview schedules elicited "facts" about the transactions of clients and agents and also indications of the "feelings" which preceded and followed the transactions (see Appendix B). Agents were asked about client manner of presentation, response to counselling, and signs of acceptance or rejection of the helping relationship generally. Agents were also asked to describe their own behaviour in eliciting the problem, counselling the client, and responding to signs of acceptance or rejection. I systematically inquired about any perceived contrast between the behaviour of Indo-Canadian clients and that of Euro-Canadian clients.

Interviews with agents usually took place in their offices

and lasted just over one hour. They tended to be business-like encounters. Although only one agent appeared reluctant to share subjective information with me, most agents responded with a degree of formality. They frequently requested copies of the interview schedule and followed it point by point. I sensed an immediate recognition on their part of my purpose in meeting with them and of their role in serving that purpose.

In contrast, most interviews with clients took place in their homes and lasted on an average of two hours. There were long periods of socializing in which information on personal background was exchanged (see Stebbins, 1972). These periods merged with conversations intended to answer the questions of the interview schedule. I rarely produced the schedule except to convey the contents of the introductory paragraph assuring them of confidentiality. Pre-tests had indicated that responses would be considerably fuller if elicited in the context of casual conversation.

I usually started the interview proper by asking clients about their experiences in obtaining accommodation, employment, and financing in Canada. I then inquired about any problems they had had regarding health, children's education, and family life, and how they had dealt with these problems. When the resolution of a problem involved a social service agent, I elicited the same information on "facts" and "feelings" about the transactions that I did with agents. Finally, I asked clients to contrast their experience of solving problems in Canada with their experience of solving them in India.



The interviews with agents and clients produced a wealth of information about the way in which each perceived the other to transact and the way in which each believed himself to respond. But the interviews also contributed to my awareness of the "objectively observable behaviour" between agents and clients (see Ichheiser, 1973: 160). Of 34 relationships which Indo-Canadian respondents described in detail, 26 (76%) were with social service agents included in my sample. In several instances, the agents also gave examples of their Indo-Canadian cases in sufficient enough detail (e.g. "a Punjabi lady with five kids whose husband died in a sawmill accident") to enable me to match them with my client respondents. Thus I was often able to reconstruct the "facts" of the interaction from both sides, and to compare two or more perceptions of the same relationship.

In sum, data for the present thesis derive from a combination of sources which complement and supplement one another. The cultural referents of each model of social exchange emerge from analyses of first-hand observations and published accounts. The transactional patterns characterizing the relationship to be explicated also derive from analyses of direct observations, and from extensive verbal recollections of the parties involved. Each of the sources of information alerted me to insights regarding the others. In combination, they ultimately enabled me to posit the implications of the identified models for the identified agent-client relationships.

## Basic Research Conclusions

In Part One, analysis of the social service model of social exchange reveals two parallel sets of cultural referents. Societal values, organizational goals, and controlling transactional modes co-exist alongside individual values, professional goals, and mutual exchange transactional modes. Without exception, the service agents interviewed in principle favour mutual exchange behaviour, decisions based on the professional goals of client self-fulfillment, and realization of the rights and responsibilities of the client as an individual. In practice, some agents may utilize the alternative set of exchange referents depending on the nature of the case.

Analysis of the Indo-Canadian model of social exchange reveals an underlying orientation to the value of family honour. Family honour is maintained, enhanced or damaged depending on the attainment of ascribed goals, primarily family sufficiency, caste purity, and service to others. If service from others is necessary, Indo-Canadians favour a mutual exchange mode of transaction, as between friends, in order to maintain family honour.

Contrasts between the two models of social exchange lead to the logical expectation that agent transactions hindering the client's pursuance of ascribed duties and mutual friendship, and client transactions hindering the agent's efforts at professional mutuality and client self-fulfillment, will pose problems for each party. In Part Two, the patterns of behaviour and response described by agents and clients for their

counselling relationships generally support this hypothesis. Agents express particular frustration with client reluctance to disclose problems, client expectations of direct advice, and lack of client follow-through on treatment plans. Clients are particularly troubled by agent initial intervention and subsequent referrals, agent discussion of problems in relation to life-style, and agent reluctance to provide personal information and to accept prestations.

The interpretation of the identified patterns of agent-client interaction in terms of the posited models of social exchange produces as well as tests hypotheses. The models of social exchange appear related not only to the points of difficulty experienced by agents and clients, but also to certain correspondences between agent transactions and client transactions. Agents who provide personal information, cultural interpretation of problems, and direct or extensive counselling, and agents who accept prestations tend to report that clients willingly disclose and discuss problems with them, and that they implement counselling suggestions independently.

Two limitations on the research findings warrant mention. First, despite pre-testing of the interview schedules, a number of unanticipated factors pertinent to agent-client interaction emerged during the course of research. For example, several agents spontaneously remarked on the high incidence of personal questions from clients during the initial phase of counselling. Similarly, several clients, usually after the interview was officially concluded, revealed that they attribute their

problems to aspects of Canadian culture. Such remarks provide explanatory insight to the agent-client relationship and as such have weighed in the analysis, despite the limited number of respondents making them.

Secondly, the significance of certain findings may be confined to the specific populations to which they refer. Although the identified models of social exchange pertain to Indo-Canadian clients and social service agents generally, their identified implications may or may not extend to Indo-Canadian populations having different socio-economic compositions than that of Vancouver's, or to social service agents engaged in relationships other than that of counselling.<sup>10</sup>

In sum, for both quantitative and qualitative reasons, the data analysed for the present thesis do not permit the pronouncement of general causal claims. Instead, as one symbolic interactionist puts it, such data permit the formulation of "embedded causal claims" (Menzies, 1982: 35):

[T]hese claims are embedded in the analysis and cannot be detached from the situation about which they are made. An embedded causal claim states that some concrete action has a particular effect (another concrete action or belief).

It is my hope that the causal claims embedded in my interpretation of the Euro-Canadian agent/Indo-Canadian client relationship will foster what Blumer calls (1969: 147-8) sensitizing concepts, concepts which impart a "general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances."

Notes: Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> My data do not permit an evaluation of the proportionate use of services by Indo-Canadians. However, one agent who predicted that the caseload of her office was "about 50-50 white and ethnic" did a statistical summary for me. Of 481 clients, 339 were Canadian-born. Only 54 had immigrated from Hong Kong or China, and 48 from India or Fiji. The manager of this office had stated "Immigrants are the mainstream as far as we're concerned."

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of literature on agent-client relationships see Beck (1983). Beck's own study concludes (p. 10) that "Beyond all else, the findings confirm the critical importance to outcomes of the clients' global perception of the counselor/client relationship."

<sup>3</sup> Barth argues (1969: 18) that value differences constrain intercultural exchange by sanctioning shifts in transactional modes: "Persons would be reluctant to act in new ways for fear that such behaviour might be inappropriate for a person of their identity." I would argue that cultural values themselves determine whether behaviour borrowed from another culture's transactional modes is to be sanctioned or applauded.

<sup>4</sup> In so far as a Euro-Canadian agent is familiar with the culture of a non-Euro-Canadian client, his transactional mode may also shift from one exchange to the next. However, such changes on the part of an agent are more likely to result from "emergent properties" than from decisions unrelated to previous

exchanges.

<sup>5</sup> Befu suggests (1977: 259-260) that within the cultural context lies a "model of social exchange" comprised of the culturally adapted norm of reciprocity and the rules for exchange of the culture. While I agree that a person's transactional behaviour is partially based on such a model, I believe his perceptions and decisions, which also influence behaviour, are based on a wider range of cultural referents including certain values and goals.

<sup>6</sup> Some game theorists explicitly recognize all three assumptions of classic exchange theory but eliminate them as factors in their analyses. Axelrod (1984: 17-18), for example, suggests a framework in which "payoffs," or the values to be realized through exchange, need not be comparable, symmetrical, or measured on an absolute scale; actors need not be rational, or trying to maximize their rewards; and behaviour need not reflect conscious or deliberate choice.

Such a framework is tempting in its simplicity. Theoretically, it renders cultural differences in values, goals, and even transactional modes all but irrelevant. However, Axelrod's framework makes assumptions of its own which limit its suitability for the study of agent-client relationships (1984: 11-12). Among other things, it assumes that no actor can make an enforceable threat; that no information on the opposite actor is available except information based on previous transactions with him; and that neither actor can "run away from the interaction." As Axelrod himself notes (1984: 19), the analysis of abstract

interaction "puts aside many vital features that make any actual interaction unique."

<sup>7</sup> It is significant that Salisbury, the one contributor to Kapferer's volume to analyse exchange in an intercultural situation, chooses to consider the individual, rather than the dyad, as the "locus of decision making" (1976: 42). He thus circumvents "the question of whether both parties are deciding on the same basis." Where scholars do address themselves to both sides of intercultural exchange, they tend to posit a common basis for interaction. Barth, for example, suggests that "interaction both requires and generates congruence of codes and values" (1969: 16).

<sup>8</sup> Green's own answer to the need to identify communication patterns is to study ethnicity as defined and redefined by intercultural interaction. My own position would appear to be the reverse: I hold patterns of interaction to be defined and redefined through reference to cultural contexts. However, the contrast is more apparent than real. Green treats ethnicity, and I culture, as "an element of behavioural and cognitive participation in the decisions and symbolic constructs which supply meaning to communication" (1982: 9).

<sup>9</sup> Suggestions came primarily from social workers. Public health workers and school counsellors had difficulty in citing relevant references, although studies in their respective fields do address the topic (cf. Gazda et al., 1975; La Monica and Karshmer, 1978; Sue, 1981; Westwood and Massey, 1982).

<sup>10</sup> For example, the cultural referents of social exchange

appear to have very different implications for relationships between financial assistance workers ("welfare workers") and Indo-Canadian clients.



PART ONE:

MODELS OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE

## Chapter Two

### THE EURO-CANADIAN AGENTS: THEIR CULTURAL REFERENTS OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE

Who are the Euro-Canadian social service agents? One student of the helping professions suggests that they are individuals with "a need to help people in a profession that enjoys considerable prestige and allows one to exercise a degree of power over the lives of others" (Ginsburg, 1951: 321). As indicated below, other scholars dispute the amount of prestige enjoyed and power exercised, but they generally agree that "an interest in people and their affairs," and a "generalized concern for others," motivate many who enter the social services (Hollis, 1964: 84; Shenk, 1981: 98).

Certain cultural values of North American society render such motives positive and honourable within that society. The same values also underlie the goals of the professions and organizations which the agents represent. Together, the values and goals help determine the transactional modes to be utilized by service agents, and provide criteria for evaluating agent behaviour (Upham, 1973: 20). The values, goals, and transactional modes constitute the cultural referents on which agents base their perceptions, decisions, and behaviour regarding clients.

In the present chapter, I indicate the cultural values which scholars posit as the foundations of North American social

services. I also discuss the professional and agency goals pertaining to the delivery of services, and the transactional modes employed by agents in each phase of a counselling relationship. First, however, a brief biographical profile of the specific agents involved in the study: who are they within Canadian society, within their professions, and within their agencies? In particular, what orientation might they have towards immigrant clients?

#### Profile of Euro-Canadian Agents Interviewed

All Euro-Canadian respondents in the study are Canadian born and raised (see Appendix A). All provide counselling services to clients raised in various non-European cultures. However, considerable differences exist in the intercultural content of these agents' personal, educational, and occupational backgrounds.

The majority of the 23 Euro-Canadian respondents for whom information is available comes from a British or British and northern European background (Table I).<sup>11</sup> All but four recall their childhood environments as predominantly Euro-Canadian or, as many of them put it, "WASP." Sixteen respondents have travelled abroad, most as tourists, but four with the intention of learning about different cultures.

The educational background of the agents is somewhat more restricted in terms of cross-cultural or multicultural content (Table II). Six respondents have taken courses devoted explicitly to cultural issues. Five of these have completed a

Table I

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF EURO-CANADIAN  
AGENTS' PERSONAL BACKGROUNDS

<u>Family Origin</u>		<u>Childhood Environment</u>		<u>Purpose of Travel</u>	
Brit./N. Eur.	10 (44%)	WASP	19 (83%)	Holidays	12 (52%)
British	6 (26%)	Italian	1 ( 4%)	Study	2 ( 8%)
E. European	5 (22%)	Jewish	1 ( 4%)	Live	2 ( 8%)
S. European	1 ( 4%)	Ukranian	1 ( 4%)	(no travel)	7 (30%)
Amer. (Brit.)	1 ( 4%)	multi-ethnic	1 ( 4%)		
TOTAL					
	23		23		23

Table II

CROSS-CULTURAL CONTENT OF EURO-EUROPEAN  
AGENTS' EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS

<u>Degree Obtained</u>	<u>Cross-Cultural Courses by Degree</u>	<u>Cross-Cultural Courses in Total</u>
Social Work: 7 (30%)	None: 5 Intro. Anth.: 1 Adv. Anth.: 1	None: 17 (74%) Intro. Anth.: 5 (22%) Adv. Anth.: 1 (4%)
Nursing: 6 (26%)	None: 4 Intro. Anth.: 2	
Education: 6 (26%)	None: 5 Intro. Anth.: 1	
Arts: 4 (17%)	None: 3 Intro. Anth.: 1	
TOTAL: 23	23	23

single course in introductory anthropology or sociology-anthropology. The sixth respondent, a graduate of McMaster University, has taken a variety of courses concerned with ethnicity, non-Christian values, and Black culture.<sup>12</sup>

Many of the agents spontaneously remarked during interviews on the failure of their professional training to prepare them for "the real world" of multicultural clientele. Only one, a recent graduate of the University of B.C., feels that cultural issues were adequately addressed within the context of "the usual" courses. Interestingly, although curricula (at least in schools of social work) have shifted from a Freudian to a more eclectic approach over the past twenty years, agents of all ages tended to cite classic ego-psychological texts. These texts refer to cultural differences as factors in counselling only in their more recent and revised editions (compare, for example, Hollis, 1964 and Hollis and Woods, 1981).

Despite their essentially mono-cultural personal and educational backgrounds, almost half the respondents have worked exclusively, at one time or another, with non-European clientele (Table III). Some have been employed in programmes developed for Native Canadians (4), Indo-Canadians (2), or Black Canadians (1). Three were designated as persons in charge of their agencies' services to ethnic clients in general. Only two respondents, one a school counsellor and the other a community health nurse, have ever worked exclusively with Euro-Canadian clients.

Seventy percent of the agents have attended in-service

Table III

MULTI-CULTURAL CONTENT OF EURO-CANADIAN  
AGENTS' OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS

<u>Nature of Employment</u>	<u>Work in Ethnic Programmes</u>	<u>Participation in Cross-Cultural Workshops</u>
Family-related: 8 (35%)	5 (22%)	6 (26%)
Health-related: 8 (35%)	2 ( 9%)	5 (22%)
School-related: 7 (30%)	3 (13%)	5 (22%)
<hr/>		
TOTAL:                   23 (100%)	10 (44%)	16 (70%)

training sessions focussed on non-European clients and their cultures. In some instances it was difficult to judge whether agents attended on their own initiative or on the directives of their agencies. The value of some of the workshops was also questioned by several respondents. Nevertheless, it appears that some effort is made, either by the agents or by their agencies, to compensate for the lack of multicultural training in the agents' educational background.

The personal, educational, and occupational backgrounds of social service agents may have implications for their attitudes and expectations regarding immigrant clients. However, the evidence for such implications is both scanty and mixed. On the one hand, a random sample of 95% of Canada's population found that an individual's own cultural background and his level of education are the two most important predictors of his attitude toward immigrants: Anglo-Celts and persons with academic degrees -- both categories to which my respondents belong -- feel more positively disposed toward immigrants than do other groups surveyed (Berry et al., 1980: 264-266).

On the other hand, several studies which posit the existence of an "ethnic hierarchy" in Canada place Indo-Canadians at the bottom of the ranking order (Kalin, 1981: 139-140.) One of these studies suggests that the more highly skilled Indo-Canadians are disliked for the economic competition they are perceived to represent (Frideres, 1978: 26). A second study indicates that persons with Indo-Canadian accents are pre-judged as least suitable for skilled jobs (Kalin et al., 1980).



If any suggestion may be made on the basis of such minimal and somewhat contradictory evidence, it is that Euro-Canadian social service agents are unlikely to feel negatively towards immigrant clients, but if they do, they may direct such feelings towards Indo-Canadian clients before clients of other cultural groups.

The present study does not focus on stereotyping, prejudice or racism as these phenomena are commonly conceived. It focusses on perceptions of intercultural behaviour. Nonetheless, as Taylor points out (1981: 151):

[P]ast experience must be organized and stored cognitively so that it can serve as a guide to behaviour.... The major cognitions in the field of intergroup relations are ethnic stereotypes and ethnic attitudes ... [or] prejudices.

Stereotypes, as Taylor defines them (1981: 155), "clearly refer to people's perceptions and beliefs about other categories of people." In this sense, all but one or two of the Euro-Canadian agents interviewed hold some stereotypical images of the Indo-Canadian clients with whom they work. Indeed, my questionnaire was designed to elicit precisely such images. For example, when asked to describe the client's manner of presenting problems, agents often began with "East Indians usually ..." or "Most of them tend to ...." Also, while recounting a specific response from a particular client, agents often added such remarks as "this is typical of East Indians." Only one agent consistently and, I believe, conscientiously

answered questions without reference to stereotypes.

In contrast, prejudice may be defined as attitudinal or evaluative orientations, usually negative ones (Taylor, 1981: 159). Applying this definition, I consider a maximum of three agents to have revealed themselves as prejudiced against Indo-Canadians during my interviews with them. Comments like "they want anything they can get," or "they'll lie through their teeth to get you out of [their home]" indicate negative attitudes, not just stereotypical beliefs. However, 92% of the 37 Euro-Canadian agents responded to my questions without such prejudiced remarks.

The apparent lack of prejudice among the respondents may be due in part to the fact that the values and goals of the helping professions discourage agents from acknowledging, to others but also to themselves, generalizing negative attitudes:

Admitting there is a [racism] problem can be extremely threatening to social workers who have an emotional and professional stake in viewing themselves as able to cut across class, racial, and ethnic lines (Mizio, 1972: 83).

About half of the Euro-Canadians interviewed interrupted themselves at some point with apologetic remarks such as "Heavens, I sound so prejudiced!" or "You understand I'm generalizing here. I don't do that with clients. Each client is an individual case."

In sum, the Euro-Canadian social service agents of the present study belong to a segment of Canadian society and to

professions within that society which are unlikely to express prejudicial attitudes. But they do hold stereotypical beliefs about the immigrant clients with whom they work, beliefs which may well effect their behaviour with those clients. The significance of stereotypes for the present study lies in the fact that they are shared beliefs: "One person's beliefs about a group do not constitute a stereotype" (Taylor, 1981: 155).<sup>13</sup> It is the cumulative impact of many individuals' shared perceptions and beliefs which give rise to the patterns of interaction between them and others.

#### Dimensions of Social Service Values

The motivation of social service agents to "help people," their professional experience in programmes designed for specific cultural groups, even their reluctance to appear prejudiced, all reflect values of the professions which they represent. However, as Loewenberg points out (1977:38), the values manifest in North American social services constitute continua, not absolute standards.<sup>14</sup> Loewenberg identifies nine value dimensions pertinent to the helping professions:

Importance of individual	-	Importance of group
Autonomy	-	Interdependence
Self-help	-	Co-operation
Self-determination	-	Decision by experts
Freedom	-	Limits
Personal liberty	-	Social control
Heterogeneity	-	Homogeneity
Progress	-	Stability
Activism	-	Fatalism

As Loewenberg notes, "value heterogeneity is itself a value " of

North American social services (1977: 39).

Seven of the nine value dimensions posited concern the rights and responsibilities of the individual as opposed to those of society. The tension emerging from the co-existence of these polar positions has been termed "a uniquely American schizophrenia" (Wynne, 1980: 95). In discussing the social security system of the United States, Wynne suggests that American social service policy resolves the tension to some extent by treating the rights and responsibilities of society as the predominant value, but those of the individual as the predominant norm.

An examination of the development of, for instance, Canada's Unemployment Insurance policy reveals a similar tension between the individual and societal ends of the value continua:

In the 1920's, most Canadians believed that obtaining and retaining employment and providing the basic essentials of life were largely an individual matter.... The economic depression of the 1930's forced a change in the social attitudes...[which] gave rise to pressure for a wider range of social programs.... The preamble to the [1935] Act stated that it was essential for the peace, order and good government of Canada (Dingledine, 1981: 5).

Both the right of the individual to basic essentials and the right of society to peace and order were held to justify unemployment insurance.

But neither the individual Canadian nor Canadian society was, or is, completely comfortable with the transfer of responsibility. Repeated surveys of public opinion indicate that

fluctuating but significant percentages of Canadians disapprove of the system and consider its use stigmatizing (Dingledine, 1981: 72-114). Canadian society, as represented by government policy, takes care to phrase its responsibility in restricted terms: unemployment insurance offers only "protection"; it concerns the "temporarily" unemployed; a basic objective is to "aid re-entry" into the labour market (Dingledine, 1981: 52-59). It may be that Canadian social services, in a mirror image of their American counterparts, accord the rights and responsibilities of the individual predominant value, while assuring that those of society constitute the predominant norm.

In any case, tension between the polar positions of the value continua does manifest itself in the helping professions. The services which they provide exist because of the value placed on interdependence, on decision-making by experts, and on social control. Yet the core values attributed to the services by the professionals themselves inevitably concern "the worth and dignity of the individual," his rights, responsibilities, and potential (Boehm, 1958; Hollis, 1964; Loewenberg and Dolgoff, 1971).

In their more general statements, the Euro-Canadian agents interviewed consistently expressed strong support for the individual ends of the value continua. For non-statutory cases, they stated a belief in the "client's right to choose" whether to accept service or not. For statutory cases, they were very aware of a "responsibility to inform clients of their rights." Euro-Canadian agents also indicated an orientation toward

"getting the client to think for himself" and towards developing in clients "a sense of personal identity."

However, agents' comments on specific relationships with Indo-Canadian clients indicate that a discrepancy sometimes exists between the values underlying ideal behaviour and those manifest in actual transactions. As the data presented in Part Two illustrate, agents refer to "special needs of immigrant clients," and to their own frustrations with client behaviour, to explain transactions which reflect the value placed on decision by experts, homogeneity, and social control.

The discrepancy between the value orientations of different agent transactions exemplifies the tension that exists between the ends of social service value continua. The potential is there to emphasize societal ends, but the agents feel called upon to rationalize the exercising of this potential. Ideally, in their opinion, the rights and responsibilities of the client as an individual constitute the ultimate value to be realized through social service, whatever transactions may be deemed necessary in particular cases.

### Professional versus Organizational Goals

The helping professions appear to reconcile the polar positions of their value continua by defining the purpose of "social-value" services in "individual-value" terms.<sup>15</sup> Thus, "one of the goals of help is something called 'self-fulfillment'" (Keith-Lucas, 1972: 12). The purpose of the agent-client relationship is "to enable a person to resolve or cope in

some more effective ways with some identified problem" (Perlman, 1979: 62). Counselling itself is defined as preparing the client to manage for himself the source of his problem (Green, 1982: 15-16).

But for helping professionals employed by social service agencies, the reconciliation between societal and individual ends of the value continua often remains incomplete. Such agents may concur with the professional goals of client self-fulfillment, but more practical organizational goals can impede their realization (Mencher, 1967: 138). To maintain funding, some agencies encourage repeat visits with clients, expand contacts with clients' families, and emphasize "outreach" work. Other agencies, for similar reasons, strive to close files and open new ones as rapidly as possible (cf. Handleman, 1976: 228). In either case, a numbers game is played which prevents the interests of clients from being the sole determinants of agents' decisions regarding them.<sup>16</sup>

The contrast between professional and organizational goals, like that between individual and societal values, may catch social service agents in the middle. On the one hand, by virtue of their education and training, most agents consider themselves professionals (Etzioni, 1969: vi; Scott, 1969: 82-83). On the other hand, they are salaried employees, subject to all the features of bureaucratic structures.

According to Blau and Scott (1962: 60-61), the dual identification of social service agents should have little effect on their goals regarding clients. Both independent and

salaried professionals are expected to meet similar standards:

1. Basis of interaction confined to area of professional expertise.
2. Nature of interaction maintained as affectively neutral.
3. Content of interaction determined by universalistic standards.
4. Course of interaction directed by client's needs.

The main feature distinguishing independent and salaried professionals is the nature of control over them (Blau and Scott, 1962: 62-63). The independent professional is subject to the authority of knowledge as judged by peers (Etzioni, 1964: 76). The employee of a service organization is subject to administrative authority as exercised by a hierarchical structure (Etzioni, 1964: 88; see also Loewenberg, 1977: 116, 135).

But this central contrast between sources of control would itself appear to have implications for the goals of agent-client interaction (see Toren, 1969). Blau and Scott argue that the principle of client interest over self-interest is more easily realized by a salaried professional than by an independent one, since the latter's income depends on client fees. In the case of the independent professional, it is only the potential sanction of his peers which "tends to make the practitioner's own interest dependent on his serving the interests of his clients" (Blau and Scott, 1962: 62).

I would argue that the potential sanction of bureaucratic



supervisors may exert just as great an influence on the salaried professional as a desire for fees exerts on the independent professional. The supervisor and the hierarchy above him determine an employee's status and career advancement. His income depends on their evaluation of his performance. Thus, if organizational goals demand more clients, or if they demand a high rate of client turn-over, the salaried professional may feel pressured to offer or to withhold services, regardless of the needs of the client.

In other words, as a professional, a social service agent is subject to peer control and professional goals of client self-fulfillment. As an employee, he is subject to administrative control and organizational goals of client management. Where professional and organizational goals conflict, an agent may feel pulled in opposite directions.

Interestingly, despite the potential conflict between professional and organizational goals, none of the public health workers, school counsellors, or social workers interviewed acknowledged feeling pressured by bureaucratic goals. As the data presented in Part Two indicate, when expressing their hopes or explaining their decisions regarding clients, the agents reflected only the professional goals of client self-fulfillment. Moreover, agents who commented on their supervisors in this regard all indicated that the latter are supportive of the same goals.

About half of the agents noted that lack of office space, lack of time, or restrictions in their mandates and budgets

prevent them from providing the kind of service they feel their clients require. But these limitations, according to the agents, result from priorities set by "them," persons high up in the hierarchy of government. Immediate supervisors and administrative personnel within the agencies are perceived by the employees interviewed to share their frustrations over lack of resources. Without exception, the Euro-Canadian agents appear to pursue professional goals of client self-fulfillment, unhindered by any organizational goals of client management.

### Transacting Power

Just as cultural values underlie professional and organizational goals, so do those goals orient exchange behaviour between social service agents and their clients. Agents offer and clients receive (or refuse to receive) "help," a commodity evaluated "in terms of specific helping goals, which depend ultimately on values" (Keith-Lucas, 1972: viii). Since the values and goals range from one end to the other of individual-societal continua, it is not surprising that patterns of agent-client interaction can vary along similar lines. Grosser suggests (1972: 379) that whereas the old "residual practice...makes social work an instrument of control...[the new] perspective provides a basis for partisanship and advocacy."

Ideally then, in accordance with the professional goal of client self-fulfillment, help should be perceived by both agent and client as a mutual effort:

[G]enerally the worker attempts to promote an environment of equality in which he or she and the client work together to search for answers to the problems at hand. Worker and client are both experts in their own right; they both share responsibility for how the treatment progresses (Hollis and Woods, 1981: 285-299).

The goal of self-fulfillment is met, and the value of the individual realized, through a continuous, mutual exchange of information, meaningful feelings, and feedback on these (Loewenberg and Dolgoff, 1971: 11; Perlman, 1979: 137; Upham, 1973: 10).

Potentially, however, an interest in client management and in the realization of societal values may determine an agent's mode of transaction. The question is one of control, not just between individual and societal values or between professional and organizational goals but also between agent and client: who controls what the other wants? What an agent wants and how much he wants it, his "interest in the event," is determined by his value-orientation and goals. But the extent to which an agent obtains his desired ends depends upon the degree of control he has over what the client wants, and the client's reciprocal control over what the agent wants.<sup>17</sup>

On the one hand, the client may be thought to control very little. By definition, he has affiliated himself with an agent, or has been contacted by an agent, because he has needs which the agent can meet: employment counselling, medical advice, homemaker service, etcetera. The client cannot repay in kind, for even if he controls comparable resources the agent is not

permitted to have an interest in them and would refuse to receive them.

Rather, the client repays by not repaying. His dependency on and indebtedness to the agent translates into power for the agent:

[If] one person needs something another has to offer ... but has nothing the other needs to reciprocate ... he must subordinate himself to the other and comply with his wishes, thereby rewarding the other with power over himself (Blau, 1964: 21).

According to Blau (1964: 22), "unilateral services that meet basic needs are the penultimate source of power."

On the other hand, the very fact that a client is willing to express gratitude and deference, to make a "symbolic counter-donation," itself amounts to a source of client power:

The norms which require symbolic counterdonations ... serve [a] vital purpose ... blame is levied only against those wealthy groups which fail to meet requests for help ... which the potential donees are obviously willing to treat as reciprocal obligations (Wynne, 1980:30).

The expression of gratitude and deference ultimately shifts power to the agent. But initially, the promise of such symbolic counterdonations aids the client in getting what he wants. Agents may or may not be interested in receiving gratitude and deference, but they are quite likely interested in avoiding blame.

To a lesser extent, the client who is unwilling to promise

or deliver symbolic counterdonations also exercises power in the agent-client relationship in so far as he is perceived by the agent to be "owed" the requested commodities. As a taxpayer, the client may also perceive himself as a contributor to the agent's resources and thereby entitled to benefit from them (Blau and Scott, 1962: 75). Agents may have little to gain by redistributing tax dollars, but, again, they have an interest in avoiding blame:

[B]lame is [also] levied against those wealthy groups which fail to meet requests for help that are already obligations due through the previous donations of the now dependent donors (Wynne, 1980: 30).

However, as Etzioni points out (1964: 95), "the degree to which a given segment of the public consumes public services is inversely related to its participation in financing." Moreover, even where a client has paid or is still paying taxes, his power as a consumer is limited:

The smallest degree of control by consumers will be found in public monopolies ... next are public services such as public schools ... health services, and social welfare agencies (Etzioni, 1964: 95).

Consumer influence over public organizations depends on political organization and articulation, features which seldom characterize social service clients as a group (Etzioni, 1964: 103-104; see also Blau and Scott, 1962: 81-82).

Thus, a limited degree of power rests with the client on

the basis of his rights as a person in need who is willing to make symbolic counterdonations and/or who has previously made material donations. These sources of control are limited because they do not represent anything the agent wants, but only something he wants to avoid: blame for refusing to grant a client a commodity for which he pays.

The more significant source of client power vis a vis agents relates to the role which clients play in the agents' attainment of goals. To the extent that agents want the approval of their professional peers, they strive to realize the professional goal of client self-fulfillment. To the extent that agents want the approval of their supervisors, they try to gain the cooperation of clients in meeting organizational goals. Finally, agents may, to varying degrees, desire the approval of the client himself as manifested in expressions of liking and appreciation.

The agents' interest in client self-fulfillment, client cooperation, and possibly in client approval grants the client power. It establishes a balance of control between the help-giver and the help-needer. Throughout the counselling relationship, the client's control over what the agent wants combines with the agent's control over what the client wants to influence the patterns of agent and client transactions.

### The Counselling Relationship

Textbooks of the helping professions often identify five phases in the counselling relationship: introduction, study,

assessment, treatment, and ending.<sup>18</sup> As Part Two of the present thesis amply illustrates, the functions of each phase may be mixed chronologically. Agents often have the feeling that they "take one step forward, two steps backward." Nevertheless, for purposes of research and analysis, the identification of five phases provides a useful and convenient framework.

The texts cited by the agents stress that, in each phase, the professional helper should exercise skills which promote and support the client's exercising of his own abilities. The agent gives of his expertise in such a way that the client gains a sense of being his own helper. In other words, these texts suggest that control of the helping process rests with the agent, but that in order to meet the professional goal of client self-fulfillment and, more importantly, in order to be effective, the agent must facilitate a perception of control in the client.<sup>19</sup>

To introduce the client to the counselling relationship, an agent clarifies his role as one of enabler, not authority. He identifies any negative feelings the client may have towards working with a professional helper, and reassures him that the helper's role will enhance, not threaten, his own role. The agent also modifies any excessive expectations the client may have of the helping relationship, and assures him that he is his own best resource. The message is one of trust in the agent and confidence in the self.

In the terms of social exchange theory, the agent perceives himself to be giving to the client. He offers the client not

only an opportunity for a helping relationship, but also the opportunity to control the outcome of that relationship. He explicitly promises to restrain his powers so that the client may exercise his. In return, the agent wants the client to trust him. He wants client acceptance of his offer of help.

However, during this introductory phase, the balance of powers may be determined by the client as well as at the discretion of the agent. If a client has little interest in a helping relationship, or is perceived as uninterested, he holds a good bargaining position. To obtain such a client's trust, an agent must identify something the client does want, that is, the condition under which the proffered relationship will be accepted:

[A] sense of relationship in the help needer ... will often be the consequence, not the beginning condition, of the helper's meeting of basic survival needs or the receiving of some wished-for resource (Perlmam, 1979: 15).

In the social service literature, such fulfillments of clients' wishes have been termed " 'gifts of love' [which] go beyond services that would be given routinely" (Hollis, 1964: 88-89). In social exchange terms, they constitute payments for the acceptance desired by agents. If an agent wants a relationship more than does his client, he pays more for it.

In the study phase, an agent offers the client an opportunity to discuss his problem. He utilizes non-judgmental, empathetic listening techniques to enable the client to explore for himself the "reality" of his situation and his feelings



about it. Once again, the agent perceives himself to be giving, not only of his support and skills, but also of his potential power. He restrains any "impulse to rush in with suggestions" (Shulman, 1979: 49). In return, the agent wants the client to reveal facts and feelings pertaining to the problem. He desires client openness in self-disclosure.

But just as the client may set terms for the acceptance of the helping relationship, so too may he establish conditions under which disclosure will be forthcoming. Indeed, many of the professional skills intended to promote client disclosure appear to have been developed in response to demands of clients, both spoken and unspoken. In the first instance, a client wants reassurance that the agent will accept him despite the facts and feelings he reveals. Armed with such understandings as "all behaviour has purposiveness," agents are trained to convey acceptance, "an expression of good will toward the perpetrator" of unacceptable behaviour (Hollis, 1964: 85; Perlman, 1979: 105).

Moreover, clients may demand far more personal input and feedback than the prescribed professional standards permit (see p. 48). Recent texts posit the importance of sharing relevant personal thoughts and feelings, and suggest how this may be done within the confines of the professional relationship (Hollis and Woods, 1981: 290-291; Shulman, 1979: 78-82). Such agent self-disclosure does not extend to the revelation of personal, biographic information. For example, if a client asks whether the agent has children, the agent should reply "are you

wondering if I can understand you?" (Shulman, 1979: 14-15). But the client who "holds out" for two-way communication of thoughts and feelings during the study phase of a counselling relationship may well receive it.

Once a client has responded with trust to the offer of a helping relationship, and with disclosure to the opportunity of sharing his problem, the assessment phase begins. To assess a problem and what can be done about it, the agent offers the client information on specific, relevant resources. But to meet the professional goal of client self-fulfillment, the agent must enable the client to decide for himself which resources to accept, and which contributions he himself can make to the resolution of the problem. Through his "professional use of self," the agent helps his client to "partialize" the problem, to set priorities, to establish short-range and long-range goals, and to decide which external aids he will utilize to attain these goals. In return, the agent wants the client to arrive at and commit himself to a treatment plan. He wants client self-determination.

At this point in the counselling process, client control of the exchange relationship diminishes. The client who has accepted the offer of help, and the opportunity to share his problem, is likely to be interested in the resolution of that problem. He wants something the agent has to offer. If he is unable or unwilling to reciprocate with even a semblance of self-determination, or if his self-determined treatment plan is not acceptable to the agent, it is the agent who decides whether

the desired resource will be delivered.

The question of client self-determination probably represents the most widely debated issue in North American social service literature. It is "alternately treated as inevitable, up to the agent, and as an illusion" (Keith-Lucas, 1972: 36). I suggest that the degree of self-determination exhibited by a client depends to a large extent upon the degree of interest the agent has in client self-fulfillment, and the degree of interest the client has in resources held by the agent. However, as the transactions described in Part Two suggest, the capacity for self-determination may also be subject to factors of cultural, and especially educational, background.

As professionals, agents have a great deal of interest in client self-fulfillment. They strive to reflect in their transactions the value placed on the individual. To this end, they tell one another that client self-determination is "inevitable" because their authority is only one of knowledge, that the power of choice rests with the client (Perlman, 1979: 72):

[T]he worker is responsible for what is offered ... but the client exercises control over what is accepted (Hollis and Woods, 1981: 301).

An agent's influence is recognized as greater if he has been successful in acquiring the trust of his client and in enabling him to disclose the "reality" of his situation. But, "ultimately," the choice is the client's: he is free to decide what kind of treatment plan he will follow, or to withdraw from

the helping relationship altogether (Keith-Lucas, 1972: 15; Scott, 1969: 123-127).

As employees of organizations, however, agents may reflect in their behaviour the bureaucratic goals of client management. The values underlying these goals grant societal rights and responsibilities priority, and render client self-determination an "illusion":

[T]he consumer's freedom of choice is restricted in the name of other values such as health, education, or increased possibilities of choice in the future.... [S]eparation between consumption and control is supported by a strong ideology ... namely, that those who administer the service are in a better position to judge what is good for the consumer than he is himself (Etzioni, 1964: 97-98).

To the extent that agents accept societal ends of the value continua over individual ends, or organizational goals over professional ones, they and not their clients may determine treatment plans. The client's one option is to forfeit assistance altogether, that is, to decide that the payment required for it is too high. Otherwise, if the client wants the resources of the agent more than the agent wants the self-determination of the client, control rests with the agent.<sup>20</sup>

The balance of power which emerges during the assessment phase of counselling continues into the treatment phase. The agent continues to offer resources relevant to the resolution of the client's problem, including his skills at enabling the client to use his own resources. In return, he wants the client

to implement the treatment plan. He wants client follow-through.

