THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN BAHRAIN:
LABOR MIGRATION IN A PLURAL SOCIETY

A thesis presented

by

Robert Lee Franklin

to

The Committee of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

September, 1985

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ABSTRACT

Indian migration to Bahrain has increased geometrically since the mid-1970's, due to the recruitment of Indians for employment in the rapidly expanding construction and service sectors of the economy. Rapid growth policies were, in part, distributive responses to political demands stemming from the illegitimacy of the local government and religious and ethnic tensions in the society. These same demands entail the social control of the large foreign population that was the direct result of rapid growth. Indians are controlled and incorporated into Bahraini society through administrative regulation and personal sponsorship, which are extensions of the system of tribal authority. These institutional constraints, in turn, affect cultural expression and group formation among Indians.

The thesis elaborates these arguments and examines the history and structure of the Indian community. Social organization reflects the complex patterns of cultural pluralism present in the population. However, only some cultural elements and ascriptive distinctions are expressed. This is attributed in part to the backgrounds of the migrants. Contextual restraints also channel the bases, forms, and functions of organization. Of the many caste and sect categories present in the population, only those with influence in the local society are organized. While Muslim and Hindu Indians are rarely organized, politically innocuous Christians organize freely. The national category is weakly organized. The principal bases of organization are language and region of origin, and the main functions are recrea-

tion and cultural expression--all politically neutral and socially acceptable. Voluntary associations and other institutions do not effectively articulate or represent the political and economic interests of Indians. Exploitation is common, and, in general, the position of Indians has declined as their numbers have increased.

The thesis discusses the relative position of other foreign groups, the nature of Bahraini attitudes toward foreigners, and the general effects of political, economic, social and cultural change on processes of pluralism in the society.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The truth of the matter, I suppose, is that I was really not very well-prepared for fieldwork in Bahrain. In fact, my research there was an accident, or, to be more precise, an intentional response to unforeseen circumstances. I had originally intended to conduct research in Iran. This became impossible because of the revolution, and I was allowed to transfer the project to Bahrain, to study the Persian community there. So, with little preparation, made less useful by the unreliability of much of the literature, I set off for the Gulf. A few months into the research, this project, too, was overtaken by political difficulties. Due to ethnic and religious tensions--Bahrain is a predominantly Arab country beset with a troublesome Sunni-Shi'a split in the population--the Persian community was in a rather delicate position. Moreover, the ambiguous civil status of many Bahrainis of Iranian descent was a sensitive matter for the government. Eventually, I was able to negotiate a change of topic acceptable to the Bahraini authorities, a study of the foreign communities in Bahrain, and of the Indian community in particular. I thus came to undertake a project for which I had no theoretical or ethnographic preparation.

These simple facts indicate the presence of serious political problems in Bahraini society. These issues will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three. At present, I wish to link these events to the relationship in social anthropology between

theory and substantive research. Force of circumstance led me to put the cart of research before the horse of theory, so to speak. Insofar as intensive preparation can direct, restrict and, thus, betray one's perceptions through prejudicial images, categories and analytical paradigms, the lack of it might be seen as an advantage, and perhaps it was. My analysis necessarily remained at a low level of theoretical formulation—essentially, who did what to whom and why. I believe this allowed me to more readily perceive many nuances and contradictions in the situation. On the other hand, the circumstances of research led to certain difficulties in casting my material in a theoretical mould for presentation to the scholarly community at-large.

The first of these was the necessity of doing most of the historical, comparative and theoretical "preparation" after the fact. This provided many insights into the material I had collected; it was also time-consuming and alerted me to numerous issues I might have investigated more thoroughly. The greatest difficulty, though, was in choosing a theoretical problematic. I was in the position of shopping around for a perspective to attach to the reasonably coherent explanation that had already been achieved. The research was directly relevant to several timely problems, such as ethnicity, economic development and labor migration. Though these perspectives are useful, they do not offer the scope required to develop a comprehensive understanding of the field situation. Therefore, I have dusted off a theoretical problem of broader scope that has been little used in social anthropology in recent years, that of pluralism,

or "the plural society."

After penetrating the surface of Bahraini society--that is, after getting to the point where I could tell the people apart--the overwhelming quality of the society was its cultural diversity. I had been led to expect some differentiation within the local society itself, but was quite unprepared for that in the resident foreign population, which consists largely of migrant workers and their dependents. Among Bahrainis, distinctions are made on the basis of ethnic or national origin, religious sect, tribal affiliation or lack of it, lineage and family. In addition, differences of sex, class, occupation, and prestige are important and often interlinked with other distinctions in the definition of categories and statuses, which have both presumed heritages and continuing social implications.

Among Indians in Bahrain, an even greater number of factors are used as bases of identity, social differentiation, and formal organization: Indian nationality itself; city, town, locality or village of origin; region and language; religion, sect and sub-sect; varna, caste and sub-caste; lineage and family; sex; class, occupation and education; and what may be characterized as "conservative," or "traditional," and "modern" orientations in the combination of cultural heritages to formulate individual identity and persona. In addition, there are internally differentiated Pakistani, Sri Lankan and British communities, sizable but less differentiated communities of Americans, Thais, Koreans and Filipinos, and numerous small groups of other European, Asian and non-Bahraini Arab categories.

Some of the bases of differentiation in the Indian population and in the society as a whole are ascriptive and some are achieved or functional. Sometimes, distinctions are clearly recognized and ideologically formulated, sometimes they are hardly recognized at all. The various categories and distinctions may coincide in numerous ways. They sometimes entail not only "overlapping" ascriptions, but parallel differences of rights, obligations, wealth, power and prestige. These coalescences of statuses and positions may be partial or situational, or they may be so complete as to be regarded as intrinsic or essential. Differences of status may be legitimized in legal codes, norms and customs, or in unadorned practice; they may be regarded as illegitimate to some degree by any or even all parties involved; they may be illegal, in a technical sense. Finally, these distinctions may or may not entail boundaries--that is, separation and social avoidance--or the formation of organized groups. The groups that do exist exhibit a number of inclusive and exclusive, limited and extensive, formal and informal associative forms. In the Indian population, in particular, different dimensions of identity and cultural difference received organized expression at the same time, though to different degrees and for different purposes.

In confronting such a situation, a set of analytical issues presented themselves, first as methodological problems and, much later, as theoretical ones. What was the origin of all these categories and distinctions, not in the ultimate sense, of course, but in an immediate sense? Why are they salient in

Bahrain, and how does one explain their persistence and articulation? How and why are so many kinds of differences significant in the same society? Why are some of them more clearly or elaborately articulated than others? How does one explain boundaries between differentiated elements of the society where they exist? How does one explain cultural continuities and discontinuities across the range of distinctions, and the various forms and levels of institutions and social organizations, or lack thereof, among and across the various groups? How is the society integrated, how does it cohere or hold together to the extent that it does? Finally, how are these factors shaped or affected by economic development, local and regional politics, and other processes that extend beyond the horizons of the various groups involved?

These problems, and the situation which provoked them, are precisely the sorts of phenomena that the theory of plural societies aims to deal with. I have sought, then, to translate the perspective I gained in the field into the framework and language of plural theory. In doing so, I have encountered difficulties. Having confronted these issues in all their complexity, I find that plural theory is inadequte to systematically order the data. This is a common perception, no doubt; the generalities of theory never subsume the intricacy of individual cases. However, I believe that the difficulties in plural theory are general, rather than particular. Therefore, in the interest of contributing to the development of plural theory, and, in order to allow the reader to appreciate the discussion of

the case at hand, I will develop a perspective for the study of plural societies in this chapter. Very briefly, while I agree with others that the theory must be a contextual one, I argue that it must be a dialectical theory, rather than a deterministic one. In addition, rather than a structural theory concerned only with boundaries, it must be a processual theory concerned with group formation.

J.S. FURNIVALL: COLONIALISM AND THE PLURAL SOCIETY

Though there were antecedents, the classic formulation of the model of the plural society was presented by J.S. Furnivall, an economist with administrative experience in British Burma (1939, 1942, 1945, 1948). Furnivall's analysis was oriented toward, but not restricted to, the European colonial societies of the tropics, especially Burma and Indonesia. In his view, these societies were composed of highly distinctive categories or populations, conceived by Furnivall, and ostensibly by the people themselves, in racial or ethnic terms, as in this often-quoted passage:

> In Burma , as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples--Europeans, Chinese, Indian and native. It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the marketplace, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side but separately within the political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division along racial lines. (1948:304).

Furnivall goes on to distinguish homogeneous societies from plural ones, noting that some of the former may have plural

characteristics, as in the French sections of parts of Canada (Ibid.,310).

The emergence of a plural society involves both the political and economic aspects of colonial expansion. It presumes first of all the destruction of pre-existing political institutions. The formation of the colonial polity creates a synthetic constellation of fragments of what were or might be separate societies. Integration into the colonial economy destroys even the small-scale structures of traditional society, breaking up villages into aggregates of atomized individuals, who thus repesent "a crowd and not a community" (1948:307). Economically, this may produce a cultural division of labor in which each group has its own specialization. Colonialism destroys, fragments, and separates without building common institutions; each population finds or is allotted a status, and, given separation and continuing cultural differences, they lack a common "social will." In most instances, the society is held together by force, or the threat of it, in the authority of the colonial administration. Differentiation in Furnivall's plural society is primarily ascriptive, though it may acquire a functional basis as a result of the institutionalization of ascriptive distinctions. Pluralism is highly salient in the society, and is neither undercut by the multiple affiliations of modern society nor balanced by consensus. Such stability as exists is based on domination and control by the colonial government, outside of which group organization appears to be limited. [1]

In the 1950's, social anthropologists began to look beyond functional analysis and simple homogeneous societies. As they examined conflict and intergroup relations in more complex social systems, they drew inspiration from work in other fields, including that of Furnivall. Terms for the colonial or newly-independent societies they were studying proliferated (see Smith, 1969c:416-7; Van den Berghe, 1973:962-3). The one which eventually received general acceptance, "made it socially," was the term used by Furnivall himself, "plural society." The principal work on the theory of plural society in social anthropology has been that of M.G. Smith, to which I now turn.

M.G. SMITH: THE PLURAL SOCIETY IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Smith actually formulated two distinct versions of the theory. The first was outlined in 1960 and developed in subsequent publications (1965a, 1965b, and, with substantial revision, 1969a and 1969b). The second was stated in 1969 (1969c) and reiterated with elaboration as late as 1984.

In the earlier formulation, Smith accepts Furnivall's characterization of plural societies with only minor criticism: he notes that the plural society is not limited to tropical climates and that it may originate through political conquest and migration as well as European colonial expansion. He opposes plural societies to homogeneous societies, on the one hand, and to modern societies, on the other. The latter may contain cultural differences, in which case they are "pluralistic," or "heterogeneous." However, they are understood to be integrated by

consensus and functional interdependence, which outweigh these differences. Hybrid forms are possible: the United States, for example, is pluralistic with plural features. True plural societies, on the other hand, are understood as radically divided, evincing neither consensus nor integration.

Smith is more concerned to develop the sociological basis of a plural social order. The elements upon which he bases his social types--homogeneous, pluralistic (or heterogeneous), and plural--are institutions. In the 1960 essay he uses a Malinowskian definition--institutions are composed of social relationships, ideas or values, and attitudes relevant to action (1960:63)--coupled with a problematical distinction between "compulsory" or "basic" institutions and "alternative" institutions or "specialties," borrowed from Nadel (Ibid.,62). This distinction is never made clear, and is in fact variable--what is compulsory in one case may not be in another. This limits the utility of the distinction itself.[2] The linkage of relationships and values in institutions, especially compulsory ones, is critical. The practice of different institutions entails social separation or disjunction, such that the people involved have no common relationships. In addition, "social integration develops institutionally" (Ibid.,72), i.e., from the valuational dimension of institutions; uniformity of institutions produces "institutional motivations" toward conformity (Ibid.,70). Finally, illustrating the continuity of one of the more pernicious assumptions of functionalism, Smith maintains that "any given institutional system tends toward an internal

integration and thus some closure" (Ibid.,64).

Smith's rigid typology of societies, with ostensibly necessary structural implications, follows from these principles. A society has either one or more sets of compulsory institutions. If it has only one, it will be integrated, despite variation in alternative institutions, and the society will be either homogeneous or pluralistic. If there are more than one set of compulsory institutions, "since any institutional system tends toward internal integration or consistency, each of these differentiated groups will tend to form a closed socio-cultural unit" (1960:71-2), and the society will lack integration and consensus. Given the absence of "institutional motivations toward conformity," in order to maintain political unity--the definitional boundary of Smith's social systems--one of the groups must be dominant, and, therefore, rank or status differentiation is a necessary condition in the plural society. If the dominant group is a minority, given its more precarious position and the lack of consensus, government will necessarily be by "regulation," that is, by authoritarian domination (Ibid., 70): the classic plural society. In all cases, similarities or differences of institutions are themselves seen as determining patterns of social segmentation or integration, consensus, and political conditions. It is, then, an "internal" explanation of pluralism, in which "institutional differences" are not subject to explanation, but are accepted as given.

The theory was widely discussed, frequently employed, and almost as frequently criticized (L. Kuper, 1969; Hoetink, 1967;

Benedict, 1970; R.T. Smith, 1970; Van den Berghe, 1973; and Leon and Leons, 1977). The criticisms may be summarized in two counter-arguments, both eventually accepted by Smith: (1) the behavioral and valuational dimensions of institutions are not necessarily linked, and cultural differences do not necessarily correspond to or enjoin social disjunctions, and vice versa; and (2) institutional differences are not self-generating or self-perpetuating, but must be subject to explanation and may be determined by other structures, factors and processes.

The second point was, in fact, the basis of Smith's reformulation of the theory. In the second version, beginning with his first article in Pluralism in Africa (1969a), the distinction between compulsory and alternative institutions as measures of pluralism is replaced by a--similarly problematical--distinction between the jural, or public, domain and the private domain, borrowed from Fortes. Thus, it is distinctions in the "common public domain" which make pluralism socially significant, rather than differences of "compulsory institutions." In this work, Smith also develops the notion of "corporations," i.e., bounded and closed social categories, and the distinction between social "groups" and "categories," that is, corporations or other categorically defined populations which are or are not, respectively, characterized by some variable degree of extensive formal organization.

Though not stated explicitly, it is evident that Smith is either not concerned with group formation as a general social phenomenon, or is unprepared to allow it. In later works, he

appears to assume that the formation of corporations entails the formation of organized groups. However, at this point, he follows Furnivall in drawing the implications of the plural society: the population as a whole tends to become or remain fragmented, and his use of the terms "units," "collectivities," "sections," etc., is not meant to imply groups of any particular sort, but merely bounded social categories. It is only the dominant category which forms an effective corporate group. It is argued that corporate groups will enforce from within specific standards of behavior. This reproduces the significant cultural or institutional differences that divide the society. Why corporate groups, or at least these corporate groups, do this is directly related to their structural position in the "common public domain": that is, it is a necessary means of preserving social dominance.

In discussing these issues, Smith considerably elaborates the model of the plural society. Since his description is quite relevant to the case at hand, I will summarize it before moving on to theoretical development in later works. Differentiation in the common public domain entails institutional cleavages, asymmetrical relations (i.e., domination), and, when the ruling or dominant category is a minority, "regulation." In such a case, the rulers "typically" form exclusive corporate groups to control political institutions. The rest of the population is denied civic rights, and extensive organizations--especially political ones that might transform acephalous categories into politically powerful corporate groups--are discouraged or suppressed (1969a: 32-3). Though representative institutions may exist, legally or

formally, government is "a characteristically oligarchic regime," using inequality to preserve minority domination (Ibid.,53-4). The ruling group tends to monopolize political office, recruitment for which is by descent or patronage, and authority is usually centralized in a supreme office held by a member of the dominant category.

Intermarriage and other forms of association with the elite are proscribed; it is thus a self-perpetuating, closed group. Its coherence is maintained through collective action that both preserves the corporate exclusiveness of the category and minimizes dissent within it. The differences and inequalities are extended to all spheres of social action, which restricts mobility, acculturation and assimilation, and encourages status and role definition to remain ascriptive and corporate rather than individual, functional, or achieved (1969a:53-4,58). Notwithstanding this closure, the ruling section may seek to enhance stability through "symbiotic relations," such as clientage, or through an "inclusive cult" (Ibid.,54-6). Minority rule thus entails strategic political problems which, in turn, have a profound effect on patterns of social relations. As we shall see, the ruling family in Bahrain is very nearly an ideal-typical corporate group in these terms.

In Smith's later work (1969c, 1984), the notion of incorporation in the common public domain is elaborated. In criticizing early theories of ethnicity (eg., Geertz, 1963), Smith could very well have been criticizing his own early work. He notes that such phenomena should not be seen as "primordial,"

or given, nor can they be seen as themselves determining more general patterns of social relations. "Rather, as plural units are always established and articulated by particular modes of incorporation, we must look to these modes, and to the contexts and processes through which they have been instituted, maintained or modified, for proper understanding of the units and conditions through which they are manifested, and for their nature" (1984: 160, emphasis added).

If the key to Smith's early theory is the assumed holism of institutional structures and linkages between their social and cultural aspects, the key to his later theory is an assumed link between "modes of incorporation" and patterns of segmentation and institutionalization. Though it is never clearly defined, a "mode of incorporation" may perhaps be described as a prescriptive—but not necessarily jural or legal--relationship of a given category of the population to a society's "common public domain." The latter term appears to refer exclusively to political discourse and processes, unlike the earlier "compulsory institutions." Thus,

> It is evident, therefore, that the decisive conditions of pluralism are political and relate directly to the conditions of collective incorporation in the public domain; and also that these conditions consist of those de facto and de jure patterns that regulate relationships of collectivities with one another and so determine their differential or equivalent access to the central organs that coordinate and administer the common society and allocate opportunities, constraints, and disabilities among its elements or sections. (1984: 174)

Political structure is "decisive for pluralism and for its linked or alternative social formations" and "this political structure consists of relations of collective dominance, complementarity,

subordination, or incorporation as equals in a common society. Such relations, once instituted, signally and continuously affect the cultures and social accommodations of all groups or categories" (Ibid.).

The differentiation of types of relationship to what are assumed to be the principal institutions in the society leads Smith to distinguish three "modes of incorporation." Singly or in combination, these are associated with three forms of pluralism and five types of society. The "universal" mode of incorporation includes all members of the society without reference to ascriptive categories, on formally equal terms. It is "inherently assimilative" (1969c:435) and egalitarian (Ibid.,444). Universal incorporation is compatible with either categorical homogeneity or "cultural pluralism," which is defined as differences of cultural or institutional practice that do not extend to the common public domain or entail "collective segregation," i.e., corporate boundaries. It is similar to the "pluralistic" or "heterogeneous" qualities in the earlier formulation. Universal incorporation is found in homogeneous societies, such as Sweden, and heterogeneous societies, such as Belgium.

The other modes of incorporation include the members of society not as individuals, but as members of particular corporate units; they are distinguished in the common public domain as belonging to segregated, mutually exclusive and, usually, institutionally diverse categories (1969c:434). In contrast to earlier formulations, such units may be incorporated symmetrically or asymmetrically. In the former case, "segmental

incorporation," the society is called a "consociation." Switzerland, which incorporates separate but equal cantons, is a typical consociation. Assymetrical incorporation of corporate units is referred to as "differential incorporation," and is found in "hierarchical" societies such as South Africa, and in "complex" societies, hybrids in which both universal and differential modes are evident, as in the United States. Differential incorporation entails hierarchy and domination. Smith still argues that these implications are most extreme when the ruling section is a minority. He thus assimilates the old ideal type, plural society, to the new categories, differential incorporation and hierarchical society.

In both segmental and differential incorporation, the population is simultaneously divided into and prescriptively incorporated as separate categories in the common public domain (1984:151). In 1969, Smith still notes that cultural or institutional differences "facilitate and may enjoin" corporate boundaries (1969c:434), or that a categorical mode of incorporation "typically presumes antecedent institutional differences" (Ibid.,436). In 1984, he merely notes that various criteria of differentiation are "culturally selected, defined, and valued" (1984:160). In both formulations the emphasis is not on the origin of differences, but on the causal or reproductive significance that selected or antecedent distinctions have when established and given prescriptive status in the public, or political, domain. These modes of incorporation separate the population into "exclusive contexts" that preserve or promote

differences of cultural or institutional practice (Ibid.,152). Smith refers to this condition as "social pluralism."

In a consociation, social pluralism may eventually give way to assimilation--if the equal status of social categories is effectively maintained--or to instability--if collective inequalities emerge (1969c:434,441-3). The cultural and institutional implications of differential incorporation are not equivocal. By excluding subordinate categories from the public domain, differential incorporation institutes unequal participation and prescribes differences of status, which, in turn, strengthen corporate boundaries, preclude mobility, and establish a situation in which different categories are forced to separately adapt to distinct positions in society (Ibid., 440,444,446). In other words, it creates enduring niches, such that "even where the differentially incorporated sections initially lacked them, they invariably develop differing institutional practices and organizations in their several collective domains, and in other sectors also" (Ibid.,436, emphasis added). Smith argues that this level of differentiation is so intense and pervasive as to represent a separate variety, "structural pluralism."

Smith thus arrives at the same social type as in the 1960 essay, i.e., sharply distinguished social categories with integrated but incompatible cultural and institutional systems, by different means. Cultural or institutional differences do not simply entail boundaries and reproduce themselves. Rather, modes of incorporation prescribe boundaries, which, in turn, encourage

the social separation and institutional differentiation which constitutes pluralism and helps reproduce it.

Smith's occasional references to "contexts and processes" (eg., 1984:160, quoted above), to varying conditions, and to historical development are undercut by his adherence to typology and his emphasis on the determinative significance of political structures, the "common public domain," and of modes of incorporation in particular.[3] Though Smith appears to seek a broader, more synthetic explanation of pluralism, his insistence on the overwhelming importance of a limited set of phenomena forestalls any such attempt. It is assumed that modes of incorporation are prescriptive, or hegemonic, and thus overcome the effects of history--that is, the significance of different beginnings in determining structural outcomes--and the effects of process--that is, the social practice in which contrary interests are negotiated. These assumptions make the theory virtually inapplicable because it fits so few cases. While it seems appropriate to attempt a systematic explanation of pluralism, it would seem useful to do so without reference to a simple typology based on a limited set of structural characteristics and without assuming beforehand the unambiguous enforcement of these structures.

While political relations and modes of incorporation are undoubtedly important—certainly in the case of Bahrain--Smith's discussion of them is underdeveloped, as Katznelson noted long ago (1972). To be fair, the 1984 paper does represent some elaboration. Smith notes that if a mode of incorporation is

legally universal or segmental, but is in fact differential, this introduces tension into the situation, leading to a reinforcement of plural distinctions to protect the status quo. He also notes that plural situations are aggravated when societies undergo rapid change, which intensifies concern about potential changes in status (1984:156). Yet, like modes of incorporation themselves, these contextual features of plural situations are discussed in structural, nomothetic terms, without reference to the processes that make them important. Smith also grants that the number, distribution, size and strength of segments effect the significance and intensity of pluralism, though modes of incorporation are, at least partly, ultimately determinative of these characteristics (Ibid.,155,157). He also emphasizes the role of the nature and structure of the dominant section in selecting and weighting criteria of differentiation in hierarchically plural societies (Ibid.,153). These factors all represent structural or contextual features that are, potentially, somewhat independent of modes of incorporation, but they are not systematically developed.

The emphasis on political relations presumes that political institutions are or can be meaningfully differentiated from others, and that these are the only or primary relations which involve both categorical differentiation and resource access and allocation. It seems appropriate to seek a broader theory of incorporation and the institutionalization of differences, in order to identify dimensions of context and structure which may serve to explain and describe pluralism with more attention to

variation and complexity.

Though his theory is explicitly political, Smith fails to elaborate--and, in fact, hardly refers to--legitimation and the ideological dimensions of the political order. Reference to a political or more general theory of legitimation would allow a deeper understanding of de jure/de facto disjunctions, of the implications of change, of the entailments of modes of incorporation as structural relationships, of the subtleties of social integration, and of the ideological significance of categorical ascription itself. However, an understanding of legitimation entails, or may entail, ambiguous prescriptions, competing claims, negotiation, and more complex notions and bases of power and authority than Smith allows. The assumption that modes of incorporation are prescriptive, that, in effect, there is effective rule by force if not by normative consensus, precludes consideration of process. It would appear, then, that there is considerable room for development of the cultural and ideological aspects of pluralism and for the elaboration of a theory which incorporates these aspects into explanation.

An equally important dimension of social relations is that of group formation, which Smith almost entirely ignores. He is concerned primarily with boundaries, and the formation of "segments." His few references to the organization of those segments are equivocal: on the one hand, he argues that only the dominant section in a hierarchically plural society is extensively organized in group form (1969a), while, on the other, he asserts that differentially incorporated segments develop

different institutions and organizations as a result of their social separation (1969c:436, quoted above) and that "locally specific contexts and conditions" regulate the organization of activities within and across boundaries while the "system of incorporation" "measures" the significance of categories (Ibid.,432). It is evident that the political system plays a role in group organization, but here, as elsewhere, what is meant by "locally specific contexts and conditions" is unclear. Smith emphasizes segmentation and neglects organization because he assumes that the latter is a simple function of the former.

As the brief description of the situation in Bahrain presented earlier should indicate, a great range of categories may be available to form a great range of organizations and institutions in response to a considerable range of incentives and constraints from numerous sources, in a general system of ambiguous communication, negotiated prescriptions and complex bases of legitimacy and authority. To deal with these possibilities, and with the other problems noted above, it is, I argue, necessary to examine society from the perspective of "action," the processes of negotiation among social actors, rather than simply from that of social "structure," prescriptively instituted relations.

Finally, it must be noted that the replacement of one given, "institutional differences," with another, "modes of incorporation," does not eliminate a thorny issue: what is the nature and origin of this given? Why should groups be differentiated in the "common public domain" or in social

relations generally? Smith's delegation of the selection and weighting of the criteria of plural orders to elites is useful, but inadequate. A general re-working of the bases of plural theory is necessary in order to account for the status of modes of incorporation--as analytical concepts, subjective ideas or values, relations and institutions--to utilize notions of legitimation and negotiation, and to account for process and group formation.[4]

The difficulty with Smith's theory is perhaps not his attention to structure, but his assumptions about it, which preclude a processual understanding of it. The latter in turn entails a larger explanatory role for historical factors: to understand trajectories and endings, it is necessary to take into account different beginnings, as well as some of the structural configurations that appear along the way with, perhaps, different impacts in different cases. Particular institutional structures, such as modes of incorporation, may be associated with various forms of political culture. An understanding of the ultimate effects of structural or contextual factors requires knowledge of prevailing attitudes, beliefs and senses of identity. The perceptions and impacts of structure and context may be ambiguous and variable, with competing claims and negotiated resolutions. Coping analytically with this possibility requires some understanding of the legitimation of social relations. The building--creation, transformation, or mere reproduction--of institutions and structures is, thus, not a straightforward procedure. Rather, it entails a dialectical analysis of the

interrelationships of actors in concrete situations, and of the forces--material and ideological--they can bring to bear.

A major contribution to this sort of plural theory has been made by Crawford Young.

CRAWFORD YOUNG: THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL PLURALISM

While Young (1976) develops a contextual theory of pluralism, he does not limit himself to structural or institutional aspects, but discusses psychological and symbolic processes as well, and the linkages between the two sorts of phenomena. He thus creates the possibility of a dialectical understanding of pluralism. Insofar as other theorists do not attend to the social psychology of plural relations, it may be useful to summarize some of his points here.

A central concept is that of "identity" as the link between individual and collectivity and between symbols and concrete relationships. Identities are "sustained by" shared symbolic systems, which provide a "paradigm of social reality" (1976:161). They are definitions of self and others which also imply a system of relationships between self and others. Insofar as they are linked to roles and are defined and selected with reference to others in social relations, they may be "variable, overlapping, and situational" (Ibid.,65). As behavioral determinants, these identities, symbols and associated paradigms depend on "social cues" for their "evocation." Young notes that

> Such cues are numerous in culturally plural environments; they are encountered in everyday life through...transactions and interactions involving others whose cultural distinctness is mutually perceived. Probably more often, the cues are supplied by

> messages...which have already processed reality through a cultural symbol system and transmit information in a communal structure....(Ibid.,143)

The message of pluralism may thus permeate the consciousness of social actors and the minutiae of social interaction; it is not only articulated by modes of incorporation.

Such images of the social arena are linked to self-definition not only in a symbolic sense, but in a psychological sense as well, that is, in terms of security, anxiety, and the resolution of contingently structured or more general existential problems. Categorical reflections and implications of social cues will be perceived more attentively during periods of threat, insecurity and conflict affecting the status or well-being of a particular group (1976:161). This can lead to clearer perception and maintenance of boundaries, heightened group solidarity, and, in some cases, to "a spiral of hostility-building and fear-evoking responses" (Ibid.,142), involving stereotyping and increasingly generalized perceptions of and behavior toward social others (Ibid.,161-2). Among the situations that powerfully affect identity and engender anxieties of this sort are those of "modernization" and those in which "basic power relationships within a polity are to be fundamentally altered in unpredictable ways" (Ibid.). To a certain extent, this represents an elaboration, from the actor's point-of-view, of arguments Smith makes in 1984. However, Young does not see the political instability in question as simply a matter of de facto/de jure disjunctions or entailments of modes of incorporation.

Structural configurations in any simple sense do not have

such implications. Moreover, in order to understand the impact of modernization and institutionalized structures, it is necessary to take varying base points into consideration. Young notes that identities in pre-modern situations have been "localized and of small scale," for the most part. These identities and the "cultural solidarity units" built around them may be based upon various sorts of categories, or perceived "commonalities," such as ethnicity, language, race, religion, caste, and region (1976:65). These are not merely or necessarily "institutional differences" or "objective," analytically defined cultural differences, but cultural definitions of difference. Such perceived commonalities are "initial cultural resources," which limit the redefinition of individual identity (Ibid.,65). They are "given," but not in any essential sense. Rather, these identities and patterns are "given" only with respect to a particular moment in history, in this case, the moment of modernization. As such, they represent the "underlying cultural plurality" of a society, and affect the further development of pluralism within it (Ibid.,95).

Young develops a rough classification of configurations, presented here as a contrast to Smith and because of relevance to the case of Bahrain: homogeneous societies; societies with single groups having "sufficient numerical preponderance" to establish social dominance; societies with a core culture and central institutions, but with different groups in the geographical periphery; societies with a dual or bi-polar social and cultural pattern; societies with multiple culturally-defined groups, but

with no dominant ones; and societies with a multiplicity of cultures and with multiple bases of differentiation operating simultaneously (1976:95-7,506). Unfortunately, Young classifies Bahrain as a homogeneous society (Ibid.,96), when, in fact, it fits in the last category.