A client may fail to follow through either by acting in a manner too independent of the treatment plan or too dependent upon it. If the content of the plan has not been mutually developed and agreed upon, the client may "drag his feet" or express hostility toward the plan, the agent, or the agency. Ideally, a professional helper committed to client self-fulfillment recognizes apathy or hostility as indications that the assessment and/or study phases of counselling must be repeated with an even greater emphasis on client input (Perlman, 1979: 89; Shulman, 1979: 76).

However, the official reluctance to "take over" at this point is often stronger than the actual reservation held by the agent (Hollis, 1964: 89). An agent pursuing organizational goals may respond to client apathy with coercive techniques, and to client hostility with bureaucratic authority (Scott, 1969: 125-128). As long as the client wants the agent's resources more than the agent wants client self-fulfillment, the agent remains in control. He "teaches the client how to behave and what to request if benefits are to be forthcoming" (Handleman, 1976: 229).

A client may also fail to follow through with the intent of the treatment plan: he may implement its content but do so with an attitude of dependency on the agent. In particular, a less educated person with no experience as a client will "tend more to expect advice and a somewhat more authoritative approach" (Hollis, 1964: 149). For the agent interested in client

appreciation or one according societal rights and responsibilities priority, client dependency presents little problem -- indeed, it may serve to fulfill his wants -- unless and until organizational goals require that the file be closed, and that the client be able to continue his life unaided.

The agent committed to client self-fulfillment, however, must respond to dependency by clarifying the attitudinal differences between himself and his client, by ensuring that "the bridge of dependence he provides is no stronger than necessary," and by guarding against the prolongation of what should be a passing phase (Hollis, 1964: 95; Keith-Lucas, 1972: 9; Perlman, 1979: 73). The professionally oriented agent, like his bureaucratically oriented colleague, accepts dependency, but he also applies skills developed to overcome it:

Nothing is more cruel or less productive than to tell someone that the choice is his and, so to speak, to tell him to go into a corner and decide.... [O]ur job is to provide him with a medium, a situation, and an experience in which choice is possible (Keith-Lucas, 1972: 46).

Thus, whether the client expresses too much independence or too much dependence, as long as his interest in the agent's resources exceeds the agent's interest in his self-fulfillment, control rests with the agent. To the extent that agents aim to achieve organizational goals, they may command compliance or accept dependency. To the extent that they focus on professional goals, agents may balance directive techniques with the exercise

of clients' powers; acceptance with expectation, and support with stimulation (Perlman, 1979: 149). In either case, the balance of power during the treatment phase is established at the discretion of the agent.

This situation may change somewhat at the end of a counselling relationship, depending on which party has more to gain and less to lose from termination. If the client wants "out" when the agent wants to maintain ties, the client regains some of the control he enjoyed during the introductory and study phases. However, if the agent initiates termination before the client feels ready, the client remains relatively powerless (but see Handleman, 1976: 234 on client delaying tactics).

In general, it is the helping professional who, using his "ending skills," prepares the client for the transition to non-professional support systems (Shulman, 1979: 92-105). An end to the counselling relationship is considered both inevitable and in the best interest of the client: "There is nothing so frightening or debilitating as unlimited time" (Keith-Lucas, 1972: 57). Termination may also be in the best interest of the organization, if client turnover is a criterion of agency success (Handleman, 1976: 228).

If the client does not want the relationship to end, if he wants to prolong it, he may renew his offers of what the agent has wanted from him all along: acceptance, disclosure, self-determination and follow-through. In so doing, he implies or explicitly states additional offers of liking and gratitude. Since the purpose of the relationship has supposedly been met --

the problem has come as close to resolution as the agent's and client's resources permit -- such offers no longer serve to fulfill the agent's professional or organizational goals. However, they may satisfy more personal needs: "[T]here is often the pull to stay with the responsive, appreciative client -- it is so gratifying to be needed and wanted!" (Perlman, 1979: 64).

Social service agents are trained to offer attentiveness and responsiveness on a one-way street, without expectation of client gratitude or liking (Keith-Lucas, 1972: 47-48, 50, 67). They are advised that expressions of praise or liking may indicate "the client expects the relation to be more personal than the professional is able or willing to make it" (Etzioni, 1964: 10). Such client "fantasies" of personal relationships with the agent are to be removed through recognition and discussion (Hollis, 1964: 109). Relationship needs for both agents and clients should be "met in our natural environments" (Perlman, 1979: 64).

Such training no doubt reduces the influence which offers of gratitude and liking by the client have on the counselling relationship. But agents are human; they have personal goals as well as professional and organizational ones. As Perlman writes (1979: 208) of the need for "immediate experiential rewards:"

[T]he warm glance and sigh of relief ... the verbal expression of gratitude ... the determined effort to behave in some more constructive ways.... How nourishing to the ego ideal of the help giver these instances are.



To the extent that an agent has an interest in client liking or gratitude, the client who offers such experiential rewards may control the ending phase of the counselling relationship more than the less rewarding client.

To conclude, the relationship which evolves during the five phases of counselling depends very much on the value-orientation of the agent, the goals on which he bases his decisions, and his consequent mode of transaction. But the nature of the relationship also depends on the client's response to the manifest attitudes and behaviour of his agent.

The Euro-Canadian agents whom I interviewed all subscribe to individual-oriented values. They acknowledge only professional goals of client self-fulfillment. And they strive to pursue these goals in the transactional mode of mutual exchange. A professional relationship of mutual exchange is confined to the agent's area of expertise, but it encourages the sharing of control or power with regard to that area. It remains affectively neutral, but permits the agent to share his thoughts and feelings with the client.

In Part Two, I examine the Indo-Canadian client's response to agent transactions which are based on these cultural referents of social exchange. But I also identify agent transactions which appear to reflect a societal-orientation, organizational goals, and a controlling transactional mode, and I examine the response of clients to these agent transactions as well.

Notes: Chapter Two

<sup>11</sup> Biographical information is not available for 14 Euro-Canadian agents who were interviewed in two groups of 6 and 8 persons, respectively (see Appendix A).

<sup>12</sup> The agents ranged in age from 22 to 53 years. In general, the younger agents had taken the cross-cultural courses, but agents of all ages had participated in multicultural in-service training workshops.

<sup>13</sup> As noted in Chapter Four (pp. 129-130), Indo-Canadian agents also hold stereotypical beliefs, not about Indo-Canadian clients as a group, but about different sub-groups. These beliefs are not shared or agreed upon, however. They tend to be unique to individual agents and as such probably have little effect on the overall pattern of interaction between Indo-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients.

<sup>14</sup> The roots of social service values lie deep within the Judaic-Christian tradition (cf. Caponigri, 1971: 104; Wynne, 1980: 99-102). However, even within this tradition, values have been expressed in a dualistic manner. As Shenk notes (1981: 99): "The altruistic value of being one's 'brother's keeper' is contradictory to the individualistic value of 'God helps those who help themselves.'"

<sup>15</sup> Green identifies (1982: 13-22) four styles of intercultural social service delivery: advocacy, brokerage, regulation, and counselling. Although many of the agents interviewed provide each of these from time to time, my thesis,

and hence my discussion of agent goals and transactional modes, focus on counselling. Further research is needed to establish the implications of exchange models for other forms of social service relationships.

<sup>16</sup> Considerations other than funding ones may also affect clients' interests. For example, Blau and Scott note (1962: 78) that "the professional principle of the importance of a stable and continuing relation between worker and client was sacrificed for the distinctly bureaucratic principle of the interchangeability of one worker for another."

<sup>17</sup> Handleman writes (1976: 225) that "the evaluation of relative power" in agent-client relations depends on "the identification of the resources which either party can introduce to obtain benefits from the other." Thus, he goes beyond consideration of what one party can repay the other to a consideration of how one party can coerce the other. He suggests (p. 231-234) that client circumstances such as health and age, and client tactics such as diversification of demand, constitute sources of client coercive power. I agree that client circumstances and tactics affect agent-client interaction, but I suggest that the degree to which they do so depends upon the extent to which the agent has an interest in something the client can give or withhold.

<sup>18</sup> The five phases derive from the "medical model" basis of some schools of social service thought. It is beyond the scope of the present thesis to describe the many variations and differences of opinion which exist within the social service

literature regarding counselling practices. I have attempted a compilation based on the texts recommended to me by agents. Most of these present a Freudian or neo-Freudian perspective on counselling. (The one exception is Bronfenbrenner, 1979.) For a comprehensive analysis of several different counselling approaches see Turner (1979). For a behavioural approach to intercultural counselling see Higginbotham and Tanaka-Matsumi (1981).

<sup>19</sup> Experience and experiments have shown that, at least for North American clients, a client's perception of control over the agent-client relationship is positively related to his progress and satisfaction within that relationship (Anne-Marie Furness, personal communication; see also Rogers, 1973: 240-245).

<sup>20</sup> Handler suggests (1973: 137) that if the agent offers primarily "talking" services, clients feel freer to refuse his advice than when "hard" services are at stake.

### Chapter Three

#### THE INDO-CANADIAN CLIENTS: THEIR CULTURAL REFERENTS OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE

Indo-Canadian immigrants who interact with social service agents do so from a hybrid perspective. In varying degrees, they view exchange encounters with reference to the model of exchange obtaining in their regions of emigration, to that obtaining in their local immigrant communities, and/or with reference to their perception of Euro-Canadian exchange patterns. Each of these bases for perspective is influenced in turn by several factors, including colonial heritage in the regions of emigration and racial biases in the countries of immigration (Djao, 1982: 91-95).

Despite the heterogeneity of superimposed variables, however, a core model of Indian social exchange emerges from an analysis of the ethnographic and sociological literature. In the first three sections of the present chapter, I identify the key cultural referents of this model: the main values, goals, and transactional modes pertaining to exchange relationships in the regions of emigration. Since 28 of the 40 clients interviewed (70%) identify themselves as Jat Sikhs from villages in India's Punjab State, most references are to the Jat farming caste or class, the Sikh religion, and the rural Punjab (see Appendix A). However, the cultural referents of exchange relationships among Hindus in India and Hindus in Fiji are also noted.

In the final two sections of the chapter I indicate the extent to which the model of social exchange, posited for the regions of emigration, persists in the countries of immigration. Within the Indian immigrant communities, the values, goals, and possibly the transactional modes appear not only to obtain but also to assist in the maintenance of community life. Between the immigrants and the non-immigrant populations, the same cultural referents are seen to create difficulties, specifically with regard to the delivery of social services.

#### The Value of Family Honour

There is no dearth of information on social exchange in Indian culture. Most ethnographic accounts, whether they focus on marriage or on caste, on politics or on religion, document exchange as symbolic of and central to the social relationships involved. A few scholars have suggested South Asian exchange as a phenomenon demanding focus in and of itself:

If I were to sum up the core theme of Indian culture in one word, I should choose the word giving .... Giving as a kind of repeated exchange is at the center of the natural and moral universe (McClelland, 1975: 134).

These scholars point not only to the pervasiveness but also the complexity of exchange in India:

South Asian society has developed transactional thinking perhaps further than has any other. It exhibits an elaborate transactional culture, characterized by explicit, institutionalized concern for

givings and receivings (Marriott, 1976: 109).

But exchange, even if it constitutes an ethos in Indian culture, is not an end in itself. It is a means to the attainment of value-related goals.

Most frequently, the literature suggests that correct form and content in giving and receiving serves to fulfill dharma, one's duty according to one's station in life. Especially for Hindus, the fulfillment of dharma relates to the value of moksha or release from the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. A Hindu who gives and receives according to his dharma, and who dies without debt, may be re-united with the eternal life-force, or at least be reborn to a higher station in his next life (McClelland, 1975: 135-136). For Sikhs, although they also believe in reincarnation and the desirability of moksha, the goal of behaving according to one's dharma (Punjabi: dharam) and the decision-making behaviour associated with that goal is more frequently related in the literature to the value of honour or izzat (also: mann).

Honour, defined as positive community appraisal, may be bestowed by a community on an individual, a family, or on a group. But most commonly in patrilineal, agrarian societies it is the family which constitutes "the bearer of virtue, and of its public reflection, reputation" (Wolf, 1966: 8):

Because the family involves the "whole" man, public evaluations of a man are ultimately led back to considerations of his family. Moreover, any gross infringement of virtue by one of its members reflects on the amount

of virtue held by the others.

Family honour affects its members' social standing. Members' behaviour affects the family's honour.

In the villages of the Punjab, the "family" whose honour is so highly valued may be conceived of as a series of concentric circles based on agnatic kinship ties. An individual's reputation accrues first of all to his nuclear family, secondly to his residential household which may be patrilineally joint or extended, and thirdly to the head of household's "brotherhood" of agnatic kinsmen, the baradari, and their families (Hershman, 1981: 94-106). When an individual is exhorted to alter his behaviour in consideration of family izzat, it is ultimately the honour of the larger grouping which is at stake:

An individual's izzat is especially vulnerable as it is considered largely in the context of group membership.... One family member's behaviour affects the whole kin group (Helweg, 1979: 11,18).

In Hindu India, the concentric circles of nuclear family, joint family, sub-caste, and caste function in a similar manner to articulate standards of behaviour, apply pressure for conformity to them, and reap the consequences of individual members' compliance or non-compliance. At one time it may have been the sub-caste whose role was most significant and whose honour most at stake in relation to its members' fulfillment of dharma. In contemporary Hindu India, the joint family appears to have assumed these functions:



The basic role of the joint family is to do honour to its heritage, improve upon it if possible, and enable youth to carry this heritage into the next generation (Howard, 1971: 18).

As in Sikh society, the Hindu individual's prestige is subordinated to that of a group, and his behaviour will affect the honour accorded that group. However, individual reputation in Hindu society appears to affect and reflect a more confined grouping than that of a brotherhood, namely, the joint family.

In Fiji, the locus of honour in rural Hindu society is less clear, and may have shifted since the abolition of the indenture system in 1920.<sup>21</sup> A recent study suggests that residential clusters of nuclear units related by kinship "constitute the key groupings in Fiji Indian rural society" (Jayawardena, 1983: 147). Any one such cluster, termed a "household,"

...carves out of relations between kin and affines a unit that can be called a family: producing the new generation, socializing them and fostering sentiments of solidarity between concentrically widening rings of consanguines (Jayawardena, 1983: 178).

However, participation in a "household" is voluntary. Individuals or nuclear units can shift residence within their consanguineal and affinal networks to "avoid being enmeshed in a cluster with declining resources," or, presumably, to terminate association with a cluster of questionable honour (Jayawardena, 1983: 148). Once outside the residential "household," an individual's ties "dissolve into kinship." His behaviour cannot affect their izzat, nor does the latter determine his

reputation.

In sum, the emphasis on family honour appears to increase with the size and immutability of the "family" whose prestige affects and is affected by its members, from the cluster of nuclear units in Hindu Fiji, to the joint family in Hindu India, to the entire brotherhood in the Sikh Punjab. Correspondingly, the value placed on positive community appraisal of the individual, on personal honour per se, appears to decrease with these factors. Among Hindus in rural Fiji, it was the individual who suffered a loss of izzat at the time of indenture (Ali, 1979: 67). Afterwards, as Hindu society reestablished itself, differences in prestige and relative rank "were as much between individuals" as between other units (Mayer, 1973: 160, italics original). To this day, despite the apparent increase in kinship-based residential patterns, a rural Fijian Hindu relies upon his "individual reputation ... to call upon friends to support him in time of difficulty" (Brenneis and Padarath, 1979: 57).<sup>22</sup>

In contrast, for Hindus in India, sources of support and objects of duty are more likely to be the family than the self. True, a person's interest in fulfilling dharma in order to attain moksha suggests at least a potential for emphasis on individual honour as a goal in itself (Wood, 1975: 53). But security in this life requires the "subordination of individual desires to the family's good" (Howard, 1971: 18):

[Members] must understand that maintaining a strong family means that they themselves will have a secure and dignified life.

The nature and allocation of roles within the joint family promote such familial loyalties:

[T]raditional patterns of socialization ... ensured diffusion of identification and partial individuation in the individual. He therefore tended to rely upon norms, rules and constraints which were more aggregative in nature and this reliance was psychologically validated by his extended family, caste, and village republic (Nandy, 1970: 67).

In other words, the family both facilitates behaviour conducive to maintaining its honour and reinforces such behaviour. "Personal achievement and initiative ... are even now pejorative ideas and they have to be sanctified with reference to particularistic group goals" (Nandy, 1970: 68).

Similarly, despite the stated emphasis in Sikh religious doctrine on an individual's responsibility for his own moksha (James, 1974: 30), Sikh social philosophy emphasizes an individual's responsibility for his brotherhood's izzat. Among Sikhs, group prestige and interests quite explicitly take precedence over personal prestige and interests (C. Ballard, 1979: 111):

One who claims to be a Sikh claims a framework within which he can be expected to honor general practical obligations and defer individual and family requirements (Leaf, 1972: 220).

In return, it is to the larger kin group that "the individual looks for financial and practical help, as well as emotional support in any crisis" (James, 1974: 17).

To summarize, honour, defined as positive community appraisal, constitutes a significant value for Indian Sikhs, Indian Hindus, and Fijian Hindus alike. Each group varies in the nature of the locus to which honour accrues, and hence in the degree to which group members pressure one another to achieve and maintain it. But for each group, the value placed on positive community appraisal renders decision-making and related behaviour subject to community standards.

### The Goal of Dharma

The community standards relevant to the evaluation of family honour "invariably ... refer back to the way in which people handle their domestic affairs" (Wolf, 1966: 8). Both inherited reputations and those generated in the present are based on intra-familial patterns of "economic provisioning, socialization, the exchange of sexual services, [and] the bestowal of affect" (Wolf, 1966: 7):

A relation continues to exist between the way in which a family carries out these multi-purpose functions and the ways in which it is evaluated in the eyes of the larger community (Wolf, 1966: 8).

In making decisions, it is in an individual's interest to ensure that community standards regarding familial functions are met.

But just as the definitions of the "family" whose honour is so highly valued vary from one group to another, so too do the agreed-upon standards for evaluating familial behaviour. Particularly in Indian culture, where the overall goal of

fulfilling one's dharma by definition creates "as many moral codes as appointed stations in life ... the concept of rightness and goodness varie[s] with caste, occupation, age, and sex roles" (Nandy, 1970: 72).

For the Sikhs of India's Punjab, the fulfillment of dharam entails specific modes of behaviour relating not only to the individual and his immediate family but also to his larger community:

Man's Dharam is to live in society, raising a family, helping his fellows, trying to free himself of instincts of greed, fear, anger and so on.... Certainly duty to the family and community, including the maintenance of their traditions, is essentially a religious Dharam (James, 1974: 31).

The observance of social customs and relations is an integral part of dharam, "probably more important than subscribing to a set of beliefs of a metaphysical kind that we would call 'religion'" (James, 1974: 24).

The emphasis on community-related aspects of dharam is evidenced by the specific behavioural goals considered conducive to high izzat. Helweg identifies seven such goals (1979: 12-15) which may be summarized as follows:<sup>23</sup>

1. Brotherly love: deep affection and loyalty manifested through lending money, aiding in sickness, and providing food and shelter without expectation of return.
2. Hospitality: provision of food and shelter for indefinite periods of time without expectation of any return save a bond of mutual friendship.

3. Service to others: help or gifts for individuals or the community rendered without expectation of return.

4. Caste purity: behaviour devoid of polluting, defiling, and immoral consequences.

5. Power: measured by the number of followers acquired through the bestowal of goods and favours.

6. Wealth: an end in itself, but also a means to power through patronage, or through the acquisition of contacts which can benefit others.

7. Landownership: essential for a personal sense of manliness, it is also a measure of wealth and hence a means to power.

Six out of these seven concepts relating to the evaluation of izzat in Sikh society involve giving of oneself or one's resources. The first three goals of brotherly love, hospitality, and service to others represent standards of evaluation directly pertaining to one's transactions with others in the community. The last three goals of power, wealth, and landownership may be construed as ends in themselves, but, if they are to contribute to the enhancement of family honour, they must be employed as a means of giving to community members.

Only caste purity, "present in Punjabi life ... in spite of the Sikh gurus rejecting caste" (Helweg, 1979: 13), constitutes a behavioural goal unrelated to one's propensity or capacity to give. For Sikhs, the maintenance of caste purity entails adherence to certain moral codes, in particular that of female modesty, and adherence to certain ritual practices, occupational conditions, and codes of dress and diet (James, 1974: 24, 81).

Caste purity also influences the definitions of endogamy and exogamy when marriages are arranged (H. Singh, 1977). However, it does not restrict other dimensions of inter-caste relations. Indeed, one central institution of Sikhism, the langar or common kitchen, both in principle and in practice rejects caste as a basis for patterns of social interaction (James, 1974: 40; Leaf, 1972: 153; Mukherjee, 1982: 129).

Although the behavioural standards by which izzat is gauged emphasize community orientation, they reflect a brotherhood's handling of its internal, domestic affairs. The attainment of wealth and landownership establishes a family's success in "economic provisioning." The maintenance of caste purity and demonstrations of hospitality indicate familial success in socializing the young. And by providing service to others and by manifesting brotherly love to non-family members, individuals are also evaluated for their intra-familial "bestowal of affect:"

The basic element in Sikh moral teaching is sewa, service done without desire for reward.... In daily life, it is the ideal of selfless service to the community, but above all doing one's duty (Dharam) in one's own family and immediate circle" (James, 1974: 46).

A Sikh brotherhood acquires honour not only because its members contribute to the community, but also because such contributions reflect internal order, loyalty, and good management:

Service within the kin group is as important, if not more so, than service to outsiders.... [C]oncern of consanguines is

very important in gaining a high evaluation. If family members are loyal and helpful to one another, they are considered an izzatwali family, a family with high honour (Helweg, 1979: 18).

For Hindus in India, the caste-purity aspect of dharma appears more relevant to behavioural standards and goals in general, and to inter-caste transactions in particular. To reflect caste status and thereby maintain family honour, an individual should give certain commodities to lower caste persons, but receive those commodities only from persons of higher caste. Commodities of the same kind -- symbolically, cooked foods -- are both given and received only between equals. A communal kitchen such as found in Sikh temples could not exist among strict Hindus. Along with exchange itself, hierarchy must be considered an "immutable" of Hindu culture (Galey, 1983: 120; Nandy, 1970: 69). But within the confines of the hierarchical caste structure, emphasis is placed on giving, an act which earns religious merit for Hindus as it does for Sikhs (Hershman, 1983: 192).

A second set of behavioural standards and goals relates not to the Indian Hindu's dharma according to caste but to his dharma according to stage of life and role in the family. For example, it is a mother-in-law's duty to instruct her son's wife; it is a duty of the daughter-in-law to receive the advice and to give her husband's mother devoted service, or seva (Vatuk, 1975: 149-155). Positive community appraisal accrues to the family whose members interact with one another, as well as



with members of other castes, according to their dharma. Indeed, with the decreasing relevance of caste and sub-caste as a locus of honour, it may well be the dharma pertaining to familial relations which reflects most directly on an individual's reputation, and hence on family honour.

Among Hindus in rural Fiji, where the systems of both caste and joint family have been highly transformed, the religious precept of duty to others appears to have survived in a diffused but no less commanding state. When asked to indicate what behavioural guidance they derive from their religion, Hindu villagers most frequently indicate "the ideal of concern for others" (Wilson, 1979: 98-99). They define dharma as the duty "to feed the hungry, to help the blind ... to help those who are in need of your help." No mention was made of the attitude toward receiving, but laudable behaviour involved benevolence:

The framework provides what might be termed selfish motives for being unselfish.... Religion has inculcated the feeling expressed by some that the very purpose of life is to be found in service to others.... Self-interest and the interest of others coincide then (Wilson, 1979: 100-101).

Within the clusters of nuclear family units, the "households," much of the dutiful behaviour between members as it is known in India may be observed "in the breach" or acknowledged "as an ideal" (David, 1964: 391-393; Mayer, 1973: 165-166). In particular, the role of women within the household appears less bound by the dharma of service to others, although the literature disagrees somewhat on this point.<sup>24</sup> However, the

behaviour of women outside the family constitutes one of the key sources of honour or dishonour for household members. A man's reputation is linked to that of his close female relatives (Brenneis, 1979: 50). As among Punjabi Sikhs, Fijian Hindu men rely on the chastity of their women for their own community standing (Brenneis and Padarath, 1979: 57).

Despite the obvious dissimilarities, the ascribed goals of Indian Sikhs, Indian Hindus, and Fijian Hindus have in common several features. All are based on a concept of ascribed duty, duty which is determined by one's religion, social caste or class, and position within the family unit. Secondly, in each group the fulfillment of this dharam or dharma entails adherence to certain intra-familial patterns of behaviour, and to certain patterns of interaction with the larger community. Finally, the ascribed duty vis a vis the larger community in each case involves giving, helping, and serving without thought of return. A member of a Sikh brotherhood, an Indian Hindu joint family, or a Fijian Hindu household who fulfills his familial and community duties contributes to the honour of the social unit which in turn establishes his own prestige.

### Transacting Status

Given the goal of maintaining and demonstrating family self-sufficiency, it comes as no surprise that solutions to family members' problems are sought within the family. With only one exception, respondents indicated that in their countries of emigration, relatives would have handled the difficulties the

respondents are now experiencing:

In India, you tell your relatives according to the friendship you have [with them]. They will talk with your children, tell them to show respect, how you are suffering.

There is no divorce in the Punjab. Parents think "it is our duty to make them reunite." Or your brothers and sisters help if there is a dispute.

In the exceptional case, a respondent who felt "ashamed" of the way his brothers treated him says he shared his problem with friends:

I got no help from my family in Fiji. But from friends, yes. They will give you ideas, discuss things when your mind is not working properly.

None of the forty respondents had ever received counselling advice prior to immigration except from relatives or close friends.

To identify factors relevant to helping relationships between non-family members, it is therefore necessary to extrapolate from the patterns of interaction posited for Indian society generally. Following the analysis done by Marriott (1976), four interactive modes or "transactional tactics" obtain: giving, exchanging, non-exchanging, and receiving. Each of these modes has implications for the status of the person employing it, and hence for his fulfillment of ascribed goals and the realization of family honour.

Persons who give stand above those who receive in power and prestige (Marriott, 1976: 112).<sup>25</sup> In the hierarchy of the caste

system, Brahmins at the apex of the pyramid epitomize the transactional tactic of bestowing on all but receiving from none. They are accorded the highest rank through, among other things, "their great gifts to other terrestrial men -- cosmic knowledge ... teaching, and advice" (Marriott, 1976: 129). In the hierarchy of the family unit, a comparable rank is held by elders who, through experience, have acquired knowledge which is "'donated' for social purposes" (Wynne, 1980: 57). Persons who unilaterally bestow money, clothing, food or other commodities also rank above those who receive them, but for present purposes it is important to note that prestations of knowledge and advice are associated with the highest ranking positions of Indian society: "The person who gives advice, in the Indian value system has more power than the one receiving it" (McClelland, 1975: 159).

From the perspective of the giver, power over receivers may be a less important consequence of giving than the attainment of other goals. Indeed, it is necessary "to disguise one's assertive powers in the form of doing good to and for others" if prestations are to qualify as truly unilateral and truly selfless (McClelland, 1975: 146-147). Of greater significance to the giver is the fact that giving serves to fulfill his dharma, thus earning him religious merit and positive community appraisal. For example:

Hospitality in their own homes is regarded by Sikhs as part of their Dharam or duty.... All work ceases, and no effort is spared to make [a guest] comfortable -- this is thought to bring great credit and blessings

to the host (James, 1974:40).

While the attainment of power over others constitutes a direct return for prestations and should be disguised, social approval accrues indirectly and does not compromise the giver:

Although a Jat does not ask for anything in return for help, it is proper for him to expect and receive recognition for it.... a humble person serves others and is publicly recognized for it (Helweg, 1979: 16,155).

Since community appraisal of an individual's behaviour reflects on his family, the transactional tactic of giving without receiving, whether it results in power over others or not, contributes to the honour of both the receiver and his family.

From the perspective of the receiver, the allocation of power implied by unilateral transactions bears more directly on the fulfillment of dharma and on the maintenance of family honour. On the one hand, where differences in power and prestige are already established, it may be the receiver's duty to accept prestations, and to acknowledge subordinate status through acts of servitude, gratitude, and deference. Within the caste system, indebtedness of lower castes to higher castes is considered inevitable and appropriate (Marriott, 1976: 128). Within the family unit, members of lesser status are expected to receive from those of higher status.<sup>26</sup> Junior females in particular fulfill their dharma and preserve family honour by receiving from, and demonstrating indebtedness to, males and senior females (Marriott, 1976: 137).

On the other hand, where differences in power and prestige

do not already exist, unilateral transactions create them. In requesting or accepting prestations, a receiver acknowledges the relative superiority of the giver, regardless of his socially acknowledged rank:

The person who asks for help automatically assumes an inferior position and admits from the outset: "You are stronger and more powerful than I am, therefore give to me" (McClelland, 1975: 155).

As Marriott notes (1976: 114), "'attributional' rankings ... and 'interactional' rankings ... thus amount in South Asian theory to two aspects of the same thing."

If receiving from a would-be social equal or subordinate, rather than from a superior, it is less incumbent upon the receiver to acknowledge indebtedness through demonstrations of gratitude and deference. In such instances, the very act of requesting or accepting prestations "is in itself a sign of respect" (McClelland, 1975: 155). Nevertheless, the re-allocation of power implied by unilateral transactions between would-be equals amounts to a violation of the receiver's dharma, and hence a threat to his family honour. Unlike the giver, whose transactional tactic contributes to izzat whether or not it gains him power, the receiver invites negative community appraisal -- shame -- precisely because he has lost power.<sup>27</sup>

Given the positive consequences of bestowing prestations, and the negative implications of receiving them, a potlatch-like competition in giving might be expected. In fact, the literature does note a certain amount of competition, especially between

Punjabi Sikh brotherhoods, with regard to donations to the temple and other community causes (cf. R. Ballard, 1979: 154). However, such competition can only result in the acquisition of izzat. No one individual or group loses izzat because none has received from another: prestations are accepted on behalf of the impersonal, generalized community as a whole.

Three other features of Indian culture also modify competitive tendencies by not discouraging receiving while encouraging giving. First of all, as noted above, the hierarchical structures of caste and family ensure that for most dutiful givers there are dutiful receivers. In accepting prestations, subordinates in caste or family rank fulfill their dharma just as much as do the superiors who bestow them.

Secondly, the accrument of honour to social groupings rather than to individuals frees transactions within those groupings from implications of indebtedness. Members of a Punjabi Sikh brotherhood, an Indian Hindu joint family, or a Fijian Hindu cluster of nuclear families give and receive freely among themselves in what Sahlins (1972: 193) would refer to as a system of generalized rather than balanced reciprocity:

The more imprecise the reciprocity system, the broader the responsibilities that can be generated to the benefit of all. Presumably, that is why many pre-industrial societies place such a high premium on honor, loyalty, courage and other evidences of fidelity within their basic group: the assumption is that what the members of such groups "owe" one another is incalculable (Wynne, 1980: 41).

By engaging freely in generalized exchange, members of the units

to which honour accrues not only facilitate the attainment of common goals -- self-sufficiency and service to outsiders -- but also earn positive community appraisal for their loyalty and generosity to one another.

Finally, among social equals outside of family groupings, competition in giving is controlled and receiving is rendered non-stigmatic through the employment of Marriott's third transactional tactic, that of exchange. Persons who consider themselves social equals and who can afford to give equal prestations receive from one another without altering their relative prestige or power. The absolute power of both parties may in fact increase, since such mutual exchange relationships constitute the bases for alliances and friendships.

Marriott suggests (1976: 125) that the transactional tactic of symmetrical exchange characterizes the Kshatriya or warrior castes of Indian society -- castes with which the majority of the Indo-Canadian clients interviewed associate themselves. By maximizing the size and number of their exchange relationships, social groupings build powerful political alliances (Leaf, 1972: 109). At the individual level, repeated acts of mutual giving and receiving create fast friendships (Helweg, 1979: 12). In an analysis of a folktale featuring North Indian Kshatriyas, Todorov concludes (1983: 48-51): "Affective transformation replaces the transfer of goods.... friendship, for example, is the best credit."

Once an exchange relationship has been initiated, considerable pressures exist to maintain it. Refusal to accept a



prestation would terminate the alliance or friendship and might shame or anger the giver (Hershman, 1981: 204). Failure to return a prestation would also disrupt relations and shame the receiver. As one social service agent, a Punjabi, put it:

Once the cycle of reciprocity is broken, the person gets condemned, despised. He is really excommunicated.

Since shame, like honour, accrues to the family grouping, pressure to maintain approved exchange relationships and material support facilitating their maintenance come from the family grouping as a whole.

In sum, the hierarchical nature of caste and family, the familial locus of izzat, and the benefits obtained through mutual exchange modify most tendencies toward competitive giving. Giving is encouraged and rewarded, but receiving -- from ascribed superiors, from members of one's own family grouping, or from social equals who accept return prestations -- is not discouraged or punished. Rather, it contributes to the fulfillment of dharma, and hence to the maintenance of family honour.

However, receiving between persons who consider themselves superior to each other, or between acknowledged equals who cannot afford equal prestations, violates dharma and threatens family prestige. As Todorov notes (1983: 65):

[W]hereas maximum inequality seems to guarantee an harmonious conducting of transactions, near equality of status combined with great material discrepancy leads to power struggles....

Thus, where parties rival one another for status, neither will receive from the other, so neither gives to the other. Similarly, if an individual perceives the equality of another's status, but cannot reciprocate the other's prestations, he will decline to accept them. Both situations result in Marriott's fourth transactional tactic, that of non-exchange.

The employment of non-exchange as a mode of transaction is influenced by the same features of Indian culture which render receiving an acceptable tactic. The hierarchical structure of society obliges closely ranked individuals and groups to decide whether to receive from one another or not. At times, as noted above, benefits may be gained through the acknowledgement of equality and the initiation of exchange relationships. But if greater benefits are thought to accrue from a claim to superior rank, non-exchange results. Instead of a competition in giving, there is a competition in not receiving. Even conversation with rivals, since it means listening to them, is avoided, because it brings one "down to the common level" (Marriott, 1976: 132).

Similarly, the accruing of honour to the family grouping and the necessity of reciprocating prestations to maintain that honour not only result in familial support for exchange relationships. Where resources are scarce, they may also lead to decisions not to exchange:

The help needed by any one household can be provided by a few other households, and a large number of friends is, in a sense, less useful than a few friends (Leaf, 1972: 77).

Rather than risk their material well-being by having to make

return prestations, or their social status by not making them, families rely on their own resources. After all, giving outside the family is significant primarily as an indication of success within the family. Self-sufficiency more than external exchange or giving is the cornerstone of family honour.

To summarize, each of the four transactional tactics identified for Indian culture has implications for the relative status of the person employing it. Marriott illustrates this point succinctly (1976: 133) with observations from North India:

Feast encounters ... yield ranked categorizations of the actors as "refined men" (those who are feeders but not fed), "men" (those who are sometimes feeders, sometimes fed), "their own men" (neither feeders nor fed), and "dogs" (fed, but not feeders).

Conversely, the relative status of a person determines in large measure the transactional tactic he will employ in a particular situation: giving to subordinates, receiving from superiors, exchanging with equals, and refraining from exchange with rivals. In other words, the tactic employed affects the actor's status, and the actor's status influences his mode of transaction: "Actors and their interactions are never to be separated from each other, they change together" (Marriott, 1976: 112).

### Exchange in the Immigrant Context

Studies of Indian immigrant communities do not focus on social exchange as a central cultural theme to the extent that

studies of Indian society do. But the cultural referents of exchange posited for the regions of emigration do appear relevant to the immigrant context. Both published accounts of overseas communities and data generated for the present thesis suggest at least an influence on exchange behaviour of the value of family honour, the goal of fulfilling ascribed duties, and the status implications of the four transactional modes.

Most noticeably, the value of family honour as appraised by the community appears alive and well in the immigrant context, particularly among Punjabi Sikhs:

[T]hose who have gone overseas are very much conscious of the bonds of duty and affection within the family.... [They] are subject to pressure from their own elders, and fear for the good name of their family (James, 1974: 15,18).

The community which appraises a family's reputation consists of fellow immigrants and of fellow villagers still resident in the Punjab. Yet concern with family honour also influences interaction with natives of the country of immigration:

The cultural notion of honour or izzat, along with related concepts, greatly colours the Punjabi migrant's attitudes and perceptions of his experience in England.... Izzat is so entrenched in Sikh Jat culture that an appreciation of it can be projected on to outsiders (Helweg, 1979: 10-11).

Although my interviews with Punjabi Sikhs focused on transactions between them and Euro-Canadians, references to family reputation constituted a recurring theme.

Interviews with non-Punjabi Indian Hindus and with Fijian

Hindus also contained references to pride or honour, but almost inevitably it was personal pride or the honour of a married couple that was indicated. Several factors probably contribute to this contrast with Punjabi Sikhs. First of all, as described above, already in the regions of emigration the loci to which honour accrues are more confined for Hindus than for Sikhs. Secondly, at least in Vancouver, immigrant Hindus have not established integrated communities to the extent that Sikhs have (Wood, 1980: 277; but see also Dusenbery, 1981). Fijian Hindus base their interpersonal networks on a selection of relatives, "not a slavish maintenance of kin ties" (Buchignani, 1983: 83). Finally, the absolute size of Vancouver's Hindu communities is relatively small.<sup>28</sup> Historical analyses of overseas Sikhs indicate that it was only with significant numbers of immigrants that "family honour became a concern, even obsession, replacing a more laissez-faire attitude" (LaBrack, 1983: 228; see also Helweg, 1979: 56-58).

Whether personal honour or the honour of a family grouping is at stake, the ascribed goals relevant to attaining honour in the immigrant context appear directly related to those posited in the regions of emigration. In particular, scholars note the extent to which the goals of landownership, caste purity, and service to others orient exchange relationships within overseas Indian communities. These same goals also have implications for the way in which overseas Indians interact with non-immigrants in the countries of immigration.

The desire to own property constitutes "the fundamental

material objective" of Fijian Hindus and Indian Sikhs alike (Buchignani, 1983: 77):

Owning a home means security and symbolizes prosperity and the stable family. It is also important as a status marker.