Young puts these patterns of pluralism into a political context, with particular attention to the role of the state. Significantly, patterns of cultural pluralism are analytically distinguished from and not meant to imply political relationships among the groups. What he calls "cultural bases of the state" involve historical origins and cultural definitions of the nature of the state and its relationship to the varying groups under its sovereignty. He again presents a typology, in which several distinctions are made: whether the state is of traditional or arbitrary origin; the manner and extent to which it was or was not affected by colonialism; whether or not the state encompasses a homeland or is a product of some form of cultural self-determination; and, whether immigrants or indigenes have acquired what form and extent of domination and power (1976:92-5,506).

By analytically separating the underlying "patterns of cultural pluralism" from the set of "cultural bases of the state," Young avoids the presumed entailments of Smith's political modes of incorporation. Young's emphasis on politics is by vocation and choice, not by logical necessity. He acknowledges that both cultural pluralism and class or stratification influence politics and vice versa, and it may be understood that similar relationships may exist between class and patterns of

cultural pluralism. Young's scheme, then, is generally Weberian, positing economy, polity and society--which he operationalizes here as social stratification, bases of the state and patterns of cultural pluralism--as interdependent systems and processes, each with its own analytically distinguishable ideas, ideologies, interests, institutions and relations. This allows for more complex causal models than Smith's theory.

Young argues that "in the interaction between the cultural basis of the state and the pattern of cultural pluralism in the society may be discerned the shape and nature of communal conflict" (1976:97). This "interaction" is dynamic, rather than prescriptive, as in Smith. Together, the patterns of cultural pluralism and the cultural basis of the state—and, I would add, associated patterns of economic differentiation and stratification—determine the existence and rigidity of status distinctions in the society and, as sets of conditions, effect the range of options open to individuals and groups should their perceptions of status relations and inequalities change (Ibid.,137). The quality determined by this interaction, which we may designate as an additional parameter, is the existence and rigidity of a cultural hierarchy in the society, that is, the relative consensus about the nature of status relationships and the regularity of practice. Not only is this continuously variable, rather than simply present-or-absent (differential or segmental, in Smith's terms), but it must be seen as negotiated in practice and intrinsically capable of differential interpretation. That is, again in Weberian terms, the definition of the social order

may involve several legitimations, all of which are subject to change and fluctuate in accordance with power alignments.

Given the framework of identity, patterns of cultural pluralism, state organization and status relations, the central purpose of Young's study is to demonstrate the impact on plural societies of one of the most potent sources of fluctuation in power alignments: modernization and the nation-state system. In doing so, he develops the dynamic elements of the theory. I will only briefly summarize his propositions.

In the global processes of Western cultural, economic and political expansion, "modern" culture and relations have penetrated nearly all existing social formations. These processes include urbanization, economic development, education, improved communication, etc. (1976:26-8). Though, for analytical purposes, these processes of change may be distinguished from state formation, they usually involve social integration and contribute to the importance of society-wide political institutions (Ibid.). Similarly, political processes have numerous linkages with other dimensions of development. (The intimate association of "political" and "economic" factors will be of considerable importance in the analysis of Bahrain.)

As a result of the linkage between political and other social processes, group action may involve the politicization of categorical identities and their mobilization for political competition. Various categories may differ in the intensity of these identities and in the degree to which they develop group ideologies or become politicized. This depends upon the density

of communication within a category and on the "cultural entrepreneurs" and "political brokers" that are produced, if any (1976:45). Entrepreneurs elaborate the symbolic basis of group identity, while brokers link ideology and the groups thus formed to conflict and competition in the society as a whole (Ibid.,65). Of course, there is no implication that entrepreneurship, brokerage, competition and conflict are limited to situations of modernization. Moreover, by calling attention to the means and processes through which structures of pluralism are created and transformed in any case, Young emphasizes historical flux and social process, rather than given, self-reproductive, or prescriptively instituted structures.

The effect of the modern state on pre-existing status relations and on processes of competition and modernization is enormous. At times Young waxes almost Smithian: the state is "the authoritative arena which defines the framework for cultural pluralism" (1976:67). However, the state is salient not because the mode of political incorporation is everywhere determinative, but because these particular states are capable of exercising an increasingly pervasive "transcendent despotism over reality" (Ibid.,66). Young does not presume that political institutions are so important in all plural situations; he is merely concerned to discuss cases in which they are. The state, as understood here, is not the laissez faire arbiter of private interests, but the welfare state, sometimes, legitimately or not, defined as being co-extensive with a particular "nation." Its role, and expectations concerning its role, are enhanced by related

ideologies of "development" and "socialism." The state so defined is "an extremely powerful normative concept" (Ibid.,97), which, when elaborated by concepts of nation, etc., represents "an epistemology of political reality" (Ibid.,73). The "epistemology" of the state may or may not include a nation, but, in either case, it will legitimate a political unity that may contradict the "epistemology" of pre-existing plural groups.

The power of the state is not merely "normative": it controls boundaries and influences communication, economic processes and populations movements as well as political activity (1976:66). The ideology of the state enlarges its legitimate role and increases expectations; at the same time, greater resources and improved technology increase its power, which is economically, politically and militarily reinforced by the international state system (Ibid.,97).

Modernization and the development of the state are experienced as indeterminant and uncertain, and therefore lead to anxiety and stress. They enhance the awareness of self and others--with whom reciprocal comparisons of wealth, power and status may be made--and establish or intensify processes of social competition (1976:65,98). Economic development, in particular, may result in new inequalities, or exacerbate old ones, presenting tangible threats to status. As Young notes, modernization and the state provide new material and socio-cultural resources to be applied to old and new ends (Ibid.,98). As concept and structure they expand and alter perception, increase interaction, heighten aspirations and enlarge the number

of options available (Ibid.,99), without clearly establishing legitimate access and allocation. They provide or intensify legitimations for competition and other attempts to alter given status relations, irrespective of pre-existing norms and relations. Such a situation is characterized by conflict and ambiguity, rather than the prescriptive enforcement of normative/institutional modes of incorporation.

In the discussions of modernization and development, of the processes of entrepreneurship and brokerage, and of the establishment of patterns of status relations, Young makes central to his analysis an element which is almost completely absent from Smith's work: competition. Smith allows that competition may emerge in consociational forms as a destabilizing factor, but, in general, his formulations do not incorporate it. It is limited by consensus and equality in universal incorporation. Differential incorporation entails a rigidly enforced hierarchy, the antithesis of competition. Thus, the kinds of relationships between and among plural categories are limited, for the most part, to consensus, cooperation or antagonistic domination. The assumption of prescriptive enforcement of modes of incorporation leads Smith to ignore the multiplicity, ambiguity and negotiability of norms and, thus, to minimize the competition present in all sorts of societies. Unfortunately, while his theory allows for authoritarian, cooperative, or variably competitive relations, Young's concern with political mobilization leads to an emphasis on situations in which it can occur, that is, those in which there is relatively

open competition.

Young's general point is that there is often a contradiction between the effects of modernization and the state and existing patterns of pluralism. If there are well-defined groups in the society, but no consensus about a status hierarchy or a weak one, cultural mobilization and open competition are likely to occur (1976:100-1,137-9). Electoral and representative institutions, if present, may provide organizational arenas for opposition to established hierarchies, or, if merely expected, may legitimate such opposition. While electoral politics does not always provide an arena for conflict and the mobilization of plural categories, if they are already mobilized and in competition, electoral political organizations will probably reflect them. The definition of the state is important: if it is linked to a particular ascriptive category, a nation, this may legitimate the overt expression of ascriptive identity by some groups, while the presence of moral or ethical categorical distinctions, rather than ascriptive ones, may limit the legitimacy and expression of cultural mobilization (Ibid.). As we shall see, in Bahrain, modernization and political independence legitimated opposition to an established elite, though without cultural mobilization.

Young's understanding of the cultural construction of society and polity and of the perceptual and affective dimensions of identity permits him to avoid the structural objectivism of Smith. While Young's theory is contextual, it permits a dialectical understanding of the significance of context and structure. While it is explanatory, it requires an understanding

of history and the trajectories of societies and allows the combination of explanatory factors, rather than presuming determined inter-linkages. While it is political, it greatly expands our understanding of the role of the state, and, consistent with the generally dialectical perspective, incorporates an understanding of legitimation and competition as the terms within and the means through which varying conceptions of the social order and conflicting interests are argued.

Though Young is sensitive to identity, ideology and categories, his model goes beyond the symbolic dimension. His linkage of these factors with brokerage and mobilization entails not ony a dialectical theory of pluralism--one in which "micro" and "macro" levels, "action" and "structure" or "context" are dynamically linked through conscious, purposeful human action--but a theory of pluralism as group formation. In Smith's theory, the primary factors were the specification of categories and their prescribed relations: pluralism was segmentation and separation, and the formation of groups was implied, but ambiguous, and, in any case, dependent. For Young, the articulation of pluralism, in identity and in social action, is inseparable from the formation (or utilization for greater purposes) of relations and groups. Pluralism is not instituted by a mode of incorporation which is, in some sense, alienated from consciousness, but is constituted through the manipulation of cultural and other resources by actors in a broad range of social relationships, including, among others, those of political institutions. The formation of identity and ideological

elaboration around cultural categories entail some form of group formation, as does the articulation of these identities and group interests in various social arenas. It is important to understand not merely the categorical bases of a plural order, but the appearance of particular organized forms as well, or, said differently, in order to understand the latter, it does not suffice to know the former.

Two implications for plural theory must be noted here. First, it is clear that the conceptual or cultural elements relevant to identity and group formation in plural situations go far beyond the unique institutions of a particular group or those entailed in a mode of political incorporation. They also entail definitions of others, one's numerous relationships with them, the social order itself, and the various structures within it; they imply "epistemologies," to use Young's term. It seems meaningful or useful, then, to speak of more general "ground rules" of pluralism in discussing this dimension of culture and consciousness. Such ground rules entail definitions of the society and the groups within it, of course, but also understandings of justice and of legitimacy--not only of government, but of all relations and institutions—of proper or permitted social action. They imply both a definition of the social order and a general theory of legitimation, a range of normative or moral perspectives and attitudes.[5] Of course, such ground rules must be placed in a framework of social relations.

A second issue, the formation of groups, relates directly to this framework. To prevent a dialectical perspective from

becoming voluntaristic, it is necessary to maintain linkages between particular categories and groups, on the one hand, and structure and context, on the other. If the explanation of pluralism is the explanation of the formation of relations and groups, it is necessary to understand the impact of particular contextual features upon the entrepreneurs, brokers and other social actors who form those groups in their strategies to express and formulate identity and to protect or acquire categorically-based interests. What is required, ultimately, is a systematic linkage of types or features of context and forms of group organization. These linkages may not be necessary, but they provide means of differentiating elements of context and organization, which may, in turn, be used to construct explanations. The full development of such a theory is beyond the limitations of the present work. However, I will draw attention to what appear to be the more important aspects.

Smith and Furnivall have already provided one model: a context in which plural differentiation is rigidly enforced and group formation is, for the most part, limited to the ruling elements of the society. Though Young discusses a number of organizational forms in case studies, he does not systematically discuss linkages of group form and context or structure. As noted, he is primarily concerned with the impact of the state on plural orders and, within that concern, with situations in which political competition is relatively open. He deals with the roles of entrepreneurs and brokers in cultural mobilization and the formation of political parties with both explicit and

surreptitious linkages to ascriptive categories. The concentration on situations in which electoral institutions are involved is counter-balanced by attention to less formal attempts at domination and the formation of hierarchy, such as tribal factions. These contextual features--the institutions of government and electoral politics--and forms of organization--parties and political factions--represent a second model linking context and group structure.

To encompass the case at hand, it is necessary to complement these two models by examining cases in which other contextual linkages and types of groups may be found. A very useful example is H.S. Morris' discussion of the Indian community in Uganda.

H.S. MORRIS: PLURALISM IN EAST AFRICA

Morris wrote some of the earliest critiques of the plural society model (1956, 1957). He tested Furnivall's framework against the case of East Africa, and found it wanting in several respects. The situation he describes lies somewhere between the rigid pluralism of Furnivall and Smith and the open competition of Young, in terms of both political arrangements and the organization of categorically differentiated populations. Morris notes a "wide measure of agreement in many spheres of social action" (1957:125) among the population in East Africa, particularly the elites. This is in contrast to the near-total segmentation discussed by Furnivall and Smith. While the various categories might have differing ideals or ultimate values, and they certainly pursue some divergent ends, they all share a

tactical acceptance of the status quo and seek to derive similar benefits from the system. Though Morris does not develop the point or express it clearly, what he outlines is a more complex notion of legitimacy than that offered by Furnivall or Smith.

Another problem is more relevant to the issue of group formation. Despite the use of racial or cultural categories--African, Indian, Arab, British--in the colonial constitution, where they were formally given differential privileges and positions, and despite the salience of these categories in popular consciousness, these categories themselves were not organized for effective political action in Uganda. Nor were political organizations suppressed or absent for other reasons, as in the classic plural society. Rather, the bases for such politically active associations and organizations as existed were categories other than those of "race," namely, tribe and faction among the African population and caste and sect among the Indians. Such "lower-level" categories, as I will call them, were little recognized outside their respective racial populations and were of little importance politically until their recognition for administrative purposes--including the distribution of revenue--provided an incentive for widespread group formation and political action along such lines. The chain of events is relevant both to the general issue of group formation and to the situation of the Indian community in Bahrain, and will therefore be noted in some detail.

In response to internal issues and the demands of the colonial government for an unambiguous authority for legal

purposes, during the 1930's the Ismaili community underwent a structural transformation, including a rationalization of authority (1956:200). In the process, the Ismailis of East Africa cut themselves off from India and developed a coherent community structure extending throughout the Ismaili population there. Not only did the Ismailis develop institutions to regulate internal affairs--credit, education, welfare--they began to lobby directly with the colonial administration, rather than work solely through and for the institutions of the Indian community as a whole. They gradually received official recognition as a group, and their success motivated others, especially the various caste and sect categories of the Indian population, to follow suit, or at least make an attempt (Ibid.,208). What emerged, then, as a result of the inability or unwillingness of the colonial administration to enforce the plural constitution in the face of such persistent attempts by the Ismailis to undermine it, was a "flexible arrangement of comparatively small factional groups, competing with one another both inside and outside the racial categories" (Ibid.,211).

The British did not preserve leadership and authority entirely for themselves, but, probably more than they intended, encouraged the formation of a multi-racial elite which interacted in the social and political arenas as well as in the economic realm. African and Indian leaders were incorporated as members of and consultants to various governing committees and boards within the colonial administration. Most important, the distribution of resources to various groups through these leaders entailed a

degree of mobility for the groups as well as for the leaders themselves. Though there was a racist constitution, it was not enforced in some important respects. The colonial administration was not despotic, but was governed by negotiation and counsel, according to rules all understood, even if some, like the Ismailis, exploited them better.

Morris underplayed or overlooked the extent to which jurally decreed pluralism—that is, racism--was enforced in other ways. However, the linkage he made between administrative procedure and group formation is an important point. The plural society of Uganda was somewhat at odds with itself, recognizing one set of categories in some situations and recognizing another set in other sorts of relations. Two modes of incorporation, in Smith's terms, instituting different sets of categorical distinctions, were operating simultaneously and ambiguously through negotiation rather than through prescription. Moreover, Morris' account draws attention to the fact that customary procedure, as opposed to formal and explicit structures of domination or competition, represent a "node," if you will, through which power and other resources may be distributed on the basis of ascriptive categories. Institutionalized authority may be seen as variably formalized, a feature similar to but more subtle than Smith's distinction between de jure and de facto incorporation. Of course, such nodes, the pre-eminent domain of brokers, need not be purely political or administrative. A number of such nodes may exist, perhaps in contradiction, and thus recognize a number of sets of categories for different purposes.

Morris also discusses a range of organized forms, from the highly extensive, pyramidal and "rational" structure of the Ismaili community to less effectively or minimally organized categories, like the Patidar caste and the Indian community as a whole, respectively. The forms he draws attention to--elite networks and voluntary associations--complement the ambiguity of Smith and Furnivall with regard to organization and the emphasis on party organization of Young. Though he failed to develop them as such, Morris' articulation of these various factors represents an important contribution to the understanding of group formation in plural societies; it illustrates the emergence of groups from categories, the transformation of existing relations into organized forms through the activities of brokers and entrepreneurs manipulating both ideology and institutionalized relations within the context of an overarching and powerful colonial state.

Young and Morris provide a useful development of Smith's modes of incorporation. They provide some insight into the manner in which incorporation works, that is, how political and other relations influence the flow of resources in such a way as to encourage differentiation, boundary maintenance and group formation. It is evident that both incorporation and group formation involve something more than formal constitution and political relations. Relative power positions, and the means that may be used to maintain or restructure them, may or may not be a matter of unambiguous prescription. The difference between rigid hierarchy and open competition is one of degree. As Morris'

Ismailis demonstrate, the characteristics of particular groups themselves may be important. The cultural, material and organizational resources of different categories affect not only the groups they form, but the negotiated institutionalization of formal plural structures in the society as a whole. The institutional context may be more receptive to some kinds of inputs than to others, and thus channel group formation, but it does not necessarily create groups or the categorical distinctions on which they are based. Because groups differ and because plural processes operate at different levels, many kinds of groups formed on the basis of various sets of categories may maintain different sorts of relations within a single society, all affected in some way by political and other general institutional structures. This is precisely the situation in Bahrain that was sketched at the beginning of this chapter.

The types of groups discussed thus far have included extensively organized elites with unorganized subordinate categories (Smith and Furnivall); political parties and factions (Young); and low-level categories organized extensively, to a variable degree, with broader categories less extensively organized (Morris). The structural factors discussed have been numerous, though particular attention has been drawn to Smith's prescriptive incorporation and "regulation," Young's political competition and electoral politics, and Morris' administrative procedures. A brief look at one more case will illustrate forms and processes complementing those already discussed.

GUYANA

The plural structure of Guyanese society prior to independence (therefore, to be more precise, Guianese society) illustrates a different sort of context, one in which political institutions did not directly structure group relations, as they do in the models and cases of Smith, Young and Morris. In one way, the society illustrates the elements of Furnivall's analysis that were neglected by Smith, Morris and others: economic structures indirectly supported by political institutions were the primary means of separating pluralities and forming groups. Eventually, competition that had emerged in economic arenas entered the political arena as well. It is evident from the Guyanese case that group competition may occur in various sorts of relationships and, thus, that both social incorporation and group formation are not merely political processes. (The discussion of Guyana is drawn from Despres (1967, 1975), Jayawardena (1963, 1968, and 1980), and Premdas (1981). Accounts are similar, and attribution is therefore not provided for particular facts.)

In Guyana, the two major categories of the population, Afro-Americans, or Blacks, and East Indians, were differentiated as categories from the beginning of their co-existence in the same society. They were seen as opposed and in competition when Indian indentured laborers were imported during the nineteenth century to replace manumitted African slaves, who refused to remain on the sugar plantations. Organizational forms were limited by rural isolation for blacks and were determined by the plantation

structure for Indians, at least at first. Eventually, a substantial rural population of Indians emerged, living alongside Blacks in villages. Occasional government attempts at segmenting the population--through residential segregation, for example--were ineffective.

Though the two categories often lived alongside one another, various processes contributed to a gradual separation in both economic activity and residence. Many Blacks migrated to towns, took jobs in emerging industries, and came to dominate government service. Indians remained in rural areas or were concentrated in industries other than those dominated by Blacks. These developments were accompanied by the emergence of a variety of communal associations and institutions, generally at a local level. Caste and sect lacked the administrative linkages they had in Uganda, and, in fact, were of limited salience in general. Organizational forms may be seen in great part as a response to economic factors—that is, to competition for economic position—and to needs defined by the groups themselves--such as welfare, religion, cultural and social relations. In a laissez faire political environment (relative to other cases that have been discussed), liaison to administrative structures provided few incentives for the formation of plural identities and groups. The groups followed categorical or collective strategies, but they were not politically instituted ones.

Modernization and tremendous population growth within the Indian category led to their movement into cities, new industries and government. This was accompanied by political agitation and

organization. In the context of independence, competition became both more intense and more political. It is at this point in Guyanese history that Young's model becomes relevant. Modernization provided ideological legitimations for a unified political movement of Blacks and Indians against Europeans, but the movement soon collapsed. Pre-existing plural associations became affiliated with political parties, which were generally categorically-based, despite moral ideologies. The case well illustrates Young's assertion that if cultural categories are mobilized for competition before the advent of electoral politics, the latter will probably reflect the former. The subsequent polarization and violence in Guyanese society, with the attempts of the smaller Black population to forcefully maintain its dominance, exemplify arguments made by both Smith and Young.

The plural organization of Guyanese society raises an interesting issue. It is, in Smith's terms, a de facto rather than a de jure form, combining segmental and differential elements. The question it raises, never asked by Smith, is the following: what was the <u>origin</u> of the norms and values which supported such an organization prior to the emergence of politically effective prescriptions? Social relations were interpreted categorically, as in Young's formulation, but what was the <u>locus</u> of this interpretation? Clearly, a broad range of "ground rules" is necessary to encompass the understandings actors had about the nature of the groups in the society and their potential relationships with various kinds of institutions.

Political institutions were hardly irrelevant in the colonial society, but they played a limited role in the formation of pluralities because they did not directly or prescriptively institute a plural order among the subordinate groups in the society. In such cases, definitions of the social order, of cultural differences and of group relationships develop in different social contexts and in response to different exigencies. The context of cultural expressions and organizational forms of pluralism may consist of authoritatively articulated political or economic macro-structures, or of the absence of such structures, in some combination. Other contextual features, such as ecology and geography, and the resources of particular groups may then have greater importance.

CONCLUSION

We are now in a position to draw together the elements of our plural theory and restate them briefly. We begin with a dynamic, dialectical and processual model of social relations and institutionalization. Groups and institutions must be seen as constituted by social actors. Therefore, identity, ideology and "ground rules" become relevant issues, as do the social-psychological dimension and the problematic of legitimation. Plural societies are seen as social fields in which patterns of differentiation may be instituted prescriptively or, more likely, through the negotiation of individuals and groups. These parties may articulate a variety of interests and marshal contradictory social forces in several social arenas. A number of legitimations

and other resources may be available to mobilize constituencies or check the power of others. The factors Young has described--pre-existing patterns of cultural pluralism, the cultural basis of the state or other important institutions, the degree of consensus about hierarchy in the society, and the effects of modernization and change--are all important in understanding the kinds of cultural and material resources that are utilized in the negotiating process.

This process inter-relates two analytically distinguishable elements--context and groups. The latter have not been discussed in great detail, but a number of forms have been noted along the way. We began with a contrast between atomized subordinate categories and highly organized, corporate ruling groups. Young discussed parties and factions with an established and important role in political activity. Morris drew attention to a number of forms--elite networks, variably organized caste and sect categories, and fragmented racial categories. Finally, local categorical associations, emergent groups with economic and political functions, and political parties were mentioned in the Guyanese case.

Aside from the obvious fact that groups may be based on a variety of ascriptive categories and functional differences, and thus articulate or reproduce a variety of cultural traditions, these forms illustrate several parameters of group formation. The first is size. This refers not just to numbers, or <u>scale</u>, but to <u>extensiveness</u>, the degree to which all members of a category are represented by or included in the activities of an organization.

Organizations themselves may serve a variety of functions, from articulating political and economic interests, to welfare concerns, to religious or cultural expression. They may exercise a single function on a casual basis, or they may serve a multiplicity of functions for members on a continuing basis. This dimension of group formation may be conceptualized as a continuum from special-purpose groups to organizationally complete ones (Baureiss, 1981). Finally, groups may be variably formalized, from informal relationships and networks, to semi-formal and formal voluntary associations, to highly formalized compulsory organizations with complex administrative structures. Formalization appears to be linked to forms of leadership, from patronage and brokerage to formally rationalized authority. Leadership--that is, the kinds of leaders that are likely to emerge--may, in turn, may be related to context, the third principal element in the analysis of pluralism.

The issue of structural or contextual linkages—constraints and incentives--is a complex one. Context is not to be seen as something entirely outside plural groups, but as relations in which group members participate, but which may, on the one hand, be differentiated from the relations which constitute the group itself and, on the other, usually extend beyond the horizons and control of the group members. The relationship between group and context is a dialectical one; the role of the organizational and other resources of a group cannot be ignored, but will to a variable degree shape the impact of various contextual factors. Nor can context be seen in purely material terms. Ascriptive

identities are symbolic and affective as well as pragmatic, and plural groups serve these interests as well as utilitarian, material ones. Not only do threats to the status and material interests of groups have effects in the symbolic and affective dimensions, but cultural orientations and affect influence the ways in which groups interpret contextual factors and those interests which the analyst might be prepared to call material.

Given such understandings, it is possible to point out a number of contextual features that may serve as incentives or constraints in the formation of groups. It is evident that the articulation of categorical incentives and constraints need not be political, or, if it is, it need not follow constitutional or normative prescription. To reiterate yet again the critique of Smith: plural orders may be variably prescriptive, and may, to varying extents, impose particular positions, functions or forms of organization on the constituent categories of the population. That said, institutional or organizational "nodes," particularly those through which resources are allocated--which often <u>are</u> political—seem to be critical in delivering incentives for group formation. These nodes may be numerous and contradictory in their effects and in the categories they recognize. Relations may be clearly defined, jurally or normatively, or evolving and less clearly defined, in the manner of administrative practice in Uganda. Such practices may perhaps be manifestly illegal, or only surreptitiously so. This is not merely a difference between a mode of incorporation instituted de jure or de facto. Rather, the situation admits of multiple and ambiguous effects. Insofar as

this is true, and varying dimensions of differentiation exist, plural identities and structures may take on a limited and situational form, rather than constituting "sections" or "compartments."

The matter, then, involves the rigidity with which hierarchy and other "ground rules" are maintained in a complex situation. The nature of administration or other forms of distribution of resources—by decree, by informal negotiation and brokerage, by committees and boards, by rational bureaucracy, through institutions recognized with some degree of legitimacy as "private," etc.--is significant not only in recognizing particular categories and establishing particular forms of relationships--domination, cooperation, competition, etc.--but in enjoining, permitting, legitimating, forbidding, or discouraging organizational forms as diverse as sub-categorical lobbying groups and political parties. At the same time, the nature of administration and similar institutions is obviously related to the substance of ground rules and the legitimacy of the social order itself.

Insofar as the effects of the macro-social context on group formation may be variable, it is possible that these effects could be weak, or relatively so. In such cases, the backgrounds and resources of particular categories are likely to be more significant in forming groups. However, while such situations may allow greater freedom in negotiation and organization, it is not accurate to say that there is a lack of structure or constraint; rather, the absence of significant or pre-established

institutional nodes may allow the clearer articulation--or the relatively unmediated impact--of other situational constraints, such as ecological or demographic factors. The salience of these factors, as of all factors, is a function of interpretation and the culturally defined needs or interests of particular groups as well as of those defined in the society-at-large.

This theory of pluralism, linking contexts and groups through dialectical social processes, is unarguably incomplete. It will be developed further in another context. The point now is to use it. Toward that end, I begin with a discussion of Bahraini society. It is the complex plural context in which the even more complex cultural pluralism of the Indian community is expressed. I then proceed to an analysis of the processes of group formation themselves.

NOTES

1. In common with later writers on the subject, Furnivall tailored his definition of the plural society to a few specific instances. This somewhat confused the issue as to whether the correlation of various characteristics was necessary or fortuitous. When his definition was later taken as a general one, he was left open to a great deal of unwarranted criticism. In fact, it seems that Furnivall's main interest was not "pluralism" at all, but colonialism. Furnivall argues that colonialism has produced plural societies; his critics inappropriately assert that he has argued the logical inverse of this proposition, i.e., that all plural societies are the products of colonialism. Later writers, such as M.G. Smith, have attributed to Furnivall their own morphological, taxonomic and structural orientation. In fact, his presentation is historical and processual. He does not present "the plural society" as a set of elements or traits so much as he describes a trajectory of development in which given categories and structures are transformed by the political and economic processes of colonialism.

2. One strong bias in the definition of "compulsory institutions" is evident: class and occupation are not compulsory. This is linked to an assumption that stratified social orders, when based on functional differentiation, are necessarily consensual and are integrated by a status or economic system. Even in 1984, Smith minimizes the inequalities and categorical differences present within modern societies (eg., 1984:155). The attribution of consensus and integration to "stratified" societies and to Western or modern societies in general, and of dissensus and coercion to plural societies is at times quite arbitrary. Though Smith nominally repudiates the necessity of dissensus and coercion in plural societies in later work (eg., 1984:159), since he lacks a theory of legitimation, his problems with consensus and the normative bases of the social order are not successfully resolved even then.

These issues point to another difficulty in Smith's work: he never clarifies the distinction between ascriptive and functional differentiation. He leaves the definition of pluralism to ambiguous "institutional differences" or, later, disjunctions in the "common public domain." I would agree with Van den Berghe (1973:967-9) that pluralism, proper, is concerned with ascriptive differences. However, since functional differences can become ascriptive, as in estate systems, and ascriptive differences can also be associated with functional differences, as in caste systems, it is evident that any distinction between "plural analysis" and "class analysis" is ultimately a false one. The important factor in pluralism seems to be the extent to which bases of differentiation, of whatever kind, are ideologically formulated, elaborated and given organized expression. Cultural recognition allows the conscious manipulation of relations. Existing bases of differentiation can become recognized ideologically or can even be invented, and existing ascriptive differences can lose their salience. Therefore, from a processual as well as definitional perspective, what is required is a

general theory of group formation. That, however, is somewhat beyond the limits of the present work.

3. In one sense, Smith's handling of modes of incorporation and politics is similar to the articulation of "modes of production" and economics by the so-called "structural" or "scientific" Marxists, eg., Althusser and his anthropological followers, Godelier, Meillassoux, Terray, etc. Rather than take a more holistic perspective, in both cases theorists ascribe numerous implications and great explanatory weight to their respective "modes." They give to their favored sphere, economics or politics, the function of allocating the relative importance of various institutional spheres in particular societies. Thus, it is the mode of production which determines the "dominance" of kinship or economics or politics; or, it is the mode of incorporation which determines the significance of class or of political relations. Two points are made here: (1) The significance of politics or economics cannot really be explained from within these essentially functionalist paradigms, and remains unaccounted for without a historical and holistic analysis. (2) These frameworks reify structure and imply auto-reproduction, failing to incorporate process, "action," the linkage of levels of analysis, and consciousness.

4. Many of the difficulties in Smith's work can be traced to his positivism, or objectivism. This may be related to the derivation of many of his assumptions from Radcliffe-Brown. Radcliffe-Brown's dichotomy, structure and culture, led him to grant determinative force to some institutions, such as kinship, and a dependent, supporting role to others, such as religion. In Smith's case, it is the structures of modes of incorporation which are granted this force, while other institutions are expected to respond functionally. The implicit materialism in modes of incorporation--they are the principal relations through which what are presumed to be the most significant goods in the society are distributed--makes consciousness and intentionality as irrelevant as other institutions.