Indeed, cooperative efforts to obtain land may characterize Indian immigrant behaviour when the goal of caste purity, even at the time of marriage, is ignored (cf. LaBrack, 1983; Leonard, 1981). To non-immigrant Canadians, "East Indians seem far more eager to buy property than they themselves are" (Mayer, 1959: 25), a perception which constitutes a main source of negative feeling towards Indo-Canadians in general (Buchignani, 1980b: 83). The priority accorded landownership may also perplex and frustrate social service agents who feel priority should go to an improved standard of living, albeit in rented accommodation (Triseliotis, 1972:10). For the present thesis, however, the primary significance of the goal of landownership lies in its symbolization of the stable, sufficient family.

The goal of caste purity appears more relevant to Sikh immigrants than to Hindus, especially Fijian Hindus. As indicated with reference to the value of family honour, the difference may be due to the fact that the Hindu communities in Vancouver are smaller and less integrated: Sikh attention to codes of dress, diet, and ritual behaviour tend to increase with increases in migration. In addition, it is argued by scholars and by some social service agents that Fijian and Indian Hindus possess a more cosmopolitan outlook. They appear "pre-adapted"

to Canadian values and practices, and more accepting of them (Buchignani, 1980b: 90; 1983: 73). Nevertheless, adherence to moral codes, in particular those pertaining to the role and position of female family members, sets both Sikhs and Hindus apart from the bulk of Canadian society. Interviewed agents providing social, health, and educational counselling all describe problems which they perceive the Indian attitude towards women poses for themselves as agents and for their female clients.

The "service to others" noted for immigrant Indian communities includes hospitality to recent arrivals. New immigrants from Fiji, Punjab State and elsewhere in India often stay with relatives or friends for extended periods of time (Buchignani, 1983: 74; Helweg, 1979: 12). Of the 40 immigrants in the present study, 26 (65%) lived with kin or fictive kin upon arrival for between six weeks and two years. Only one, a Fijian Hindu, paid cash for room and board, although others presented gifts to their hosts and/or purchased food for common consumption. All of the remaining 14 respondents rented their initial accommodation "from friends," either through direct previous arrangement or indirectly through relatives.

Facilitating employment, guaranteeing loans, and orienting newcomers generally to the country of immigration constitute other important forms of service to others (Buchignani, 1980a: 134; Helweg, 1979: 59-61). Of the 47 jobs held by the respondents since their arrival in Canada, 28 (60%) were obtained through fellow countrymen. All but two family doctors were selected on

the basis of recommendations from Indo-Canadian friends, although the doctors themselves tended to be Chinese or Euro-Canadian. Information on medical insurance, family allowance, registration for school, and so forth, even when received in written form at the time of immigration, was acted upon under instruction from relatives and friends.

Since all but one of the immigrants were sponsored by relatives, it cannot be suggested that their benefactors are motivated by the goal of service to others rather than by their commitment to the Canadian government's terms of sponsorship. Clearly, however, the immigrants receiving the help consider it to fulfill ascribed goals recognized in the regions of emigration. Assistance from relatives demonstrates devoted service or seva within the family:

My husband's father's brother met us at the airport and took us to his house....He took my husband to the Manpower office....This is our way. In the Punjab, families do everything for each other.

Assistance from friends demonstrates brotherly love and seva to others. It quite often leads to kin-like ties, or at least to kinship terms of reference:

One family from the same village as my husband saw to all our needs. After them there was nobody. They are our family here.

Finally, the services of persons unrelated by kinship or friendship receive particular gratitude and public acknowledgement (cf. Helweg, 1979: 60-61). The old Sikh lady who



befriended a deserted Gujarati bride, and the Fijian Hindu youth who found employment for his Sikh neighbor from Calcutta are openly praised for having provided truly selfless seva. One repeatedly-mentioned Sikh man who "helps anyone and everyone who needs help" holds an elected position in a Sikh temple association.

Other individuals who also assist newcomers but who ask material remuneration for their services are not considered to demonstrate true service to others (Helweg, 1979:77-78):

Indian landlords and 'job-fixers' were in a position to extract a lot of money from [recent immigrants], though the ethics of the village-family system made those who did this social outcastes in the end (James, 1974: 11).

However, response to remunerated service varies. Labour contractors unrelated to the respondents by kinship or village ties are not condemned, although it is known that they take cuts from the wages earned and/or charge high fees for transportation to job-sites. "This is their business," " They want to make a profit so they do this" (see also Helweg, 1979: 42-43). But a relative or fellow villager who profits from similar services "has no pride. He does not care for others, what they think":

My husband's cousin-brother helped with my I.C.B.C. claim. But we should [e.g. were expected to] give him such big dinners, so many bottles of Black Label. It was terrible. How can he do that? He is our brother.

Just as expressions of appreciation for free services increase

with the social distance between helper and helped, expressions of scorn for paid services increase with social proximity.<sup>29</sup> To Euro-Canadians, however, exploitation within the immigrant communities is abhorrent regardless of the social distance involved (Buchignani, 1980b: 83).

In fulfilling the ascribed goals of family sufficiency, caste purity, and service to others, immigrant Indians utilize one or more of the transactional modes posited for their regions of emigration. They give, receive, exchange and/or decide not to exchange in their efforts to maintain or enhance family honour. However, information concerning the social implications of each mode in the immigrant context has yet to be systematically obtained. Judging from the data on service to others, giving appears to result in increased honour and status. But it is not clear whether receiving help from fellow countrymen results in a loss of status.<sup>30</sup> Collaborative efforts to acquire land indicate the utilization of exchange tactics among social equals, but less is known about the employment of non-exchange between rivals for status. The application of Marriott's model of social exchange to the Indian immigrant context would, I believe, provide answers to many questions raised by the literature presently available .

To summarize, the cultural referents of social exchange posited for the regions of emigration appear relevant to exchange behaviour within the communities of immigration. Some referents receive greater notice from scholars than others. Social implications of the various transactional modes remain,

for the most part, relative unknowns. Perhaps, as in India, they are all but sub-conscious influences on transactors, blending as they do with explicit awareness of ascribed duties and hence with concern for family honour.

The value of family honour and the goals of family sufficiency, caste purity, and service to others are comparatively well documented. Immigrants themselves readily articulate them, and non-immigrants identify them for the ways in which they contrast with their own values and goals, and for the problems which the contrasts present. The question remains as to whether the social implications of the transactional modes, however subtle they may be, might not also pose problems for intercultural exchange.

#### Non-Exchange with Canadian Social Services

Data obtained for the present thesis indicate that at least in their dealings with social service agents, Indo-Canadian immigrants are indeed influenced by the social implications of the alternative transactional modes, as well as by the goals and values characterizing the Indian model of social exchange. In Part Two, the implications of giving, receiving, and exchanging are examined in relation to the patterns of agent-client interaction identified. The implications of not exchanging of course lead to a lack of interaction, and as such might appear to warrant little attention here. But the pattern of service non-utilization, as it is known in the social service literature, exemplifies the effects of the cultural referents of

exchange, and foreshadows some of the main factors involved in patterns of utilization.

Much of the literature pertaining to service non-utilization by immigrants notes how alien the concept and structure of social services can be to newcomers (Ferguson, 1964: 100; Selyan, 1978: 3; Triseliotis, 1972: 6). For a person accustomed to seeking help via established personal relationships, the very idea of a professional helping relationship may simply be too foreign to entertain. Furthermore, immigrants who lack the language and other communication skills may get lost in the maze of referrals and counter-referrals, application forms, and appointment procedures. Newcomers from socio-economically distinct backgrounds are likely to feel particularly intimidated:

It is difficult for Canadians brought up in an urban society to understand the shyness and the feelings of inferiority with which [rural immigrants] approach even a minor clerk (Ferguson, 1964: 100).

Certainly lack of familiarity with the context of services must account for some non-utilization of those services by new Canadians.

However, the interviews with Indo-Canadians of the present study reveal few examples where shyness, confusion, or language barriers restricted immigrants from availing themselves of services.<sup>31</sup> Instead, references to the role of the family in non-utilization prevail: how the family prevents problems from arising in the first place, how the family resolves problems

which do arise, and how the family discourages the use of outside help even for problems which it cannot resolve. Underlying each of these roles is an orientation toward the ascribed goals which, if met, demonstrate the honourability of the family unit.

Studies of North American service utilization patterns indicate that a close-knit family, an actively connected extended network, and a sense of community diminish the need for social services (cf. Pattison, 1977). For Vancouver's Indo-Canadians, these factors appear particularly relevant. For example, a majority of immigrant respondents care for an aged relative or have done so recently, in some cases until the death of the relative. None has a parent living alone, either here or abroad: "This is not our way, we must look after them." Public health workers and Homemakers believe that their case loads of Indo-Canadian elderly are disproportionately light:

East Indian families are much more supportive of old people. Old age is venerated so we don't get many requests [for service].

Similarly, the extensive involvement of Indo-Canadian mothers with their young children is thought by some to diminish the need for services to that age group:

It isn't the East Indian kids who are maladjusted. They get what it takes at home. The problem just isn't there the way it is for whites.

For the mothers themselves, at least one post-partum counsellor

feels that the Indian family system obviates the need for her services:

East Indian mums have such a lot of help. They have such large extended families. I don't need to worry so much about them.

As illustrated in Part Two, exceptions to all these examples exist and may result in service utilization. But the belief is there, among immigrants and agents alike, that many of the problems characterizing less close-knit and less extended families do not occur as frequently within Indo-Canadian families.

When problems do arise, the concentric circles of family and friends become involved in their resolution, starting with the inner-most grouping of resident kin. Minor troubles are perceived to constitute a natural part of family life, and the family just as naturally deals with them. As one Indo-Canadian agent put it:

Family problems are important for East Indian ladies. They spend a lot of time talking about them. It's a Western point of view to go to an agency with a problem to "solve" it. In India, everyone has problems and that's what you dwell on.

Extra-ordinary troubles often require help from greater genealogical and geographical distances, but it is still the "duty" of family and close friends to assist those in need:

Two years ago I had open-heart surgery. I was very weak. They said they would send one lady to help me in the house. But we had already called [e.g. invited] my husband's

cousin-brother's wife from Gujarat. She did all the necessary.

Some scholars suggest that it is the alien nature of service agencies which throws immigrants back onto their own resources:

Because of these difficulties, immigrants come to rely heavily on relatives and friends for advice, as well as sometimes depending on the services of unscrupulous fellow countrymen (Triseliotis, 1972: 6).

But judging from the examples given by the respondents of the present study, non-utilization more often appears attributable to the general belief that family and friends can, should, and will resolve problems which arise. As one young woman said,

When my husband deserted me, I didn't think of going to an agency. Since I was new to this country I would naturally rely on people I know, rather than go to unknown people.

In other words, even before they find the services intimidating, immigrants turn to customary, familiar sources of help.

When family members do not resolve a problem to the satisfaction of the individual concerned, they may actively discourage the individual from using outside sources of help.<sup>32</sup>

My husband was beating me too much [i.e. a lot]. His younger brother told him "Stop it; she has done nothing." When it got too much for me I wanted to go to [a family crisis worker]. But he [HuYoBro] did not like this. He said "When I can help, why go outside?"

Accepting help from social service agents constitutes an admission of failure to meet ascribed familial goals.<sup>33</sup> Depending on the nature of the service, its utilization reflects on the family's ability to provide for itself economically, to socialize its young, and/or to manage the "bestowal of affect" among its members. An admission of failure in any one of these areas jeopardizes the honour of the family unit.

With regard to the acceptance of services involving financial income, Indo-Canadians clearly distinguish between those services which imply economic insufficiency and those which enhance family finances without compromising the recipient. Without exception, universal benefits such as old age pensions and family allowance cheques are welcome:

All seniors in Canada get these cheques. It is one of the great things about this country.

Insurance benefits (i.e. medical, automobile) are also accepted on the grounds that the individual has contributed to them directly. Indeed, two Indo-Canadian agents and one Euro-Canadian stated that "some people try to get all they can, even cheating, because they have put into it."<sup>34</sup> However, about half of the immigrants expressed mixed feelings about unemployment insurance benefits:

I applied for U.I.C. when I was laid off. It is not good to take it but sometimes there is nothing else so we are glad to find out at least there is some help.

I didn't want U.I.C., living off some government grant as if you were so helpless.



It wasn't a good idea for me at all. But my friends said "after working you get U.I.C. There is nothing wrong with it." They didn't mean I should rely on it.

Respondents who had never used unemployment insurance said so with pride and/or relief.

In contrast to the generally accepting attitude towards universal and insurance benefits, the attitude towards social assistance ("welfare") is singularly rejecting. Interviews disclosed at least five cases of refusal to accept this form of income supplement:

My [elderly] father would not put us on welfare, even though the social worker said he should. We got help from the community, and I worked berry-picking and then housecleaning.

Most respondents who have accepted social assistance are women with dependent children living without their husbands. Even under such circumstances, however, other respondents have declined:

After my husband was killed, I managed the [three] children on my [widow's] pension and I got a job washing dishes. My E.S.L. teacher told me to apply for welfare but I said "it is not dignified."

Respondents relate their rejection of social assistance quite explicitly to the goal of economic sufficiency and the value of positive community appraisal:

I have never taken welfare. I am always afraid it will come to that. Then people

will talk. Your prestige goes down if you take welfare.

In India it is very bad to beg and when you get welfare it's like begging. To get a monthly cheque from welfare is demeaning, it's obviously indebting.

We say "moffat ka khanna," to eat for free. That is very bad. People will say "he's no good. He can't pull himself up."

Unlike benefits which all persons receive or to which recipients contribute directly, social assistance singles out a family as needy, as having failed to provide for itself economically, and thus it imperils family honour.<sup>35</sup>

A few of the services commented on by respondents are subsidized programmes which entail financial outlay by users. In general, the fact of subsidization does not influence Indo-Canadian response to these services: only two respondents even seemed aware that the users' fees do not cover the total costs of the programmes. Rather, it is the question of expenditure which affects the pattern of utilization. According to two agents, one of them Indo-Canadian and one Euro-Canadian, any service requiring financial outlay may be rejected:

East Indian men resist any service they have to pay for. They want a big house, a big car, a colour TV. If their wives need help in the house that's just too bad.

However, data from interviews with the immigrants themselves suggest that acceptance does occur, depending on the service offered. If in the region of emigration outsiders normally provide the service -- for example, dental examinations

-- Indo-Canadians generally agree to it and usually decline to have the fee waived. But if family members normally provide the service -- for example, daycare -- non-utilization frequently results. The family's resources must be conserved for the attainment of goals having higher priority.<sup>36</sup> One man who had rejected daycare for his son accepted the idea of pre-school enthusiastically:

Tell me where the best school is. We will send him there. We can afford.

As with services involving financial income, the critical factor with regard to services requiring financial outlay appears to be the way in which utilization affects and reflects on the familial goal of "economic provisioning."

Acceptance of counselling services which involve neither income nor expenditure reflects on a family's ability to socialize its young and to engender devoted service among its members. Even acknowledging behavioural problems constitutes an admission of failure in these areas and threatens family honour (Allodi, 1978: 8; Great Britain, Community Relations Commission, 1976: 32). If outsiders become involved, the threat increases:

[Family members] expect to sort out each other's troubles, not least because if those troubles were to become public -- to the British, but particularly to their compatriots -- the izzat of the group as a whole would be affected (R. Ballard, 1979: 154).

The following observation by a Vancouver mental health worker is echoed by most of the agents interviewed, both Euro-Canadian and

Indo-Canadian (see also Lobo, 1978: 55).

There remains a tremendous stigma particularly pronounced among minorities, East Indian and Chinese especially. They try to deal with the problem within the family. If it's absolutely not containable, then we see them. We get them after the crisis has been reached.

The acceptance of outside help may also be perceived as a personal insult by the head of the household who feels most responsible for the family's attainment of its goals. During an interview with two generations of a family, a young couple said they thought marriage counselling could be beneficial. The father of the woman turned to me:

You see, when people come here and stay for a longer period, they have little respect for the family. They don't appreciate what the family says. When my children have no more respect for me, then they will go to these agencies.

Before individuals decide to seek assistance outside the family, they must weigh significant probable consequences. As a workshop on battered women in Vancouver noted, to turn to social services often means that a person "will be shunned by friends and relatives ... if you go outside of the family circle, it's extremely difficult to come back in" (Globe and Mail, 1977).

In sum, the Indo-Canadian family's pursuance of ascribed goals and its overriding concern with family honour clearly diminish service utilization by rendering the services either unnecessary or unacceptable. Whether the service in question

reflects on a family's economic sufficiency or on its socio-emotional sufficiency, it still imperils family honour. As one Indo-Canadian agent remarked:

It's demeaning to accept money. It's demeaning to accept counselling. They are very different but they are both resisted.

The intensity of resistance and the breadth of non-utilization derive, I believe, from the fact that in accepting a service a family perceives itself to have failed at three levels of responsibility: the prevention of problems in the first place, the resolution of problems which do arise, and the containment of unresolved problems within the family circle.

Notes: Chapter Three

<sup>21</sup> Although David suggested (1964:391-393) that "kin-style relations" appeared to be established on the basis of "propinquity," Mayer reported (1973: 173-175, 202-203) "strong expectations among agnates" and a decrease in clusters of nuclear families based on shipmate ties.

<sup>22</sup> Hindu Fijians are critical of Fijian natives for the extent to which they feel obliged to meet demands from kin (Mayer, 1973: 180).

<sup>23</sup> Helweg notes (1979: 15) an eighth concept, pirhi, which "refers to the prestige that has accrued to a family through its history." However, pirhi represents an ascribed goal only in so far as family members make decisions with the honour of future generations in mind.

<sup>24</sup> David suggests (1964: 392) that because of their scarcity during the indenture period, Fijian Hindu women acquired "an immeasurably stronger bargaining position" within the household. But Jayawardena argues (1983: 143-144) that the scarcity of women led to "the exercise of a greater control of females by males.... Fijian Indian women play a much more traditional and circumscribed role" than their counterparts in India.

<sup>25</sup> There is one major exception to the rule of superiority of givers. Where hypergamous marriages prevail, including among Punjabi Sikhs, the family which gives the bride places itself in a position of inferiority vis a vis the family which receives

her (Hershman, 1981: 191). To counter-balance their status, the bride's family gives as dowry and other prestations all they can, and they carefully avoid receiving any but prescribed, token prestations from the groom's family (Das, 1976: 27). Marriott attempts to explain this anomaly by terming the taking of a bride an act of violence which the bride giver receives (1976: 133).

<sup>26</sup> According to Vedic tradition, all men are born indebted to their ancestors, to the gods, and to the saints (Malamoud, 1983: 26-27). A later Veda adds a debt to men.

<sup>27</sup> There may be a difference between Hindu and Sikh community awareness of such transactions. Among Hindus, "the person asked is supposed to share his greater resources ... privately" (McClelland, 1975: 156). Among Sikhs, although a person should be humble in his role as giver, "humility does not require operating in secret" (Helweg, 1979: 155; see also Fleuret, 1974: 32).

<sup>28</sup> Statistics are frustratingly unavailable. City officials, vernacular newspapers, and temple representatives agree there are roughly 60,000 Indo-Canadians living in the Greater Vancouver area. However, Sikhs claim up to 85% of this population, and Hindus claim 33%. Similarly, Fijian Hindus believe they constitute the majority of the Hindu population, and Indian Hindus believe they do, once the disparate sub-communities (Bengali, Gujarati, etc.) are considered.

<sup>29</sup> My data includes one exception to this suggestion. A woman, who complained to her husband that his uncle had charged

her for taking her to the Workers' Compensation Board, was told: "If someone helps you, what does it matter if you pay them?" The woman added that her husband also took money for helping friends with their income tax returns.

<sup>30</sup> One young Fijian Hindu borrowed his air fare from the relatives with whom he now lives. His wife reports that he is "treated like a servant. If they want a drink of water, he has to get it for them."

<sup>31</sup> Lack of awareness of services probably contributes to non-utilization as well, but only two agents suggest it as a factor. Hypothetical questions of clients ("Would you have gone to this agency had you known about it at the time?") were not very satisfactory. They received for the most part non-replies. The few answers obtained reflect the same orientation toward family as do the reasons for non-utilization when awareness does exist: "We would not go to anyone if our son behaved in this way. We can solve ourselves. We know more about our children."

<sup>32</sup> Indo-Canadians can and do go to medical doctors with the physiological manifestations of their problems: sleeplessness, weight loss, and "nerves." A doctor's advice is sought, not as a consciously chosen alternative to counselling, but as the culturally familiar and acceptable response to one of the consequences of containment, namely, somatization (cf. Leff, 1973).

<sup>33</sup> When asked whether members of his family ever used the public library, one man replied with pride: "My son had to go before, but now we have our own encyclopedia so we don't need to



go."

<sup>34</sup> Indo-Canadians are not alone in attempting to recover insurance contributions (Dingledine, 1981: 44-47), nor are they unanimous in their attitude towards this practice. One respondent is particularly critical of Euro-Canadians who "have the feeling they should be supported by government, like get a little injury and claim disability. It is cheating to your own country and your own people. The same thing applies to people who come from other countries."

<sup>35</sup> Triseliotis writes (1972: 6) that "there is no welfare stereotype" among Indian immigrants to Britain. I am at a loss to explain the sharp contrast between his findings and my own. Three Indo-Canadian agents intimate that acceptance of social assistance would increase were it not for the fact that sponsors are obliged by law to support their relatives for a certain period of time. And one client refused welfare because acceptance would render her ineligible to sponsor her mother. But respondents agree that even with the elimination of these factors, welfare utilization among Indo-Canadians would still be less than among the general population.

<sup>36</sup> The priority accorded earning affects patterns of service utilization as well as patterns of non-utilization. Two agents note a lightening of their Indo-Canadian case loads during berry-picking season: "Business is slow right now; they've gone to the farms. That's top priority with them." Others remark on the noticeable decrease in Indo-Canadian enrollment in English classes since the financial incentive for

taking them was removed (no significant change in Chinese Canadian enrollment occurred). One agent proposes, somewhat in jest, that there ought to be a tax benefit to counselling services: "To convince an East Indian man to change it has to be financially advantageous" (see Chadney, 1976).

## Chapter Four

THE INDO-CANADIAN AGENTS:  
THEIR DUAL MODEL OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE

Persons born and raised in one culture who provide social services in another are generally presumed to operate with ease in both worlds. The agency hiring them to work with fellow immigrants takes for granted their familiarity with the values, goals and modes of interaction obtaining in the country of emigration and also with those of the country of employment. A major task of such ethnic workers, as they are referred to in Vancouver, is to interpret not just a linguistic idiom but also a cultural idiom to their clients and often to their Euro-Canadian colleagues.<sup>37</sup>

But while an ethnic worker may be quite aware of two cultural systems, he cannot operate in both simultaneously, any more than he can speak two languages simultaneously. His own interaction with clients, regardless of the cultural information he is conveying, will be based either on the model of exchange he shares with his clients, or on the model he shares with his professional colleagues -- or on a third model which combines elements of the other two.

Biographical data on the Indo-Canadian agents of the present study reveal at least two factors which suggest a predisposition to a Euro-Canadian professional exchange relationship with clients. Firstly, few of the agents share the

same regional background as the majority of their clients. The 21 agents interviewed emigrated to Canada from 11 different states within India or countries other than India. Only two came from villages of the Punjab, and five from cities of Punjab State. Six emigrated from cities elsewhere in India, and the remaining eight from England, Pakistan, and countries of East Africa and Southeast Asia. None of those interviewed is from Fiji. As one workshop participant noted: "Cultural brokers are considered South Asian by service agencies, but they are marginal as far as the ethnic clients are concerned."<sup>38</sup>

Secondly, many of the Indo-Canadian agents do share a similar educational background with their Euro-Canadian colleagues. Six earned their professional degrees in nursing, education, and social work in Canada. Another five have taken credit courses related to the services they provide from Canadian institutions. Even the four agents with professional degrees from South Asia probably learned a basically North American approach to social services, since the curricula leading to such degrees is based on American social work philosophy (Gangrade, 1970: 8; Nagpaul, 1971: 14). Moreover, studies in the social service fields suggest that with or without professional training, ethnic workers soon "conform to the style of the majority worker" (R. Ballard, 1979: 160; see also Perlman, 1979: 144-146).

Nevertheless, as the interactions described in Part Two of the present thesis indicate, contrasts in style do exist between Indo-Canadians and Euro-Canadians as providers of services to

Indo-Canadian clients. After all, Indo-Canadian agents are asked to handle Indo-Canadian cases precisely because they are considered able to relate to the clients in appropriate cultural as well as linguistic idioms. Furthermore, any professional training they have received has been superimposed relatively late in their lives upon a basically Indian upbringing. On the one hand, general patterns of interaction will have been established early in life and are resistant to change. As Johnson and Johnson note (1975: 453) with regard to Japanese-Americans:

Although assimilation is evident in dress, speech, style of home, and religious affiliation, it will be shown that in norms governing day-to-day interaction, the effects of the culture of origin remain influential.

On the other hand, perceptions about the role of a social service provider will also have been established prior to enrollment in a professional course of training. An Indo-Canadian who has chosen to become a "social worker" in his region of emigration or an "ethnic worker" in an immigrant community has identified himself with a specific role ascribed to such persons within those cultural contexts:

[T]he verbalization of social type, which we call a culturally recognized role, contains within its particular symbolic configuration specific information about the expectations, aims, and qualities of actors, and even about some of the rules for interaction (Parkin, 1976: 177).

The present chapter examines the role ascribed to social service providers in Indian culture and in Indian immigrant communities. It identifies the values, goals, and modes of transaction associated with the helping professionals in each context. Having done so, the chapter concludes with a summary of the differences between the models of social exchange of Indo-Canadian agents and Euro-Canadian agents, differences which, I suggest, underlie the differences between their respective patterns of interaction with Indo-Canadian clients.

### Social Service Providers in India

Since its inception as an independent nation in 1947, India has acknowledged state responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens. While a Gandhian emphasis on self-help pervades most aspects of the Government's Five Year Plans, three other sources of social policy also direct activities. British colonial experiments in agricultural extension and community education continue to influence health and welfare projects and demonstration programmes, primarily in rural areas (Weisner, 1978: 222). American-style schools of social work, now over thirty in number, graduate individuals who hope to work in the government's special services for underprivileged groups, the "weaker sections" of Indian rural and urban society (Nagpaul, 1971: 7). Finally, the Five Year Plans rely heavily on the traditional Indian institution of voluntary welfare associations for the implementation of their policies, especially in urban areas (Caplan, 1983: 5). Through a grant-in-aid system, the

Government of India funds some 3000 established voluntary organizations, and another 3000 newly created ones (Nagpaul, 1971: 6). According to Nagpaul (1971: 3), social service in India "has always been understood to be synonymous with voluntary service."

The voluntary welfare organizations, which may be based on caste, sect, or common cause, tend to be run by upper-middle and upper class women.<sup>39</sup> In providing unpaid service to others, usually to persons beneath them in the social hierarchy, they are fulfilling their dharma.

Women's organizations.... play a significant part in the formation of class boundaries by distinguishing between a class whose duty it is to dispense charity, and one which needs to receive it (Caplan, 1983: 11).

The women's activities also reflect positively on the izzat of their families. In one case, for example, a young bride who had "shamed" her family by being deserted by her husband redeemed the family's reputation through selfless service to girls of her village (Helweg, 1979: 19).

The transactional mode utilized by the volunteers of social welfare organizations is outspokenly that of giving. As the president of one association exhorted her members, "One should sympathize with the people who have sinned [in their previous lives] and share what we have with the have-nots" (cited in Caplan, 1983: 15). One may argue, as Caplan does, that the transactional mode chosen contributes to the creation of differences in class status. However, the individuals served by

the volunteers already represent the most destitute elements of India's population: children, women, and seniors without family or means of support (Desai and Khetani, 1979: 110; Gangrade, 1970: 10; Nagpaul, 1971: 13). As indicated in Chapter Three, unilateral giving usually characterizes transactions between persons of previously established superior rank and their social subordinates.

The transactional mode of giving in the context of voluntary welfare service reflects assumptions not only about the service provider but also about the service recipient. In an analysis of speeches and printed material produced by social welfare associations, Caplan notes (1983: 16) five pairs of "constantly recurring" terms used to describe volunteers on the one hand and beneficiaries on the other:

active/dynamic	-	helpless
generous	-	deserving
enlightened	-	ignorant
forward	-	backward
munificent	-	grateful

These terms are probably not intended to be as pejorative as they might sound to North American ears. Perhaps South Asians have yet to adopt the euphemistic English phrases employed elsewhere. Still, to some extent each term does reflect the nature of the relationship between a provider and a receiver of social service.

While in India, I became familiar with two social welfare organizations. One, in Gujarat, administered an employment programme for battered and deserted wives. The other, in New



Delhi, ran a pre-school/daycare for children of beggars. In both cases, I was struck by the mixture of compassion with which the volunteers described their clients, and the almost abrupt manner in which they interacted with them. I believe this mixture illustrates the significance of the above pairs of terms in three ways.

Firstly, little or no background information was gathered beyond what the client provided spontaneously. Lack of time and interest, and/or respect for privacy and izzat may have been factors in this pattern (see Dasgupta, 1981: 25). But certainly the need for information was reduced since the "helplessness" and "deservingness" of clients was assumed: who but a totally destitute person would request unilateral prestations? Moreover, in some instances the recipients' circumstances were already known to the volunteer. Where they were not, "visible signs" of dress, grooming, and demeanor conveyed the necessary information (Wynne, 1980: 49). With the helplessness and deservingness of the client established, it was incumbent upon the volunteers to proceed in their "dynamic" and "generous" roles.

Secondly, the volunteers interacting with the battered women and the beggars manifested an assertive, even bossy attitude. Since the recipient of service was "ignorant" and "backward," the role of the service provider was to inform, advise, and direct him. As McClelland notes (1975: 147) with regard to the exceptionally domineering manner of Indian children towards one another, a selfless motivation and other-

orientation on the part of advice-givers renders direct instruction acceptable:

For a child to say to another "Stop eating that, it will make you sick" is perfectly all right in the value system: it is pro-social dominance or giving good advice to another.

The fact that volunteers of social welfare associations are "enlightened" and "forward" relative to their clients renders their pro-social dominance particularly appropriate.

Finally, despite the constant recurrence of the phrase "grateful" to describe beneficiaries, the recipients of service in both the Gujarati and New Delhi programmes exhibited a wide range of reactions to their benefactors. Some were obsequious, touching the feet of volunteers and likening them to gods. Others gave no outward sign of deference and remained verbally uncommunicative throughout their time at the service centres. The majority of clients fell somewhere in between, smiling and articulating occasionally what the service meant to them. In my experience, the degree to which a client declared gratitude did not greatly affect the volunteers' interaction with them. Servile expressions of appreciation were gently but firmly cut short. Lack of verbal thanks did not result in lesser service. Perhaps, just as the request for unilateral prestations suffices to establish helplessness, their acceptance is assumed to entail gratefulness, and to indicate the "munificence" of the service provider.

The paid workers of India's community development projects

and of its special programmes for weaker sections are also attracted to their roles by the cultural "emphasis on the value of self-sacrifice and service to lower castes" (Howard, 1971:81). Their "commitment to the underdog" and "identification with suffering humanity" render their activities honourable, at least in their own eyes (Iyer, 1969: 38-39). But the fact that they receive monetary compensation for their services can result in hostility between them and voluntary workers, and between them and their clients (Howard, 1971: 19; Iyer, 1969: 39). If personal financial gain accrues from public service, izzat does not. A paid social worker, at least initially, may be viewed as "suspect," as an exploitive government bureaucrat, "not to trust but to manipulate" (Helweg, 1979: 155). In an analysis of health centre utilization patterns in Gujarat State, Weisner's "most striking finding" (1978: 235) is the non-impact of paid community workers. He recommends that planners "look for active voluntary associations in assessing potential utilization patterns and locating health facilities."

To a certain extent, the fact that many of the paid social service providers are graduates of American-style schools of social work may help to relieve initial suspicions. Presumably the worker thus trained seeks to establish rapport with clients, a trusting relationship, before proceeding. But in several respects, American practice techniques ill prepare an individual for social work in India (see Schlesinger, 1960: 264). Some of these are almost comical: students learn "about the traumatic implications of overstrict toilet training in a country with an

extraordinarily casual attitude to defecation" (Mukundarao, 1969: 31). Others are more sobering:

Indian society is still struggling with the basic problems of poverty, deprivation, unemployment, ill health, inadequate housing, malnutrition and illiteracy.... In this context, social work education based upon American social work philosophy .... oriented primarily towards the problems of the individual ... seems not only irrelevant but potentially dysfunctional (Nagpaul, 1971: 13-14).

The needs of India's population are so great, and the resources currently available so few, that institutional care rather than individual rehabilitation constitutes the most common form of service (Desai and Khetani, 1979: 110; Gangrade, 1970: 10).

Even in the proportionately few instances where one-to-one agent-client relationships are possible, North American approaches to counselling are criticized precisely for their focus on the individual. In the first place, Indian social workers view the individual as an inextricable part of, and "centripetally propelled" towards, a family (Gangrade, 1970: 6-7). An individual's problems should be analysed and resolved using "the entire network of family relationships" (Howard, 1971: 25). Moreover, experience has taught the Indian social worker that a client is more likely to change, to overcome resignation to fate, if he is reminded of his ascribed duty in life rather than of his right to self-fulfillment:

[A] style of mobilization which stresses personal ambitions, hopes and achievement concerns ... cannot be effective for many (Nandy, 1970: 62).

Finally, the Indian social worker considers the "desirability of an element of choice for the individual," client self-determination, to be "peculiarly American" (Gangrade, 1970: 8). The service provider should not deny any authority attributed to him by clients, but should "use this authority, offering direct practical advice and assistance" (Howard, 1971: 26).

Thus, although service recipients in India may initially regard paid social workers differently from the way they do volunteers, subsequent patterns of interaction may not be too dissimilar. Both paid and unpaid social service providers interact for the most part with extremely disadvantaged persons.<sup>40</sup> There is a "hidden assumption that those served are basically inferior" (Howard, 1971: 19). This assumption, combined with the necessary prevalence of institutional care, minimizes information-gathering:

[Workers are] tempted to see particular community members in predetermined perspectives (i.e. to apply stereotypes and rely on the criterion of social status) to escape the burden of making endless segmented judgments (Wynne, 1980: 49).

The same assumption also leads to a paternalistic, or maternalistic, approach to advice-giving (Caplan, 1983: 17; Howard, 1971: 19). As noted in Chapter Three, the person who requests help automatically assumes a subordinate status; the person with superior status assumes the role of advice-giver.

### Indian Social Service Providers Overseas

In the immigrant context, social welfare services may also

be delivered by volunteers as well as by salaried persons. Voluntary work constitutes an extension of the seva provided to relatives and fellow villagers. Volunteering individuals, who may be termed "social workers" by community members, enhance their izzat through selfless action taken on behalf of others (Helweg, 1979: 80, 157). Groups of volunteers, organized very much along the lines of Indian social welfare associations, also provide some immigrants with an opportunity to "do good works" for their fellow countrymen.

Although both individual volunteers and groups of volunteers exist in Vancouver as described below, it is important to note that most of the Indo-Canadians interviewed consider voluntary welfare activity to be comparatively lacking in the immigrant context.<sup>41</sup> Some suggest that, once in Canada, immigrants get "caught up in the rat race:"

People here do not have time for other people's lives. Everyone just works. That is why they come to Canada, to get more money and get ahead.

Everybody is busy with his own affairs so they say "I can't lend a hand." You are all alone, nobody cares, nobody has time to spare.

Comments by other Indo-Canadians suggest that the rural and middle-class background of the majority of immigrants precludes much familiarity with voluntary welfare services in India, and hence any predisposition to volunteering here:

We do not have the custom of social services in our country. Just, your family is there, and you make contribution to the temple.

One lady from [a Neighborhood House] told me to come to Volunteer Evening. In the Punjab there is no volunteer position. Only if you are in bad trouble, then you go out and get help. But we were well off.

Voluntary social services do exist in the regions of emigration, but most of the Indo-Canadian respondents were neither poor enough to have received such help nor wealthy enough to have provided it.

Backgrounds of the individuals who do provide voluntary service within Vancouver's immigrant communities indicate that both relief from the "rat race," and previous familiarity with community work, facilitate the selection of a volunteer role. Five such individuals were encountered during fieldwork, three of them women whose husbands provide amply for their families, and two of them comfortably retired men. Only one of these, formerly the headman of his village, had engaged in anything that could be considered community work before moving to Canada. But the remaining four had emigrated from urban centres of India or Fiji and were familiar with voluntary welfare associations there. In Canada, two of the five work as unpaid staff at immigrant services centres. Three help run voluntary service groups, one for senior men and two for immigrant women.

In giving their reasons for becoming volunteer social service providers, each of the five individuals alluded to the honorability of the role, given the neediness of the clients:

My children were busy with their schoolwork, their friends. I was getting irritated sitting at home. So my friend got me involved in immigrant services. It was a

respectable thing to do. Some of these people can't even read. I tell them what their papers [official forms] say; what they must do.

There are so many problems here for seniors. It is the opposite of India. The daughter-in-law says "get a job delivering papers." You must beg your own son for pocket money even. But many [seniors] won't do that. They come here and we give them all the information, like about bus pass.... Everyday I am going with them to doctor, citizenship court. I do this for no pay. I am "counsellor of senior citizens" in our community [this said with a chuckle]. I was unanimously elected President of this Society.

In other words, in Canada as in India, the neediness of the client not only prompts volunteer activity, but also ensures that that activity fulfills the goal of service to others and contributes to izzat.

With two or three notable exceptions, the paid Indo-Canadian social service providers are also financially well off in comparison with most of their clients. Like their volunteer counterparts, most emigrated from urban centres where they were familiar with social services. Unlike the volunteers, however, the salaried workers tend to explain their choice of occupation in terms of professional considerations rather than client need:

I always thought I wanted to be a teacher, but I switched to psychology and sociology after two years [in education].... It just seemed more interesting to me.

I had been in charge of insurance and pensions for the families [of employees in former business], so when I came here and heard about this job I thought I could use my skills. My experience was relevant.



A few of the paid service agents also remarked spontaneously on their salary, either as an indication of the importance of their work, or as a source of irritation that their professional backgrounds were not better remunerated. There was no hint of apology or rationalization for accepting money for delivering services to others.