Smith's objectivism and the assignment of varying existential force to different elements can be traced through several aspects of his theory: the simple construction of types; the assumed efficacy of prescribed relations; the radical and at times arbitrary distinction between plural and non-plural societies; the rigid distinction between integrated and segmented orders; the assumed presence or emergence of rigid boundaries and widespread institutional differences in plural orders; and, assumed consensus and stability or likely conflict and instability.

His assumptions entail a definition of social science and judgments about what is analytically important that might also account for elements that are absent or unimportant in his theory: the lack of development in his principal theoretical constructs, eg., as sub-types of modes of incorporation; minimalization of fluidity, mobility or individual variation; and, a lack of concern for entrepreneurs or leaders outside the ruling section in plural societies. More generally, while he

presumes their practical functions, Smith is unconcerned with the intimate, affective aspects of ascriptive attachments, with their meaning and relationship to identity. These elements are so dependent as to be irrelevant.

5. In her work on ethnicity and political development, Enloe mentions "social ground rules" of interethnic relations (1973:33-4). She notes that they may be disrupted by many of the same factors others have mentioned--changes of technology or demography, ideology, decolonization, foreign intervention--and existing relations and established modes of behavior and identity may be questioned or altered (Ibid.). Enloe apparently refers to the maintenance of boundaries and, especially, stratified relations among ethnic groups, but, unfortunately, she does not develop the notion.

In quite a different context, that of macro-social theory, Eisenstadt also proposes a set of "ground rules." It is this formulation I wish to draw upon. What is involved are definitions of self and others and a generalized notion of social legitimation, whether or not consensus or conflict occurs over any of these points. In the context of concrete social relations, these ground rules structure and constrain interpersonal and intergroup relations.

Observing that human society appears to be an attempt to impose some meaning and order onto an intrinsically indeterminate universe, Eisenstadt suggests that "ground rules of social interaction" serve to structure and order the indeterminacies of social relationships and the predicaments of social organization (1976:350-358.) These ground rules "portray or provide images, prototypes and specifications" (Ibid.,457) of several aspects of social life. Eisenstadt's list is as follows:

> 1. The range of goals or "desiderata" permitted to social actors and the manner in which they may be combined in "styles of life."
>
> 2. The symbolic and institutional boundaries of the society and of collectivities within and outside it. These are specified in "attributes of similarity," which are based on definitions of the contents of the sociocultural order, rules of access, and the legitimation of both in a "broad charismatic conception of order or appropriateness." These attributes in turn at least partially define the criteria of membership in collectivities and the obligations of participation in them.
>
> 3. Rules of justice and equity regarding distribution of rights and obligations.
>
> 4. Rules concerning access to resources and their various appropriate uses.
>
> 5. Definitions of the meaning of various relations or activities and their importance relative to various defined goals.
>
> 6. The legitimation of institutions in terms of criteria of justice, equity and social goals. (Summarized from 1976:357-8).

Whether or not such rules are effective in providing meaning and structuring indeterminacy would appear to be an empirical question. We must certainly acknowledge that conflict and differences of opinion over various rules can occur. There is no reason to believe that rules are given as coherent and integrated sytems or will necessarily be made so. However, social actors are likely to be aware of the different versions favored by their consociates, and this multiplicity and the mutual awareness of it are incorporated into consciousness, if not into the rules themselves.

The point is that actors enter social interaction with more than identities. They are armed with a whole series of rules, assumptions, alternatives and caveats, which, in concrete social contexts, stable or indeterminate, allow the creation and recreation of the relations we so casually reify as "structure." A notion of ground rules can be linked to modes of incorporation, to varying definitions of the social order, to the establishment of competitive or hierarchical relationships among groups, and to the emergence of groups at different levels or in different spheres. It also allows a complex solution to the problem of integration and consensus, involving a notion of legitimation that extends beyond political institutions to the social order itself.

Chapter Two

PLURALISM AND LEGITIMACY: ISSUES IN THE HISTORY OF BAHRAIN[1]

In this and the following chapter I will develop a characterization of Bahraini society as the context in which the Indian community may be situated and its formation and structure analyzed. The general argument, very briefly, is as follows: Unresolved issues in the plural constitution of the society have influenced development policy such that rapid economic expansion has been encouraged. This has led to a tremendous increase in labor migration and a restructuring of the population and the labor force. The same contradictions which influenced the path of development have necessitated the control of the vast foreign population that was the immediate result of development policies. It is these measures of control--in the context of a politically unstable plural society undergoing rapid change--which constitute the active contextual influences on the formation of the Indian community and expatriate groups in general. Chapter Three will trace the implications of pluralism and political difficulties in economic development, migration and the changing composition and structure of the society. In this chapter I will discuss the history of Bahrain, in its regional and global context. The purposes are both to establish a baseline for the arguments of Chapter Three and to give the reader some sense of the place.

The State of Bahrain and Its Dependencies, as it is now formally known, is composed of two sets of islands lying just off

the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula to the north of the Qatar promontory, about mid-way between Kuwait and the upper Gulf and the United Arab Emirates and the lower Gulf. The southernmost group of islands, called Hawar, is virtually uninhabited. The northern group of islands, Bahrain proper, comprises some 250 square miles of territory. Nearly all of this is represented by a single large island, Awal, sometimes called Bahrain Island. It is linked by causeway to the other main inhabited islands, Muharraq, due east of Awal, and Sitra, nestled between the eastern shore of Awal and the southwestern shore of Muharraq. The capital city, Manama, is situated at the northeastern corner of Awal island, and is geographically parallel to the Saudi Arabian cities of Dhahran, Dammam and Al-Khobar.

The population of Bahrain has undergone major demographic changes during the course of this century. Growth has been rapid, especially in recent decades, producing a population that is not only larger but proportionately younger. During this same period, the country has undergone wholesale urbanization. In April, 1981, the date of the last census, the population was about 351,000. Of this number, 283,000 were classified as urban, with 122,000 living in Manama or its environs. About one-third of the population were foreign nationals. Given the size of the country, the concentration of its population, and modern means of communication, it is fair to say that Bahrain has become a single social arena. It is, however, a complex one, as we shall see. The diversity of the population will be discussed in detail.

The islands possess no mineral resources that were

exploitable before the modern era. The climate is unpleasant and was, until recent times, unhealthy. However, there is a sizable supply of fresh water rising from an underground aquifer that extends from the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia to Bahrain and the surrounding seabeds. The presence of natural wells and springs allowed the cultivation of irrigated gardens in the northern parts of Awal and in Muharraq and Sitra. Though fodder, fruits and vegetables were grown, the main crop was dates.[2] Agricultural production and an abundance of fish in the waters surrounding Bahrain supported a substantial population, relative to that of other areas along the Gulf littoral. However, these assets were not substantial enough to support the development of Bahrain as a major center of production in the region. In addition to ecological limitations (given technological levels, of course), social, political and economic structures--in the form of an essentially prebendal mode of production--restricted the internal generation of surplus during much of Bahrain's history. Craft production was limited to local needs, and was usually inadequate even for that. The dates produced were of poor quality, relative to those of southern Iraq, Eastern Arabia and Oman, and brought little foreign exchange. The primary internally generated and produced export seems to have been a breed of large white ass, well-known throughout the region.

Bahrain's position in the regional economy and its periodic ascendancy and impoverishment over the centuries were due less to these factors than to the existence of rich pearl beds offshore, on the one hand, and to the situation of Bahrain and the Gulf in

general on important trade routes at the margins of empire, on the other. During prosperous times, when demand for pearls was high and Bahrain was able to attract the fishermen to its port, pearling supported nearly as many people as agriculture. The towns served as trade entrepots and places of exchange more than as centers of production. It was the revenues and spin-offs from these "industries," more than agriculture and crafts, which paid for imports and provided the basis of such prosperity as Bahrain occasionally saw.[3]

As a result of these factors, throughout history the fortunes of Bahrain and events within its shores have been closely linked to developments outside--often far outside--the immediate vicinity. General economic and political developments affected the demand for pearls, the relative value of pearling and other maritime pursuits, and the stability of the region, a prerequisite for maximum exploitation of the pearl beds. Military encroachments and the rise and fall of civilizations and empires throughout the world have significantly affected the volume of trade and the importance of the several trade routes through and around the region. Bahrain has been little more than a pawn in the expansion and competition of political and economic systems to its north, east, west and south. Over the centuries, its shores have been frequented by merchants, seamen, artisans and soldiers from India, Iran, Mesopotamia, the Arabian peninsula, and, most recently, Europe and the Far East. In the process, a plural society of considerable complexity has emerged. These patterns of pluralism linger today and have been compounded by

the effects of growth, modernization and new waves of migration. I now turn to a brief synopsis of Bahrain's history and of the nature and transformation of the society and political system.

BAHRAIN AND "THE GULF SYSTEM"

Trade between South, East and Southeast Asia and various destinations in the Middle East and Europe has existed for millenia. Until recently, it was the major element in the global economy. During some historical periods, largely in response to political configurations in the Middle East, much of this transcontinental trade was carried through the Arabian Gulf. The archeological record indicates that Bahrain enjoyed great prominence and prosperity during what was probably the exploration and first major utilization of the maritime trade route through the Gulf. Excavations at Qala'at al-Bahrain, "Bahrain Fort," along the northern shores of Awal Island, have uncovered the remains of substantial settlements dating from the second and third millenia, B.C. Artifacts from the Akkadian and Babylonian civilizations of Mesopotamia have been found alongside others from the Mohenjo Daro/Harappan civilization of the Indus Valley (Bibby, 1969:378-9).[4] The first "Indian" migrant to Bahrain, a merchant or a sailor, probably arrived well over 4000 years ago! Other strata at the site, from Assyrian, Persian and Hellenistic periods, attest to Bahrain's importance in later ancient times as well (Ibid.).

Commerce in the Gulf saw its "Golden Age" between the eighth and eleventh centuries, A.D., when the wealth and power of

the Abbasids brought unprecedented affluence to Gulf merchants and seamen. What has been referred to as an "entrepot system" developed during this period (Landen, 1967). The "Gulf system," as we will call it, remained in place until the mid-nineteenth century and had three sets of actors. First were the political centers around the Gulf, such as Iran, Iraq, and, later, Turkey and India. They exercised a varying degree of control over events within the Gulf itself. Second was the main entrepot in the Gulf. Usually, a single major port served as the emporium and point of transhipment of goods to and from the major producing and political centers and the other ports in the region. This position in the system was held by such fabled cities as Siraf, Qays and Hormuz. Sometimes they were under the direct or indirect control of one of the centers and sometimes they were relatively independent. They exercised a similarly variable degree of control over the last group of actors in the system, the smaller ports. They served as minor entrepots, distributing goods to the hinterland, collecting such trade items as the different local areas had to offer, and, when possible, operating in the long-distance trade, or the "carrying trade," as it is often called. This trade was vulnerable to political and economic developments both around and within the Gulf. Insofar as the infrastructure of trade—merchants, ships, and, for the most part, goods as well—were mobile, trade was quite responsive to changing conditions.

As they expanded their influence, the major emporia acquired other ports as dependencies, either as direct tributaries or by arrangement with one of the political centers. Once established,

the emporia maintained prosperity by offering attractive conditions for merchants, policing the sea lanes and, if necessary, by outright assaults on rival ports and unruly dependencies. Though agreements of fealty and alliance were commonly made, they were subject to revocation at the first opportunity. Relations between ports were fiercely competitive, and commonly took the form of economic warfare, later called "piracy" by the British. The structure of the system was thus loose and fluid. Authority was based not on religion or other moral legitimations, but on force, tempered by traditional ties and alliances. These were based on kinship, for the most part, in an extendable tribal idiom, often complemented by ethnic, religious and caste categories. Most of the seamen were Arab, but other groups--Persians, Indians, Baluchis, Africans, etc.--also participated. In sum, a plural system developed, both in individual ports and in the region as a whole, in which small, traditionally-based groups were linked by complex and fluctuating pragmatic ties.

Bahrain played a role in the Gulf system, but it never attained the prominence it seems to have had in ancient times. Though the demand for pearls probably increased during the Golden Age of Gulf commerce, Bahrain was apparently never more than a local entrepot and a minor player in the game of political and economic relations in and around the Gulf. As the ability of centers or peripheral powers to assert their authority waned and conditions of instability and competition emerged, Bahrain was one of the first properties to change hands. The islands were

usually held as a dependency or tributary of the dominant center or the major entrepot. However, actual occupation and rule was customarily in the hands of yet another party. Sovereignty was mediated and readily contested. The claims maintained by the center or the main entrepot were negotiable, and, in unstable conditions, either of these parties, other predatory and ascendant groups, or even local elements might take control for a period, often very brief.

The entrepot system was dominated by regional powers until the arrival of the Portuguese in the Gulf in 1507. With legendary brutality, they conquered Hormuz, then the main entrepot, and its possessions, which at that time included Bahrain.[5] The appropriation of the carrying trade by the Portuguese and the political instability and insecurity they brought to the area led to a decline in traffic and a substantial withdrawal of Indian merchants from the Gulf and Indian Ocean (Landen, 1967:131-3).

Portuguese control was relatively brief. They were expelled from Bahrain in 1602 (Khuri, 1980:16; Lorimer, I: 836) and from Hormuz in 1622 (Landen, 1967:23). By this time, other European powers--Britain, Holland, France--had begun to operate in the Asian trade. Within the Gulf itself, the new European powers did not yet seek political domination (Ibid.). Like local merchants, British and Dutch traders exchanged the products of the East for those of the areas in which their "factories" were located. The Gulf system attracted new participants, but, for the time being, it remained intact.

After the defeat of the Portuguese, Persia became the

dominant power in the Gulf. Bahrain became a Safavid dependency under the Governor of Hormuz (Niebuhr, 1774:284-5). However, as the Safavid dynasty declined, the rulers in Isfahan were less able to exert control and a highly competitive situation emerged. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were chaotic. In the seventeenth century, the ascendant power was Oman; Masqat eventually replaced Hormuz as the major Gulf emporium. The struggle between center and entrepot continued well into the eighteenth century and occasionally involved the conquest and reconquest of various ports and territories, including Bahrain. As Niebuhr notes, "Dans ces derniers siecles Bahrein a eu plusieurs des maitres" (Ibid.). More often than not, actual control was in the hands of local parties, the so-called Huwalah Arabs of the town of Manama, rather than the Persians or Omanis (Ibid., Abu Hakima, 1965:33). Later, Arab tribes of the Iranian coast ruled in the name of the new power in Iran, the Zands.[6]

By the late eighteenth century, the main challenge to Masqat came not from the Persians, who were preoccupied with internal matters, but from the newly emergent Utub Arabs of Kuwait. In 1766, some Utub lineages migrated out of Kuwait and established a new settlement at Zubara, on the western coast of Qatar, from which they sought to further enlarge their participation in trade and pearl fishing (Abu Hakima, 1965:26,65-6). The strategy was successful and, as Landen wryly comments, "as usual in the Gulf, when new powers sought to realize their political and economic ambitions, a maritime war broke out" (1967:25). The situation deteriorated rapidly. Soon, the Utub, the Persian government, the

Arab tribes of the Persian coast, the Omanis, and the famous "pirates" of the lower Gulf, the Qawasim of Sharjah and Ras Al-Khaimah and their allies, were all involved in a free-for-all of attack and counterattack, alliance and counter-alliance.[7]

In 1783, the Utub captured and occupied Bahrain. The rulers of Kuwait, the Al-Sabah, returned home. Following a dispute, another Utub lineage, the Al-Jalahima, left Bahrain as well (Lorimer, I: 840). The Al-Khalifah, with a number of allied tribal lineages, were left in possession of Bahrain and Zubara.[8] Of course, their control was hotly contested, mainly by the Omanis. They were also under pressure from the Persians and from the Wahhabis on the Arabian mainland. The Utub might have lost control of Bahrain during the violent years of the early nineteenth century had it not been for an auspicious event, the entry of a new power in the Gulf, the British.