If paid Indo-Canadian agents base their sense of honour on the professional nature of their role, the possibility exists that they are free of the need to define their clients as helpless and ignorant. They may be able to use the transactional mode of mutual exchange, as opposed to that of unilateral giving, and still fulfill their goals. And if clients are not perceived as helpless or ignorant, if mutual exchange characterizes interaction, agents may also be open to information-gathering, and to client self-determination.

It must be noted, however, that although few Indo-Canadian agents relate the worthiness of their role to the neediness of their clients, most do hold stereotypical beliefs regarding different categories of their clientele. Whereas Euro-Canadians usually said they "can't sort out who's from where," and rarely differentiated between Hindus and Sikhs, Indo-Canadian agents inevitably conveyed firm sociological perceptions of each group.

No discernible pattern emerges from these perceptions. One agent from East Africa depicts Fijian Hindus as "very religious. Their blood has been mixed with that of tribes." Another agent from Southeast Asia describes Fijian Hindus as "more Westernized than Punjabis. Punjabis care more about their religion." But a

general class consciousness is there. Certain agents hold certain groups to be "uneducated." Other agents hold the same or other groups to be "modern." The honour of a paid social service agent may not depend of the neediness of the clientele, but interaction between agent and client may still be influenced by established notions of "we" and "they."

To summarize, Indo-Canadian social service agents may refer to one of two models of social exchange when interacting with clients. Their urban backgrounds, Western-style training, and professional reasons for becoming service providers suggest that their perceptions, decisions, and behaviour might well be based on cultural referents of social exchange similar to those of their Euro-Canadian colleagues. But their Indian upbringing, their familiarity with Indian voluntary welfare service, and the roles they are asked to play in Canada suggest that their interaction with clients might logically be based on Indian values, goals, and transactional modes.

Reference to one exchange model versus the other, or shifts between the two, would have significant implications for Indo-Canadian agent/Indo-Canadian client relationships. Operating within the Indian framework, an agent might elicit less information during the study phase of counselling. He might include the client's family, and the client's duty to his family, in the assessment phase. Most obviously, reference to the Indian model of exchange would render an agent's transactions more directive and authoritarian during the

assessment and treatment phases of the counselling relationship. In Part Two, contrasts between the transactional patterns of Indo-Canadian agents and Euro-Canadian agents are examined for such manifestations of the two models of social exchange.

Notes: Chapter Four

<sup>37</sup> The term "ethnic worker" is used by Euro-Canadian agents and administrative personnel to refer to social service agents who are themselves immigrants. It can be misleading, since many such persons carry the same culturally heterogeneous case-loads that non-immigrant agents do. Of the 21 Indo-Canadian agents interviewed, 10 deal with clients of various ethnic backgrounds, and 11 deal exclusively with Indo-Canadian clients.

<sup>38</sup> The religious affiliation of the Indo-Canadian agents is more similar to that of the clients. Among the 21 agents, there are 10 Sikhs, 8 Hindus, 2 Christians and 1 Muslim.

<sup>39</sup> Elderly persons of either sex may also perform community welfare work as part of the dharma of their stage of life (Desai and Khetani, 1979: 101).

<sup>40</sup> Weisner assumed (1978: 243-244) that members of higher status castes would be offered more respect and better care by the paid workers at local health centres. He feels his assumption was confirmed by his finding that the higher the caste, the higher the rate of utilization.

<sup>41</sup> Examples given by Indo-Canadians to illustrate lack of support often include behaviour which Euro-Canadians would consider supportive. For example:

In Fiji, my husband went two-three times with other women. Then I went to my brother's house. Now he [Hu] has gone to this lady. I have family here but nobody wants to get involved. They say, "If you want to leave him, that is your problem." My

[other] brother's wife drove me to [an agency]. I should get help there.

## Chapter Five

### THE MODELS OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE COMPARED

To understand intercultural transactions, it is necessary not only to examine the models of social exchange obtaining in the cultures involved but also to compare those models. The differences and similarities emerging from such a comparison suggest likely sources of conflict and likely points of compatibility to be found in relationships between members of the two cultures.

The present chapter compares the cultural referents of social exchange as posited in Chapters Two and Three for Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients respectively. It identifies differences and similarities in the values influencing perception of an exchange situation, in the goals underlying decision-making, and in the transactional modes guiding observable exchange behaviour. On the basis of this comparison, the chapter concludes by suggesting the logical implications of the contrasts between the models of social exchange for counselling relationships between Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients.

Judging by the interviews conducted, both Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients focus on single, predominant values within their respective cultures (Figure 2). Although the social services posit value continua with both societal and individual ends, the Euro-Canadian agents consistently express

Figure 2

## MODELS OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE COMPARED

<u>Cultural Referent</u>	<u>Euro-Canadian Agent Model</u>	<u>Indo-Canadian Client Model</u>
Primary value underlying perceptions:	Individual rights and responsibilities	Family honour
Primary goal underlying decisions:	Client self-fulfill- ment through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) disclosure of problem</li> <li>b) determination of treatment</li> <li>c) follow-through with treatment</li> </ul>	Fulfillment of <u>dharma</u> through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) family sufficiency</li> <li>b) caste purity</li> <li>c) service to others</li> </ul>
Primary mode underlying behaviour:	Mutual exchange which is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) confined to area of expertise</li> <li>b) affectively neutral</li> <li>c) universalistic</li> </ul>	Mutual exchange which is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) pervasive</li> <li>b) deeply affective</li> <li>c) individualistic</li> </ul>

support for the rights and responsibilities of the individual. Although Indian religious philosophy emphasizes an other-worldly concern with personal release from rebirth, the immigrant clients reveal an orientation toward Indian social philosophy emphasizing a this-worldly concern with family honour.

The fundamental values of the agents and clients resemble one another in so far as they pertain to present, this-worldly rights and responsibilities of social units. Each party's perception of an exchange situation is based on considerations of what the valued social unit can and should give or receive, here and now. The agents' and clients' values differ from one another in so far as they refer to different social units, to individuals on the one hand and to families on the other. In perceiving an exchange situation, an agent asks "What does this mean for him?" The client asks "What does this mean for my family?"

Overall goals present themselves as means to the realization of the primary values. The Euro-Canadian aims to achieve the approval of his professional peers by pursuing the professional goal of client self-fulfillment. The Indo-Canadian works toward the positive appraisal of his community by fulfilling his ascribed duty, or dharma, to that community and even more so to his family.

The decisions which the agents and clients make regarding exchange situations reflect these culturally specific goals. Euro-Canadian self-interest lies in the offering or accepting of prestations which further the fulfillment of a client as an



individual. Indo-Canadian self-interest expresses itself in the transacting of prestations which serve to fulfill duties to family and community. Both agents and clients have the client's interest at heart, but their cultural goals and the values underlying them effect distinct definitions of that interest.

The understanding of what constitutes client interest is further complicated by the fact that the two overall goals of client self-fulfillment and fulfillment of dharma each contains several sub-goals. Euro-Canadian agents try to achieve client self-fulfillment by enabling a client to disclose his problem, to determine his own treatment plan, and to follow through with that plan. Indo-Canadian clients try to fulfill dharma by demonstrating family sufficiency, caste purity, and service to others.

Whereas the overall goals have in common the interests of the client, the means to those goals have little in common. Indeed, they would appear to contra-indicate one another. By admitting to a problem, an Indo-Canadian client belies family sufficiency. In implementing a treatment plan, he risks violating caste mores and practices. The very existence of a counselling relationship not only implicates a client's capacity to serve others but also renders him a recipient of service.

The modes of transaction characterizing Euro-Canadian and Indo-Canadian exchange behaviour also vary one from the other at the specific rather than at the general level. An agent perceives himself as transacting power on a potentially two-way street. Ideally, bearing in mind the goal of client self-

sufficiency and the value of the individual, an agent aims to foster in the client a sense of his own power, both with regard to the counselling relationship and with regard to the problem at hand. In particular, an agent wants to transfer to the client the power of determining for himself what treatment plan he will follow.

An Indo-Canadian client perceives himself as transacting status, in one of four ways. If he gives, he establishes his own status as superior; if he receives, he acknowledges inferior status. Mutual exchange indicates equal status, and non-exchange leaves the question of relative status open to debate. Bearing in mind the goal of dharma and the value of family honour, an Indo-Canadian client might logically be expected to favour the transactional mode of giving. But his position as help-needer, within the Indian model of social exchange, eliminates giving as an option available to him. By definition, the person requiring service cannot also enjoy the power and status which accompany the determining of that service.

Of the transactional modes remaining, non-exchange and mutual exchange are preferable to unilateral receiving. While not increasing status, at least they do not diminish it. However, non-exchange means that help cannot be received. If help is required, then mutual exchange represents the preferred mode within which to transact it.

Thus, at a general level, Euro-Canadians and Indo-Canadians agree that unilateral receiving by clients constitutes the least preferable mode of transaction. Agents feel it renders client

self-fulfillment unobtainable and ignores individual rights and responsibilities. Clients feel it sacrifices any hope of fulfilling dharma or of realizing family honour. Furthermore, the two parties would appear to agree that mutual exchange constitutes the optimal mode of transaction. Agents describe an "environment of equality" in which mutual sharing of information and feelings leads to client self-fulfillment. Clients refer to kinship-style relations within which transactions are free from implications of indebtedness by virtue of the fact that they are mutual and generalized.

However, as with the understanding of client interest as a goal, the understanding of mutual exchange as a transactional mode is subject to cultural differences at the specific level. Euro-Canadian agents feel professionally obliged to confine interaction to their area of expertise. Transactions must be affectively neutral, notwithstanding the empathy to be conveyed, and they should be based on universalistic standards. Indo-Canadian clients associate mutual exchange with group alliances or personal friendships. The brotherly love characterizing the latter entails deep loyalty and affection. It is pervasive, timeless, and -- ironically -- based on individualistic standards. Within this context, a help-needer receives direction and advice from the friend able to provide it. But the help-provider also receives, from the person he helps, other indications of friendship.

To summarize, the basic similarities between the Indo-Canadian and Euro-Canadian models of social exchange reside in

the empirical, social-unit bases of perception; the client-oriented bases of decision-making, and the mutual exchange mode of transactional behaviour. The differences between the two models relate to the distinct definitions accorded these common referents. Euro-Canadian agents transact with clients in such a way as to grant them power, that they may become self-sufficient and realize their potential as individuals. Indo-Canadian help-needers exchange with others so as to grant them the status of advice-givers while maintaining their own status, thus fulfilling an ascribed duty and realizing family honour.

How might these differences and similarities affect interaction between Euro-Canadian social service agents and Indo-Canadian immigrant clients? Since transactional behaviour reflects goal-oriented decisions made by each party, and since the decisions in turn reflect each party's perception of the exchange situation in accordance with cultural values, the fundamental implication of contrasts between exchange models would logically reside at the level of perception and value. I suggest the following hypothesis:

DIFFICULTIES IN THE EURO-CANADIAN  
AGENT/INDO-CANADIAN CLIENT RELATIONSHIP WILL  
EMERGE WHERE AGENT TRANSACTIONS ARE  
PERCEIVED BY CLIENTS TO IMPINGE ON FAMILY  
HONOUR, AND WHERE CLIENT TRANSACTIONS ARE  
PERCEIVED BY AGENTS TO IMPINGE ON INDIVIDUAL  
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Furthermore, I expect agents will feel frustrated or confused by client transactions oriented toward family honour, and that clients will respond similarly to agent transactions oriented

toward individual self-fulfillment.

In Part Two, I describe the patterns of interaction obtaining between the Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients interviewed, and suggest the extent to which the points of compatibility and points of conflict support the above hypothesis. Four phases of the counselling relationship -- introduction, study, assessment, and treatment -- are each examined for the decisions which the agents and clients make, the transactional modes in which they carry them out, and the responses of the opposite parties to those decisions and transactions.

The ending phase of counselling is not included for lack of data. Only four of the 40 immigrants in the study were not currently engaged with agents at the time of interviewing. However, client and agent evaluation of outcome -- normally associated with the ending phase of counselling and critical to the analysis of agent-client relationships -- is included as much as possible in the discussion of the first four phases (see Briar and Miller, 1971: 167-170). I note indications of agent evaluation of client acceptance, disclosure, self-determination, and follow-through. I also examine clients' statements for evaluations of agents' offers of help, interpretations of problems, approaches to counselling, and support during treatment.

As indicated in Appendix B, the interview schedules were designed to elicit relative information, not only on Indo-Canadian clients in comparison with Euro-Canadian clients, but

also on Indian Sikh, Indian Hindu, and Fijian Hindu clients in comparison with one another. However, as explained in Appendix A, Indian Sikhs constituted the bulk of my client population. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter Four, Euro-Canadian agents seldom distinguished between Indo-Canadian clients on the basis of religious affiliation or region of emigration. Indo-Canadian agents did differentiate on these grounds, but no clear pattern emerges from the distinctions they suggested. Thus, given the data generated, the transactions described in Part Two are posited as pertaining to the counselling relationship between social service agents and all three categories of Indo-Canadian clients.

PART TWO:

PATTERNS OF INTERACTION

## Chapter Six

### "WHO ARE YOU?"

#### THE INTRODUCTORY PHASE

In the introductory phase of a counselling relationship, an agent and client give and receive information about themselves and about their perceptions of one another. What information is conveyed and the way in which it is transacted bear directly on how it is received and responded to. Judging by the interviews conducted, the nature of the relationship established between a social service agent and an Indo-Canadian client depends heavily on the latter's understanding of who the agent is and why he is there. As one Indo-Canadian agent puts it:

A stranger walks in and says "I am concerned about you." But who are you? You are not a doctor. Who are you?

The present chapter examines patterns of interaction between agents and clients during the initial phase of counselling. First, I describe how contact is made, and how each party perceives his own and his opposite's response to initial contact. I then discuss how an agent identifies himself to a client, and how the client interprets this information. Finally, the chapter concludes with an examination of client efforts to identify agents to their own satisfaction, and agent responses to these efforts.



### Patterns of Initial Contact

Social service agents refer to three ways in which they first come into contact with clients: intervention, routine services, and self-referral. Each of these means of contact tends to correspond with one of three transactional modes initially employed by clients (Table IV). In general, Indo-Canadian clients manifest negative or non-exchange behaviour in response to intervention; positive or mutual exchange behaviour in response to routine services, and dependent or receiving behaviour in response to contact through self-referral. An examination of the circumstances surrounding first contacts helps to explain this correspondence.

INTERVENTION, in the jargon of the helping professions, refers to those contacts initiated by agents in response to information received from someone other than the prospective client. Although normally associated with the roles of social workers, intervention may also bring public health workers and school workers into contact with clients. By definition, intervention is problem-oriented and implies need on the part of the client. Agents believe that Indo-Canadian and Euro-Canadian residents of East and South Vancouver are equally likely to require intervention. However, more Euro-Canadian cases concern infant and child abuse, and more Indo-Canadian cases concern abuse of wives and adolescents.<sup>42</sup>

Depending on their role within the network of helping agencies, workers receive the majority of their Indo-Canadian referrals from police and other emergency services, and

Table IV

FORM OF INITIAL CONTACT  
BY  
MODE OF CLIENT RESPONSE

Initial Contact

Client Response	Intervention	Routine	Self-Referral	TOTAL	
	Non-Exchange	11 (32%)	1 ( 3%)	-	12 (35%)
	Mutual Exchange	-	7 (20%)	2 ( 6%)	9 (26%)
	Dependent Receiving	5 (15%)	2 ( 6%)	6 (18%)	13 (39%)
	TOTAL	16 (47%)	10 (29%)	8 (24%)	34 (100%)

secondarily from hospitals, private doctors, and public health workers making routine visits. Less frequently, teachers and "friends" of the prospective client bring his problem to the attention of agents. Although this pattern of referral may or may not be representative, based as it is on impressionistic and non-random data, it does make sense in light of the Indian preference for containment and for familiar sources of help.<sup>43</sup>

Agents indicate that whatever the source of referral, their consequent intervention usually elicits a hostile response from clients. Whereas the reaction of Euro-Canadians tends to be defensive ("I'm a good parent. I haven't done anything wrong"), the reaction of Indo-Canadians tends to convey resistance:

It's not your concern what happens in my family. This is the way things are done in our community.

There was a little problem but there's no need for you to be involved. Next time we'll get in touch with you.

He's a piece of my heart. I will look after him. I don't need you. I don't want you. Get out.

The Indo-Canadian's dispute is jurisdictional; he challenges the agent's right to intervene. As one family worker puts it: "Whites don't want to be seen as causal, but with East Indians it's just 'none of your business.'"

Agents note that while both Euro-Canadian and Indo-Canadian men resist intervention more than do their wives, Indo-Canadian men resent the "intrusion into their domain" most of all. In the opinion of one agent, they act as if they have been personally

attacked. When children are involved, Indo-Canadian women may initially appear "really open" to the prospect of a helping relationship. However, "once the father has expressed his resistance, the mother usually goes along." Where the case involves wife-battering, Indo-Canadian women often refuse "even to let the worker in," particularly if the husband is present:

A typical pattern is to have the wife deny the problem and the man tries to get us out of there. He'll say, "Sure, I got drunk one day and hit her. If it happens again we'll phone you."

Of the 34 relationships which clients recalled in detail, 16 were established as a result of agent interventions. Of these, 11 (69%) were characterized at the outset by client resistance. The remaining 5 cases (31%) all involved women who were in the process of separating, or were already separated from, their husbands. Each of these cases was characterized initially by client dependence.

ROUTINE SERVICES, as the term implies, are services offered as a matter of course to all individuals of a given category, for example, to post-partum mothers. By definition, such services are considered equally available to all qualifying persons within the geographical area of the agency administering them. They are task-oriented or preventative, rather than problem-oriented. Although most frequently associated with public health workers, school workers and social workers outside of the Ministry of Human Resources may also establish contact

with clients through the delivery of routine services.

In stark contrast to the hostile client response to intervention, client response to routine services is generally quite positive. Agents indicate that both Euro-Canadians and Indo-Canadians usually afford their offers of service a consistent welcome, but that Indo-Canadians seem to take them less for granted and to be more grateful for them. Particularly persons who have heard about the service but who have not yet received it "say 'yes' before I can get my spiel out."

When any reservations to the acceptance of routine services are expressed, they tend to be expressed by men. Agents report that while Euro-Canadian men remain neutral or become positively involved, Indo-Canadian men remain neutral or "need to check out what this is all about":

East Indian men have more questions about why you are there. It's the more protective role they feel they have to play. They want a valid reason for your being there.

Indo-Canadians also occasionally ask whether the service costs anything, and how the agent got their name:

Sometimes they seem to wonder why I am there. They think I am defining them as a problem, just because they are immigrants. As soon as I explain that it is routine for all mums, it's okay.

As one man said with regard to routine dental examinations for his grandson:

We have taken all the necessary help we think is essential. But we would not want to receive more than the next fellow.

Of the 10 agent-client relationships which were established as a result of routine delivery of services, 7 were characterized from the beginning by relatively free-flowing, two-way transactions. The 2 relationships in which the client assumed dependent attitudes from the outset involved women in very poor health and severe financial straits. In only one case did an Indo-Canadian immigrant of the present sample initially reject an offer of routine services.

SELF-REFERRAL denotes those contacts between agents and clients initiated by the client. Like interventions, self-referrals are problem-oriented and tend to be associated with social workers. However, unlike some cases of intervention, self-referral occurs when the client himself feels he has a problem with which he would like outside assistance.

All of the agents interviewed remarked on the proportionately low rate of Indo-Canadian self-referrals in comparison with that of Euro-Canadians. They estimate that between 5% and 12% of their Indo-Canadian cases are self-referred, in contrast to up to 50% of their Euro-Canadian cases, depending on the nature of the service. Most Euro-Canadian agents attribute the relative scarcity of Indo-Canadian self-referrals to factors of language, lack of awareness, and transportation difficulties. Most Indo-Canadians, both clients and agents, explain the pattern in terms of Indian cultural

values:

They see it as a negative thing to get help. The ability to handle their own problems is the strongest value. The family is the be-all and the end-all. You just don't talk outside.

When Indo-Canadians do refer themselves for help, the situation is inevitably a serious one. Almost as inevitably, it is characterized by a dependent client demeanor:

No East Indian case is not desperate. If they are asking for help, it means they are completely dependent on you. The family has broken down.

Agents note that "rarely" or "never" do Indo-Canadian men refer themselves for a problem. Of the 11 men interviewed, only one had initiated contact with an agent:

I was so ashamed. My daughter-in-law shouted at me, I should get a job. My son listens only to her.... I told my friends how it was for me. One guy told me about [an agency]. Another guy told me to go there also. So I openly went to that place.

Several agents suggested that self-referrals are most likely to come from individuals who have "no one else to turn to" within their own community. But interviews with the self-referring clients indicate not only that they do have someone to turn to but also that they have turned to them and have been advised by them to seek professional help:

I didn't tell anyone for a long time. Then I told a friend how my husband was bothering me. She told me to go to [a particular agent]. She gave me the number. When my husband left to live with that woman, I called [that agent].

On the one hand, encouragement from friends alleviates the fear of what people would say if they "found out." Help-seeking cannot violate community standards as drastically if community members suggest it. On the other hand, encouragement from friends alleviates the fear of appearing, to oneself or to others, as self-serving. Most of the immigrants who initiated contact with agents emphasized that they "would have put up" with the situation, but that others "insisted" that they look after themselves.

Eight of the 34 relationships described by clients resulted from contacts made by them. Six of these self-referred cases (75%), all involving women, were characterized at the outset by a dependent client manner. The two remaining relationships, one involving a male client and one a female, were characterized by open, mutual exchanges from the beginning.

The general correspondence between the form of contact and the pattern of response to contact may be understood in terms of the clients' referents of social exchange. Contact by intervention, because it implies exceptional need, implicates the sufficiency of a client's family and threatens its honour. If family honour can still be preserved, the client responds to intervention in the non-exchange mode of transaction. Contact through routine services is more acceptable, once the universal



nature of the service is understood. A client responds in the mutual exchange mode, assured that the sufficiency of his particular family is not being challenged. Contact through self-referral, while problem-oriented, is acceptable because the family -- the object of goals and the basis of values -- has broken down. Self-referred clients transact with agents as unilateral receivers. Without family, they perceive themselves as having little to give and a great need to receive.

Most of the exceptions to this general relationship between form of contact and response to contact further underscore the relevance of these cultural referents. The clients who responded in a dependent manner to intervention (5) or to routine services (2) were all women more or less without their husbands. They had no family in Vancouver who would help them, and none whose honour they could protect except at great personal cost.

The two clients who transacted in the mutual exchange mode following self-referral perceived themselves to be acting from a position of relative strength. One, a Fijian Hindu woman, had her own family of procreation resident in Vancouver. They shared her righteous indignation over her husband's behaviour, and advised her to seek help. The other, a senior Punjabi Sikh man, had village brothers who shared his righteous indignation over his daughter-in-law's behaviour and advised him to seek help.

The one client who responded to routine services in the non-exchange mode had a complicated situation of bigamy to hide. He feared deportation, and was reluctant to talk to any official person. I return to the factor of fear of deportation later in

this chapter.

### Identification of Agent as an Official

When they first phone or visit a prospective client, agents typically introduce themselves by personal name, then by the name of the agency which they represent, and finally by their reason for calling. If the personal name is an Indian one, the client may surmise several items of information about the caller. The significance of this information is discussed below in relation to the identification of the agent as an individual.

If the name pronounced is a European one, no information is conveyed, unless the client happens to have heard the name mentioned by others. The client then relies entirely on the name of the agency. He hears, for example, "I am a nurse with the Vancouver Health Department," or "I am your son's counsellor at such-and-such school." As indicated above, the subsequent statement concerning the reason for the call has broad implications for the nature of response to it. However, the key words used in the identification of the agent serve to modify or reinforce this response.

In the first example, the key term for Indo-Canadians seems to be "nurse":

A nurse is okay, because nurses they know.  
But it is difficult for them to  
differentiate between nurses, to  
conceptualize the different roles.

The immigrants interviewed explicitly associate public health

workers in Canada with the nurses of government clinics in their regions of emigration. For example, one man accepted an unexpected post-operative visit understanding that "the hospital must have given our records to the area sisters. In Fiji we have this in urban areas for injections." The only difference is that "here, the government pays nurses to come to people's homes," and to care for children in the schools.

Visits from public health workers, from "nurses," are the most widely known personally delivered routine service. Perhaps because of these agents' high profile, but also because of the ease with which "nurse" fits previously existing cognitive categories, other persons are sometimes confused with them. Immigrants who spoke of receiving help from a "nurse" or "hospital sister" often turned out to have had Homemaker Service, delivered by individuals with no nursing background.

When the service provider introduces himself as a counsellor from a school, the key term for Indo-Canadians is "school":

If I phone East Indians and say I am calling from the school, they are really open. They have respect for the education system. They are willing to come to the school at once.

The respect accorded schools relates on the one hand to the authoritarian education system of the regions of origin, and on the other hand to the importance placed on a child's success in the school system here. Although Chinese Canadian parents are consistently perceived as placing the greatest emphasis on education, the "successful adaptation of a child is extremely

important to all immigrant parents. Services offered by the school are readily accepted." School workers for the most part recognize the attitude of underlying respect and use it:

I always present myself as working in the school, for the school board. I want them to connect me with the school. East Indians -- all ethnic groups -- have a positive relationship to the school. It is often negative with social services.

The only two agents who perceive Indo-Canadian males as "just as receptive" to services as females are both school workers.

While the education system is previously known, awareness of its services is limited to the disciplinary and academic functions of teacher and principal. With one exception, immigrants who were contacted by a counsellor referred to him as either "teacher" or as "principal" ("He is not [my daughter's] teacher; maybe the principal"). Nonetheless, the respect accorded the school system as an institution facilitates acceptance of its services, even if the roles of those delivering them are not recognized:

East Indian parents have the same attitude to the counsellor and the teacher. They don't know the difference. They are not used to school counselling, but once you explain, it's okay.

Counsellors report that Euro-Canadian parents in South and East Vancouver also respond favourably to contact, but that "they already know about us. East Indians have to grasp the idea bit by bit. It's new to them."

Perhaps the most confusing of contacts for Indo-Canadians to deal with cognitively are those made by social workers, especially agents from the Ministry of Human Resources. Unlike "nurse," "social worker" is not a well known role in the regions of emigration. Unlike "school," "Ministry of Human Resources" tells prospective clients little, and it can be misleading. As indicated in Chapter Three, a negative attitude toward social assistance is established soon after arrival in Canada. Persons receiving financial aid refer to the Ministry of Human Resources as "the welfare office," and to a financial aid worker as "welfare worker" or "social worker." Who, then, is this person on the other end of the line wanting to visit?

Although the evidence is scanty, it suggests that a social worker with the Ministry of Human Resources may be associated with the previously existing category of "police." For example, when asked whether there was anything like M.H.R. in the Punjab, Indo-Canadians replied "We spent our whole lives there and never saw the police," or, "The police there do not bother about family problems." One woman who was contacted by a social worker after being beaten by her husband "just laughed and told the police it was nothing." The frequency with which actual police intervention is followed by calls from social workers, and the statutory power of M.H.R. to apprehend children at risk, would certainly act to reinforce any tendency on the part of Indo-Canadians to regard Ministry of Human Resources agents as police.

Workers calling from the Immigrant Services Centre (now

OASIS) appear to be most readily and most accurately identified by prospective clients. Not only are their personal names Indian ones, but the name of the agency and its location are also familiar. Some of the immigrants interviewed had been taken by their sponsors to the Centre during their first days in Vancouver to apply for medical insurance, etcetera. Others had read about the Centre in Indian language newspapers as a place to go for English or citizenship classes. A few respondents had "seen the board" over the store-front door and had come in to inquire about sponsoring relatives.

Thus, in the case of the Immigrant Services Centre, the agency name is not associated with any previously known institution; it is accurately identified as an office that meets immediate needs:

That immigrant office is the most important.  
They told us about U.I.C.

I went to I.S.C. to get my papers filled  
out. When my husband was alcoholic I went  
there also.

Because the Centre's workers meet a gamut of impersonal, uncompromising needs, they are often known to and accepted by clients prior to intervention or self-referral.

The identification of agents in their official capacities in many instances reinforces the pattern of response to contact discussed above. Social workers are not only most frequently associated with stigmatizing intervention, they are also associated with stigmatizing welfare assistance and police

services. Resistance to contact through intervention may also be resistance to help offered by agents negatively identified.

Public health workers are not only most frequently associated with non-stigmatizing routine services, they are also associated with the role of "nurse" known from the regions of origin. Acceptance of contacts made in the course of routine service delivery may also be acceptance of help offered by agents identified in a positive light.

Workers from the Immigrant Services Centre, who received five out of the eight cases of self-referral, do not identify themselves to clients as "social worker" or "counsellor." Their problem-oriented services are accepted because, as individuals, they are previously and positively known to the clients through the delivery of other, non-stigmatizing services.

Several of the social service agents interviewed suggest that, rather than associating them with any particular role, Indo-Canadian clients identify them with government officials in general:

East Indians new to the country give me the impression that they feel they don't have a choice. I say I'm from the Health Department and they slot me in with government. Pretty soon they find out we don't have any authority.

Newcomers accept intervention more easily. There is some feeling that "This is a government agency. We shouldn't refuse or it might go against us." Later it's more like whites; you're just doing your job.

Agents feel that Euro-Canadian clients also associate them with

government, but that they are less intimidated by the fact than are Indo-Canadians, and more aware of the limits to the agents' authority.

The question arising from the agents' suggestions is two-fold. First, to what extent do Indo-Canadians "slot workers in" with government? And, secondly, how is "government" regarded?

When asked who pays the salaries of the various agents, clients almost invariably replied "government." A few have no idea how agents get paid, and one woman believes that her medical insurance covers the services of public health workers. Also, it is interesting that several respondents distinguish between workers paid by the school board and those paid by government. However, the majority of clients answered immediately that health, school, and social workers are paid by government.<sup>44</sup>

As to whether this association with government is a negative or positive one, the evidence is mixed. On the one hand, the Canadian government is the government of the country of choice. Persons are unlikely to immigrate to a place where they consider the government terribly oppressive or frightening. As one community worker remarked:

There is no negative reaction to the fact that we are funded by government. You are in Canada and this is the Canadian government.

Clients from both Fiji and India characterize the Canadian government as trustworthy and benevolent in its provision of services:



The government is so nice here; they provide this kind of help. After my baby was born and I had the accident, whoever came and said "I am here to help you from the government," I was very glad.

In a recent sampling of all immigrants to British Columbia, 86% expressed satisfaction with government health and education services (Canada, Manpower and Immigration, 1974: 111-118). Certainly great appreciation, not to mention satisfaction, was expressed by no less a percentage of the Indo-Canadians interviewed for the present study.

On the other hand, some evidence suggests that a residual mistrust of government agents does exist. Two Indo-Canadians who had paid fellow countrymen for services had been told by them that the alternative sources of help "side with the government. We are on your side" (see Ferguson, 1964: 102). Three clients who feared deportation for reasons of illegal entry, bigamy, or tuberculosis were most cautious in interacting with agents, and also cautious in talking to me. A film on B.C.'s farmworkers notes that contractors manipulate doubts of immigrant status to ensure the acquiescence of labourers (Patwardhan, 1980).

In sum, while the government as a provider of services is positively regarded, the government as immigration authority may be regarded with fear. In most cases, however, the association of an agent with government promotes cooperation, or feigned cooperation, not resistance. I suggest that resistance to government intervention is resistance to intervention, not to government.

### Identification of Agent as an Individual

Identification of an agent for an Indo-Canadian client demands more information than the usual name-role-agency statement conveys. In the opinion of one agent, "to an East Indian, getting to know you means getting to know your place in society." A total of 13 agents (38%) spontaneously remarked on the tendency of Indo-Canadian clients to ask personal questions of them:

East Indians want to know a lot about your personal life. Are you married? Where do you live? How much money do you make? It used to be just the men but now the women ask too. Chinese don't ask that much.

When a Euro-Canadian agent initiates contact, such questions serve to establish who he is as an individual, to "flesh out" the official person:

East Indians ask the interpreter things like "Does the nurse have kids?" I tell her to say "She's trained to advise you." I don't like to give personal data. But that is what they want; they're asking about you. There's no challenge to your ability like you get from whites.

As noted below, however, to the Indo-Canadian client it is precisely the personal data which establish an agent's qualifications.<sup>4 5</sup>

When an Indo-Canadian agent initiates contact, the first questions from clients usually concern his place in Indian society:

A Hindu grandmother will ask what caste you are. The mother wants to know what your father or husband does.

My Sikh clients never ask about my religion. Maybe they know from my name. But they always ask which village I am from.

After establishing the Indo-Canadian agent's place within Indian society, clients then ask the same family-residence-salary questions that they pose Euro-Canadian agents.

Not all social service providers react favourably to personal questions from clients. Of the 13 who commented on their occurrence, 8 (61%) said they answer willingly, or provide information voluntarily. Five withhold information, or provide it reluctantly. As indicated in Table V, the division tends to correlate with the ethnic background of the agent. In general, Indo-Canadian agents respond favourably to questions from clients, while Euro-Canadian agents tend to respond with indifference or with misgivings.<sup>46</sup>

The agents who express misgivings about personal questions consider them "inappropriate," for two reasons. First of all, they are "time-consuming." Social service professionals are taught that the introductory phase of counselling is crucial; it is then that the "dynamics of the relationship and the quality of interaction" are determined (Aguilar, 1972: 67; see also Mizio, 1972: 83). However, the transactions considered conducive to initiating a positive relationship vary between Indo-Canadian and Euro-Canadian cultures. Euro-Canadian agents allow time to assure clients of their rights and responsibilities within the proposed relationship. Indo-Canadian clients allot time to

Table V

AGENT DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION  
BY  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AGENT

<u>Agent Background</u>	<u>Agent Disclosure</u>		TOTAL
	Willing	Unwilling	
Indo- Canadian	6 (46%)	1 ( 8%)	7 (54%)
Euro- Canadian	2 (15%)	4 (31%)	6 (46%)
TOTAL	8 (61%)	5 (39%)	13(100%)

ascertain personal information about the proposed exchange partner. In general, the agents do not perceive requests for information as requests, nor do they regard their answers as offerings in the transactional sequence. Personal questions merely "waste time."

Personal questions are also considered inappropriate because they are "too personal" or "rude." As one agent said, "you just don't ask things like that of a perfect stranger in our society." As noted in Chapter Three, however, you just don't share problems with a perfect stranger in Indian society.

In their attempts to get to know the agent and to establish an exchange relationship to their own satisfaction, Indo-Canadian clients may offend North American sensibilities. A study of relations between Japanese-Americans and whites in Hawaii points to the critical role played by concepts of etiquette in determining the extent to which intercultural relationships can develop:

The interaction rules which tend to deter the development of mutuality centre around the polar differences in styles of disclosure (Johnson and Johnson, 1975: 461).

While the interaction rules of North American and Indian society may not contain "polar differences," the etiquette surrounding how, when, and which personal questions to ask certainly varies. A Euro-Canadian agent may feel imposed upon by a client's requests for information, and an Indo-Canadian client may feel that a helping relationship is unacceptable from an agent who

refuses to disclose information about himself.

The agents who respond positively to personal questions, many of them Indo-Canadians, do so in the belief that a sense of trust in the agent comes easily once the client "knows" who the agent is:

In the beginning, East Indian clients are all tense. They are sitting tight, using brief answers which are very formal, and their facial expressions are very limited. Then we chat: "Where are you from?" I have lived everywhere. The whole thing changes then. They start talking loudly. It takes just five minutes. If not, I know it's going to be a big problem.

Euro-Canadian agents who provide personal information feel that a sense of trust develops once the client has found a way in which to "identify with" them:

If they ask how much I make, I just say "lots, and I love it!" But I try to establish a non-threatening rapport before getting into a problem. It comes out that my mother [from Europe] never spoke good English. That makes all the difference.

Several Euro-Canadians, including a few who view questions with indifference, note a "remarkable effect" when they inform clients of their special interest in Indian culture (cooking, religion), or in visiting India.

The importance to an Indo-Canadian of knowing his agent as an individual is evidenced by the fact that all of the self-referrals in the present study took place with agents already known to the clients, either personally or by reputation:

Culturally, East Indians would never think of using this agency. But they come anyway because they have heard about me. I am known in the community.

East Indians self-refer to the baby clinic only if they speak English, live close by, and if they know that I am the nurse that will be there. It's at the clinic that lots of problems come out.

Frequently, when I asked clients if they had ever had contact with a particular agency, they answered in the negative; but when I then asked whether they had had contact with particular workers from that agency, the answer was affirmative. As one service agent put it, "They go on personalities."

The personal questions asked of unknown agents serve at least two purposes from the perspective of an Indo-Canadian client. In the first place, in ascertaining an agent's "place in society," the client also evaluates his qualifications and respectability as a potential source of counselling. Since, within the Indian model of social exchange, help may only be received from persons of equal or higher status, it is necessary to have certain information about an agent before a decision regarding the proposed relationship can be made.

Secondly, once a decision has been made to accept help, answers to personal questions serve to establish the nature of the relationship as one of mutual exchange. Agent disclosure of personal information appears a pre-requisite to client disclosure of problems, as the following chapter indicates. In sum, both the content of the information and the fact that it is offered facilitate acceptance of a proffered helping

relationship.

To conclude, the establishment of a counselling relationship between a social service agent and an Indo-Canadian immigrant depends on the prospective client's perception of three things: the reason for the relationship, the official role of the agent offering it, and the agent's attitude toward disclosing personal information. An Indo-Canadian perceives the reason for the relationship to have greater or lesser implications for the maintenance of family sufficiency. He perceives a relationship with any given agent to be more or less stigmatizing depending on the agent's official identity. And he perceives an agent's attitude toward personal questions to have implications for the mutuality and hence the honourability of the proposed relationship. The introductory phase of counselling between Indo-Canadian clients and their agents may falter over any one of these dimensions of the answer to the question, "are you?"



Notes: Chapter Six

<sup>4 2</sup> Throughout this dissertation, statements concerning Euro-Canadian clients derive solely from my interviews with agents.

<sup>4 3</sup> The large number of referrals from emergency services reflects the emphasis on containment and the familiarity with police as a resource (see D. Singh, 1975: 29-39). Often a problem does not come to the attention of outsiders until a life is in danger:

I never wanted to go against my husband. In India a woman must always believe in her husband. But then he threatened my daughter with a knife. Then I thought to phone 911 [emergency services].

Not all referrals from police result from calls made by the prospective clients. Neighbors often report disturbances before those involved in them either have the opportunity to do so or before they deem it necessary.

The large number of Indo-Canadian referrals from medical sources illustrates the incidence of somatization and the acceptability of medical advice. Although some referrals from hospitals and doctors concern patients with injuries resulting from family violence, others concern patients who have sought help for a variety of ills and who have then "opened up" to doctors or nurses. Still other patients, however, reach even medical services only after experiencing mental breakdown.

The lesser frequency of referrals by friends may also be

understood in light of the emphasis on containment and the stigma attached to emotional problems. On the one hand, prospective clients are likely to keep problems from friends until, as one Indo-Canadian woman put it, "it becomes too much to bear." On the other hand, friends who are aware of problems are also aware of the stigma attached to revealing them further:

If an East Indian phones, they want to be anonymous. Sometimes they won't even say who they are calling about; they just want to feel out the possibilities. When I ask why they won't give any information, they say they must protect the reputation of the family.

It is also possible that friends anticipate anger rather than gratitude from the prospective client for referring their problem.

The number of referrals from schools, although not much greater than those from friends, is interesting in that it does not relate to any previous help-seeking pattern. As indicated in the present chapter, schools in India and Fiji assist primarily with academic matters. In Canada, however, Indo-Canadian children learn that teachers, counsellors, school nurses and principals may be turned to for personal problems (see Westwood and Massey, 1982):

Kids who came here when they were young attach much less stigma to getting help. They say "It's my right to talk to someone."

School workers report that Indo-Canadian parents are often "speechless" when they learn that their child has initiated contact with them.

<sup>44</sup> No client mentioned community-based sources of funding such as the United Way, although some of the agents were funded at least partially through them. Several Euro-Canadian agents and two Indo-Canadian agents expressed irritation at the clients' failure to recognize and appreciate the private sector's role in social services. In particular, these agents criticized Indo-Canadians for making contributions to their temples but not to the service agencies who assist them:

They want all the benefits of living here but they don't want to give anything. The temple backs the wife staying with her husband even if her life is threatened. We [social service agencies] are their only hope, but they give only to the temple.

The multiple, positive roles which temple organizations do play are discussed by Dusenbery, 1981.

<sup>45</sup> Works in social psychology indicate the interconnectedness of personal information exchange, liking, and getting-to-know you in Western culture (cf. Altman and Taylor, 1973; Jourard, 1973). For the most part, however, such factors are examined with regard to personal rather than to professional relationships.

<sup>46</sup> When Indo-Canadian and Euro-Canadian agents visit clients jointly, this contrast may produce inter-agent tension:

If [an Indo-Canadian worker] is there, everything takes longer. She likes to have chatty times with the clients: "How long have you been here?" Things like that.

## Chapter Seven

### WHEN THE POT IS BOILING:

#### THE STUDY PHASE

During the second phase of a counselling relationship, an agent and client convey information and attitudes to each other about the problem at hand. In exchange for assurances of confidentiality and acceptance, the agent desires client openness in disclosing and discussing his problem. An Indian proverb states: "When the pot is boiling, it is covered." During the study phase of counselling, the challenge for an agent is to get the client to uncover the pot and to examine its contents.

The present chapter identifies the patterns of agent and client transactions pertaining to the initial disclosure of problems and to the subsequent discussion of them. It notes the agents' explanations for client non-disclosure and the clients' understanding of agents' efforts to discuss what is disclosed. The chapter concludes by suggesting how cultural referents of social exchange combine with other cultural factors to affect transactional patterns during the study phase of counselling.

#### Disclosure of the Problem

Whether they deal with problems of health, education, or family, agents describe two basic ways in which Indo-Canadian clients present their problems. Over half of the agents refer to a restricted pattern of communication:

East Indians don't really come out and tell you what's wrong. You come in cold through the door. People open up only if you stumble onto something. It comes out through my asking questions.

Sikhs and Fijians will only present part of the problem. They'll say "my husband left me," and later you find out there was a third party involved. Whites are less withholding. They're pretty open compared to East Indians, unless common-law is involved.

In contrast, the remaining agents describe an outpouring of emotions and details on the part of Indo-Canadian clients:

They have a different way of describing a problem. It's extensive. You get details of what is wrong today, what happened yesterday. Grudges from years ago come out. Every story has a long history dating back to India.

Ethnic groups, especially East Indians, speak more from the heart. They are not as reserved; they express more verbally. Whites are more intellectual, less emotional in presenting a problem.

Clients' accounts of meetings with agents support the impression that communications may be either wide open or quite restricted. However, whereas any given agent tends to believe that "most" clients follow one pattern and an "exception" follows the other, a given client often indicated that his pattern of communication varies from one agent to another. For example, a woman experiencing marital difficulties felt free to "tell everything" to a school worker, but asked "why should she know?" regarding a public health worker. The question is, then, what enables certain clients, with certain agents, to disclose

their problems?

Many of the Euro-Canadian agents reporting client reticence in disclosure attribute the pattern to the unalterable fact that they are not themselves Indo-Canadian.<sup>47</sup> As Table VI indicates, the patterns of client disclosure and non-disclosure do tend to correlate with the ethnic backgrounds of the agents. Eighty-one percent of the Indo-Canadian agents, but only 30% of the Euro-Canadian agents, report open initial presentation. Overall, a 74% correspondence exists between the agents' ethnic background and their experience of client initial disclosure.

On the one hand, some Euro-Canadian agents suggest that cultural differences render the clients unable or unwilling to communicate to them:

East Indians have great difficulty in understanding what we do. I am a foreigner to them. Most clients say I don't understand their way. They have a different life-style.

On the other hand, other Euro-Canadian agents feel that their non-Indian background renders them unable to communicate effectively with clients. As one agent put it, "I'm afraid I can do more harm than good not knowing their culture." In particular, the language barrier, even when interpreters are used, is perceived to compromise communication:

It's a question of nuances. With whites we can pick up on a problem, pursue it. With East Indians you might be getting only one-tenth of the situation. You just don't know because you can't pick up on the nuances.

Table VI

CLIENT DISCLOSURE OF PROBLEM  
BY  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AGENT

Agent Background	<u>Client Disclosure</u>		
	Open	Restricted	TOTAL
Indo-Canadian	17 (29%)	4 ( 7%)	21 (36%)
Euro-Canadian	11 (19%)	26 (45%)	37 (64%)
TOTAL	28 (48%)	30 (52%)	58 (100%)

Indo-Canadian agents hold sharply contrasting views on the significance of an agent's ethnic background to the client's disclosure of a problem. Interestingly, most of the Indo-Canadian agents who are best liked by their own clients suggest that factors other than ethnicity are more important:

It is a question of personal approach. It makes no difference if you are not Punjabi. You must be sincere. If they see you can be trusted then they will trust you.

Two Indo-Canadian agents who feel that "it just doesn't work between East Indians and whites" are themselves not trusted by their clients whom I interviewed.

The Indo-Canadian clients generally support the Euro-Canadian view that language poses a major obstacle to a helping relationship.<sup>48</sup> Many named language as their "biggest problem" as immigrants: "I can't tell my feelings. I say so much and then the interpreter says [translates] two-three words." Nevertheless, the clients also named nine Euro-Canadian agents as their "best friend" or "biggest help" in Canada.

Apparently, a Euro-Canadian agent may be entrusted with problems, despite his cultural background, depending on his personal manner:

One lady from [an agency] saw me outside. She was very friendly. She saw I felt shy. She said, "Don't be afraid." Because of her only I came to know all these services.

Now my worker treats me so rudely: "Do this; don't do that." Before, I had [another Euro-Canadian]. Then everything was so fine.



She was like my sister. Even if my English is not good, we talked so much.

As one client put it, "It's just like the Punjab. There are some good people and some bad."

A minority of Euro-Canadian agents experiencing restricted disclosure attribute the pattern to their sex rather than to their ethnicity. Five female agents suggested that Indo-Canadian men refuse to discuss things with them because "they consider themselves superior" to women. The men "don't respect a woman worker" because "they don't believe that women have any authority." These agents have read or heard that such attitudes are "part of Indian culture."<sup>49</sup> One male agent attributed his success with clients to the same factors:

The men accept me because I'm male. They think I'll understand their point of view. I have a lot easier time of it than some of the women [agents].

No Indo-Canadian agent suggested that the sex of an agent is a factor in client disclosure, except where the problem to be discussed involves intimate topics such as impotence. At one in-service training workshop, the suggestion was made, somewhat in jest, that only male social workers should be given East Indian cases involving males. A female Indo-Canadian agent responded with vehemence:

Women have [command] great respect in the Indian family system. Family problems are always looked after by women. In Indian

society too, look at Indira Gandhi. These men are just trying to intimidate you. They don't want anyone to interfere in their business. It doesn't matter whether you're a lady or a man.

Certainly the male clients interviewed showed no sign of differing attitudes towards their agents based on sex. In the few instances where particular respect was expressed, it referred to the employment status of an agent ("she is Director now"), or to an exceptional service which the agent had provided.

The experience of female Euro-Canadian agents and their perceptions of it cannot be denied and may in fact represent something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. But in terms of the Indian model of social exchange, it is the perception of the Indo-Canadian agents which appears logical. Outside of the family, any individual's status depends on his family's reputation, his caste or village, and his employment. A woman establishes her respectability on these grounds just as a man does. Moreover, as the Indo-Canadian agent pointed out, inside the family it is a woman's role to deal with problems that arise. Intervention by another male might be perceived as a greater threat to honour, and prevent or postpone the establishment of mutuality. In other words, whether an Indo-Canadian man perceives a female agent as having comparable authority or less authority than a male, his willingness to disclose a problem to her should not be less than if she were a male.

The agents reporting an open pattern of disclosure with Indo-Canadian clients attribute it either to the severity of

their clients' problems or to the trust which their clients have in them, established during the introductory phase. Since severe problems may be withheld from some agents but revealed to others, it is the factor of trust that warrants special examination.

Judging by the interviews conducted, the issue of agent disclosure of personal information, discussed in Chapter Six, shades imperceptibly into the issue of client disclosure. Without exception, those agents who say they provide personal information willingly to clients also report that clients present problems openly to them. The agents who have reservations about disclosing personal information all describe a restricted pattern of communication on the part of clients.

The evidence is far from conclusive: only 13 of the 58 agents remarked on questions from clients (see Table V, p. 164). Moreover, agent attitude toward self-disclosure is probably not alone in determining client attitude to problem disclosure. A cluster of subtle, related variables in personal manner and non-verbal behaviour likely accompany an agent's acceptance or rejection of personal questions, and together influence the client's decision to divulge or to withhold information (cf. Gumperz, 1978).

Nevertheless, in several ways the relationship between agent disclosure and client disclosure follows the logic of the models of social exchange posited. First of all, given the goal of family sufficiency, clients perceive disclosure of problems to entail certain costs. In revealing a problem to an outsider,

a client acknowledges failure on the part of his family to prevent, resolve, and contain the problem. The outsider entrusted with this knowledge must be respectable, a person of equal or higher status. To reveal information to a person of lower status would compromise the client still further.

Through personal information about an agent, the client determines his respectability. As one Indo-Canadian agent put it:

In India you do not go to a stranger with a problem. You go to someone you know and respect. Here I have authority, but I do not command respect just because I have authority. Before they'll talk, they must come to know me.

Respectability must be established not only prior to the acceptance of an offer of help (Chapter Six), but also prior to the disclosure of a problem.

Secondly, the implicit attribution of status to the person entrusted with a problem renders the act of disclosure an act of giving in the eyes of the client. If the relationship is to be one of mutual exchange, the agent must also give.<sup>50</sup> As one Indo-Canadian woman said, an agent seems "more like a friend" when the conversation includes information from both parties. This woman had concealed her main problem from a public health worker, one of the agents who considers personal questions rude: "She acted like a big official, taking down information on our lives."

Since disclosure is an act of giving, agents who volunteer information about themselves initiate a transactional sequence.

As one family worker remarked, "If I am open with them, then they must be open with me." Most agents confine information about themselves to biographical facts, but four Indo-Canadians occasionally tell clients about problems they have faced -- single parenting, "Canadian" behaviour in children, and even psychiatric problems in a family member -- if these relate to the clients' problems. In terms of the prescribed professional mode of transaction, such disclosures go beyond the limits set by "area of expertise." But the Indo-Canadian agents perceive that an acknowledgement of their own problems serves to reduce the sense of stigma and promote a sense of mutuality conducive to client disclosure:

I always say, "Well, don't worry about it. Everyone faces problems, I face problems, and I want someone to talk to." Then they talk to me.

Finally, the apparent relationship between agent disclosure and client disclosure makes sense given the value placed on family honour. When an Indo-Canadian divulges a problem, he not only incurs definite costs in terms of family sufficiency, he also risks possible costs to his family's reputation. Personal information about the agent, particularly an Indo-Canadian agent, helps determine how great these risks are:

East Indian men need to clarify who I am, partly to determine how much they can share, if I can be trusted.

The first thing I do is make sure a Punjabi

Sikh understands where I am from and that I offer absolute confidentiality. He feels more comfortable when he knows where I'm from, as long as he knows I'll repeat nothing.

Confidentiality by Euro-Canadians is not always assumed by clients ("I think she talked about our son to her office meeting"), but neither is it a major concern. Family izzat rises and falls according to one's own community's evaluation. As one English-speaking Indo-Canadian said:

I would not go to an Indian worker because I would feel vulnerable. I would go to a white worker because I am not known in their community and they are not known in mine.

In sum, the data suggest that agents who willingly provide personal information are more likely to experience open communication from their clients. Personal information from agents facilitates client disclosure by indicating the respectability, mutuality, and confidentiality of the relationship. The fact that a greater percentage of Indo-Canadian agents experience open initial disclosure from clients may well be related to the fact that a greater percentage of them willingly disclose information to clients.

#### Discussion of the Problem

Whether clients "pour out" their problems initially or present them in a restricted manner, agents proceed with the study phase by asking further questions about the information

which has been provided them. As with initial client disclosure, agents experience two distinct patterns of client discussion of problems. Precisely half of the agents report that clients willingly answer questions and explore the issues involved (Table VII). The other half believe that Indo-Canadian clients are either unable or unwilling to examine their problems.

As indicated by Table VII, the pattern of client discussion correlates to some extent with the ethnic background of the agents. However, whereas 81% of the Indo-Canadian agents experience initial client disclosure (see Table VI, p. 175), only 71% report willing discussion of the problem. In contrast, the percentage of Euro-Canadian agents experiencing client openness increases from 30% to 38% between initial disclosure and subsequent discussion. The interviews with agents and clients suggest a number of possible explanations for these patterns.

Judging by statements from the clients, the asking of further questions is a critical issue for the counselling relationship. On the one hand, when elaborating on why they consider a particular agent "good," at least four immigrants mentioned that the agent questions them fully:

The court worker is very nice. She listens to whatever I have to say. She asks so many questions. She asks all the background information.

One agent is "not good. He didn't ask me about anything. He said he would talk to my son's teacher. What does [the teacher] know?

Table VII

CLIENT DISCUSSION OF PROBLEM  
BY  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AGENT

<u>Agent Background</u>	<u>Client Discussion</u>		TOTAL
	Willing	Reticent	
Indo- Canadian	15 (26%)	6 (10%)	21 (36%)
Euro- Canadian	14 (24%)	23 (40%)	37 (64%)
TOTAL	29 (50%)	29 (50%)	58 (100%)



We know our son best."

On the other hand, several clients and also several Indo-Canadian agents feel that questions from agents can be offensive, and can create a wall of resistance between client and agent (see Vikram, 1981: 8):

When the nurse visited I was very glad. She told me so many things, what to do for the baby. Then she came again, I don't know why. She asked rude questions, "How do you sit so many people at the table?" I told her we will move, we are saving our money. She wanted to come again, but I said we will be away. There was no point.

Most clients who object to questions perceive them as criticism, or as challenges to previous statements made. In particular, clients express nothing short of outrage at questions from certain agents about how they spend their money.

Many of the agents experiencing difficulty in getting clients to discuss their problems attribute the pattern to aspects of Indian culture. They suggest that the emphasis on containment, and a lack of emphasis on introspective reasoning, complicate the study phase of counselling:

Indians are mostly reserved people. They do not like to talk about their problems outside the family. The men feel they are not doing their duty.

The women don't show their feelings. Feelings have always been shoved aside all their lives. Their feelings might inconvenience someone else.

Agents who experience no difficulty with client discussion, but

who do experience difficulty with initial disclosure, also point to lack of familiarity with introspective counselling. The agent must "elicit the details but they are forthcoming":

People from India are not used to talking like this. You must not be so formal, but be friendly. They are not hiding, but you must lead them to what you want. Be direct and they will be direct also.

A few of the agents having difficulty with client discussion suggest that conscious withholding may occur, particularly if a client feels threatened.<sup>51</sup> As indicated in Chapter Six, Indo-Canadians do not appear to regard agents with fear unless their status as immigrants is in question. However, interviews with at least two clients suggest that a client may decide to withhold information because of a desire to limit discussion to the problem for which he has accepted help. One woman agreed to counselling for her child's behavioural problems, but refused to discuss her husband's drinking problem. A second woman, deserted by her husband after the birth of a child, accepted Homemaker Service but would not talk about her marriage. In limiting disclosure, a client may perceive himself as limiting the costs to family sufficiency and family honour.

It would seem that client openness to discussion, so pivotal to the attainment of agents' goals, must be encouraged by agents with more than assurances of confidentiality. One agent, consistently held in high esteem by the clients interviewed, suggests that a general explanation of expectations

should preface specific questions:

In the first hour people can say anything. In the same conversation, the story changes. Don't label them as liars, as unco-operative. Say "That's okay, I understand. You are nervous, confused. Come out in the open with me. I am not going to judge you. If I am to help you, I must know the truth. I will not make it worse for you."

Such an explanatory preface covers the range of possible reasons noted above for client withholding of information. It both defines counselling content and identifies openness as behaviour which will cost little and may gain a lot.

In terms of the Indian model of exchange, such an explanatory statement clarifies for the client what he is expected to give and what he may expect in return. As one agent notes, "It's useless to ask questions in the beginning. They won't tell you anything until they're ready to." If a client understands that open discussion is a necessary part of the price of help, that it may in fact engender fuller support from the agent, he may feel ready to share information sooner than if asked questions without such understanding.

Analysis of the interviews conducted suggests one further explanation for client reticence regarding agents' questions, namely, the nature of agent acceptance conveyed when the client initially discloses his problem. All Euro-Canadian agents and all but one of the Indo-Canadian agents say they try to convey a sense of acceptance when a client discloses a problem:

I have to be non-threatening if I want to get anywhere. I ask "How do you handle your daughter's rages?" I keep pushing: "What if that doesn't work?" They feel guilty. I have to validate them: "Sometimes you get to that point."

Yet, in relating the clients' problems to me, the agents also reveal certain pre-conceived and generalized explanations for the problems. I believe such explanations have significant implications for continued disclosure by clients during the study phase of counselling.

Over half of the agents, most of them Euro-Canadians, base their interpretation of clients' problems primarily on direct observations made over time with other Indo-Canadian families (Table VIII). For example, when a mother phones to complain that her baby cries too much, a public health worker may attribute the problem to "overstimulation":

When you go into East Indian homes, there is so much going on at once. The baby is always with them; it's right there in the kitchen with the pots and pans banging.

Most of the remaining agents rely for the most part on information about Indian culture acquired, in the case of Indo-Canadians, through personal experience or, in the case of Euro-Canadians, through formal learning and travel.<sup>52</sup> They tend to interpret a problem in its wider cultural context. For instance, when a Sikh boy is beaten by his father for smoking, an Indo-Canadian worker or an informed Euro-Canadian may offer the following explanation:

Table VIII

AGENT INTERPRETATION OF PROBLEM  
BY  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AGENT

Agent Background	<u>Agent Interpretation</u>		TOTAL
	Indian Culture	Indo-Canadian Life-Style	
Indo-Canadian	15 (26%)	6 (10%)	21 (36%)
Euro-Canadian	12 (21%)	25 (43%)	37 (64%)
TOTAL	27 (47%)	31 (53%)	58 (100%)

Cigarettes are shocking to the Punjabi family. But they are important to peer interaction. If a teen explores this new behaviour, the father takes it as a personal affront, or hurt. It's an insult to him.

The different bases of interpretation have implications for the nature of "acceptance" conveyed by agents. A single kind of problem -- for example, the exhaustion of post-partum mothers -- may be responded to in very different ways, depending on the agent's understanding of the situation. An agent who depends on direct observation may focus questions on features of Indo-Canadian life-style:

When I see an East Indian mum is run down, I ask what her husband's schedule is. So often they have two jobs, or shift work. I tell her she should lie down for half an hour in the morning and afternoon. I ask if he can help out when he's home.

An agent who relies on broader, accurate knowledge of Indian culture may focus counselling in quite a different direction:

In India everyone has their own support network. Not all women can cope without it. Especially new mothers need encouragement to let friends or relatives help. Sometimes I can arrange it.

In both of these cases, the attitude toward the client is accepting, but the questions based on direct observation may convey an attitude of non-acceptance of the client's behaviour. I suggest that questions which implicate aspects of behaviour or features of life-style may also be perceived by Indo-Canadian

clients to threaten standards of caste purity. If the questions challenge caste mores and practices, the cost of answering them is considerable.

No agent explicitly identified his basis for interpreting clients' problems, nor did any agent connect his interpretation of problems to his experience of continued client disclosure. However, as Table IX indicates, a high degree of overlap exists between those agents who interpreted clients' problems to me in terms of the clients' life-style, and those agents who reported client reticence in discussing the problems. Whereas the correlation between agent ethnic background and client discussion of problems is 66% (see Table VII, p. 184), the correlation between agent basis of interpreting problems and client discussion of them is 89%.

The relevance of the goal of caste purity to Indo-Canadians' discussion of problems is suggested by an examination of their own bases of interpreting those problems. Although I did not systematically ask all of the clients what they held responsible for their difficulties, in the course of conversation eleven of them implicated some aspect of Canadian culture or Canadian life-style.

Particularly in cases involving children, parents look to Western influences to explain difficulties (see Kurian and Ghosh, 1983: 133).

My daughter is getting into bad company.  
They tell her she should go with them; don't  
come home after school. Canadian children  
have no respect for their parents.

Table IX

AGENT INTERPRETATION OF PROBLEM  
BY  
CLIENT DISCUSSION OF PROBLEM

Client Discussion	<u>Agent Interpretation</u>		TOTAL
	Indian Culture	Indo-Canadian Life-Style	
Willing	25 (43%)	4 ( 7%)	29 (50%)
Reticent	2 ( 4%)	27 (46%)	29 (50%)
TOTAL	27 (47%)	31 (53%)	58 (100%)



The kids see everything on T.V. They see you get married just like that [simply, quickly], then get divorced. They stop listening to me.

The problems which clients attribute to features of Canadian culture agents term "cultural conflict." As one worker said, "Immigrants don't identify cultural adjustment problems, we do." Perhaps clients identify the same problems, but do not perceive them to call for "adjustment."

In cases concerning marital conflict, agents report that Indo-Canadian men "blame the women for everything" or that husbands and wives "usually accuse each other" of causing the problems. Study then focuses on the interpersonal relationship involved: "We work with the men on their attitude toward women." However, clients who were asked why their spouses act in a particular way tended to implicate Canadian culture:

My husband has too much money here. He can drink because there is so much money; he doesn't care. All his friends have too much money.

Indian ladies see white ladies can do as they please. Then they say, "Why should I stay home and do all this drudgery?" So, many people get divorce here. It is not good.

Agent discussion of client understandings of Canadian culture would probably ease discussion of client adjustment to it.

Indo-Canadians who attribute their problems to features of Canadian culture may try to restrict contact between family members and the outside world. One woman's husband forbids her

to leave the house without him. Several families have purchased video equipment so that Indian films can replace Canadian television. Many parents refuse their children permission to participate in extra-curricular school activities.

The counselling relationship itself may be perceived by a client as exacerbating rather than resolving problems. The fear that a worker will "liberate the wives and young girls" constitutes yet another reason for male resistance to services (Vikram, 1981: 9). Rather than expose the family to this dimension of Canadian culture -- the culture held responsible for the problem -- men may try to prevent their wives from utilizing services, and parents may "whisk away" their children:

If M.H.R. [a Ministry of Human Resources agent] comes anywhere near, the child simply disappears. She's off on a visit to a relative somewhere. We never see her again.

One boy, whose parents had been advised to let a youth worker talk with him once a week, now lives with an aunt and uncle in northern B.C.: "We miss him too [very] much, but now he will learn respect from our people."

In sum, both social service agents and their Indo-Canadian clients enter the study phase with certain understandings of the problems at hand. Agents tend to interpret difficulties in terms of Indo-Canadian life-style and Indian culture. Clients tend to attribute difficulties to Canadian life-style and Canadian culture. I suggest that the agent's basis for interpreting problems determines to some extent the questions which he poses

clients, and hence the nature of the acceptance which he conveys to them. The client's understanding of problems, and his perception of the agent's attitude towards them, affect his decisions regarding continued disclosure and discussion.

In terms of the Indian model of social exchange, the explanations offered for problems have implications not only for the goal of caste purity but also for the client's perception of himself and his agent as transactors. The client's attribution of problems to Canadian culture may diminish his sense of indebtedness: it is easier to receive help if help is necessitated by circumstances beyond one's control. Agents who interpret problems in terms of their knowledge of Indian culture may appear to clients to agree with this perception. They convey the attitude that responsibility for the origin of the problem lies outside the client, although responsibility for its resolution is still within the client's powers.

In contrast, agents who rely on direct observation to explain difficulties, without reference to Indian cultural patterns, appear to place responsibility for both the problem and its solution on the client. They convey the impression that they believe the client is receiving help because of his own way of doing things. Thus, they increase the client's sense of indebtedness, and his estimation of the costs entailed in continuing the relationship.

In conclusion, agent attainment of client initial disclosure and subsequent discussion of problems appears related

to several factors. One of these, client familiarity with introspective or reflective counselling, does not pertain to the models of social exchange posited. It constitutes a significant factor for some counselling relationships, however, both during the study phase and again during assessment and treatment (see p. 223). To some extent, the difficulty posed by a client's lack of familiarity with introspection may be overcome by an explanatory statement offered by the agent before he begins to discuss the client's problem.

Other factors affecting patterns of client disclosure and discussion do pertain to the Indian model of social exchange. The goal of family sufficiency manifests itself in the client's emphasis on containment and in his desire to limit discussion to the problem for which he has accepted help. The goal of caste purity is reflected in clients' understandings of their problems and in client response to agent interpretations of those problems.

But the cultural referent of social exchange having greatest significance for the study phase of counselling appears to be that of the transactional mode. With regard to the discussion of problems, an agent's basis of interpretation not only has implications for caste purity, it also has implications for the extent to which clients feel beholden or indebted. Similarly, a client's desire to limit discussion may reflect a desire to limit indebtedness, as well as a desire to maintain family sufficiency. Finally, the significance of transactional modes may be seen in the high degree of overlap between agents

who disclose personal information and those who experience open communication from clients. In the Indian model of social exchange, if a problem must be revealed and discussed outside the family, it should be revealed and discussed within the context of a mutual exchange relationship.

Notes: Chapter Seven

<sup>47</sup> The four Indo-Canadian agents experiencing non-disclosure by clients attribute the pattern to client fears of deportation, child-apprehension, etcetera. I discuss fear as a factor in client communication patterns later in the present chapter.

<sup>48</sup> In a study of a multicultural clientele in New York, Beck reports (1983:22) that ethnic matching of agent and client was associated with positive outcomes but not at a statistically significant level. However, the "unusually large differential for Hispanic clients is undoubtedly influenced by the added language barrier."

<sup>49</sup> Beck notes (1983:19-20) that, among her multicultural clientele, male as well as female clients report better counselling outcomes when their agent is female.

<sup>50</sup> If the relationship is one of unilateral, dependent receiving, reciprocal information from the agent does not appear as necessary. None of the described relationships characterized by client dependence at the outset was reported to have included personal questions to agents until after the first few sessions (see Table IV, p. 146). In the 6 of these cases that were based on self-referrals, the clients already knew the agents. But in the 7 initially dependent relationships established through intervention and routine services, the clients neither knew the agents nor did they ask personal questions of them before describing their own problems. The clients' desperate

circumstances rendered them totally beholden, unable to contemplate the mutual exchange mode which personal information from the agent would have established.

<sup>51</sup> A few agents believe that clients may also consciously misrepresent facts. Three of these agents, all Indo-Canadians, feel that the very connotation of the word honesty varies between Canadian culture, in which it is considered a virtue, and Indian culture, in which it is considered foolishness, a quality of simple-minded persons:

In India, to not hurt feelings or to avoid hassle, it is okay to lie. It is not the official system but the standard way of doing things. Even educated, intelligent people won't tell you the exact truth.

These agents inform their clients that "in Canada you must tell the truth":

An average Indian doesn't know that by telling the truth he can get what he wants. He is constantly asking "What should I tell them?" For example, "How long should I say I've been here?" I always tell them to tell the truth. Now my clients have come to know and they don't cheat.

<sup>52</sup> A minority of Euro-Canadian agents, no more than three of the present sample, refer to ideas about Indian culture not substantiated in the literature:

One woman told me her husband was bringing home other women. They don't have the same scruples we have. There are no should's and shouldn'ts.

I have categorized these agents as interpreting problems in terms of Indo-Canadian life-style. Although they phrase their explanations in broad cultural terms, the terms derive from personal judgement rather than accurate knowledge.



## Chapter Eight

### A MIRACULOUS SOLUTION:

#### THE ASSESSMENT PHASE

During the third phase of counselling, agents and clients exchange information and attitudes regarding possible solutions to the problems disclosed during the preceding study phase. An agent identifies resources relevant to the resolution of the problem and offers to make them available to the client. In return, the agent wants the client to decide which resources he will utilize. He wants client self-determination of a treatment plan.

According to the agents interviewed, Indo-Canadian clients seem less able or less willing to develop their own treatment plans than do Euro-Canadian clients. As one agent put it, "They want a miraculous solution, and they want you [the agent] to produce it." This perception on the part of agents represents one of the most quantitatively significant findings of the research conducted: every agent, whether Euro-Canadian or Indo-Canadian, remarked on the relative dependency of Indo-Canadian clients during the assessment phase.

The present chapter examines the differing expectations of agents and clients regarding determination of a treatment plan in light of their differing cultural referents of social exchange. First, I suggest how client hopes for a "miraculous solution" and agent response to these hopes relate to each

party's understanding of mutual exchange relationships. Next, I identify how agent expectations of decisions regarding treatment plans and client response to these expectations relate to each party's transactional goals and the values underlying them. The chapter concludes with an analysis of treatment plans which appear satisfactory to both agent and client, despite differences in the cultural models of social exchange.

### Client Expectations of Agents

Whether agents deal with family, educational, or health-related concerns, they all report that once an Indo-Canadian client discloses a problem, his expectation is that the agent will solve it:

Clients expect me to solve marriage disputes single-handedly. They say "you talk to her, you tell her" and think that that will bring about reconciliation.

They tell the school worker: "You are the teacher, you know, you do the necessary to make my kid behave." East Indians want problems dealt with by the school.

East Indian mums want me to produce miraculous solutions. If the baby cries too much, they want me to do something definite, right away. Their expectations are unreal.

This pattern of client expectation characterizes most of the described counselling relationships whether they were established through intervention, routine services, or self-referral. Even clients who employed the mutual exchange mode of transaction during the introductory and study phases of counselling are generally described as dependent during the

assessment phase.

Given the status implications to Indo-Canadians of transacting as dependent receivers, the pervasiveness of the pattern of expectations appears to challenge the validity of the model of social exchange posited for Indian culture. If clients request unilateral advice, how can they also have as their ideal transactional mode that of mutual exchange? I believe the answer lies in the way the Indo-Canadian understanding of the agent-client relationship minimizes the negative implications of receiving direct advice within that relationship.

In the first instance, at the core of Indo-Canadian expectations of miraculous solutions rests the belief that agents, in providing direct answers to the problems presented, are "doing their duty." Clients' comments such as "that is your job, isn't it?" were frequently reported by agents. On the one hand, expectations of direct solutions relate to the clients' lack of familiarity with counselling processes:

To the East Indian with a drinking problem,  
treatment means medical treatment.  
Counselling and therapy are unknown in  
India, at least by these people.

On the other hand, clients' expectations relate to their identification of agents with "nurses," "principals," and "police" in the countries of emigration. The exhausted wife who requests "a pill and the whole thing done with," or the father who wants the school to modify his son's behaviour through the exercise of its authority, base their expectations on their understanding of the agents' prescribed roles. In so doing, they

limit the costs to transactional status entailed in receiving the requested services. They are not asking for anything beyond the duty of the agent, a duty performed in return for salary provided through taxes.

Secondly, whether or not the solutions requested exceed the clients' understanding of the agents' prescribed roles, the costs incurred may be perceived as limited in so far as the client's role in the problem is also perceived as limited. Thus, if the client attributes the problem to Canadian culture during the study phase (pp.191-193), he curtails the extent to which he feels compromised in requesting advice on the problem during the assessment phase. Agents note a general tendency on the part of clients to insist on solutions which reflect their own views of the problem:

Teenager problems are very difficult. The parents have definite ideas about restraints and they expect the worker to support their view, to agree with them about what they want for their kids.

When it's a husband-wife dispute, each wants you on their side. We are here to bring about reconciliation, but they think there is a right and wrong and you will set things straight.

Euro-Canadian clients as well as Indo-Canadian clients want agents to support their views of the problems presented (Keith-Lucas, 1972: 23). For Indo-Canadian clients, however, agent solutions which suggest that a client is "in the right" may be important not only because they relieve the client of responsibility for the problem, but also because they relieve

him of responsibility for the costs incurred in resolving the problem.

Finally, when Indo-Canadian clients do perceive that their requests of agents exceed the agents' prescribed duties, they limit the costs they might otherwise incur by defining their relationship with the agent as one of mutual exchange. Such a definition logically follows the transactions which have taken place during the introductory and study phases. In the client's perspective, he has given to the agent by according him respect and status through the acceptance of an offer of help and the disclosure of a personal problem. It is now the agent's turn to reciprocate with advice and solutions regarding that problem.

Most of the clients express the mutual exchange nature of their relations with agents in terms of kinship and friendship (see Fleuret, 1974:31):

When [an Indo-Canadian agent] comes, we talk about my children, how I am managing. She is my best friend. I have many friends but I would not confide in them.

Our family is very thankful [a Euro-Canadian agent] is our friend. Whatever she tells me I do. My sons call her Auntie. They see she is very good to us.

When you have problems, you want someone to talk to, a brother or sister. I had this kind of talk with [a male Indo-Canadian agent] when I went to the Centre.

Only one Euro-Canadian agent explicitly suggested that the mutual exchange relationship and the dependent expectations during assessment might be related: "They put you in the role of friend and want you to tell them what to do." However, as noted

in Chapter Three, kinship and friendship very much include the giving of direct advice. More importantly, they facilitate the receiving of such advice by placing the transaction within the context of an on-going relationship of generalized reciprocity.

In sum, the expectations of Indo-Canadian clients for miraculous solutions from their agents are considered by the agents to be indications of dependency. To the clients, however, such expectations fall within the bounds of the mutual exchange relationship, given the problems concerned. Immediate, "medical prescription" solutions constitute the essence of the prescribed roles of social service providers as these are known in the countries of emigration. More involved solutions may be requested for problems whose origins lie beyond the control of the person experiencing them. Extensive counselling advice characterizes interaction between friends, one of whom has already given respect and trust to the other.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, although transacting as a dependent, unilateral receiver during the assessment phase, the Indo-Canadian client does not perceive himself to be compromising his status, his goals of dharma, or his family honour any further than he already has. He limits the costs of receiving solutions to his problems through his understanding of those problems and his understanding of the relationship established to resolve them.<sup>54</sup>

#### Agent Response to Client Expectations

As indicated in Chapter Two, all of the Euro-Canadian social service agents in principle express strong support for

the professional goal of client self-sufficiency and the value of individual rights and responsibilities. During the assessment phase, Indo-Canadian expectations of solutions directly test the strength of these convictions:

East Indians ask "What do I do?" They like direct advice. We're supposed to provide client-centered counselling. The most I should say is "Have you thought of this?" But they're not interested. They want to be told what to do.

Similarly, client expectations that solutions will reflect their own views of problems challenge established practice techniques:

Professional training says don't take sides. We must mediate, not form an alliance or a coalition with the client. We are not here to become involved in a dispute, but that can cost you the client's cooperation in some cases..

From the professional perspective, as one agent noted, Indo-Canadian clients can pose a "no-win situation": either the immediate problem is "solved" but the principles are ignored, or the principles are maintained but the problem goes unresolved.

All but one of the social service agents say they initially respond to client expectations by "putting it back to the client." However, the manner in which this is done and hence the attitude which is conveyed towards the client vary considerably between agents:

I explain: "The government pays me to bring service to you, not to bring my ideas to you but to help you reach your own decisions." Some clients never get the idea. Others do,

but it can take a long time.

East Indians feel I should be all-knowing. They place themselves in my hands. I try to clarify my role: "I am here just to repeat what you tell me." But it takes time. You're dealing with a different culture.

These clients want me to play God. Once I gain their trust and respect they expect me to make all better. I tell them they must help themselves. I can't hold their hands indefinitely.

In terms of the Indian model of exchange, agents who articulate a positive role which they do want to play in helping the client probably stand a better chance of gaining the client's cooperation. An agent who simply reiterates what he wants the client to do appears, from the client's perspective, neither to fulfill his prescribed duty nor to reciprocate for the respect and trust the client has shown him.