BAHRAIN AND "THE IMPERIAL SYSTEM"

The Omanis, Persians, Wahhabis and other regional powers sought only to dominate the Gulf system; the British changed it. One purpose of British interference was the protection of British trade in the area, of course. But this paled to insignificance alongside the need to protect communications and travel between Europe and the new empire in India. British actions in the Gulf took the form of brute force, intimidation and diplomacy, more or less in that order. The policy was officially one of "noninterference," but as Landen notes,

> In actuality, her policy interfered as nothing had before in upsetting the context and dynamics of traditional life in the Gulf.... Modified, qualified or abolished altogether were many of the old practices by which one local city-state used to dominate another or achieve preponderance in the Gulf. (1967:27)

Of course, the first of these practices to be eliminated was economic warfare. Combined naval and land forces destroyed the fleets and "reduced"--i.e., utterly devastated--the fortresses of the Qawasim "pirates" in three "punitive expeditions" (Landen, 1967:165; Khuri, 1980:20). Thereafter, British influence, interference and control grew, slowly but steadily. The slave trade in the Indian Ocean was suppressed. Europeans, Indians, and some local minorities were gradually removed from local jurisdiction, given British protection and, in some cases, granted special privileges. The introduction of British (rather than British Indian) manufactured goods had a devastating impact in producing areas. As steamship lines in India extended their operations to the Gulf in the 1860's, they captured most of the long-distance trade still in Arab hands, thereby destroying the Gulf shipping industry, especially in Oman. Moreover, by sailing direct to most Gulf ports, rather than using Masqat as a point of transhipment, the steamers destroyed the entrepot system itself (Landen, 1967:99-101).[9] The marginalization of traditional activities and the decline of prosperity in general put most local economies into a tailspin, from which they did not recover until the exploitation of petroleum.[10] The economic dislocation and impoverishment in the Gulf during the late nineteenth century led to migration, increasing reliance on subsistence agriculture where possible, and, in Bahrain and the central Gulf, the

intensification of pearling for the flourishing Indian and European markets.[11]

British political hegemony in the Gulf was formalized through a series of truces and treaties, increasingly expansive in their terms, to which all the Gulf rulers were forced to agree. A series of "exclusive agreements" in the 1880's and 1890's gave the British complete control over the external relations of the Gulf states and established a de facto protectorate status. The regulation of external affairs led eventually to growing involvement in the internal affairs of the various ports as well. Pacification and the protection of principalities from invasion and conquest stabilized borders and regimes in the area; it also directed group competition for resources inward, rather than outward. The British often found it necessary to protect local rulers from internal revolt, provide them with subsidies and military aid, support one or another faction of a ruling family, police unruly parties, or encourage administrative rationalization to improve fiscal situations. To handle these matters, the Indian government eventually sent out Political Agents. This was followed by the appointment of British advisors and administrators who, in some cases, ran nearly every department of government and dictated policy in those areas they did not directly control. These activities further undermined local authority and polarized local populations.

Bahrain was spared the worst economic repercussions of British hegemony, but all these political effects occurred there. Increasingly reliable British support and the elimination of the

the Gulf system--with its attendant dangers for small, independent ports--gave the Al-Khalifah permanent tenure. The fragmentation of the elements of the Gulf system and their integration into the imperial system as individual states allowed Bahrain to develop along a relatively independent path and gave its rulers a free hand in transforming the society.

The free hand was also a heavy hand. After consolidating their rule, the Al-Khalifah confiscated gardens and other properties and redistributed them as non-heritable fiefs or estates to various kinsmen and allies. Rents were collected from palm gardens and fish traps, and from shops and other property in the town (Khuri, 1980:28). Titles were redistributed at the death of current holders and, more generally, at the accession of a new ruler. Over time, this led to significant differentiation in the distribution of wealth within the family; those in the direct line of descent were favored, while affines were disinherited (Ibid.,44). This contributed greatly to the factionalization of the family. These practices also contributed to the differentiation of the Al-Khalifah from other tribal groups and from the population in general. Eventually, all members of the family were referred to as shuyukh (sing. shaykh), or "shaikhs," the popular Anglicized term we will use. Apparently, only the family leaders had previously been so entitled.[12]

Authority was exerted through tribal councils, courts and irregular police. Insofar as the tribal groups had appropriated most of the islands' resources, their councils were of general significance. The only recognized judicial authority was the

Sunni qadi, who functioned primarily for the urban population and to legitimate disputes between groups (Khuri, 1980:235). These disputes were actually settled, and the political will of the rulers enforced, by fidawis, servants of the estate-holders who were ostensibly charged with administering these properties. In fact, they were private militias who commonly resorted to thuggery.

The principle of domination was the absolute discretion of the ruler to dispense justice in accordance with his will. It was a classic patrimonial regime, except that the ruling faction was an extended tribal lineage, rather than a single individual, and the delegation of power was based on tribal alliance, rather than bureaucratic organization. The effective application of authority was negotiated and limited by tradition and by the relative utility of oppression. The administration of justice followed categorical distinctions among persons and political and economic power. As a result, the other groups in the population, which are discussed in the following section, were deprived of any role in government they may have had under previous regimes. By their presence, the Utub and their allies altered the plural composition of the society. Their councils and courts introduced processes of diffuse, informal, but autocratic authority.

Usually, the extremes of oppression were borne only by the peasants, who were mostly Shi'a. They were subject to head taxes and corvee labor of both men and animals, as well as the extraction of surplus production (Khuri, 1980:28). While there were also religious and racial motives involved, the system must

be seen largely as a product of the relative utility of exploitation.

> Social groups were left free to operate independently as long as this freedom did not impinge upon the maximal exploitation of resources.... To maximize the returns from palm cultivation, gardens were divided into several estates.... By contrast, the returns of pearl production were maximized by granting pearling enterprisers considerable freedom of operation. (Ibid., 36).

Maximizing the returns of commerce dictated similar freedom for merchants. The success of the Al-Khalifah lay in keeping import duties low and limiting the exactions forced upon the commercial sector. In effect, the Al-Khalifah maintained the timeless posture of Gulf port authorities with regard to commerce and pearling: to provide a safe and attractive environment for these pursuits and derive benefits from increased port duties and from the higher rents and sales of produce which the stimulation of the local market entailed (Ibid.,66). In many ways, the logic of the ruling family is not substantially different today.

Like most policies, this one could not always be realized. Threats and attacks on Bahrain during the 1830's had predictably depressing effects on commerce and pearl fishing. An equally important cause of declining prosperity, in part itself a response to external factors, was a heightening of oppression in Bahrain in the 1830's. The ruling shaikh was old and unable to control his kinsmen and allies, who extorted traders, pearl merchants and even British subjects, as well as the peasants (Khuri, 1980:30). In the context of the patterns of redistribution noted above, these processes pushed the factionalization of the ruling family to the point of violence in

the 1840's. The dispute was settled by the expulsion to Qatar of the dissident faction leader. Significantly, this time the matter was settled by the Al-Khalifah themselves.

In 1861, the British and the rulers of Bahrain signed a new treaty, which gave Bahrain an unprecedented guarantee of British protection (Landen, 1967:198). At the same time, the British became more involved in local affairs. The smoldering dispute between the rulers of Bahrain and their kinsmen in Qatar led to attacks on shipping and on the islands themselves. In 1869, the ruler of Bahrain was killed in one of these attacks. British action was decisive: the malefactors were caught and exiled, this time to Bombay, and a son of the previous ruler was installed as the new ruler (Lorimer, I: 897-9). British protection was gradually extended to all foreigners and religious minorities in Bahrain (Ibid.,938ff). The British noted the oppression of the Shi'a, but, at this point, did nothing about it.

Bahrain was less affected by the general economic disaster of the late nineteenth century than were the other ports of the Gulf and the surrounding producing areas. Bahraini merchants and shippers were hurt, but since there was little craft production to begin with, British goods did not have the devastating impact they had in Iran and Syria, for example. On the positive side, British activity in the port increased, which brought its rewards. Moreover, the pearl trade boomed (Khuri, 1980:57). By the early 1880's, there was a general increase in prosperity in Bahrain (Lorimer, I: 911). Other factors helped to improve Bahrain's status in Gulf commerce. New customs regulations under

the Qajar government--initiated by Western advisors--led to a mass mercantile migration from Iran to Bahrain and Qatar in 1902 (Landen, 1967:101-2). Direct steamer service to Bahrain reinforced the port's status, as did the appointment of a British Political Agent in 1900.[13] Bahrain's importance as a regional entrepot continued to grow from this period through the 1950's.

Stability, British protection, the growth of the pearl trade, and prosperity in general attracted greater numbers of Indian merchants to Bahrain. This development will be discussed in detail in later chapters. For the present, it is important to note that, aside from being important merchants, Indians became the primary bankers of the Al-Khalifah and acquired the customs at the port of Manama as a concession or revenue farm (Khuri, 1980:52; Lorimer, I: 928-931).

Interestingly, though the mercantile sector prospered, the ruling family underwent a gradual relative impoverishment, a development with serious implications. As they sought to overcome this condition, the shaikhs drew the British ever more deeply into the internal affairs of the country. The Al-Khalifah had long given up their primary means of support, trade itself, and their other sources of revenue--warfare, customs and tariffs--were either forbidden by British regulation, out of their hands, or limited by economic competition among ports. The Customs had become the subject of a running dispute between the ruler and the Political Agent (Lorimer, I: 928-33). Lord Curzon himself gave the ruler a stern lecture on the subject, but to no avail. In the first place, the concession to the Indian merchants had been

renewed years in advance for desperately needed loans. Secondly, the matter involved a struggle for internal authority. Unable to resist the British directly, the ruler resisted indirectly, by putting off customs reform, for example.

The situation reached a critical point in 1904. As in the 1830's, the presence of a weak and aged ruler allowed a heightening of oppression. Agents of a nephew of the ruler attempted to engage an employee of a German firm for corvee labor and then attacked a number of Persians. It was a perfect test of competing bases of authority: all the plaintiffs were theoretically under British protection, while the offending individual was a close kinsman of the ruler. In the face of British forces brought to the scene by the Political Resident himself, the ruler capitulated. The offending shaikh was captured and exiled to Bombay (Lorimer, I: 938-42). The surrender of the ruler and his inability to prevent the punishment of his nephew, a grave humiliation, had a powerful effect on the local population. The authority of the Al-Khalifah was further undercut and what Khuri has called a "dual authority system" was established (1980:87). Unlike the British, the ruler understood the vital necessity—to his authority within the family as well as among the people in general--of maintaining the position of shaikhs and others he might choose to protect above and beyond the application of the laws. A universal code of justice was--and is--antithetical to the categorical principle on which his authority and the plural order rested.

These events marked the denouement of "traditional" society.

Though important social transformations have taken place during the course of this century, they have compounded and complicated existing patterns of cultural pluralism without actually eliminating them. In order to understand modern Bahraini society, then, we must understand these patterns and the plural basis of the polity and economy.

TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

Bahraini society, both before and during Utub rule, had four basic elements--peasants, pearl fishermen, townspeople and rulers. Over time, these came to generally correspond with genealogical, ethnic, religious and other ascriptive distinctions. That is, patterns of functional (i.e., political and economic) and ascriptive differentiation among socially separate corporate groups were interlinked with a high degree of overlap, resulting in a stratified plural society. It is impossible to say precisely when or how this structure evolved. While the individuals and groups in some roles might have changed in response to political and economic developments in the region, the structure of the society appears to have remained fairly constant during the centuries preceding the Utub conquest.

Until quite recently, "Bahrain" referred not just to the islands which compose the present state, but also to parts of what is now the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. A common population has long occupied this entire area. Though their ancestry and origins are obscure, these people are recognized as being "ethnically" or "racially" distinct from other elements of

the population, in both modern Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. "Greater Bahrain," if you will, was quickly converted to Islam and, soon thereafter, to Shi'ism. The area was known as a center of the Qaramat in the ninth century, A.D., but the people are now Ithna 'Ashari, or "Twelvers." Religious elements are combined with geographical, biological and cultural characteristics in defining this group, who are known as baharnah (sing. bahrani). The elements of Baharnah identity, culture and society have no doubt been affected and transformed over the centuries, but they represent a constant of Bahraini life and are the only group with real longevity as indigenes.[14]

The peasants of Bahrain have long been almost exclusively Baharnah. In addition to cultivation and husbandry, they engaged in fishing (usually by means of traps in tidal waters) and craft production (mats, some cloth and crude pottery). The Baharnah peasants were organized into villages around the garden areas. They were thus separated physically and socially from the town and from other groups. Patterns of ownership and tenure of agricultural property before the Al-Khalifah are unclear, and may have included some freehold and communal rights. The nature of local administration before the Utub conquest is also unclear, but probably included a combination of self-regulation, religious authority and linkages with urban notables and rulers. The social and economic position of the Baharnah peasants declined significantly under tribal rule.[15]

As in other parts of the Arab world, the Arabs of the Gulf categorically distinguish between those who maintain tribal

kinship organization and culture and those who do not. In Bahrain, the categories are asil and bayser, respectively. Though kinship ties might be strong, most Asil have only the vestiges of a beduin way of life, and the Bayser have none at all. Significantly, members of both categories are understood by various rationalizations to have been autochthones of central Arabia. In other words, they make a claim--varying in its legitimacy, acceptance and "truth"--of being true Arabs, in the primordial, genealogical sense in which this is understood. The Baharnah are somewhat beyond the pale of these categories. Though their Arab-ness, in a general sense, is not questioned, culturally defined biological differences associated with regional origin prevent them from receiving or claiming categorical definition as Arabs in this narrow sense. Significantly, religious differences overlay all the others: the Asil and Bayser are exclusively Sunni.

The Al-Khalifah were the main Asil group, of course. They also had tribal allies, Utub and others, who exercised a military function and engaged in pearling. The extractive side of the pearl industry was organized on a tribal basis. Though divers were often African or Persian slaves, recruitment of other personnel and patterns of authority followed the lines of family, lineage and other kinship structures. The pearl fishermen were settled in villages, which reflected this kinship organization. Most pearling villages were composed of Sunni Asil.

The town of Manama was the only sizable settlement until the Utub founded Muharraq in the nineteenth century. The townspeople

were engaged in crafts and services, in government, such as it was, and in commerce. Various categories were represented there, some relatively permanent and some transient. The groups were distributed among several quarters, or fariq. It was a plural system similar to other Middle Eastern cities in the spatial organization of categorically, economically and politically differentiated groups.

Though the merchants and traders of Manama came from all over the Gulf and many points outside it, most of them were Sunni, non-tribal Arabs in a category designated as huwalah (sing. hule or howle). It was they who took control when the various parties who ostensibly ruled were either weak or otherwise occupied, i.e., off waging war. The term is derived from an Arabic verb meaning "to return." The Huwalah identified themselves as true Arabs who had migrated from the peninsula to various parts of the Gulf, usually Iran, and then "returned" to their original shores, if not their original homes. As a category, the Huwalah have been present in Bahrain for some time. Individual families came and went, though, and many of the prominent Huwalah families in Bahrain today are relatively recent arrivals. Technically, the Huwalah would seem to fit into the Bayser category. However, the latter term usually refers to those who have recently lost their tribal organization, which is not the case with the Huwalah. The Huwalah were also functionally differentiated from the Bayser; the former were usually merchants while the latter were usually craftsmen or other workers of relatively low status. Though the Huwalah had lost their

genealogical roots and tribal authority structure, kinship was still dominant in structuring social relationships, especially marriage.

There was probably a sizable Persian population in the town during most periods. Most were merchants, and, since many were from southern Iran, they included some Sunnis as well as Shi'is. It is unlikely that substantial numbers of Indians lived in Bahrain before the late nineteenth century. Other groups of merchants and traders, such as Jews (of Iraqi origin) and Armenians, were resident in Bahrain in small numbers in the nineteenth century, though it is unclear when they might have arrived. It is likely that these and other groups came and went in response to political and economic developments.

The last sizable group in the population were the slaves, who were owned by both merchants and tribal groups. They worked in pearling and served as laborers, servants, concubines and, especially for the Asil, guards and soldiers. Most were African in origin. Though they were converted to Islam, Arabized and, more recently, manumitted (at British insistence), their descendants remain a distinct group in Bahraini society. Their African roots linger in local music, folk religion and healing cults, which they dominate. They are still referred to by the Arabic term for slave, 'abd (masc. plur., 'abdan; fem. plur., 'abdat) and many work as servants or guards for the same families who owned their ancestors.

Differences of origin, language, culture, religion, and race are culturally elaborated by all groups in Bahrain. These groups

also share a common cultural complex of "blood." This ideology, which is well developed among the Arabs of the Gulf, combines criteria of kinship, race, ethnicity and region of origin, and serves to interlink groups as well as differentiate them. It is particularly useful in "constituting," representing and reproducing, a plural order. The primary bases of definition are genealogy and reputation, but, in their absence, particular attention is paid to physiognomy and stature.

Notions of blood relationships and their entailments link the Huwalah and Bayser to the Asil. All these categories are able to legitimate origins in central Arabia, to varying degrees. It is these origins which bind these groups together, and, correlatively, it is the different degrees to which they can claim such status that separate them. Similarly, while all these groups are Sunni, differences of legal school roughly correspond to the distinctions of "Nejdi-ness." Religion and pragmatic factors have made these groups allies, especially the Asil and the Huwalah. However, the deeper characteristics binding them together in Bahraini society appear to be "racial," that is, cultural definitions of biological traits.

Sunni identity also serves as a means of distinguishing these groups from the Baharnah and the Persians. But again, racial notions underly religious differences. For the Baharnah, status definition involves religious sect, Shi'ism, and region of origin, the Eastern Province. The last criterion is interpreted racially, in accordance with the ideology of blood, and a distinctive physical type is attributed to the Baharnah.

Distinctions of language dialect are also made between Asil, Huwalah and Baharnah. Interestingly, perhaps because of the variation to be subsumed, the notion of Arab-ness itself that is used in Bahrain involves other criteria and does not appear to be a simple extension of the ideology of blood, kinship, race and geographical origins. Arabism in Bahrain is more language, history, culture, civilization and community, in a larger sense, than blood. I will refer to this level of differentiation, rather than the primordial one, as ethnicity.

There are numerous means of distinguishing between Arabs and Bahrainis of Persian descent, or ʿajam, as they are called. Though language and known or claimed origins are important in the definition of status, a typical Persian physique is also imputed. Distinctions are generally recognized, in racial terms, between Persians from the littoral and those from Fars and other parts of Iran proper. Of course, most ʿAjam are Shiʿa. This is a further basis of distinction from the Asil, Bayser and Huwalah. Though both the Baharnah and the ʿAjam are Ithna ʿAshari, racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences have, until quite recently, separated these groups in most social spheres. For example, though they celebrate Ashura together, Persian Shiʿis and Baharnah march separately in the procession. Participation is through maʿtams, the voluntary associations whose primary function is to commemorate the martyrdom of Shiʿite heroes and saints; these are organized on the basis of ethnic, village and fariq units. These boundaries have been compounded by the ambiguous political status of many Persians. Some recent events,

such as the Iranian revolution, have lowered barriers among Shi'ites to a certain extent, while other processes, such as the use of Arab symbols in the definition of Bahraini identity, further alienate Persians.

Other, minor cultural categories, such as Arab Jews and Christians, complicated the traditional mix. These small enclaves appear to have been outside the processes of status competition and identity formation occurring in the larger social arenas. They remained separate and clearly differentiated from the larger categories, by both choice and exclusion. Like Indian residents, they were in the society, but not of it. Until they received British protection, they remained in Bahrain under the tolerance of local powers or through alliances with them.

Having discussed the complex categorical distinctions present in Bahraini society, we note, first of all, that there were--and are--numerous distinctions made <u>within</u> these general categories, and second, that these categories may not be presumed to be "sections" or "compartments" of overwhelming significance or to imply extensive group formation. Kinship, family, descent and alliance mark segmentation within all categories. In traditional times, they were probably more important than the general categories themselves. While there was a high degree of overlap between categorical status and functional role or stratum--eg., Baharnah cultivators, Huwalah merchants, etc.--there were numerous exceptions. Correlatively, there has always been occupational or functional differentiation and pronounced differences of wealth within categories. This was accompanied by

a degree of organized alliance across categorical boundaries, especially among merchants. However, group formation was generally limited to the sub-categorical level, reflecting, it would seem, reliance on primordial ties in an oppressive and informal political system.

In sum, the categorical basis of pluralism in Bahrain was complex, and its means of institutionalization were economic, political and status distinctions in combination. Though there was some mobility, patterns of economic and political differentiation tended to coincide with genealogical, racial, religious and "ethnic" differences (remembering that the use of the last term is limited to the complex opposition between Arabs and Persians). There was often marked social and geographic separation of the main ascriptive groups. However, there were also many finer categorical distinctions, reflected in patterns of segmentation and group formation for social action, and a degree of cross-cutting alliance and affiliation.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

After the events of 1904, the British became impatient with local authorities and took a more active role in internal affairs. They finally acquired control of customs and appointed a British officer to run it. In the late 'teens, a reform-minded Agent introduced a new court and councils to deal with legal and administrative matters. These institutions undercut the tribal councils and courts and the ability of shaikhly minions to exact justice. Public opinion was mobilized and divided over the reforms: on one side were the Shi'a, favoring the reforms and even asking for British protection, and on the other side were the tribal groups, the pearl captains and the major merchants, most of whom were Sunnis. Violence erupted in 1923, with attacks on Shi'a villages and riots in Manama. British action was even more forceful than in 1904. The offending tribal elements were fined and several shaikhs and merchants were exiled. The ruler himself was forced to abdicate, and was replaced by a son more responsive to British advice. In the end, the sphere in which the ruler could exercise absolute authority--the sine qua non of tribal rule--was further restricted. British protection was, in effect, being extended to Bahraini subjects themselves, and the resistance to the old plural order was given both ideological and tactical support.

Having eliminated the significant opposition, the British continued with their reforms. Though the monarchy and the superordinate status position of the Al-Khalifah were maintained, the tribal prebendal order was abolished and replaced with

specialized offices and legally legitimated, permanent, heritable land titles. The government was conceived for the first time as a set of institutions outside the person and household of the ruler. The local courts were overhauled, providing for more direct British input and supervision of the application of justice. Shi'a qadis were appointed and were incorporated with the Sunni qadis into the state judicial structure. The fidawis were replaced by a regular police department (Khuri, 1980:110-115). The pearling industry was also reformed, eliminating some of the abuses of the captains and merchants. In 1926, the ruler was persuaded to appoint a British advisor to oversee the new institutional structure of offices and committees. Under the guidance of Charles D. Belgrave, who remained in office for thirty years, Bahrain began to modernize. Though many Bahrainis participated, in effect the advisor ran nearly everything; as informants still recall, he signed all the checks.

The reforms led to a number of changes in Bahraini society. There was some institutional and infrastructural development, though this was not extensive at first. The reforms in the pearl industry drove many captains and divers away from Bahrain. The end of the estate system led to the dispossession of a number of minor shaikhs, i.e., those more genealogically distant from the line of successsion. With their councils abolished, their access to estates limited and their chief livelihood undermined, many of the other tribal groups either migrated elsewhere or were incorporated into the urban population. As a result of all these changes, the society as a whole was de-tribalized, in the sense

that the independence of tribal elements was eliminated and the authority of the Al-Khalifah themselves was ostensibly transferred to the state. On the bases of detailed descriptions by Khuri (1980) and Rumaihi (1976), it seems reasonable to conclude that the reforms raised the hopes and expectations of the people, especially the merchants and Shi'a, regarding their participation in government and society in general.

In some ways, the reforms and British administrative policies reinforced the plural structure of Bahraini sociey. The Shi'a were given recognized juridical status. Significantly, the first municipal elections were organized to provide representation on the basis of the various ascriptive groups in the society--Sunni Arab, Shi'a Arab, Sunni Persian, Shi'a Persian, Jew, Indian (Khuri, 1980:240)--presumably on the model of colonial administration elsewhere. The British sought to put all parties under the rule of law, but, to a limited extent, on a categorical basis. In principle, then, it was a "segmental" system, under British paramountcy, of course. The movement of many tribal Arabs into the towns when their estates and councils were eliminated led, in time, to an enlargement of the Bayser category. Insofar as these people were generally impoverished, the term took on class elements as well as the various ascriptive ones. In fact, as these people moved into the towns, they appear to have cultivated the Sunni element of their identity at the expense of the genealogical ones. The net effects of these processes--which may be described as incentives for the articulation and elaboration of cultural pluralism--were greater

salience and a more pronounced social assertion of general ascriptive categories, especially those of religious sect. As Khuri notes, the reforms encouraged "ethnoreligious distinctiveness" (Ibid.,240). This was somewhat at odds with the attempt to establish universal legal principles.

The negative effects of the reforms on the pearl industry in Bahrain were soon compounded by the local repercussions of global economic processes. The introduction of cultured pearls into world markets by the Japanese in the late 1920's displaced the natural pearl industry throughout the Gulf and led to widespread bankruptcy and unemployment. The worldwide depression then struck at the other mainstay of the Gulf economy, trade. The future of the reforms, the solvency of the government, and even the survival of the people were in doubt.

Impending disaster was averted by the discovery of oil on Awal Island in 1932. A Canadian subsidiary of Standard Oil of California owned the concession. It called the local operation the Bahrain Petroleum Company, or BAPCO. The field was in production by 1934. Not long afterward, in 1937, a refinery was built on the eastern shore of Awal Island, near Sitra. Bahrain thus became the first country in the Gulf proper to have its petroleum resources developed. Though the reserves are small, oil has had a profound impact on the society. The development of the oil industry has simultaneously intensified and undermined the changes introduced through the administrative reforms.

Oil brought economic transformation and, eventually, closer integration into the evolving world system. Traditional economic

activities were further marginalized. The building of the refinery dealt the final blow to the pearl industry and undercut date production as well (Khuri, 1980:135-6). Higher cash incomes, changing tastes and a larger European population increased demand for imported goods, which displaced what remained of local craft production (Ibid.,139). The growth of the local market provided opportunities for both local and foreign merchants. There was an influx of Indian merchants, trading independently or representing British firms. The oil industry and the limited development of administration also brought in new groups of Indians, such as clerks and technicians.

After World War II and the independence of India, the position of the Gulf in the imperial system and the world economy changed. Though their earlier strategic interests were gone, the British continued the protectorate; they now sought to maintain the political status quo for more purely economic ends--oil and commerce. Indeed, as the international economy grew and converted from coal to oil, the economic importance of the Gulf became strategic. Bahrain was at the center of British involvement in the Gulf. The Political Residency was moved to Bahrain; British air, sea and land forces were quartered there; and Bahrain became the headquarters of a number of British commercial firms. The extraction of oil in Eastern Arabia and Qatar preceded infrastructural development in these areas, and, as a result, Bahrain came to serve as an entrepot for the central Gulf as a whole. The growing British presence led to considerable economic expansion.

British policy greatly enhanced the position of the ruling family. Shaikhs were appointed to positions on all administrative committees and boards. The British granted one-third of the oil royalties to the Al-Khalifah. The new source of income gave substance to the hollow status they had been given in the reforms. From their former position as wards of the state, and a poor state at that, the Al-Khalifah, or at least the few of them who received most of the revenue, emerged to rival the merchants in wealth. The new resources reinforced the status exclusiveness of the ruling family and encouraged an increasingly extensive and complete corporate kinship group organization. The exclusiveness of the family was--and is--maintained through the control of its members, and both exclusiveness, as marked in a material sense, and control are based on redistribution. While wealth and exclusiveness improved shaikhly status, they isolated the Al-Khalifah from the rest of society (Khuri, 1980:236-9) and created a steadily increasing demand for resources.

Oil and prosperity led to a general opening up of Bahraini society, to ideas as well as imported goods. Though traditional cleavages remained the primary bases of affiliation, the emergence of modern economic institutions led to the formation of relationships which cut across the plural distinctions in society. New political ground rules--representation, development, and continued reforms--were disseminated and became increasingly popular. The formation of these relationships and sentiments was in contradiction to the substance of British rule. Major demonstrations occurred in 1938, soon after the opening of the

refinery. The main grievances were economic: the employment of Indians in government and the oil industry and the discrimination practiced against Bahrainis (Khuri, 1980:197).[16] For the first time, Sunni and Shi'a cooperated. Nonetheless, development policy remained modest, oriented toward the institutionalization of reforms, and unreceptive to the new social issues and expectations (Ibid.,118).

The new social forces also conflicted with the interests of the ruling family. While the Al-Khalifah took a proprietary attitude toward oil and other national resources--based on old claims of right of conquest and their long effete role as protectors of the people--a growing number of these people took a communal attitude toward them. Unlike some inequities of previous eras--such as those of the mercantile class, which were individualized and could be legitimized as a product of cleverness, hard work and the will of God--the new inequities were ascriptive, collective and created by the state. In a word, like tribal rule itself, they were illegitimate.

Popular dissatisfaction led to changes in patterns of social alignments. During the reforms, the British had been supported by the Shi'a and opposed by the shaikhs and merchants. Perceived injustice turned popular sentiment against both the British and the Bahraini government. As a result, the economic dependence of the Al-Khalifah on the British evolved into a political alliance. This political alliance encouraged a re-tribalization of government. The Al-Khalifah themselves were increasingly incorporated into the government apparatus and old tribal

alliances were resuscitated, not with marriages, as in the past, but with government jobs (Khuri, 1980:238). Informal patterns of authority underlay and subverted the formal administrative structure. While the reforms had destroyed the tribal organization of the society, the substance of tribal rule continued through ostensibly "rational" governmental institutions (Ibid.,235). In Bahrain, as in India and elsewhere in the empire, the British manipulated state institutions to perpetuate their domination. Indirect rule was transformed: rather than imposing themselves upon the rulers in favor of the people, the British imposed the rulers upon the people in favor of themselves.

While demographic, social and economic changes in Bahrain expanded the social arena and broadened the bases of social relations, ideology and identity, developments elsewhere in the Arab world--Pan-Arabism, the independence of other Arab states, the formation of the State of Israel (Khuri, 1980:198), and the rise of Nasser in Egypt--heightened opposition to the British. From 1953 to 1956, a series of protests, demonstrations and riots expressed popular frustration and dissatisfaction. Though the unrest began as sectarian riots, by 1954 Sunni and Shi'a had united to articulate demands for an elected parliament, unions, and a standardized legal code (Ibid.,203). However, the opposition lacked unifying formal institutions. Leaders mobilized their followings through personal networks, which were usually rooted in sectarian or other traditional relationships and institutions. Through a policy of temporizing, manipulation and, eventually, force, the British eliminated the leadership of the

opposition, at which point the movement collapsed. Despite a unanimity of will, at one level, leaders had been unable to form a unified organization to effectively challenge the government before it took decisive action (Ibid.,200-213).