Despite the apparent uniformity with which social service providers say they respond initially to client requests for direct advice or solutions, descriptions of specific relationships reveal a variety of counselling approaches employed. These approaches may be visualized on a continuum, ranging from non-directive information-giving to direct instruction (Table X). At the centre of the continuum lies a counselling technique which involves extensive "thinking-through" of alternatives with clients: the decision is not "left" with the client, nor is it made by the agent. Judging by their own accounts of actual counselling transactions, and by client accounts of interactions with them, I believe that the Euro-Canadian agents fall more or less equally along the entire



Table X

AGENT APPROACH TO COUNSELLING  
BY  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AGENT

Agent Background	<u>Agent Approach</u>			TOTAL
	Directive	Extensive	Non-Directive	
Indo-Canadian	16 (28%)	3 ( 5%)	2 ( 3%)	21 (36%)
Euro-Canadian	14 (24%)	6 (10%)	17 (30%)	37 (64%)
TOTAL	30 (52%)	9 (15%)	19 (33%)	58(100%)

range of the continuum. Indo-Canadian agents, with only two exceptions, fall in the centre and towards the directive end of the continuum.<sup>55</sup>

Agents who practice as well as preach non-directive counselling say they take particular care to do so with Indo-Canadian clients. Their general feeling is that "East Indians are all too ready to do whatever you suggest":

I don't come on strong with East Indians. They always feel I have more authority than I do. I use authority with mainstream clients.

As a male, I have to be careful not to tell an East Indian woman what to do, especially if she's just separated. I just lay out the choices and alternatives.

These agents tend to be critical of more directive approaches which, they feel, amount to "Band-Aids" since they fail to get the clients to "think for themselves."

However, the "information only" approach also has its drawbacks. Above all, it can be frustrating to both agent and client, as at least six of the described relationships illustrate. For example, an agent who has been working with a battered woman for two years reports:

She doesn't want me to talk to her husband. I've told her about Transition House, but she keeps on phoning me. It can be very frustrating. Once you offer the alternatives, they have to make the decisions. She is making a conscious choice.

Occasionally, frustration leads to a manipulative or even

coercive presentation of "alternatives":

Problems with East Indians are more intractable. I find myself telling a woman we can do nothing to help her as long as she stays with her husband. If she separates, we can support her, get her Income Assistance. The decision is hers.

Essentially, such a "non-directive" approach hardly varies from an admittedly directive one, except in one important respect: the responsibility for the consequences of the decision rests with the client (see note 54, p. 232).

Other agents, who also practice as well as preach non-directive counselling with Euro-Canadian clients, feel it necessary to use a directive approach with Indo-Canadian clients:

With whites, I lay out the alternatives like a salesman: "You've got a choice: you can send the kid to another school, accept social work counselling, or move to a new home." With East Indians, I assume more responsibility. I suggest what I think is the best solution.

On the one hand, these agents feel that the "cold-fish" laying out of alternatives lacks compassion: "They've had less education; they're adjusting to a new culture." On the other hand, the agents' experience has taught them that a more directive approach "gets results: I have to be more authoritarian or they will ignore what I say." As the one agent who does not "put it back to the client," even initially, says:

In the social services we are told not to give advice. We are told to make

suggestions, and let them make the choice. But I don't believe in this. East Indians want you to tell them what to do. They don't have the bases for making decisions.

Between the non-directive, "cold fish" approach and the directive, "Band-Aid" approach lies a counselling technique which calls for a thorough examination, with the client, of each possible solution and its likely consequences. Perhaps nine agents, six Euro-Canadian and three Indo-Canadian, consistently strive to employ this technique:

We must bring the clients to reality. What are their circumstances? What are the consequences of their actions? They must see the truth. Then only can they decide what is best for them.

A few proponents of the non-directive approach consider even these agents to be "providing crutches." But the "thinking-through" agents in turn feel that it is the agents who offer direct advice who deny clients a growing experience:

[A particular Indo-Canadian agent] gives comfort, advice, and hope. This is what you must give in Indian culture if you are trying to help. But we believe it is not helping anyone to do this. We believe you must work with the client until they see what they must do.

By all accounts, agents employing the extensive, thinking-through approach tend to spend more time with clients than do agents who fall at either end of the continuum. Agents who take the extra time, however, believe it pays off by breaking through the "no-win situation" posed by the conflicting expectations of

agents and clients.

In terms of the exchange taking place, agents employing the thinking-through approach would not appear to offer anything more concrete than agents who leave the decisions with the clients. Yet in describing what these agents do for them, clients express appreciation for less concrete values being transacted: "She talks nicely with me;" "She explained everything so we can understand." In contrast, when asked what non-directive agents have done for them, clients typically respond with a shrug and then with recollections of specific counselling suggestions, many of which have not been implemented.

An interesting correlation exists between the counselling approaches which agents employ during the assessment phase and the ways in which they interpret the clients' problems during the study phase (p. 188). Most of the agents who attribute problems to Indo-Canadian life-style tend to be non-directive. Their general feeling is that the client can see as well as they can what the source of the problem is, and that therefore the client can decide what to do about it:

I tell them my concerns and suggest what measures they can take. The demands on the woman are unreal. But after a point it's up to them. They know their situation. There's nothing more you can do.

The agents who interpret problems within the broader context of Indian culture tend to provide directive or extensive

counselling. They view the cultural factors involved in a problem as too pervasive for clients to deal with on their own:

With whites I approach the mum, tell her why something is important, and leave the decision with her. With East Indians, I try to talk to Dad. I tell him Mum is very tired; who's going to look after Baby if she gets sick? I know she would never ask him on her own, and it would never occur to him.

Moreover, these agents, many of whom are themselves Indo-Canadian, also hold cultural factors responsible for the effectiveness of direct advice-giving:

The socio-economic conditions, the hierarchy of the family system, and the religious philosophy all lead to the constant giving and seeking of advice. Look at Krishna [speaking] to Arjuna in the Mahabharata. The entire literature is full of advice. How can we say we must not give advice as social workers?

The correlation between an agent's interpretation of a client's problem and his counselling approach to that client has implications for the client's perception of the exchange relationship between them. As suggested in Chapter Seven, an agent who attributes a problem to the client's life-style places a greater sense of responsibility for the problem, and hence for the need for help, on the client. If the same agent "leaves the decision up to the client," the situation is compounded: a client perceives that a further demand has been made of him, and that little or nothing has been received in exchange for his exposure of the problem.

Conversely, the agent who understands a problem in terms of its broader cultural context relieves the client to some extent of his sense of indebtedness. When the same agent also provides direct advice and assumes responsibility for the resolution of the problem, the client perceives that concrete help has been received. He has benefited in accordance with what he has invested.

To sum up, in principle agents respond to Indo-Canadian clients' requests for "miraculous solutions" by placing responsibility for decisions with the clients. In practice, however, agents appear more or less directive depending on the value they accord client self-determination, their experience with the effectiveness of outright advice, and their perception of the source of the problem. They may also be influenced by the nature and severity of the problem, a factor discussed below.

#### Agent Expectations - Client Response

While Indo-Canadian clients hope for miraculous solutions from their agents, agents hope for decisions regarding alternative solutions from their clients. The solutions offered by agents may be divided into two categories: counselling suggestions made by the agents themselves, and referrals to further, secondary resources. Since the professional definition of the agent-client relationship confines interaction to the agent's area of expertise, secondary referrals often constitute part of the set of alternative suggestions offered a client.

A minority of agents -- one school worker and two health

workers -- feel that Indo-Canadian clients are "even more receptive than whites" to secondary referrals, particularly if the external obstacles to service utilization are not too great:

They question less if you refer them. "I have to go there? Okay." There are no "if's" or "but's." They are being reasonable, not dumb. East Indians place more trust in the helping professions.

Once they've shared the problem, they take me up on the list of services. There's no problem with that. Language can be a problem but even then they'll accept, especially if it's close and doesn't cost much.

These agents attribute client acceptance of secondary referrals to their readiness to solve the problem ("they've come to the end of their rope") and to their appreciation of sources of help which represent "such a contrast with India."

In the experience of most social service agents, however, Indo-Canadian clients tend to be less receptive than Euro-Canadians to secondary referrals. Either they decline, usually without explanation, or they appear to accept but do not in fact follow through with the service recommended (see Chapter Nine). Agents experiencing such resistance interpret it in one of two ways. Some suggest that logistical obstacles deter acceptance:

I'm more limited as to resources for them. You must find resources within their own community, within their own neighborhood if possible. Even then there's a reluctance.

Others suggest that the content of the services offend Indian sensibilities. For example, clients seem particularly reticent to attend pre-natal classes:



I can push pre-natal classes with the new breed of couple. The women are more educated and the husbands seem more Westernized. But usually I get nowhere. Even if the woman accepts, the husband vetoes it. The mother-in-law finds it threatening.

Agents report less difficulty in getting clients into English and citizenship classes, although geographical proximity continues to be a factor.

No doubt logistical obstacles and culturally-based reactions to the services offered explain much about client reluctance to accept secondary referrals, just as they help explain the general pattern of service non-utilization (see Chapter Three). But the already established exchange relationship may also affect client response. The client has just disclosed his problem to one agent; now he is asked to expose himself still further:

If it's an on-going family crisis, I have referred clients to [another agency] for counselling. But a couple of times they have been afraid to be identified. They don't want yet another outsider involved.

I get all kinds of excuses if I refer to a [parenting] group. One woman told me the other ladies would be jealous because she has four kids. Even if they go, they won't open up in front of the group.

Conversely, the suggestion of a referral may influence the established relationship between agent and client. The client expects to be helped with the problem presented, not "put off":

Before it was different, [my worker] had time for me. Now when I phoned about [the problem with] my tenants, he just referred

me [to the Rentalsman office]. Why is there no interest in me now? I don't feel good.

In other words, the offer of a secondary referral may be perceived by the client as a request rather than as a prestation, and possibly as an attempt on the part of the agent to alter the established mutual exchange relationship.

Agents respond to client reluctance to accept further services much as they respond to client expectations of problem resolution. In principle, many leave the decision up to the client:

I tell the parents these are the services available, but I don't push them. The feeling must come from them. If they don't want to make a move there is not much you can do.

In practice, however, about half of the Euro-Canadian agents and all but one of the Indo-Canadian agents say that at least occasionally they point out the consequences of not accepting:

We are constantly trying to persuade people to get into things. It's manipulation if you will, pointing out how things will benefit them. Sometimes I break all the rules and threaten.

One agent who routinely articulates consequences of non-acceptance to Indo-Canadians says he has "never had a refusal of service in eight years."

In piecing together the transactional sequences preceding the acceptance of secondary referrals, I encountered a fairly consistent discrepancy between agents' and clients' accounts.

Agents, as described above, perceive themselves as making suggestions and, occasionally, as pointing out the consequences of not selecting one of them. Clients, on the other hand, inevitably state that they have been "told" to avail themselves of the service concerned:

[My worker] said my son must go [to a summer camp]. He must have the opportunity.

I was not thinking to do anything, just manage with my baby. Then my worker saw I was so tired, she told me I must have someone to help me, so a nurse [homemaker?] came.

In many instances, the attributing of the decision to the agent may be merely a matter of phrasing. But the phrase itself appears indicative of the clients' perception of the exchange situation: an Indo-Canadian client expects direct advice and, in the transactional sequence unfolding, he feels the time has come for his exchange partner to provide it. Moreover, he wants direct advice in so far as it relieves him of responsibility for the consequences. As one client said:

My [previous] welfare worker was very frank, telling me "you should do this, you may not do that." Then there was no trouble with M.H.R.

Just as self-referring clients have been "sent" by friends to the original agents, so are clients "told" by those agents to accept secondary resources.

However, in four or five of the 34 described relationships clients appear to have been truly coerced into the acceptance of

referrals. According to the agents, each of these cases involved child abuse. According to the clients, the cases pertained to a variety of problems (wife-battering, a child's illness, or the allocation of welfare moneys), but the agents "threatened" them with child apprehension. As one of the agents involved conceded:

[When the client refused to have an infant-stimulation worker], I told her she had no choice. I said "If you object, I will inform M.H.R. and they will apprehend your children. So don't say it."

It is beyond my ability to suggest whether the various allegations of child abuse were justified. Presuming that they were, the agents' statutory mandate to protect children at risk, rather than the clients' expectations of direct advice, would account for the clients' perception of the agents' "advice" as direct instruction.

When the needs of a client do fall within an agent's area of expertise, and occasionally when they do not, one of the alternative solutions offered is counselling by the agent himself. Particularly in cases calling for the development of parenting skills and/or marital communication, agents feel that their own counselling often constitutes "the only way to reach East Indian clients":

I tell whites about family counselling and let them decide. I expect them to take more advantage. I may suggest it to East Indian families, but I know it won't work. The father wouldn't be involved and they wouldn't fit in to a middle-class white group anyway. I just carry it out myself. I go over the basic concepts with them.

In terms of the Indian model of social exchange, the agents' offer of direct counselling is relatively acceptable. Not only does it avoid further exposure for the clients; it also meets their expectation that help will come from the person to whom they have given respect and trust.

However, as the agents offering direct counselling note, Indo-Canadian clients often do not interpret or respond to counselling, as it is normally conducted, as a means of problem resolution:

Their view of help is different. What does counselling mean? If I say "bring your wife," they think it's going to be a social occasion. If I talk about husband-wife communication, they think I'm wasting their time.

If you counsel white parents, they are mentally able to apply your suggestions and come back with ideas of their own. You know they've understood. But East Indians just leave it up to you. We try to encourage questions but they've been taught even as children in public school not to ask questions.

In other words, even after clients appear to determine their own treatment plan by selecting or agreeing to counselling by their agent, they may fail to make the specifics of that plan their own.

In the course of interviewing, both agents and clients recounted numerous examples of specific counselling suggestions. Most of the factors relevant to their acceptance or rejection pertain to the problems they were intended to address, and as such lie beyond the scope of the present thesis. However, two

factors pertain to the nature of interaction between agent and client: the level of abstraction on which agents communicate the suggestions, and the degree of introspection with which agents expect clients to respond.

With regard to the first factor, just as clients perceive that they have been "told" by agents to accept a secondary resource, so too do they emerge from counselling sessions under the impression that they have been given specific instructions. In both cases, the clients' perceptions may be due to their expectations of direct advice, as discussed above. But, in the opinion of both Euro-Canadian and Indo-Canadian agents, the perception of specific instructions also relates to a propensity on the part of clients to "take in" concrete suggestions rather than abstract ideas.

For example, one social worker devoted a session to "explaining my understanding of violence and how it affects the child's development." The client's wife, who had been present, reported: "He told my husband 'Do not beat. It is not good.'" Similarly, a woman who had been counselled extensively on "self-worth" and "rights" recalls only that "if my husband threatens again, I should phone the police." As one agent puts it:

It's hard for East Indians to conceptualize. It's like with poor whites. You have to talk about specifics, not in the abstract. You can't assume anything. Even obvious ideas may not be understood. They don't relate to them.<sup>56</sup>

With regard to the degree of introspection which agents

expect of clients, several Indo-Canadian agents remarked on the "hard work" involved in getting clients to reflect on interpersonal family dynamics and on their feelings about them. One Euro-Canadian declared such efforts "useless":

You have to stick to their daily activities. Don't talk about isolation, talk about going to the temple. There's no point in saying "you seem depressed about things." It doesn't get you anywhere.

The literature which notes similar difficulties in the counselling of Indian immigrants to Great Britain and immigrants from Southern Europe (Allodi, 1978: 8) also suggests confining discussion to observable specifics:

This is a time when they need direction and guidance, and efforts to involve them in self-examination and discussions about reaching their own solutions to their problems may only throw them into further confusion (Triseliotis, 1972: 13).

However, the comment of one young woman indicates the potential benefits of the "hard work" some agents put in trying to "get the client in touch with her feelings":

[My worker] says I can talk about everything I feel. Maybe I wonder why this [desertion by husband] has happened to me. I don't have the courage to talk to M.H.R. They will say "I don't care." At the Centre, they try to understand all the circumstances.

Neither the level of abstraction on which the agents communicate with Indo-Canadian clients, nor the degree of introspection with which they expect clients to respond, relates

to the differing referents of social exchange posited for each party. Indeed, they indicate that the theoretical framework proposed for the study of agent-client interaction cannot fully explain the relationship observed.<sup>57</sup> But the difficulties posed by agent expectations of conceptualization and introspection, and those posed by expectations of self-determination, have in common the fact that they are relatively novel to the Indo-Canadian client. As one in-service leader put it:

We [social service agents] have the impression that age, education, English, etc. makes a task more or less difficult. But my study [of immigrants from Israel] indicates that the extent of cultural innovation required by the task correlates highly with the difficulty experienced in performing that task (see Mastai, 1980).

For many Indo-Canadians, the task of meeting counselling expectations of self-determination, introspection, and abstract conceptualization appears to require considerable innovation.<sup>58</sup>

In sum, agents expect clients to develop their own treatment plans on the basis of alternative solutions which the agents identify. In general, clients agree to counselling by their agents -- persons to whom they have given respect and from whom they now expect help. They tend to resist referrals to secondary sources -- referrals which might entail further costs to family honour. Whether the treatment plan eventually consists of counselling suggestions by the original agent or of participation in secondary resources, the client attributes its content to the agent. His expectation of direct advice, the novelty of self-determination, abstraction, and introspection,



and his interpretation of the "consequences" pointed out by agents as "threats," all lead the client to perceive that the agent determines the treatment plan.

#### Mutually Acceptable Treatment Plans

Twelve of the 34 counselling relationships described by respondents included assessment phases ultimately considered satisfactory by both agents and clients. None of the agents concerned expressed frustration at the lack of client self-determination, and each of the clients felt that he had received effective help from his agent. These 12 cases divide almost equally among agents employing non-directive techniques (3), a "thinking-through" approach (4), and directive approaches (5). Seven of the cases were handled by Euro-Canadian agents, and five by Indo-Canadians.

An analysis of respondents' recollections of transactions during the satisfactory assessment phases reveals two factors which do not appear to the same extent in the recollections of less satisfactory assessments. On the one hand, the agents concerned all place relatively greater emphasis on the involvement of the clients' spouses or other second parties in the development of the treatment plan. On the other hand, each of the clients refers to specific actions which the agent took on his behalf in relation to the treatment plan.

In the eight cases where a husband and wife were living together, the agents involved both of them in the discussions about the alternative solutions available to them. The men's

presence was considered important because "men have more influence. Talking to an East Indian woman is like talking to the dummy instead of the ventriloquist." However, the wife must also be present:

[The pattern of] communications in the Indian family means that if you don't explain things to her, she may never hear them. All she hears is blame for the problem that brought you there.

Because husbands may be "hard on the women later," several agents say they "soft-pedal the problem" in front of the men.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, these agents feel that both spouses should be included in developing the treatment plan:

A typical Canadian counsellor says "do your own thing; find your own space; make up your own mind." But it just doesn't work with East Indians. They do things by consensus. The solution has to be acceptable to everyone; then they'll go for it.

Probably few agents would go so far as to involve "everyone" in discussions of treatment plans. Most agents express disapproval of the extent to which clients share their problems with their children, by using the children either as spouse-substitutes or as interpreters. And only in cases which directly involve clients' parents or in-laws do the agents purposely discuss treatment plans with them, although such persons are often present and "probably have lots to say later."

However, in two cases of women who had been deserted by their husbands, close female friends participated in at least

one session of the treatment phase (see Pattison, 1977: 222-223). After all, friends are usually the first persons turned to for problems which cannot be contained within the family (pp. 83, 102). It is often on the advice of friends that Indo-Canadians refer themselves to agencies (pp. 151-152). The presence of friends during counselling sessions constitutes a continuation of an on-going role based on the Indian principles of mutual exchange relationships.

In terms of the Indian model of social exchange, the involvement of at least two persons in the development of a treatment plan stands to reason (see R. Ballard, 1979: 154). The decision to accept a particular suggestion, especially a secondary referral, has implications for the transactional status of the family as well as for that of the individual. It reflects on the goal of family sufficiency, and on community evaluation of family honour. For an Indo-Canadian individual, particularly a woman living with her husband, the prospect of making such a decision unilaterally would be nothing short of awesome.

The second feature of the mutually satisfactory treatment plans which distinguishes them from less satisfactory efforts at assessment is the clients' recollection of concrete activities undertaken by agents on their behalf. Most of these activities amount to provisions of logistical aid which facilitate the acceptance of counselling suggestions. For example, clients note that agents drove them in their own cars to shop for baby supplies, met them at the location of secondary referrals, or

acted as interpreters when suggested solutions called for interaction with Euro-Canadian neighbors.<sup>60</sup> Several of the agents who provide such services refer to them as part of a "bargaining process":

I have to take more initiative with East Indians. If I want a child in a specials' class at another school, the parents demur. But if I offer to take the kid on the bus, they accept. Either they are not interested in doing it or it's not possible for them. So you say "I'll do this if you do that."

In several instances, the assistance offered goes beyond agency policy, but agents feel "it's either that or write off the whole case."<sup>61</sup>

From the client's perspective, logistical aid renders the counselling suggestion -- especially a secondary referral -- an offer of concrete help after all. It is a potential solution to the problem, coming from the person to whom they have disclosed it. When asked what agents did for them, clients frequently mentioned such help: "She drives me to the mother's group;" "He said if I want to see a lawyer, he will come with me." Personal, concrete services from agents are recognized and appreciated by clients as prestations in the transactional sequence between them.

The "bargain" between agent and client may also amount to an agreement to recognize each other's priorities. As noted with reference to Italian immigrants in Toronto, "the services which they think they need are not the ones which Canadians think should be useful to them" (Ferguson, 1964: 118). For example, as

noted in Chapter Three, Indo-Canadians often refuse to accept social assistance. Pointing out the consequences of not accepting may have no effect, since to the clients the implications of accepting are still greater. The following case, pieced together from interviews with a client and three agents (all of them Indo-Canadian), illustrates how bargaining may succeed where threats fail:

Mrs. A has six children. Her husband deserted her when the youngest was one year old. The school worker, noting that the older children appeared hungry, dirty, and non-attentive, contacted an M.H.R. office.

Mrs. A first told the social worker who visited that her husband had gone to India and would be returning shortly. After discussing the matter with a friend, she phoned the worker and asked for a second visit, during which she mentioned the desertion. The worker suggested she go on welfare, but Mrs. A refused. According to Mrs. A, the social worker threatened that if she did not accept welfare, her children might be apprehended.

The social worker asked an immigrant services worker to talk to Mrs. A (in Mrs. A's view, "to convince me"). Rather than focus on the children, the immigrant worker discussed Mrs. A's marriage with her at length. Eventually, the worker promised to look into the whereabouts of the husband and to speak to him if possible, if Mrs. A would accept welfare as an interim measure. Mrs. A agreed.

The case of Mrs. A is not exceptional in suggesting that threats do not persuade Indo-Canadian clients as well as bargains do.<sup>62</sup> In another example, parents refused psychological testing for their child despite warnings that "if you don't your

child will suffer." When the agent promised to stay with the child during the tests, and to explain the results personally to the parents, they agreed. Similarly, an agent who wanted a family to move house "tried coaxing, coercing, telling them what would happen" if they stayed: "Finally I helped them house-hunt. They do need the extra support."

The list of examples could go on. They may indicate, as the above agent suggests, that Indo-Canadian clients need extra support. Alternatively, as the posited model of exchange suggests, Indo-Canadian clients may expect direct support at this point in the relationship. Whether need or expectation obtains, the examples indicate that clients tend to respond to assistance which facilitates the implementation of a suggestion by committing themselves to it.

In conclusion, I suggest that contrasts between the cultural referents of social exchange of Euro-Canadians and Indo-Canadians complicate the assessment phase of counselling. Euro-Canadian agents, keeping in mind the value of individual rights and responsibilities and the goal of client self-fulfillment, expect the client to determine a treatment plan appropriate to his problem and to himself. The agent's understanding of a mutual exchange relationship renders his presentation and discussion of alternative solutions -- including referrals for problems outside his area of expertise -- sufficient contribution on his part at this time in the transactional sequence. But the Indo-Canadian client's

understanding of a mutual exchange relationship leads him to expect specific advice and direct assistance during assessment. Furthermore, his goal of family sufficiency renders the acceptance of secondary referrals threatening.

In other words, a potential stalemate exists between agents and clients on all three levels of the theoretical framework posited. In terms of perception of the exchange situation, each perceives that the other should determine the treatment plan. At the level of decision-making, each party attempts to place responsibility for the plan with the other, to "leave it with" or "put it back to" him. Consequently, at the level of observable behaviour, agents and clients frequently fail to develop treatment plans, or do so with mutual misgivings.

Two factors appear influential in circumventing or breaking the stalemate. First, if a friend or family member shares responsibility for the treatment plan with the client, the client may depend less on his agent for its determination. Secondly, if the agent offers to facilitate personally the implementation of the alternative solutions, the client appears more willing to select among them. Neither of these factors produces client self-determination as it is defined in the social service literature: they do not constitute a "miraculous solution" to the conflicting expectations of agents and clients. But they can lead to mutually acceptable treatment plans and to relatively satisfactory phases of assessment.

Notes: Chapter Eight

<sup>53</sup> Keith-Lucas suggests (1972: 24) that a "way of warding off help is to throw the whole burden of the decision onto the helping person." I suggest that this does not apply to Indo-Canadian clients.

<sup>54</sup> Two Indo-Canadian agents also suggested that clients may request direct solutions because they want the agents to take responsibility for the consequences:

You have to be really careful what you say. They will blame you later for what happens. Even in jest, when I was counselling parents to allow their daughter more freedom, I said "She's not going to run away, you know." If she ever does, it will be my fault.

Sikh ladies, if you tell them about Transition House, they say "You are responsible for sending me there. You are deciding my life. My fate is in your hands."

Just as Indo-Canadians place the burden of responsibility for exposing their problems on friends (p. 152), they may also place the burden of responsibility for the decisions implemented on agents. As one agent put it, "They don't want to be blamed for lousing things up."

<sup>55</sup> As many as six Indo-Canadian agents who stated that they practice as well as preach non-directive counselling were considered by clients and other agents to be quite directive. For example, one agent said: "We don't want to impose our thoughts. It is not fair to tell them what to do. We never advise." But clients of this agent consistently recalled



specific directives, ranging from "You must get [baby] clothes before the baby comes" to "You should take welfare. That is the only way."

<sup>56</sup> Difficulty with abstract reasoning is also associated in the literature with class as well as with cultural differences (cf. Devore, 1981; Gans, 1962).

<sup>57</sup> For students wishing to pursue these other, non-exchange dimensions of agent-client interaction, a considerable body of literature deals with the implications of left-brain and right-brain development for cognition patterns in various cultures (cf. Bagley, 1983; Ghuman, 1975).

<sup>58</sup> Keith-Lucas notes (1972: 38) that "in order for anyone to be able to make an active and willing choice there must have been some experience in making alternative choices."

<sup>59</sup> Some agents who rarely involve husbands in counselling feel that doing so limits or precludes the women's input. A client's cooperation may depend on agent assurances of her right to privacy. Other agents exclude husbands because of their own "irritation" at his manner of participation:

If I make any suggestion, the husband says [to his wife] "See, that is what you should be doing." That's where my cultural bias comes in. He's not trying to help things. He's the one who deals with the outside and has authority on the inside. If a WASP guy did the same thing, I'd get angry and think he was a jerk.

<sup>60</sup> Many agents make phone calls to secondary sources of help on behalf of Indo-Canadian clients, calls which they would

not make for Euro-Canadian clients. While the clients did not mention phone calls as "extras," I believe the calls probably do facilitate client acceptance of secondary referrals.

<sup>61</sup> The opposite attitude obtains among other agents: "I started driving women to the parent-tot group, but then I figured if people want to come, they'll get there. We're not offering to drive Caucasians; why East Indians?"

<sup>62</sup> The highly unusual success of one parenting group may be attributable to the fact that a bargain underlay attendance: if the mother came to the group sessions, her children could attend the simultaneous pre-school, a desirable service with no stigma attached.

## Chapter Nine

### "WILL YOU TAKE TEA?"

#### THE TREATMENT PHASE

As a counselling relationship enters its fourth phase, agents tend to adopt a "wait and see" attitude. They deliver the resources decided upon during assessment and await client follow-through with them. Given their goal of client self-fulfillment, agents hope for client cooperation both with regard to the substance of the treatment plan, which is intended to resolve a specific problem, and with regard to the spirit of the plan, which is intended to promote client independence.

About two-thirds of the agents interviewed believe that Indo-Canadian clients generally have more difficulty than do Euro-Canadian clients with either one or the other aspect of follow-through:

East Indian cases just don't go anywhere after a while. They want you to come and have endless cups of tea, but they're not about to do anything else.

Many agents "give up at this point," attributing the lack of client cooperation to "insurmountable cultural differences." Others continue and, several cups of tea later, believe they witness client implementation of specific suggestions and increased client independence.

The present chapter examines the patterns of Indo-Canadian

follow-through during treatment in reference to the posited models of social exchange. First, I note how differences in the cultural referents of agents and clients help to explain non-implementation. I then suggest how differences in the understanding of the agent-client relationship affect perceptions of client dependence/independence. The data presented indicate that both with regard to specific suggestions and with regard to general self-reliance, follow-through by Indo-Canadian clients often depends on follow-up by their agents.

### Implementation

Twenty-nine percent of the agents, most of them Euro-Canadian, report that Indo-Canadian clients often "simply ignore" the counselling suggestions to which they have supposedly agreed (Table XI):

All groups have superficial agreement to some extent, but with East Indians you get the most passive agreement and then no follow-through. I'd say this is true in the majority of cases.

Not only is there a lack of follow-through but also a lack of communication regarding follow-through:

You don't know if they're trying and failing or just not trying. Whites let you know right away if something doesn't work, but East Indians say "yes-yes" and then don't do it.

Thus, the question of non-implementation is two-fold. First, why

Table XI

CLIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF SUGGESTIONS  
BY  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AGENT

Client Implementation

Agent Background	<u>Client Implementation</u>		TOTAL
	Implementing	Non-Implementing	
Indo-Canadian	17 (29%)	4 ( 7%)	21 (36%)
Euro-Canadian	24 (41%)	13 (22%)	37 (64%)
TOTAL	41 (71%)	17 (29%)	58 (100%)

do Indo-Canadians verbally agree to suggestions if they have no intention of carrying them out? Secondly, why do they not follow through on suggestions to which they have apparently agreed?

The agents remarking on superficial or passive compliance by Indo-Canadian clients attribute it to various factors relevant to the specific cases:

If they think I may remove the child, they'll promise anything. Whether they carry it out or not is another matter.

I think the woman was with me because her husband wanted her to be. That's why she said "Okay" to everything but never did anything.

Over there they don't have a high regard for doctors, so here they say "Yes-yes," they'll call him, but they don't.<sup>63</sup>

Only one agent, a Euro-Canadian, suggests that regardless of the specific situation, Indo-Canadians "politely bow and shake [waggle] their heads. It's part of their culture."

Interviews with clients tend to support this latter explanation. When asked how they respond to suggestions with which they disagree, most clients indicate that they tell the agents they "will try":

I never wanted to hurt her feelings, so I didn't tell her I wouldn't come [to a class], but I didn't go. She phoned once and I said I wasn't feeling well.

Even where negative feelings obtain between client and agent, the client may refrain from expressing them directly. The following exchange was related by a young mother with four

children:

I phoned [one agent] when my parents came from India. I wanted to apply for Social Insurance, medical insurance. She said "You go shopping, don't you? Why can't you go and pick up the form yourself? You get the form and bring it to our office. We will fill it out." I thought, "In that case I will ask [another agent]." But I said "If I get the form I will come."

The reasons for non-implementation may be unique to each case, but the prevalence of superficial agreement may be attributable to a single, underlying desire not to be rude.

In India, "yes-yes" conveys a message equivalent to the North American "hmm." It means, "I am listening." As McClelland notes (1975: 153), a person who says "yes-yes" facilitates interpersonal exchange but avoids commitment. An Indo-Canadian client using the same phrase perceives himself as expressing a desire to continue with the transactional sequence at hand, or at least a desire not to sever the relationship altogether. He may not fully understand or agree with what the agent is suggesting, but he is listening and wants the agent to go on. To a North American agent, however, "yes-yes" from a client indicates understanding, agreement, and commitment, and it encourages him to expect follow-through.

The Euro-Canadian agents who report non-implementation of suggestions tend to attribute the pattern to the fact of their ethnicity:

I'm not East Indian, so any advice I give is suspect. When they don't follow through, I know I've missed the boat, culturally

speaking.

A few of these agents interpret non-implementation as "resistance" to Canadian culture: "They don't want to change and this is their way of saying so."<sup>64</sup>

Interviews with clients do reveal numerous examples of suggestions, discussed with Euro-Canadian agents, which have never been implemented. However, the reasons for lack of follow-through relate to the suggestions themselves, not to the agent's ethnicity:

My son is very quiet at school. That is his nature when he is not with us. The principal [counsellor] said I should speak to him in English. [The four relatives and friends listening to the interview laugh. The respondent grins.] I told him I would try. [More laughter.]

They tell me to get second-hand clothes for the kids. It is degrading, this. The community will start talking. We long to have kids. How can I put them in second-hand clothing now?

Many suggestions from Euro-Canadians are implemented:

[My worker] was very excellent. She helped me solve all my problems. My children were showing no respect after their father died. She told me I should go to Mums and Tots. She said I should have exposure to other people. I have to take the bus, but we go.

Furthermore, even suggestions from fellow Indo-Canadians may fail to gain client cooperation. As one agent put it:

Anyone has to be sensitive to the client's background, not just white workers. Look at [one ethnic worker]: she cut the hair of a



Sikh boy in her care [thus violating a Sikh religious practice]. Look at [another ethnic worker]: clients relate better to me than to her because her thinking has changed. She comes across as a liberated female. But we are both Indian.

In other words, implementation of a suggestion depends on its cultural suitability and circumstantial applicability. In the examples given above, follow-through did not occur because the suggestions made ran into obstacles pertaining to the specific situations at hand. As discussed in Chapter Eight, non-implementation may also obtain with regard to suggestions based on expectations of abstract reasoning, introspection, or unmitigated self-determination. Whether suggestions are unsuitable on the general or on the specific level, they result, from the agent's perspective, in client non-implementation.

An agent's perception of non-implementation is based on his assumption that the client has understood and agreed to a counselling suggestion and is now failing to follow through with it. Thus, the question of non-implementation leads back to the question of passive agreement discussed above. If a client's "yes-yes" is taken by the agent to mean understanding and commitment, but in fact means "I'm listening; go on," then the agent may move from the assessment phase to the treatment phase before the client is ready to do so. In only one interview did an agent, a Euro-Canadian, explicitly suggest that passive agreement calls for more communication:

If they appear passive in their acceptance,

that's usually a sign that something is wrong. Either they don't understand or it doesn't fit with them. I say, "I don't understand. Why doesn't that work for you?" They are very willing to explain. Usually we reach some kind of agreement that gets results.

Other agents who interpret clients' passive agreement to mean readiness to implement may fail to discuss suggestions sufficiently enough to ensure follow-through.

Two findings of the present study support the suggestion that the pattern of client implementation may be a function of communication patterns between agent and client. First, as indicated by Table XII, there is a 66% correlation between the agents' approach to counselling, whether directive/extensive or non-directive, and the agents' experience of client follow-through, whether implementing or non-implementing. The nine agents who provide extensive, thinking-through counselling all report client implementation. Secondly, a somewhat higher correspondence (69%) obtains between the agents' bases of interpreting problems and their experience of client follow-through (Table XIII). Only two of the 17 agents interpreting clients' problems within the context of Indian culture report difficulty with client implementation. In other words, the patterns of client implementation correspond more to the patterns of agent communication than they do to the ethnic background of the agents (see Table XI, p. 237).

When apparent verbal compliance is followed by behavioural non-compliance, agents tend to feel they have been "given the brush off." Rather than "go on" to discuss suggestions at

Table XII

AGENT APPROACH TO COUNSELLING  
BY  
CLIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF SUGGESTIONS

	<u>Agent Approach</u>		TOTAL
	Directive/ Extensive	Non- Directive	
Implementing	30 (52%)	11 (19%)	41 (71%)
Non- Implementing	9 (15%)	8 (14%)	17 (29%)
TOTAL	39 (67%)	19 (33%)	58 (100%)

Client Implementation

Table XIII

AGENT INTERPRETATION OF PROBLEM  
BY  
CLIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF SUGGESTIONS

<u>Client Implementation</u>	<u>Agent Interpretation</u>		TOTAL
	Indian Culture	Indo-Canadian Life-Style	
Implementing	25 (43%)	16 (28%)	41 (71%)
Non-Implementing	2 ( 3%)	15 (26%)	17 (29%)
TOTAL	27 (47%)	31 (53%)	58 (100%)

greater length, they may terminate the relationship:

It used to be, if an East Indian did not follow through on what we had agreed on, I would chase him. But five, six years go by and you get burned. When you've done your best, that's all you can do.

Euro-Canadian agents who feel that "as Westerners, there's no way we can reach them" often turn their non-cooperating Indo-Canadian clients over to Indo-Canadian agents:

I feel I am second-guessing about diet, for example. So I bring in [an Indo-Canadian agent]. It's not their unwillingness to talk. It's just that I have inadequate information on their culture. There's no point in pushing ideas which may be inappropriate.

Indo-Canadian agents frustrated by non-implementation generally "leave the suggestion with clients who are stubborn." These agents anticipate "subtle acceptance later": When the next crisis arises, the client "will have an alternative for dealing with it."

To the client, an agent's withdrawal at this point in the relationship may be puzzling. The client may perceive that he has listened politely to the agent and encouraged him to go on, yet the agent has referred him to somebody else. The client's problem remains unresolved, but the agent no longer appears concerned. In sum, the agent's frustration over what he perceives to be non-implementation of agreed-upon suggestions may be matched by client frustration over what he perceives to be unwarranted and premature termination of the relationship.

The agent's difficulty with client follow-through during treatment may in fact be due to client difficulties with agent suggestions during assessment.<sup>65</sup>

### Independence

When Indo-Canadian clients do implement the suggestions agreed upon during the assessment phase, they often do so "slavishly, like they're carrying out orders":

All clients, whatever their ethnic background, start giving by cooperating. They put the kid to bed at 8:00; they provide nutritious meals. They are making a sincere effort. Their cooperation is all I expect of them. In exchange, whites hope you'll get off their backs. East Indians want more advice.

Twenty-one of the agents interviewed (36%) feel that client dependency -- noted by all agents with regard to the formulation of treatment plans -- also characterizes client implementation of treatment plans (Table XIV). Significantly, although most of the agents' general remarks on the subject would appear to apply to any Indo-Canadian client, each specific example of dependency involved a female client either widowed, divorced, or deserted by her husband. The Indo-Canadian agents had by far the greater percentage of such cases, a fact which probably accounts to a large extent for their relatively frequent experience of prolonged client dependence.

The agents' explanations of client dependency during treatment, although all based on "cultural" considerations, divide quite clearly into two categories: sympathetic and

Table XIV

CLIENT INDEPENDENCE DURING TREATMENT  
BY  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AGENT

Agent Background	<u>Client Independence</u>		TOTAL
	Independent	Dependent	
Indo-Canadian	11 (19%)	10 (17%)	21 (36%)
Euro-Canadian	26 (45%)	11 (19%)	37 (64%)
TOTAL	37 (64%)	21 (36%)	58 (100%)

unsympathetic. A minority of agents -- three Indo-Canadians and three Euro-Canadians -- feel that "many East Indians exploit their workers" at this point in the relationship:<sup>66</sup>

Our people tend to be lazy. They don't care if somebody looks after them. In India, somebody is always looking after you and you are always looking after somebody else.

I didn't continue with [a client] because she got too demanding. Their way is to think that if someone is giving you something you should never stop that process and start doing for yourself. Our way is to do as much as we can for ourselves and then ask someone else.

The remaining agents experiencing client dependency -- eight Euro-Canadians and seven Indo-Canadians -- feel that clients "rely" on them during treatment because of the lack of alternative resources:

Whites expect some kind of follow-up, but they assume the bulk of the responsibility. With East Indians, you [the agent] assume it. If you think you are frustrated, there is even less they can do at home. It's their cultural background.

Indian clients don't see counselling as a job but as an emotional tie. They have come because they don't have family to help them, so they put you in that role. They continue to rely on you like they would a respected relative.

Most interviews with clients suggest that they see their apparent dependency during treatment as a positive and appropriate continuation of the relationship which has been established over the course of the first three counselling



phases. On at least five occasions, persons described as "chronic clients" by their agents in turn exulted over their relationships with those agents:

I like working with [one agent]. Any weakness I can discuss with him. Anything I must know, what I must do, he will tell me gently, as a brother.

These interviews also indicate why so many examples of client dependency involve single females:

When my husband deserted me, I had no one but [my worker]. In India, you have your brother. Your husband is afraid of him. Now, my husband knows [my worker] is my friend.

It would be going too far to suggest that Indo-Canadian clients, particularly single females, do not rely on their agents for continued support during treatment. Indeed, after some interviews with clients I understood how agents might feel unnecessarily used, if not exploited, by some clients. But I do suggest that Indo-Canadians consider continued agent support to be part of the existing mutual exchange relationship. They perceive that they are giving to their agents as well as receiving from them. As long as they continue to give, they believe that they may continue to receive.<sup>67</sup>

Basically, Indo-Canadians "give" their agents respect. As the preceding chapters indicate, the acceptance of help, the disclosure of personal problems, and the request for solutions to those problems all implicitly grant respect to the agent. But

clients also convey respect concretely, through offers of refreshments, hospitality, gifts, and verbal expressions of gratitude. While such offers may and do occur at any time during the counselling process, several agents note that "you can count on them wanting to do something for you" during the treatment phase.

Refreshments. Almost all of the 43 social service agents who visit Indo-Canadian homes remark on the inevitability of a cup of tea, usually accompanied by sweets or spicy snacks. Only two social workers suggest that in cases of intervention tea may not be offered during the initial visit. And two Indo-Canadian agents believe that Fijian Hindus do not press offers as persistently as do Indian Sikhs. But the general consensus is that "whether the visit goes well or not," an Indo-Canadian offers refreshments and presses his agent to accept them. In contrast, "whites offer maybe half the time, but they let it go if you decline."

In India, the offer of refreshment to a visitor is automatic. As one woman put it:

If you are rich or if you are poor the guest  
is still a god. We always make a guest  
welcome and give him whatever we have.

In offering refreshments, a host is first of all doing the correct thing: he is performing a duty expected of him. Only secondarily is he showing respect to his guest. However, the expectation of the offer is so embedded in Indian etiquette that

not offering constitutes a message of disrespect. If no relationship with a guest is desired, a host in India may purposely refrain from offering refreshment.

The acceptance of refreshments, on the other hand, is not automatic. Indeed, good manners dictate that a guest initially decline. After the host insists, the guest's response becomes significant. As discussed in Chapter Three, refusal generally indicates that the guest considers his host to be beneath him in status:

Hindus in India, possibly more than any other group in the world, have made eating the insignia of status.... The rejection of an offer of food is a gesture of superiority (Farb and Armelagos, 1980: 156).

Conversely, acceptance of refreshments is a gesture of mutuality indicative of an exchange relationship.

The majority of agents making home visits (60%) say they "try to accept" offers of tea from their clients if time permits (Table XV). Many note that acceptance facilitates conversation, that the clients "put a lot of effort and pride" into the preparation, and that they "seem hurt" if the offer is refused.

However, other agents generally "try to say 'no.'" Eleven of the 27 Euro-Canadian agents making home visits (41%) report that they usually decline, pleading lack of time. For many of them, time is truly the deciding factor. But two indicate that they do not care for the food that is offered, and one worries that the cups are not clean.

Six of the 16 Indo-Canadian agents making home visits

Table XV

AGENT ACCEPTANCE OF REFRESHMENTS  
BY  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AGENT

<u>Agent Background</u>	<u>Agent Acceptance</u>		TOTAL
	Accept	Decline	
Indo- Canadian	10 (23%)	6 (14%)	16 (27%)
Euro- Canadian	16 (37%)	11 (26%)	27 (63%)
TOTAL	26 (60%)	17 (40%)	43 (100%)

(37.5%) also decline by explaining the lack of time. Most of them say they thank the clients "very sincerely, so they won't get offended." However, two or three Indo-Canadian agents use non-acceptance as a means of non-verbal communication:

I don't take tea or anything for the first four or five visits. Then, when I see that I am succeeding and they are cooperating, then I accept. They get the message.

The message is: If you want me, a person of certain status, to interact with you as an equal, you must first behave in a way I respect and approve.

Clients take obvious pride in recalling, often without being asked, what their agents accept from them. Their comments suggest that, to them, acceptance indicates that the relationship exists between equals, and that they contribute to it:

I know how to say "thank-you." When [my worker] comes, she takes pakoras, samosas. One time her boss came. He said "give me more." He is a big [important] man, but he was very nice.

Unfortunately, at least two agents -- both of them Euro-Canadian -- fail to understand an offer of refreshment as a gesture of reciprocation:

This woman never showed any gratitude. Maybe she said the word "thanks" once.... She always offered me goodies. I declined because I'm not used to sweet sweets.

When Euro-Canadian agents refuse refreshments, clients explain half-heartedly that "whites don't like our way of preparing." There is a sense of sadness and resignation that this avenue of reciprocation is not open to them. However, the three Indo-Canadian agents who refuse refreshments as a means of manipulating clients appear to arouse indignation in some cases. They are perceived to "act big" or to act "like an official in our country."<sup>68</sup>

Hospitality. Whether social service providers visit Indo-Canadian clients in their homes or counsel them in agency offices, they often receive invitations to come to dinner or to attend weddings, baptisms, or graduations. Two-thirds of the Indo-Canadian agents and 60% of the Euro-Canadian agents consider such invitations to be "typical" of Indo-Canadian cases, especially once the solutions to problems have been suggested. All of the agents who also work with Euro-Canadian clients agree that Indo-Canadian clients "invite you more, and they mean it."

To the client, the offer of hospitality differs from an offer of refreshment in that it is not an automatic, expected part of etiquette. It is a message in itself, conveying the client's desire to establish the relationship as one of mutuality. Some of the agents receiving such invitations -- 29% of the Indo-Canadians and 43% of the Euro-Canadians -- appear to appreciate the significance of the offers and accept them at least occasionally:

East Indians invite you home for a meal. I go. It gives them a feeling of acceptance. It puts them on an equal level with you. You are not superior. You are not too good to eat at table with them.

I accepted an invitation to supper with an East Indian family. I felt comfortable. They obviously really wanted me to come and afterwards things were a lot more relaxed between us.

The agents who "never" accept hospitality from clients also recognize the significance of the offer but reject it precisely for this reason:

They say "You must come for dinner." They begin to break away from the client-worker relationship. They don't understand it. To them you are talking about family problems so they see you as a friend. They're trying to be hospitable and break down the professional relationship.

It's not my style to pull back and control friendship with a client. I try to build trust, be open, honest, friendly, and direct. But I have limits. I would never socialize with a client. If they start coming with invitations, things have gone too far.

Interestingly, the Euro-Canadian agents say they decline offers of hospitality by thanking the client sincerely for the invitation and explaining that they have conflicting engagements or that their non-working hours must be devoted to family and housekeeping. In contrast, most Indo-Canadian agents say they tell the clients that they "will try," the same phrase so often heard from clients during assessment.

Whereas clients tend to express disappointment or indignation over the refusal of refreshments, most appear to accept the refusal of hospitality with equanimity. On two occasions, invitations which had been refused were recalled as indications of the closeness of the relationship:

[Our worker] is like a member of our family.  
We invited her to our daughter's wedding.  
She sent a very nice card.

As suggested above, the offer of hospitality is itself a message. Even if rejected, it serves the client as a form of reciprocation for the support he receives from his agent. In extending an invitation, the client shows the agent respect and gratitude.

Gifts. About half of the social service agents say they occasionally receive offers of money, food, or other commodities such as perfume from Indo-Canadian clients. Unlike offers of refreshments and hospitality, offers of gifts are reported by a significantly greater proportion of Indo-Canadian agents (71%) than Euro-Canadian agents (39%). All agents say they try to refuse any offer except one of food, but that their refusal "can mean a battle royal" with the client.

In general, the agents interpret offers of gifts as expressions of gratitude. They perceive that the clients "feel obligated" to them for their help and that they "want to do anything" to reciprocate:

Their way of thanking is to give money.



That's the way it's done back home. They are not very good at expressing thanks. But they are genuinely appreciative and want to show it.

Only three agents -- two Indo-Canadian and one Euro-Canadian -- feel that clients "try to buy you" with gifts: "If you accept they expect something in return. It's manipulative."<sup>69</sup>

None of the clients interviewed recalled having offered money or gifts other than food to their agents. However, the comments of other clients, quoted to me by agents, suggest that Indo-Canadians may offer gifts to establish the nature of the relationship. Several agents report that clients argue with them "You are like my daughter/sister, I cannot give you tea alone." As one agent put it, "this is their way of showing love."

Verbal Thanks. Although clients offer refreshments, invitations, and gifts as signs of respect and gratitude, most agents, when asked how clients acknowledge their services, refer to verbal expressions of thanks. The majority of agents (80% of both Euro-Canadians and Indo-Canadians) feel that Indo-Canadian clients are generally more appreciative and more open in their verbal thanks than are most Euro-Canadian clients. The few agents who feel that "East Indians don't thank you" suggest either that "they don't have the social skills that whites do" or that "they take you for granted" once the relationship has been established.

In India, expression of verbal thanks between friends or between relatives seldom occurs. Vernacular terms translated as "thank you" are customarily reserved for gods who grant prayers.

These same terms are also used by beggars when they receive alms from benefactors. The English word "thank you" may punctuate exchanges between relative strangers, or between acquaintances of Westernized groups. Generally, however, non-verbal expressions of thanks obtain. An Indo-Canadian friend of mine explains it as follows:

If my neighbor sends me some fruit, I immediately take the food, put a handful of sugar in the bowl, and return it to her. She would be insulted if I said "thank you." Later, I will give her a ride to the market or something. Any obvious return is not nice. Saying "thank you" is an obvious way of acknowledging a gift. It's estranging or distancing, and it's at odds with the Indian way of doing things. It's uncultured, uncivilized. It's just not good manners.

In light of the cultural context, how may the profuse verbal expressions of gratitude from Indo-Canadian clients be explained? Three possibilities suggest themselves. First, clients may perceive themselves as supplicants and their agents as benefactors. One Euro-Canadian agent seems to suggest this:

East Indians are more verbal in their appreciation. They see themselves on a lower strata, so they say things like "thank you for taking all this trouble just for us."

Since a helping relationship may be established with a person of equal or superior status, the posited model of social exchange does not rule out this explanation. However, most of the clients concerned, as described in Chapter Three, come from land-owning classes. They have seldom if ever been in the role of

supplicants, except in relation to God. Moreover, the value placed on family honour would go far in preventing them from ever assuming such a role.

Alternatively, clients may use the English "thank you" as Westernized groups do in India to acknowledge prestations from relative strangers. One Indo-Canadian agent -- significantly, perhaps, one whom clients do not particularly like or trust -- favours this explanation:

They say "thank you" for sure: "Many, many thanks." It's something they have picked up here, saying thanks for every little thing. They know you expect it.

However, a relationship which entails disclosure of personal problems by definition does not exist between strangers. It exists between friends, and as such does not call for the exchange of verbal appreciation.

Finally, Indo-Canadian clients may indeed "pick up" the North American custom of expressing gratitude verbally and apply it to intimate relationships in which they have few other means of reciprocating.<sup>70</sup> Judging by the agents' detailed descriptions of the "thanks" they receive, I favour this explanation. Of the agents reporting appreciative and open expressions from Indo-Canadian clients, 78% of the Euro-Canadians and 86% of the Indo-Canadians remark that clients use "other words" instead of or in addition to "thank you":

[My client] thinks of me as a friend, so she doesn't say "thank you" exactly. But when she got the retroactive cheque, she phoned me. She said: "I come to you with my tears

and my anger and my troubles. I want to share my joy with you also." I was so happy.

East Indians are shy, less competent at saying thanks, but I still get the message. They say old-fashioned things like "You are my very good teacher." They invite you back and ask to keep you as their worker. Things like this but no "thanks."

Unfortunately, several Euro-Canadian agents and a few Indo-Canadian agents feel "uncomfortable" and "embarrassed," or "turned off" and "nauseated," by the clients' expressions of gratitude. As one agent put it, "Instead of feeling thanked, you feel silly":

East Indians are so thankful its hard to know what to do sometimes. They don't say the formal word but lots of other things: "Oh my God, what would we do without you?" What do you say if someone says "Were it not for you, my daughter would be dead today"?

Fortunately, whatever the agents feel privately about the clients' expressions, most say they respond publicly by minimizing their own role: "You have done this yourself. I am glad if I have helped." Such a response is appropriate not only within the social service model of exchange, since it points out the self-fulfillment of the individual, but also within the Indian model of exchange, since it reduces the client's sense of indebtedness while at the same time acknowledging receipt of the client's message of respect.

In sum, Indo-Canadian clients perceive that by offering

hospitality, gifts, and verbal expressions of gratitude they contribute to the agent-client relationship and maintain it as a relationship of mutual exchange, particularly during the treatment phase. From their perspective, if they continue to give to the agent, to reciprocate his services, his continued support is expectable and acceptable: it does not compromise them further.

From the perspective of the agent, however, client gestures of respect and gratitude may be interpreted as signs of dependence, a primary concern of agents during the treatment phase. Both the professional goal of client self-fulfillment and the bureaucratic goal of client turn-over are at stake:

One woman whose family is in India and whose husband is in jail calls me her sweetheart and life partner. I don't find it threatening but I'm concerned because at some point I'll have to phase out. I must prioritize my cases according to risk. I tell her "I'm not a partner, I'm a helper; I'm not going away but I'm going back to my office."

Even those agents who feel it best to provide direct advice during assessment, and those who offer logistical aid to facilitate client acceptance of suggestions, sooner or later during treatment begin to "hold back" and "get the client to do more."<sup>71</sup>

I suggest that an agent's response to client prestations may affect the client's response to agent "holding back," and vice versa. As Table XVI indicates, 61% of the agents either accept prestations when time permits and perceive client

Table XVI

AGENT ACCEPTANCE OF REFRESHMENTS  
BY  
CLIENT INDEPENDENCE DURING TREATMENT

<u>Client Independence</u>	<u>Agent Acceptance</u>		TOTAL
	Accept	Decline	
Positive	18 (42%)	9 (21%)	27 (63%)
Negative	8 (18%)	8 (19%)	16 (37%)
TOTAL	26 (60%)	17 (40%)	43 (100%)

independence, or decline prestations and report client dependence. It is plausible, given the Indian referents of social exchange, that an agent's acceptance of prestations facilitates a sense of security in the client regarding their relationship. The client does not feel it necessary to press or to increase his contributions to the relationship. Given the social service model of exchange, it is also plausible that an agent who accepts initial prestations (thereby reducing the chances of excessive prestations being made) does not perceive them as indications of dependency or as violations of affective neutrality. He is therefore less likely to "hold back" on the relationship, once again reducing the chances of redoubled client prestations.<sup>72</sup>

Client independence during the treatment phase, i.e. independent follow-through with regard to the treatment plan, is not to be confused with the long-term independence hoped for by agents during the ending phase. Only four of the 34 agent-client relationships described in detail involve clients (all of them men or married women) who now function totally without agent support. Thus, any suggestion as to what constitutes an effective means of facilitating long-term client independence must be highly tentative. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in each of these four cases, the agents concerned all employed a "contracting" or "short-term goal-setting" method of treatment, more along the lines of a behavioural approach to counselling than a Freudian one (see Briar and Miller, 1971: 166-167).<sup>73</sup> Each agent laid out specific, concrete efforts which the client

was to make each day until the next visit, and each focused attention during the next visit on the achievement of these efforts:

I give East Indians lots of direct, positive reinforcement on their goal-setting. They have a hard time with it at first but we go over each day. They respond to verbalizing. After about ten sessions, this guy was on his own. He had a lot more confidence.

From the perspective of the client, the continued support entailed in contracting or goal-setting constitutes appropriate, but appreciated, continuation of the exchange relationship:

[My worker] was very patient with me. When my son was naughty at school, she came every week to see me. It was so new to me. Now I would ask more questions. But she explained everything nicely, how we should work with him at home. He had to go for speech therapy. I did not understand. I thought it was his language [ability to speak English]. She phoned every week. She cared for us very much.

In contrast, agents who simply "hold back" without following up on their requests that the client "do more" may elicit hurt or angry feelings from clients. Complaints about agents who did not return calls or who declined to make visits were common.

In conclusion, analysis of the treatment phase of counselling between social service agents and Indo-Canadian clients reveals one of two contrasting patterns. Some clients



exhibit excessive independence or resistance by failing to implement the suggestions to which they have supposedly agreed during assessment. Other clients exhibit excessive dependence, implementing the suggestions but failing to demonstrate an interest in handling the situations on their own.

Both of these very disparate patterns appear attributable to differences between the agents' and clients' models of exchange. The agent, given his understanding of the mutual exchange relationship between an agent and a client, delivers the services necessary for the implementation of the agreed-upon suggestions. In return, he wants the client to utilize the services and implement the suggestions on his own.

The Indo-Canadian client, given his understanding of the mutual exchange relationship obtaining, offers his agent respect by courteously listening to the suggestions and by extending to the agent hospitality and other expressions of gratitude. In return, he wants the continued support of the agent. If suggestions have not been fully understood or accepted, he wants the agent to discuss them further. If suggestions are suitable and applicable, he wants the agent to follow up on their implementation.

A negative cycle of response and counter-response may ensue. If the client perceives the agent's delivery of services without follow-up as a withdrawal from the helping relationship, he may increase his prestations of gratitude and respect. If the agent perceives the client's expressions of gratitude and respect as expressions of dependence, he may hold back still

further on his offers of support. The following comments by a Euro-Canadian agent and her client exemplify the consequences of the contrasts between these two perspectives:

I felt that [my client] had shifted her dependency needs to me. She more or less told me so. I felt she could manage on her own, but she wouldn't as long as I was there.

I don't know where [my worker] went or why. She told me she was going on holiday, but that was eight months ago. She said it would be two-three months. I said "Don't go. I like you. You are like my own sister." I feel so sad.

In other words, Indo-Canadian clients react to the apparent decrease in support during treatment with increased expressions of gratitude and respect. Agents react to the apparent increase in dependence with decreased manifestations of support.

The possibility exists that a positive cycle of response and counter-response may be set in motion during the treatment phase by the use of contracting or short-term goal-setting. These methods entail both follow-up by the agent and follow-through by the client. If the suggestions to be implemented have not been fully understood or accepted, a scheduled opportunity exists to re-examine them. If the suggestions are suitable and have been implemented, the opportunity is there to reinforce the independence demonstrated by their implementation. In either case, follow-up by agents makes unnecessary any extraordinary increase in client expressions of gratitude, expressions which might be interpreted as signs of increased dependence. Rather, follow-up by agents enables Indo-Canadian clients to feel secure

in the existing mutual exchange relationship, and enables agents to foster client follow-through with both the substance and the spirit of the treatment plan.

Notes: Chapter Nine

<sup>63</sup> In fact, both in India and in the immigrant context, doctors generally receive the very highest regard. As one woman said, they are "next to God."

<sup>64</sup> An Indo-Canadian agent counters: "So many workers give up when the family doesn't follow through. They assume the East Indian family is closed, not willing to change. But they just don't want to give up their culture. Let them hang on to their pride. They'll come up with their own ideas if you give them a chance."

<sup>65</sup> A study of French Canadian and English Canadian agents and clients concludes: "It is clear that ethnic differences and value differences do affect client performance in treatment and thus must be deliberately addressed by practitioners in the assessment of clients and in the formation of treatment plans" (Turner, 1970: 9).

<sup>66</sup> A lack of sympathy appears reasonable in some instances:

This girl from Transition House had seen six workers. One gave her a jacket; one invited her to her home. She came to us for greater influence with M.H.R. But when we phoned them, they said "we've already had three calls on behalf of this client."

<sup>67</sup> A strikingly similar situation of cultural misunderstanding between Greeks and Americans is described by Triandis et al., (1968: 38).

<sup>68</sup> One couple, in the context of describing how their own relatives extracted payment for helping them, praised their Indo-Canadian agent for declining refreshment:

[Our worker] won't even take juice. Since I came to know the Centre, I have such a comfortable feeling that I can accept help with no strings attached.

The agent reports that he has taken tea at this couple's home, but "not every time. Just if I have time and there is a lot to discuss."

<sup>69</sup> One example from a Euro-Canadian agent suggests that at least occasionally a client may hope to influence events with a gift, but that the giving of it resembles an offering to a god rather than a bribe to an official:

I was counselling one family for wife-battering. About a month ago, the grandmother stuck a twenty-dollar bill in my pocket as I was leaving. I mailed it back to the mother. The next visit was horrendous. The grandmother said "You returned a gift and see what has happened. My daughter was beaten again." This time she gave me \$100.00.

My awareness of certain Hindu religious practices and beliefs had led me to anticipate many more such instances. I still wonder whether a predominantly Hindu (rather than Sikh) sample would not reveal gifts-as-offerings as a pattern. The religion of the family in the above example was not known to the agent.

<sup>70</sup> Hochschild notes (1978: 568) that guidelines or rules regulate the display of emotions: "[O]nce agreed upon, [these rules] establish the worth of a gesture and are thus used in

social exchange as a medium of exchange" (my italics).

<sup>71</sup> Triseliotis suggests (1972: 13) that "the immigrants' excessive dependency may ... appeal to [some agents] so that they treasure it." I did not find any indication of this. It is my impression that some agents -- all of them Indo-Canadian -- do maintain ties with clients long after the resolution of the initial problem. However, they encourage client independence just as much as agents who terminate the relationship once the problem has been resolved.

<sup>72</sup> I suspect that the correlation between agent response to prestations and agent experience of client independence would be significantly higher were the more desperate and complicated cases of deserted and divorced women to be removed from the equation.

<sup>73</sup> At least one agent reports no success using short-term goal-setting with Indo-Canadian clients:

East Indians react with confusion to contracts: "Why do I have to write it down? Why can't I just remember?" They question with a negative connotation and the idea quickly loses credibility.

This agent is one who does disclose personal information and does provide extensive, thinking-through counselling. He interprets problems in terms of Indo-Canadian life-style, however, and my hunch is that he communicates with clients on a somewhat abstract level with considerable emphasis on introspection.

## Chapter Ten

### CONCLUSION

The present dissertation analyses interaction between social service agents and Indo-Canadian clients within the framework of a modified social exchange theory. In Part One, I describe the models of social exchange operant in the social service professions and in the Indian immigrant communities. I identify the cultural referents of social exchange -- the values, goals, and modes of transaction underlying perceptions, decisions, and behaviour -- and suggest how differences between them may affect interaction between persons utilizing them.

In Part Two, I examine the transactions of agents and clients during the introductory, study, assessment and treatment phases of the counselling relationship. For each phase, I describe each party's perceptions of, and subsequent responses to, the opposite party's behaviour, and note how these follow the logic of the posited models of social exchange.

By way of conclusion, the present chapter first summarizes the patterns of agent-client interaction identified in Part Two. Secondly, it evaluates the significance of the cultural referents of social exchange for the understanding of the patterns identified. Finally, the thesis concludes by noting the implications of its findings for intercultural social service, and for social exchange theory.

### Patterns of Agent and Client Transactions

Following initial contact on the basis of either intervention, routine service, or self-referral, an agent offers a client an opportunity for a helping relationship. In general, Indo-Canadian clients resist offers made in the context of intervention, and accept those resulting from routine service delivery or self-referral. While similar patterns also characterize the responses of Euro-Canadian clients, Indo-Canadians are perceived by agents to be more resistant to intervention, and also more appreciative of relationships offered in the context of routine services and self-referrals.

Indo-Canadian acceptance of an offer of help appears to come most fully and easily when the client feels he knows the agent as an individual. Cases of self-referral take place with agents already known to the clients. The introductory phase of other cases often includes requests by clients for personal information about the agents involved. Of the agents remarking on personal questions from clients, 61% respond positively and the rest neutrally or negatively, a pattern which has implications for the following study phase.

During the study phase, Indo-Canadian clients initially present their problems in one of two very different ways. About half of the agents state that Indo-Canadian clients pour out their troubles in greater detail and with more emotion than do Euro-Canadian clients. The remaining half of the agents report that Indo-Canadians withhold both facts and feelings more doggedly than do their Euro-Canadian counterparts. These



patterns of initial client disclosure tend to correspond with the patterns of agent disclosure noted above. Agents providing personal information about themselves experience open communication from clients. Those begrudging clients personal data report restricted disclosure from them, at least initially.

In their interpretation of the problems disclosed by clients, all agents weigh cultural factors. However, about half of them focus on aspects of Indo-Canadian life-style which they have observed. The remaining half interpret client problems in the broader context of Indian culture as they have experienced it first-hand or learned about it through secondary sources. An agent's basis of interpretation corresponds significantly with client response to further questions: 89% of the agents either interpret problems in terms of Indian culture and receive full replies to their questions, or interpret problems in terms of Indo-Canadian life-style and report restricted answers to their questions.

Given the problem identified, an agent initially suggests alternative possible solutions for the client to consider. However, Indo-Canadian clients inevitably appear to want their agents to tell them what to do. Eventually, two-thirds of the agents provide either directive or extensive, "thinking-through" counselling. Only one-third of the agents maintain a non-directive approach with Indo-Canadian clients.

Regardless of the counselling approach employed, the clients perceive that their agents have given them direct advice. Generally speaking, they resist advice which entails a

secondary referral, and accept advice which entails further counselling by their present agents. However, resistance to secondary referrals appears surmountable if a relative or friend co-determines the treatment plan with the client, and/or if the agent provides concrete logistical support relevant to the referral.

During the treatment phase, agents perceive that Indo-Canadian clients tend to have more difficulty with follow-through than do Euro-Canadian clients. Just under a third of the agents report that Indo-Canadian clients fail to implement the counselling suggestions to which they have apparently agreed. Over a third of the agents believe that clients implement the suggestions but fail to do so independently.

With regard to implementation, a 66% correspondence exists between the agents' counselling approach -- whether directive/extensive or non-directive -- and client follow-through -- whether implementing or non-implementing. The extensive, thinking-through approach appears to be of particular significance: all nine agents employing this approach during assessment report implementation during treatment. If they are removed from the equation, only a 59% correspondence exists between the agent's counselling approach and client follow-through.

With regard to client independence during treatment, the agent's approach to counselling does not appear to be of primary significance. Rather, the client's sex and family situation are strongly associated with the degree of independence manifested.

Divorced or separated Indo-Canadian women tend to remain more dependent on their agents than do other Indo-Canadian clients.

However, the agents' perception of client dependency during treatment may be influenced by the fact that Indo-Canadian clients, who have all along offered their agents refreshments during home visits, increase their offers of special hospitality, gifts, and verbal thanks during the treatment phase. Conversely, the increase in client prestations may be related to the fact that agents, who have all along favoured the client's realization of his rights and responsibilities, respond to non-implementation and dependency by holding back on the helping relationship. The data suggest that client prestations, agent perception of dependency, and agent withholding may precede and follow one another in circular fashion.

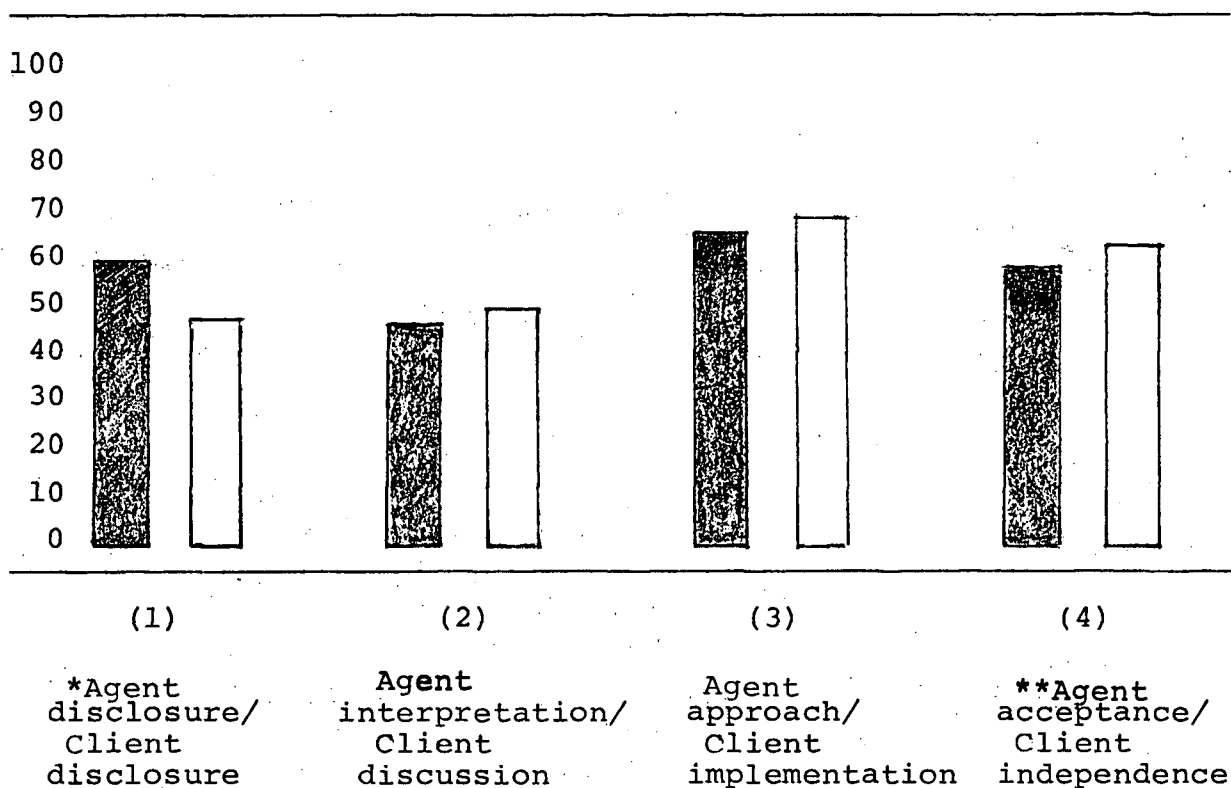
The ending phase of the counselling relationship is not included in the present analysis for lack of data. However, the few counselling relationships which had been successfully concluded at the time of interviewing each entailed considerable follow-up by the agents during the treatment phase. With continuing agent support, the clients had implemented the suggestions agreed to for the attainment of specified short-term goals. Once their problems were resolved, they demonstrated an ability to handle subsequent situations on their own. All of the successfully concluded cases involved males or married females.

The overall picture is best presented graphically. In Figure 3, in accordance with the perspective of Indo-Canadian clients, I assign positive values to agent provision of personal

Figure 3

PERCENTAGES OF AGENTS TRANSACTING POSITIVELY  
 COMPARED WITH  
 PERCENTAGES OF AGENTS REPORTING POSITIVE CLIENT TRANSACTIONS

(n=58 except as noted)



■ = social service agents

□ = Indo-Canadian clients

\*n = 13 agents remarking on personal questions

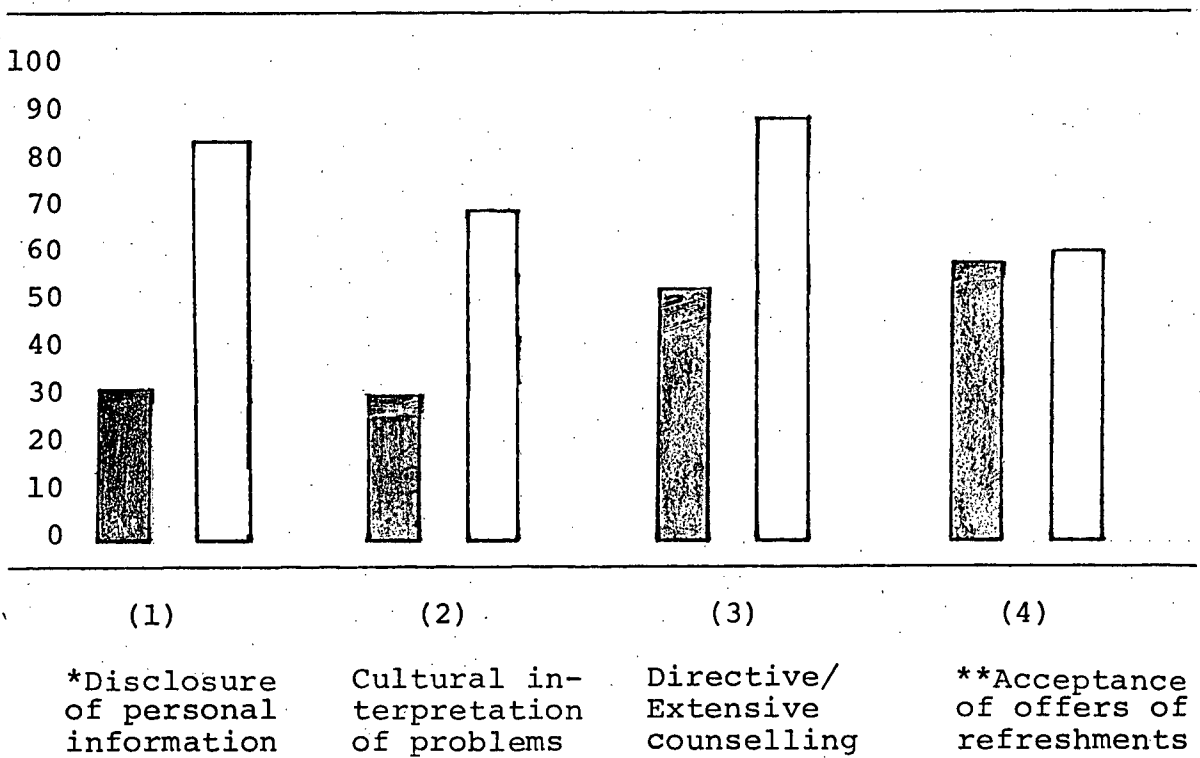
\*\*n = 43 agents making home visits

information, interpretation of problems in broad cultural terms, provision of directive or extensive counselling, and acceptance of client offers of refreshment. In accordance with the agents' professional perspective, I also assign positive values to client initial disclosure, willingness to discuss problems, implementation of suggestions, and independent follow-through. The percentages of agents transacting positively ranges from 47% regarding the interpretation of problems to 67% regarding the approach to counselling. The percentages of clients transacting positively ranges from 48% regarding initial disclosure to 71% regarding the implementation of suggestions. The greater probability of positive transactions during the later phases of counselling may be attributed to the fact that negative transactions during the earlier phases often lead to the premature termination of counselling relationships.

The transactional patterns of Indo-Canadian agents and Euro-Canadian agents vary considerably one from the other (Figure 4). Most noticeably, the ethnic background of agents appears related to their response to personal questions from clients. Of the agents remarking on questions, 86% of the Indo-Canadians but only 33% of the Euro-Canadians provide personal information willingly. Indo-Canadian agents are also far more likely to interpret clients' problems in terms of Indian culture and to meet client expectations of direct counselling advice. However, ethnic background appears less related to an agent's response to client offers of refreshments: 63% of the Indo-Canadian agents and 59% of the Euro-Canadian agents accept such

Figure 4

PERCENTAGES OF EURO-CANADIAN AGENTS TRANSACTING POSITIVELY  
 COMPARED WITH  
 PERCENTAGES OF INDO-CANADIAN AGENTS TRANSACTING POSITIVELY



■ = Euro-Canadian agents (n=37 except as noted)

□ = Indo-Canadian agents (n=21 except as noted)

\* = 6 Euro-Canadian; 7 Indo-Canadian

\*\* = 27 Euro-Canadian; 16 Indo-Canadian

offers when time permits.

The transactional patterns of clients also vary with the ethnic background of the agents involved (Figure 5). In particular, 81% of the Indo-Canadian agents but only 30% of the Euro-Canadian agents report initial client openness. This contrast narrows, however, with regard to client willingness to answer further questions. Figure 5 also indicates that Indo-Canadian agents experience client implementation of suggestions somewhat more frequently than do Euro-Canadian agents, and client independence during treatment somewhat less frequently. I attribute the lesser frequency of client independence with Indo-Canadian agents to the fact that the more difficult cases tend to be referred to Indo-Canadian agents.

Overall then, Indo-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients transact "positively" with one another more often than do Euro-Canadian agents and Indo-Canadian clients, especially during the first phases of counselling. Of equal significance for the present thesis, however, is the fact that regardless of the agents' ethnic background there exists a general correspondence between agent and client patterns of transaction (Figures 6 and 7). The percentages of clients and agents transacting positively rise and fall together over the course of their relationships whether the agent is Indo-Canadian or Euro-Canadian.

Indeed, despite the firm belief of many Euro-Canadian agents that it is their ethnic background that hinders their relationship with Indo-Canadian clients, the correspondence

Figure 5

PERCENTAGES OF EURO-CANADIAN AGENTS REPORTING  
POSITIVE CLIENT TRANSACTIONS  
COMPARED WITH  
PERCENTAGES OF INDO-CANADIAN AGENTS REPORTING  
POSITIVE CLIENT TRANSACTIONS

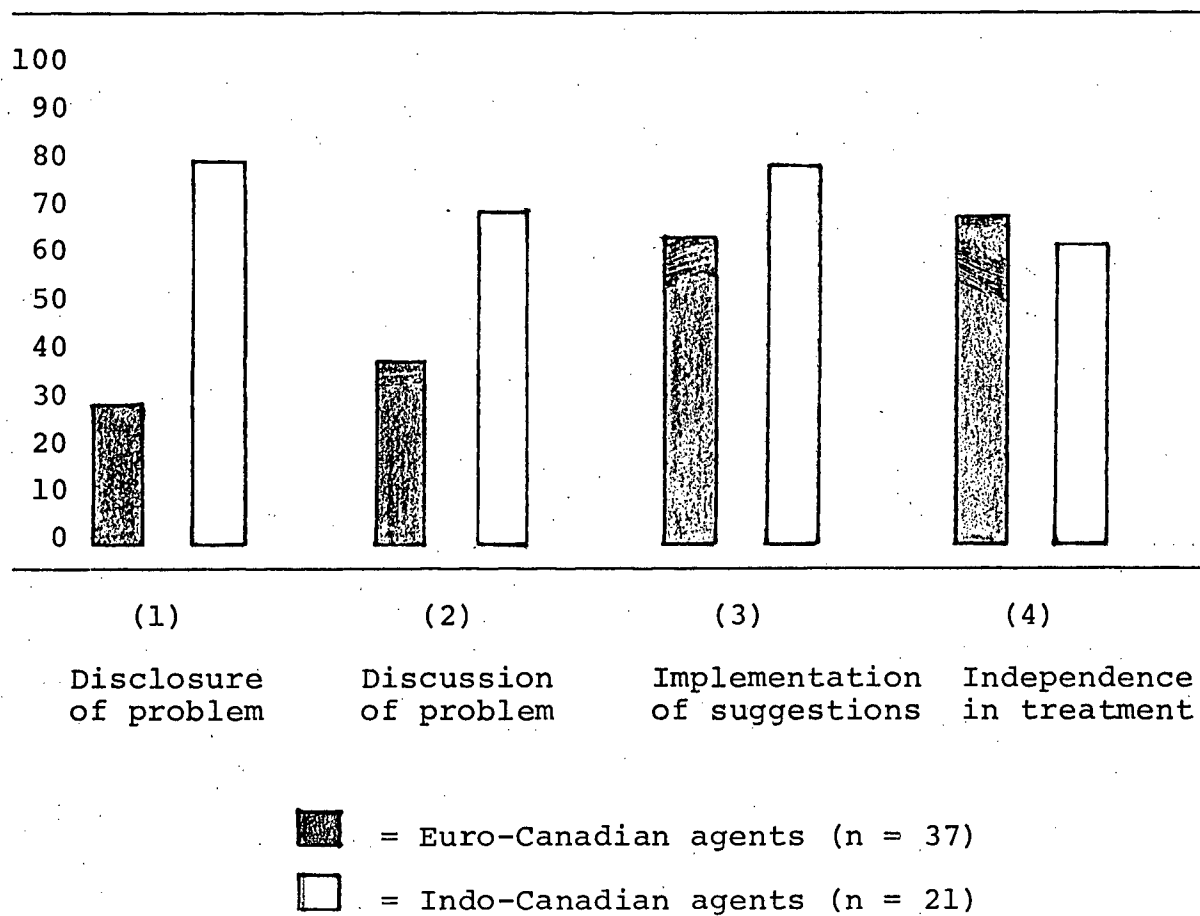
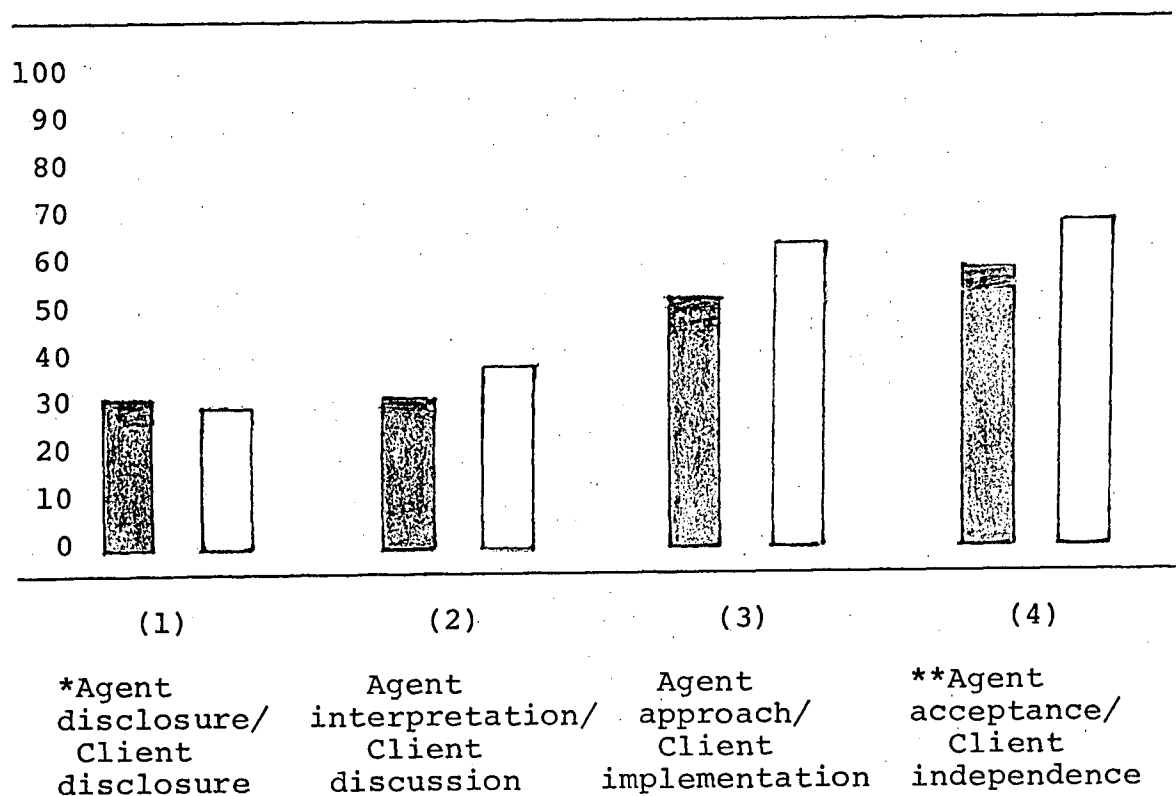




Figure 6

PERCENTAGES OF EURO-CANADIAN AGENTS TRANSACTING POSITIVELY  
 COMPARED WITH  
 PERCENTAGES OF EURO-CANADIAN AGENTS REPORTING  
 POSITIVE CLIENT TRANSACTIONS

(n=37 except as noted)



■ = Euro-Canadian agents

□ = Indo-Canadian clients

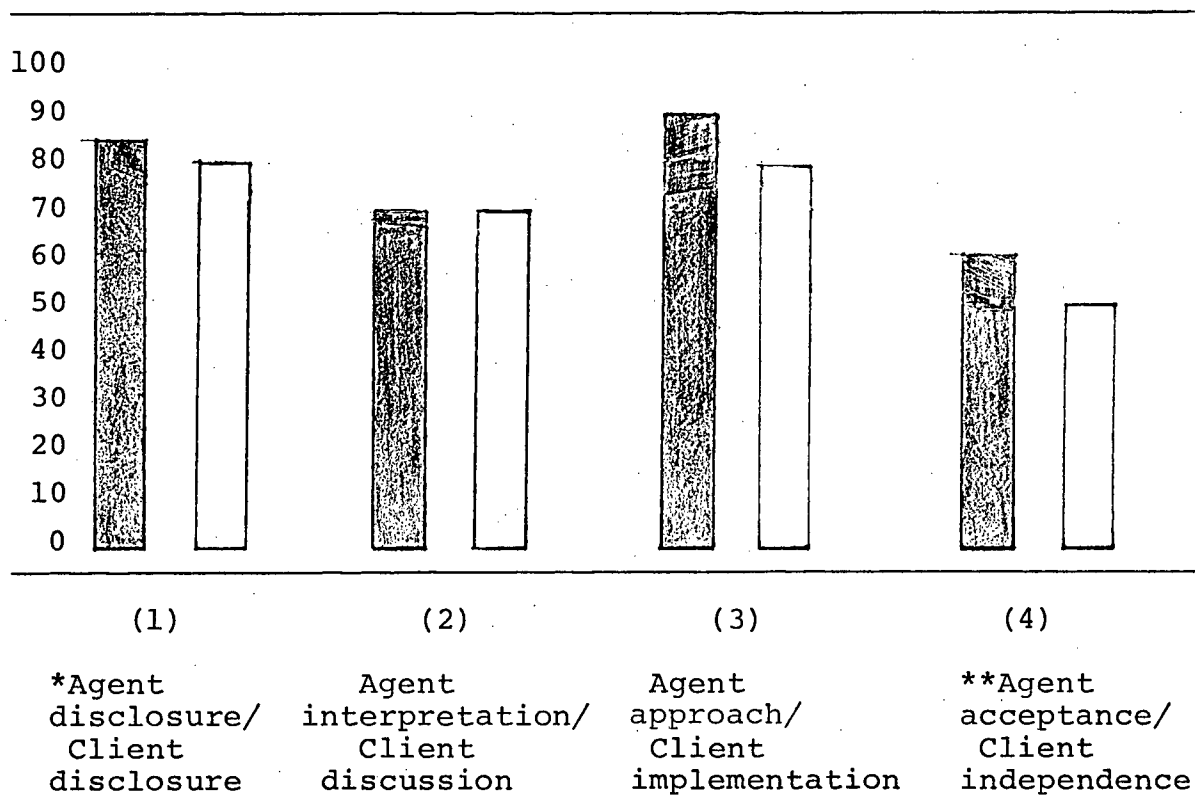
\*n = 6

\*\*n = 27

Figure 7

PERCENTAGES OF INDO-CANADIAN AGENTS TRANSACTING POSITIVELY  
 COMPARED WITH  
 PERCENTAGES OF INDO-CANADIAN AGENTS REPORTING  
 POSITIVE CLIENT TRANSACTIONS

(n=21 except as noted)



■ = Indo-Canadian agents

□ = Indo-Canadian clients

\*n = 7

\*\*n = 16

between client transactional patterns and agent ethnic background is consistently less than the correspondence between client transactional patterns and agent transactional patterns (Figure 8). Indo-Canadian agents experience positive client transactions, and Euro-Canadian agents negative ones, on an average of 57% of the time over the course of a counselling relationship. Agents transacting positively experience positive client transactions, and agents transacting negatively experience negative client transactions, 79% of the time. It is this correspondence between agent and client transactions which I believe the posited models of social exchange help to explain.

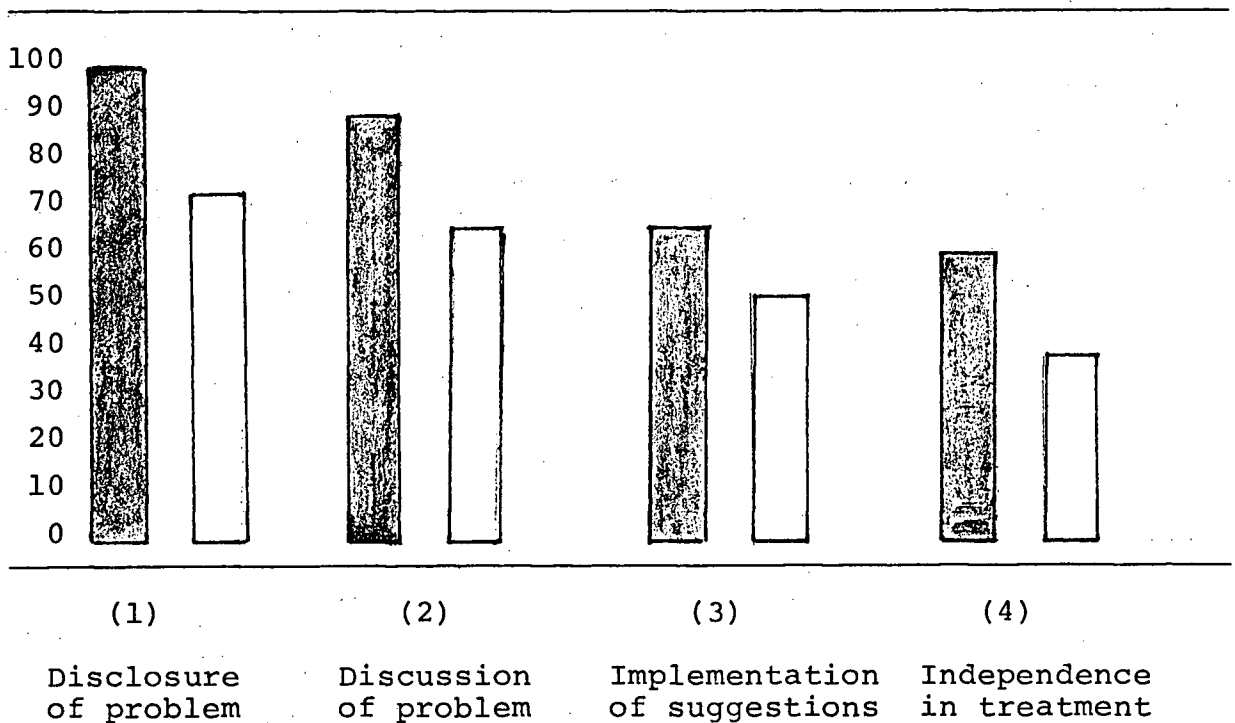
#### Significance of Cultural Referents of Social Exchange

In concluding Part One of the present dissertation, I predicted that difficulties in the relationship between social service agents and Indo-Canadian clients would emerge where clients perceived agent transactions to impinge on family honour, and where agents perceived client transactions to impinge on the realization of the client's rights and responsibilities as an individual. On the whole, the patterns of agent-client interaction identified in Part Two support this logical implication of the contrasts between the two models of social exchange. Each party's actions and each party's reactions may be seen to reflect the transactional modes and decision-making goals which each considers conducive to the realization of primary values.

Agents, to facilitate client realization of rights and

Figure 8

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CLIENT TRANSACTIONS  
AND AGENT TRANSACTIONS  
COMPARED WITH  
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CLIENT TRANSACTIONS  
AND AGENT ETHNIC BACKGROUND



= Correspondence between positive/negative client transactions and positive/negative agent transactions



= Correspondence between positive/negative client transactions and Indo-Canadian/Euro-Canadian background of agent.

responsibilities, strive for full client disclosure of the problem, client determination of the treatment plan, and client follow-through on that plan. To achieve these goals, agents believe that their transactional mode should be one of mutual exchange between a professional help-provider and a help-needer: confined to the area of expertise, affectively neutral, and universalistic.

The transactional patterns of Indo-Canadian clients which agents consider negative or problematic are ones which directly hinder the agents' efforts to pursue their professional goals within the context of a professional relationship:

1. Client resistance to intervention and client withholding of information stalls or prevents disclosure of the problem.
2. Personal questions from clients consume professional time but fall outside the area of professional expertise.
3. Client expectations of direct advice and client resistance to secondary referrals render client determination of a treatment plan difficult if not impossible to achieve.
4. Non-implementation by clients and continued client dependency during treatment frustrate agent hopes of follow-through.
5. Client prestations, both material and verbal, threaten the affective neutrality and universalistic nature of the professional relationship, and may be perceived as indications of dependency.

Clients, on the other hand, strive to realize family honour through the maintenance of family sufficiency, caste purity, and service to others. If service from others is necessary, to

preserve family honour the relationship should be one of mutual exchange as between relatives or friends: pervasive, deeply affective, and individualistic. The patterns of agent transactions which trouble clients are ones which hinder the pursuance of these familial goals within the context of friendship relationships:

1. Agent intervention impugns a family's sufficiency. Agent requests for disclosure and suggestions of secondary referrals require voluntary exposure of a family's insufficiencies.
2. Reluctance of agents to provide personal information precludes the establishment of an individualistic mutual exchange relationship.
3. Agent attribution of problems to Indian culture or to Indo-Canadian life-style, and agent counselling suggestions which entail changes in culture or life-style, may threaten a client's pursuance of caste purity.
4. Reluctance of agents to provide direct advice, agent referrals to secondary resources, and agent withdrawal during the treatment phase each challenges the pervasive and affective qualities of the helping relationship.
5. Agent non-acceptance of client prestations both threatens the mutuality of the helping relationship and also prevents the client from serving others to the best of his ability.

The models of social exchange serve to explicate not only the perceptions agents and clients have of each other's behaviour but also the correspondences between their patterns of transaction. The correspondence between form of contact and

response to contact may be understood in terms of the implications which each form of contact has for family sufficiency. To an Indo-Canadian, an offer of help is initially acceptable only if it does not imply exceptional need on the part of a family -- as in the case of routine services -- or if the need is so great that the maintenance of family honour entails extreme personal costs -- as in cases of self-referral.

The correspondence between agent disclosure of personal information and client disclosure of personal problems logically relates to the client's interest in receiving help within the context of a mutual exchange friendship. By acquiring personal information from an agent, a client can determine both the agent's respectability -- his qualifications as an exchange partner -- and also the agent's willingness to engage in a mutual relationship.

The correspondence between an agent's basis of interpreting client problems and client willingness to discuss the problems makes sense given the client's interest in pursuing caste purity. If the agent conveys non-acceptance of the client's culturally-based behaviour, discussion of problems may cease whether or not he conveys acceptance of the client as an individual.

The correspondence between an agent's counselling approach -- particularly an extensive, thinking-through approach -- and client implementation of suggestions relates to the client's expectations of a helping relationship. The fact that client resistance to secondary referrals may be overcome with offers of

logistical aid from agents underscores the importance of the nature of the helping relationship to client acceptance of suggestions.

Finally, the cyclical relationship between an agent's response to client prestations and his perception of client independence/dependence may be understood in terms of the agents' definition of a professional helping relationship and the clients' understanding of a mutual friendship. I suggest that agents willing to accept prestations are probably less inclined to perceive them as threats to affective neutrality or as indications of dependency. They are therefore less likely to respond by holding back on their relationship with clients, behaviour which might prompt redoubled prestations from clients.

Thus, the correspondences between the identified transactional patterns, as well as each party's perceptions of his opposite's behaviour, logically relate to the cultural referents of social exchange posited. Analysis reveals, however, that other cultural factors not included in the models of exchange also relate to the patterns of transaction and to the correspondences between them. In general, these other cultural factors complement and enhance the effects of the cultural referents which are included in the models.

Differences in cultural concepts of etiquette appear relevant to the interaction between agents and clients at at least two points in the counselling relationship. During the introductory phase, personal questions from clients impinge not only on the agent's professional standards of transaction but



also on general North American notions of what constitutes polite getting-to-know-you behaviour. During the assessment phase, the passive agreement of clients reflects not only their expectation of direct advice but also their perception of outright disagreement as impolite. The tendency of Indo-Canadian agents to decline invitations from clients less directly than do their Euro-Canadian counterparts may also reflect this contrast between cultural concepts of etiquette.

Differences in culturally-based patterns of cognition affect agent-client interaction particularly during study and treatment. When disclosing a problem, an Indo-Canadian client may be restricted not only by his desire to preserve family sufficiency but also by his inability to meet agent expectations of introspection. When implementing proposed solutions to the problem, a client may be inhibited not only by their implications for caste purity but also by the level of abstraction on which they were conveyed to him by his agent. Agent frustration with non-disclosure and non-implementation appears attributable in some cases to contrasts in cognitive patterns between agents and clients as well as to contrasts between their respective models of social exchange.

#### Implications for Intercultural Social Services

The findings of the present dissertation have several practical implications for the delivery of social services to Indo-Canadian clients. On the level of policy, they suggest that routine services constitute the optimal form of initial contact.

For Indo-Canadians, routine services are not only "preventative," they are also a means whereby existing problems may be revealed within the context of established and non-stigmatizing helping relationships.

On the level of practice technique, the present analysis suggests that agents who provide personal information, accept the cultural bases of problems, provide extensive, thinking-through advice, and accept prestations from clients are more likely to attain their goals of client disclosure and client follow-through. For Indo-Canadian clients, such transactions by their agents indicate the mutuality and hence the honourability of the relationship between them.

At first glance it would appear tempting to transform the obvious implications of the study into recommendations -- to simply list a number of "should's" and "shouldn'ts" to be introduced to agents during in-service training workshops. However, at second glance the temptation is easily overcome by the realization -- also based on the present thesis -- that such recommendations would be difficult for many agents to accept or to implement. Agent inclinations to withhold personal information, to evaluate behaviour while accepting the person, to remain non-directive, and to decline prestations represent just as influential a model of social exchange as do the counter-posed inclinations of Indo-Canadian clients.

One recommendation which might work, I believe, entails not so much a change in agent practice techniques as a change in agent assumptions about client understandings of those

techniques. If agents were informed of the Indian model of social exchange and of its significance for counselling relationships, they could anticipate Indo-Canadian response to their professional transactional behaviour. Without necessarily modifying that behaviour, agents could then hope to facilitate client acceptance of it by offering a word of explanation about it.

The potential effectiveness of clarifying to the client in culturally appropriate terms what the agent is doing and why he is doing it is illustrated in Chapter Seven (pp. 186-187): the Indo-Canadian agent who routinely prefaces her specific questions about clients' problems with a statement explaining her reasons for asking them inevitably experiences continued client disclosure. I suggest that similar explanatory statements could beneficially accompany most agent transactions which appear problematic for Indo-Canadian clients. In particular, agents could prepare clients for non-directive counselling in such a way as to assure the clients that such an approach, in Canadian culture, constitutes concrete help.

Some potential difficulties concerning the use of explanatory statements are also suggested by the present study. The statements would have to be formulated in specific, concrete terms. Abstract concepts of "affective neutrality" and "individual self-fulfillment," even if accurately translated, might mean little or nothing to many Indo-Canadian clients. Furthermore, client understanding of agents' explanations would have to be ascertained in specific, concrete terms. Passive,

"yes-yes" agreement might not mean comprehension of the explanatory statement any more than it means acceptance of counselling suggestions.

No difficulties are posed, however, by the operant models of social exchange or by the contrasts between them. From the agents' perspective, although the provision of explanatory statements would consume professional time, their content would not fall outside the professional mandate. From the clients' perspective, additional information from the agent about his role would contribute to the establishment of a mutual exchange relationship. Moreover, the possibility exists that agent discussion of transactions, like agent disclosure of personal information, might prompt reciprocal client discussion.

In sum, I believe that the implications of the present dissertation call for social service agents to be aware of cultural variations in models of social exchange, and, armed with this awareness, for agents to articulate their own values, goals, and transactional modes to clients. Although the specific points at which such awareness appears critical have been identified in relation to only one ethnic group, I suggest that knowledge of any client's cultural referents of social exchange can only aid the counselling process.

It is awareness of the opposite party's bases of perception, decision, and behaviour that facilitates interaction, and it is interaction that creates a relationship, personal or professional. If the relationship between an agent and client is positive, the cultural factors pertaining to the

client's problem can be identified and discussed. If the relationship is negative, an agent's awareness of the cultural context of the client's problem does not guarantee him a role in its resolution.

### Implications for Social Exchange Theory

The analysis of agent-client interaction presented herein is based on a framework provided by classic social exchange theory. However, the findings of the analysis rely heavily on the explicit and simultaneous incorporation of three modifications to that framework suggested by contemporary exchange theorists. Instead of assuming that agents and clients have full knowledge of their own and each other's interests in the exchange situation, I assume that each party has a perception of those interests based on his own cultural values. Instead of interpreting agents' and clients' decisions regarding exchange in terms of a universally defined goal of self-interest, I interpret their decisions in light of culturally specific goals defining self-interest. And instead of assuming that each party's behaviour reflects a single, stable transactional means to the realization of interests and goals, I interpret exchange behaviour in relation to culturally based transactional modes.

To have done otherwise would have rendered the identified patterns of agent-client interaction inexplicable, or at least irrational. At best, the patterns might have been viewed as indications of "culture shock" on the part of Indo-Canadian

immigrants. If agents had full knowledge of clients' interests and values, why would offers of exchange relationships so often be refused? If each party based its decisions on self-interest as defined by the same goals, how could those decisions perplex and frustrate the opposite party? If the exchange behaviour of agents and clients manifested similar transactional modes, why would it result in the premature termination of counselling relationships?

Thus, the primary implication of the present thesis for social exchange theory resides in its significant dependence on the identified modifications to that theory. The focus on perceptions introduced by symbolic interactionists and phenomenologists, the focus on cultural contexts of decision-making emphasized by ethnologists and ethnomethodologists, and the focus on properties emerging from exchange behaviour stressed by transactional analysts must all be incorporated into a theoretical framework constructed for the analysis of intercultural relationships.

What exists on the cultural level may also obtain on an individual level. Can full knowledge of an exchange situation, identical definitions of self-interest, and stability of transactional means to pursuing interests be assumed for exchange partners with homogeneous cultural backgrounds? The logical extension of the empirical findings presented above suggests that such assumptions cannot be made. Indeed, the present dissertation concludes that it is through the explicit and simultaneous recognition of value-based perceptions,

multiple goals of self-interest, and variable transactional modes that social exchange relationships -- within or between cultures -- may be understood.

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## APPENDICES



## Appendix A

## SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Between September, 1981 and September, 1982 I conducted a total of 69 interviews with 98 actively participating respondents. Each of 21 Indo-Canadian agents (5 male, 16 female) was interviewed individually. Of the 37 Euro-Canadian agents (5 male, 32 female), 23 were interviewed individually and the remaining 14 in two groups of 6 and 8 persons, respectively. Of the 40 Indo-Canadian clients (11 male, 29 female), 14 were interviewed individually, 20 in pairs, and 6 in groups of three. Each respondent was selected on a non-random basis as described below.

Social Service Agents

The selection of Euro-Canadian and Indo-Canadian agents involved four steps:

1. Identification of social service agencies located in heavily Indo-Canadian residential areas through the Directory of Services (Greater Vancouver Information and Referral Service, 1980).
2. Preliminary inquiry to establish which of these offices dealt with significant numbers of Indo-Canadian clients.
3. Acquisition of permission to approach the services from the relevant provincial ministries, municipal departments, boards of directors, etc. (Only one department refused permission.)

4. Appointments with the persons in charge of each office to explain the research proposal and to ask which agents I might interview.

My only sampling restrictions were that the agents be either Euro-Canadian or Indo-Canadian, and that they have at least one year's experience in their present position.

The majority of persons-in-charge gave me the names of agents under them whose files included Indo-Canadian cases, and let me contact them at my convenience. Thus, when a client named a particular agent with whom he had worked or was working, I was often able to interview that agent. However, two directors arranged group interviews, explaining that heavy workloads did not permit individual sessions. And one director, for undisclosed reasons, selected two agents (out of more than twenty possibilities) and made appointments with them for me.

In all, I conducted 46 interviews with 58 agents employed in 24 different offices (Table XVII). Over three-quarters of these interviews involved government employees: staff at various offices of the Ministry of Human Resources, the Vancouver Health Department, the Vancouver School Board, etc. The remaining 10 respondents were employed by private, non-profit organizations: Family Services Association, Immigrant Services Centre (now OASIS), South Vancouver Neighborhood House, etc. It should be noted that the distribution of my agent interviews does not necessarily reflect the distribution of agents in Vancouver, either by ethnic background or by sector of employment, nor does it necessarily reflect the distribution of agents working with

Table XVII

DISTRIBUTION OF AGENT INTERVIEWS  
BY AGENTS' ETHNIC BACKGROUND  
AND AGENTS' SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT

	<u>Background</u>		TOTAL
	Euro-Canadian	Indo-Canadian	
Government	23 (49%)	13 (29%)	36 (78%)
Private	2 ( 4%)	8 (18%)	10 (22%)
TOTAL	25 (53%)	21 (47%)	46 (100%)

Indo-Canadian clients.

All of the agents interviewed offer counselling services to their clients: discussion, information, and support regarding the problems obtaining. Precisely half of them counsel clients on family-related problems (Table XVIII). The other half of the agents focus on educational or health-related concerns. Although these areas often overlap -- a child's learning difficulties may be exacerbated by poor nutrition or a volatile home situation -- I divide the agents according to their initial and primary orientations. Included within the educational category are high-school counsellors, area-school (i.e. elementary school) counsellors, and home-school liaison workers. Agents addressing health-related problems include school and other community health nurses, mental health workers, and drug and alcohol addiction counsellors. Family problems are addressed by a variety of agents including family support workers, child abuse workers, ethnic outreach workers, and counsellors at homes for battered women.

#### Indo-Canadian Clients

The 40 Indo-Canadian clients interviewed met five sampling restrictions: adult status, non-professional job experience, non-Western country of emigration, four to ten years residence in Canada, and Sikh or Hindu religious affiliation.

Adult status was defined according to degree of responsibility rather than by age. A man or woman residing independently, or a person residing with senior relatives but

Table XVIII

DISTRIBUTION OF AGENT INTERVIEWS  
BY AGENTS' ETHNIC BACKGROUND  
AND NATURE OF PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Background

Problem	<u>Background</u>		TOTAL
	Euro-Canadian	Indo-Canadian	
	Family	10 (22%)      13 (28%)	
	Health	8 (17%)      5 (11%)	
	Education	7 (15%)      3 ( 7%)	
	<hr/>		
	TOTAL	25 (54%)      21 (46%)	46 (100%)

having dependent children, qualified. Adult status did not apply to unmarried persons residing with senior relatives or to married but childless persons residing with senior relatives.

Non-professional job experience (past or present) included all unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled occupations. Professionals such as business executives, dentists, etc. were excluded on the grounds that their higher education, often along Western lines, might affect their attitude towards social services.

Persons of Indian origin who immigrated to Canada from other Western countries such as Great Britain were excluded because they would have had access to Western-style social services prior to their arrival here.

The Indo-Canadians interviewed arrived in Canada between 1971 and 1977. During their first three years in the country, they had access to special services funded by and through the federal government. After three years, they became technically ineligible for most of these, but they gained access to other services. I include in the sample persons who have had access to both kinds of service but for whom the initial encounter is still a relatively recent experience.

My original intention was to interview an equal number of Indian Sikhs, Indian Hindus, and Hindus emigrating from non-Western countries other than India (e.g. Fiji). However, this proved quite difficult. Although I contacted approximately equal numbers in each category, many of the Hindus (both Indian and Fijian) had had no contact with social services. In the end, 31

of the 40 clients (77.5%) were Indian Sikhs, a figure approximating their estimated proportion of Vancouver's Indo-Canadian population generally. Five (12.5%) were Indian Hindus, and the remaining four (10%) were Fijian Hindus.

One third of the clients interviewed were contacted by means of a "grapevine" technique. I started with friends and relatives of individuals known to me personally, and they in turn introduced their friends and relatives. The other two-thirds of the clients were contacted through private non-profit service agencies. The policies of most government service agencies preclude the disclosure of clients' names. However, as Table XIX indicates, two-thirds of the relationships with agents described in detail by clients were with individuals employed at government offices. Almost half of these relationships involved Euro-Canadian agents.

A comparison of Table XVII (p. 315) and Table XIX shows that the distribution of agent interviews by agents' sector of employment approximates the distribution of relationships described by clients by agents' sector of employment. This is due in large measure to my deliberate efforts to interview those agents whom clients identified as being, or as having been, important to them for either positive or negative reasons.

Similarly, an intentional "match" exists between the distribution of agent interviews by the nature of the problems they address (Table XVIII, p. 317) and the distribution of relationships described by clients by the nature of the problems addressed (Table XX). Table XX does not necessarily reflect the

Table XIX

DISTRIBUTION OF DESCRIBED RELATIONSHIPS  
BY AGENTS' ETHNIC BACKGROUND  
AND AGENTS' SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT

Background

<u>Employment</u>	<u>Background</u>		TOTAL
	Euro-Canadian	Indo-Canadian	
Government	13 (38%)	10 (29%)	23 (67%)
Private	2 ( 6%)	9 (27%)	11 (33%)
TOTAL	15 (44%)	19 (56%)	34 (100%)



Table XX

DISTRIBUTION OF DESCRIBED RELATIONSHIPS  
BY AGENTS' ETHNIC BACKGROUND  
AND NATURE OF PROBLEM ADDRESSED

	<u>Background</u>		TOTAL
	Euro-Canadian	Indo-Canadian	
Problem   Family	9 (26%)	12 (35%)	21 (61%)
Health	4 (12%)	4 (12%)	8 (24%)
Education	2 ( 6%)	3 ( 9%)	5 (15%)
TOTAL	15 (44%)	19 (56%)	34 (100%)

proportion of family, educational, or health-related problems brought to social service agencies by Indo-Canadians generally.

## Appendix B

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

The two interview schedules reproduced below were pre-tested on 5 social service agents and 5 Indo-Canadian immigrants, respectively. Some of the questions were intended to elicit brief facts, others to lead to extended remarks. Each of the schedules was preceded by the following statement:

This questionnaire is designed to explore the nature of the relationship between immigrants of origins in India and social service providers in Vancouver. It is hoped that the results will benefit all persons interested in the adjustment of newcomers to Canada.

I would like to talk with you for approximately one hour about the topics listed below. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to. I will understand that you are willing to have the answers you do complete used in my study.

At no time will your name or any other identifying particular about you be used in reporting results. You are guaranteed strict confidentiality concerning everything you tell me.

As indicated in Chapter One (p. 24), I administered the schedules point-by-point to social service agents. With Indo-Canadian clients, however, I covered the questions as the opportunity to do so arose in the course of conversation.

Agent Interview

## A. Categories of Clients

1. About how many clients are you dealing with at present?
2. Approximately how many of these are:
  - a. mainstream Canadian?
  - b. British, Australian?
  - c. East Indian?
  - d. Chinese?
  - e. other ethnic group ? (please specify)
3. About how many of your East Indian clients are:
  - a. immigrants in Canada less than three years?
  - b. immigrants in Canada more than three years?
  - c. native born Canadians?

## B. Nature of Contact

1. How do the majority of your clients get referred to you?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
2. What problems do you encounter most frequently?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
3. Describe briefly the clients' manner of presenting problems.
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
4. What solutions do you commonly propose?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic

5. Briefly describe the clients' response to proposed solutions.
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
6. On average, how much time do you spend with a client?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic

C. Nature of "Giving"

1. Aside from your time, what do clients expect of you?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
2. How do you respond to these expectations of clients?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
3. When have you tried to persuade a client to accept a service?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
4. How do clients generally react to such efforts at persuasion?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic

D. Nature of "Receiving"

1. How do clients acknowledge the services provided?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic

2. When are offers of hospitality, gifts, or favours made?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
3. How do you openly respond to such offers from clients?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic
4. How do you feel privately about such offers?
  - a. mainstream
  - b. East Indian
  - c. other ethnic

E. What differences do you note in East Indian client behaviour or attitudes according to :

1. Sex?
2. Religion?
  - a. Sikh
  - b. Hindu
  - c. other
3. Area of emigration?
  - a. Punjab
  - b. Fiji
  - c. other
4. Length of stay in Canada?
  - a. less than three years
  - b. more that three years
  - c. born in Canada

F. Orientation to Ethnic Clients

1. Describe the work experience you have had with persons of different ethnic backgrounds.
2. What travel experience have you had in other countries?

3. Which of your academic courses or independent readings have dealt with other cultures?
4. When you need assistance handling a case of an East Indian client, what people or other resources do you turn to?

### Client Interview

#### A. Background Information

1. From which country did you emigrate?
2. How many years were you in that country?
3. How old are you now?
4. What is your native place in India?
5. What is your religion?
6. How much education have you had?
7. What work did you do before coming to Canada?
8. When did you arrive in Canada? In Vancouver?
9. Which relatives were here when you arrived?
10. What relatives do you have in B.C. now?

#### B. Accommodation

1. Where did you stay when you first arrived?
2. How did you get a place to live after that?
3. Did you know of an agency that could help you?

#### C. Employment

1. How did you get your first job?
2. How did you find your next job?
3. Did you know of an agency that could help you?

4. Have you applied for U.I.C. between jobs?

5. Do you receive Old Age Security Pension?

#### D. Finances

1. Have you ever borrowed money from:

- a. a relative or friend?
- b. a bank or trust company?
- c. other sources?

2. Have you ever received social assistance?

#### E. Health

1. What has been the most serious health problem in your family since you arrived in Vancouver?

2. How did you try to solve this problem?

3. Do you know of any services or programmes at the Health Unit?

4. Have you had any visits from public health workers?

#### F. Family

1. What has been the most serious family problem you have had since arriving in Vancouver?

2. How have you tried to solve this problem?

3. Do you know of any agency that can help with family difficulties?

#### G. Children

1. What is the most serious problem your child has had in school?

2. How have you tried to solve this problem?

3. What contact have you had with home-school workers?

4. How do you spend your Family Allowance (baby bonus) cheques?

5. Has your child received a free dental examination?



H. What contact have you had with the following:

1. English classes?
2. Citizenship classes?
3. The public library?
4. A Neighborhood House?
5. Immigrant services?
6. Other services?

I. What contact have you had with the following:

1. A temple?
2. Punjabi/Fijian/Gujarati association?
3. All Indian or Indian-Canadian association?

J. Reciprocity

1. What social services are available in your country of emigration?
2. What social services did you use there?
3. How do relatives/friends help each other in that country?
4. How do relatives/friends help each other after they come here?
5. Describe the Canadian way of lena-dena [giving and receiving] if there is one.