The unrest was followed by a new round of reforms, some of which may be seen as concessions to the opposition. Many of the discriminatory policies at BAPCO were ended; the activities of foreign businessmen were restricted; social services were expanded. Educated and technocratically oriented people were brought into the administration (Khuri, 1980:216). The political advisor retired under pressure, and was not replaced. At the same time, security laws were strengthened and forces expanded. The retribalization of the bureaucracy continued, especially where force, policy-making and the distribution of resources were involved.[17]

Other offices were distributed between the urban Sunnis and the Shi'a. The government incorporated members of these groups to co-opt individuals through the distribution of resources. It also sought to give the appearance of sectarian balance, and thereby enhance its legitimacy. There was still a bias against the Shi'a, both Arab and Persian, due in part to continuing discrimination and in part to their relative lack of education and skills, which was, in turn, largely a result of past discrimination. This situation improved somewhat in the 1960's.

By this time, three groups--shaikh, Sunni and Shi'a, generally meaning Baharnah--were informally understood as the main cultural pluralities of Bahraini society.[18] Though shaikhs

were legally entitled to some special privileges and the polity was a monarchy, all members of the society were formally subject to most provisions of the law and status distinctions were, in theory, irrelevant except in personal matters. However, the discretionary powers granted to the ruler, also jural, contradicted these provisions and made them unenforcable. The actual distribution of power and resources followed tribal lines of authority through personal, informal relationships with non-kinsmen. Though other groups--defined by both traditional and modern criteria--were incorporated into the administration, there was thus no real sharing of power. Public opinion did not propose a formal segmental organization so much as it opposed discrimination, the monopolization of power, and the favored position of the ruling family.

Serious political reform did not occur after 1956, and political aspirations did not diminish. Expectations remained far ahead of the pace of political development, and the consistent failure of the government to meet long-standing political and economic grievances was met with protest and civil unrest, which were suppressed. Otherwise, political activity was forced underground. It was sustained in and through the only institutions allowed by the government, voluntary associations such as social and sports clubs, ma'tams, and other religious organizations (Khuri, 1980:154-93). Such voluntary associations proliferated during the 1960's. Some of them bridged sectarian and ethnic categories, but most of them, even if formally universalistic in their orientation, tended to recruit from one

category or another. They also tended to follow lines of factionalzation or segmentation within categories. They replicated on a more formal basis the network organization of the 1950's, with the same inherent limitations. While the population was still divided by traditional categorical identities, it was also linked by more general relations and identities--social class, Arabism, nationality. Both the traditional, or narrow, and modern, or general, elements of identity, and their respective cultures and ideologies, were perpetuated in these various small-scale organizations.

There were thus two paradoxes in Bahraini social organization. While the new departments and offices of the government sought to centralize and rationalize authority, legitimate the state and build a nation, in actuality they perpetuated British control and a system of informal, tribal authority. In combination with other processes of development, they also created a popular, but immobilized, consensus in opposition to the government, a nation with an illegitimate state. At the same time, the very institutions which perpetuated the cultures and identities of traditional social categories and modern social and economic roles also served as the fora in which this popular consensus and related political aspirations were articulated. These fragmented institutions thus allowed the reproduction of three sets of cultural elements: those of traditional categorical distinctions; those of modern functional or achieved distinctions; and those of political modernism, involving only one distinction, that between the rulers and the

ruled. Bahraini society is not only peculiar in the sense that tribal politics continues within the ostensibly antithetical structure of bureaucratic administration, but in the sense that "civil" ideologies and aspirations are articulated, reproduced and developed within narrow, fragmented, personally constructed, semi-formal, non-extensive and usually ascriptive institutions and forms of association.

These contradictions were strained to the breaking point by the tumultuous events of the 1970's.

INDEPENDENCE: THE STATE OF BAHRAIN

The two major developments of the 1970's were independence in 1971 and increased revenues following the oil price rises of 1973-4. I will take up the issue of revenue and economic development in the following chapter and, for the most part, limit the discussion here to political and social issues.

The British began preparations for withdrawal from the Gulf in the late 1960's. Varying attitudes toward this eventuality indicate the prevailing configuration of social forces: while many of the people looked forward to independence, the rulers of Bahrain and the other Gulf emirates viewed it with such trepidation that they offered to underwrite the costs of administration if the British would stay. The British were in no position to do this, however, and took measures to ensure stable regimes after their departure. In the case of Bahrain, this meant persuading the Shah of Iran to relinquish claims to the islands, which was finally accomplished in 1970 under U.N. auspices, and

persuading the reluctant rulers to allow the promulgation of a constitution and the establishment of a parliamentary government. This "constitutional experiment," as it is often referred to in post mortem analyses, was a political disaster. The Constitution was promulgated soon after independence in December, 1971, and parliamentary elections were held in 1973.

Campaigning, elections and the open forum of parliamentary debate mobilized the population in general, offered opportunities for new leaders, and facilitated the coalescence of the variety of network, club and other associations and followings into larger political groupings. Three general political "blocs" soon emerged. Like earlier opposition alliances, they were mobilized through the personal networks and followings of various entrepreneurs and brokers. However, the readiness with which the political blocs emerged seems to indicate that they were quickly moving toward party formation and extensive and effective formal organization.

The groups were called the "People's Bloc," the "Religious Bloc," and the "Independent Middle." The People's Bloc incorporated a range of modernist sentiment from the lower and middle classes, usually linked to political movements and ideologies in the Arab world at-large. They shared demands for representative government, unions, a standardized legal and penal code, improvements in the status of women and the end of allowances for members of the ruling family (Khuri: 1980:219-225, 243-4). The Religious Bloc was composed mainly of conservative Shi'a. They were opposed to modernism in many ways, but united

with the People's Bloc in their opposition to the regime (Ibid.,225-9,243). Most members of the Independent Middle were merchants and entrepreneurs. Their political ideologies varied, but they all favored a free market, a relatively uncontrolled development policy, political stability, and the maintenance of the economic status quo. They usually supported the government (Ibid.,229-30,243). The only unreserved supporters of the Al-Khalifah were their remaining tribal allies and a number of conservative Sunnis.

In confronting its opposition, the government claimed legitimacy through appeals to its traditional role in the society and by offering the institutions of the modern state as a bureaucratic or rational form of legitimacy. These arguments were rejected on several grounds. The claimed bureaucratic legitimation was contradicted by the obviously tribal distribution of authority and by favoritism in the distribution of resources. The appeals to tradition were rejected not only by the Shi'a, who had never found tribal rule legitimate, but also by most Sunnis. Though it may seem paradoxical in an ostensibly Islamic society, religious rationalizations of opposition have generally been much less important in Bahrain than secular moral ones. In recent decades, the primary ideological bases of opposition, for both Sunni and Shi'a, have been modernistic notions and ideologies. From these points-of-view, the status pretensions of the Al-Khalifah and their appropriation of a very substantial portion of the national wealth were seen as unjust.

The first actions of the parliament were halting and

disorganized, as members explored the limits of their authority and the freedom of debate. The blocs often found themselves unified in opposition to the government. The decisive confrontation arose when the government introduced a new security law allowing it unprecedented measures of control (Khuri, 1980:230). The parliament came out strongly against the law. During its seasonal adjournment in the summer of 1975, it was dissolved (Ibid.,218,230). The experiment in public representation and delegation of authority was terminated as soon as it began to take itself seriously. This has, of course, represented a major public relations problem for the government.

In 1979, another event, the Iranian revolution, compounded the political situation and twisted the kaleidoscope of plural categories and social differentiation yet again. At first, Shi'ite fundamentalism attracted only conservative Arab Shi'a, mostly from the poor and working class. The Baharnah elite had been incorporated into the government or was prospering in the private sector. Much of the population was highly secularized anyway. Most Persians were quiescent, to discourage obvious political suspicions. The actions of the government--including arrest, detention and imprisonment on a wide scale--alienated many Shi'is who might not otherwise have sought a religious means of expressing their sentiments and reinforced the appeal of revolutionary Shi'ism. As in Iran, fundamentalism increasingly became a means of protest more political than religious in nature. The security apparatus, already ubiquitous, was expanded. As the government became more forceful, it set in motion an

ominous spiral of violence, alienation and oppression. This led to an aborted assassination plot in December, 1981, involving Bahraini parties with Iranian organization, training and funding.

The Al-Khalifah responded by tightening their control in the government, by appointing shaikhs as "Undersecretaries" in ministries they did not administer outright, for example. This undercut the power of both Shi'a and Sunni bureaucrats. The paranoia of the ruling family, to a certain extent justified, led it to demand ever more effusive, explicit and unambiguous expressions of loyalty. As a result, society was increasingly politicized and a broader range of the population, Sunni as well as Shi'a, rich and poor, was alienated. The current atmosphere resuscitates and reinforces the sectarian differences, boundaries and antagonisms which had become relaxed and less salient during the preceding decades.[19] In general, these events have increased religious tension and opposition to the ruling family, politicizing every aspect of social life.[20]

In the face of both external and internal threats, the government has sought support from the United States and from its Arab neighbors. The American government has enlarged its presence at the Juffair naval station, which it has used since the British withdrawal, and stepped up patrols in the Gulf. Bahrain's alliance with its neighbors, through the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), has been more fruitful: they have money and have not hesitated to offer their support. Though the avowed ultimate aims of the GCC are economic, educational, cultural, etc., its focus to date has not surprisingly been mutual security needs. Most of

the governments in the alliance have their own internal problems, and all are aware that events in one state may have effects in the others. After decades of fragmentation, the states of the Gulf have sought to explore anew the old tradition of alliance. (The old competitive relationships among states had already reappeared, not in the form of economic warfare, but in the form of sumptuary displays and wasteful duplication of development projects.) The GCC represents an attempt to balance cooperation, competition and domination among the Gulf states in the interests of supporting the governments individually in their own countries and collectively in the face of regional and global challenges. More than a century after the destruction of its predecessor, a new Gulf system is emerging.

Bahrain's new alliances have some drawbacks, though. The Bahraini government is wary of American interference in internal affairs and many Bahrainis fear Saudi hegemony only slightly less than they fear Iranian intentions. Of course, the rulers of Bahrain have achieved some solidarity with the rulers of Saudi Arabia, and it is the people of Bahrain, especially the merchants and the Shi'a, who look toward Mecca with something less than religious fervor.

This solidarity at the top and the GCC alliance in general have encouraged the ideology and symbolism of Gulf Arabism in Bahrain. The notion of the Gulf, or al-khalij, as a unit has become an increasingly important element of popular culture and identity. This identity immediately excludes the Persian population, and, insofar as it draws upon Sunnism, it excludes

the Baharnah. Insofar as it draws upon the tribal roots more prominent in the other states, it excludes the majority of Bahrain's Sunnis. These distinctions may become more important if Bahrain's rulers emphasize the criteria which link them--but not most of their subjects--to the other tribal regimes and populations in the Gulf. Given their isolation in the society, they may well be forced to do this, which would only increase the alienation of the rest of the population and sharpen religious and ethnic pluralism.

CONCLUSION

The history of Bahrain illustrates both continuity and change in the development of a plural society of extraordinary complexity. Economic structures have been an important determinant of this trajectory. It may first be noted that the emergence of an extractive, rentier and commercial economy in Bahrain--and, for that matter, most of the Gulf--is not a new phenomenon or a product of either the imperial or the modern capitalist world system. Since antiquity, the mainstays of the Gulf economy have been extraction and commerce. In earlier days, the basis of extraction was pearls; today it is oil.

Until the late nineteenth century, the basis of commerce was the carrying of trade through the Gulf or to regional markets, with numerous spin-offs in the domestic economy. Oil has allowed a significant expansion of the local market and generated a commercial boom, which, in turn, links Bahrain to the world economy through the importation of goods for internal

consumption, rather than re-export. Bahrain is structurally integrated into the regional and world economy through oil and refining, of course, but also by virtue of its position as a banking, communications and administrative center for multinational financial and service institutions, a position which contributes greatly to the local economic boom. In a way, then, not only is Bahrain's economy still commercial, but its entrepot function continues: it is not a repository for goods moving through the Gulf, but for capital. The new commodity moves not from East to West in the old pattern of trade, but from West to Middle East and, then, through "ports" like Bahrain, back to the West, where it is employed to the benefit of the West and local elites. As in the past, Bahrain's prosperity is in part based upon the local spin-offs of this carrying trade, carefully cultivated by policy. Bahrain has always been economically dependent on regional and global processes. Today, it is even more dependent—on the extraction of non-renewable resources, on foreign military capabilities, on foreign technology, on foreign imports, and, as we shall see, on foreign expertise and manpower.

Having discussed "economic" phenomena, we must immediately note that economic institutions remain inextricably linked to political, social and cultural ones. Insofar as illegitimate patrimonial government has been a constant in Bahrain's recent history, it may be argued that political institutions have played a dominant role in the society. The linkage of the political and the economic is evident in the fact that the institutions integrating Bahrain into the modern world system are political--

eg., the American navy--as well as economic--eg., Citibank. Locally, policies of rapid and unrestricted growth are a prime example of political and economic linkages. Because oil revenues are more compelling resources than estates, redistribution through political or politically manipulable institutions has become even more important than it was in earlier periods. Similarly, political control, through both formal and informal institutions, is today more centralized, extensive and effective than were the fidawis of the old system. Bahrain is a police state and its authoritarian government is becoming increasingly expansive.

As we have seen, traditional society was a complex system of ascriptive categories and sub-categorical corporate groups based on combined distinctions of kinship, race, ethnicity, religion, language, regionalism and nationality. Most of these notions, sentiments and relations remain relevant and are reproduced in social relationships, particularly those of a private or personal nature. The traditional structure of pluralism has been affected significantly by British influence and, later, modernization. The British ruled by consulting brokers from various categories and "persuading" the ruling elite to follow the consensus and interests they ascertained. Though they thereby reinforced plural structures, they inaugurated a more equitable relationship among categories. They also introduced new egalitarian and universal ideologies, which contradicted the plural distinctions. Mobility, urbanization, education, communications and the emergence of new economic and administrative institutions have all led to the

formation of new sets of bonds and relationships, incorporating and integrating the members of society. In general, like the ideologies of the British (as opposed to their practice), modernization and development have undercut traditional structures. As a result, social segmentation has diminished considerably. In sum, the continuity of some traditional institutions, like religion and the patriarchal family, has reproduced plural distinctions, while the processes of social, economic and political development have, in general, made them less salient.

Other factors and processes tend to transform these plural distinctions into more general oppositions. The political system and patterns of distribution reinforce the major categories to some extent, but they mark a more significant and growing plural distinction between the ruling family and the rest of the population. The Iranian revolution and the responses to it in Bahrain reinforce different plural distinctions, those between Arab and Persian and, more importantly, between Sunni and Shi'i. Finally, Gulf Arabism reinforces distinctions between Arab and Persian, and, potentially, between Sunni groups and Baharnah. All these factors tend to polarize the society, albeit in contradictory ways, rather than reinforce a complex structure of overlapping categorical and non-categorical distinctions; they further politicize cultural pluralism.

Bahraini society evinces all three of M.G. Smith's "modes of incorporation." While individuals are segmentally incorporated in religious institutions and universally incorporated in some

social and economic institutions, the primary mode of incorporation is differential. Universal legal structures notwithstanding, the ruling family and, to a lesser extent, other tribal groups in fact maintain superordinate positions on a collective, categorical basis. Though the state is not the only means of distribution and social incorporation, it is clearly the principal one.

However, "differential incorporation" has not been accompanied by many of the other social conditions suggested by Smith. While "regulation" has had an obvious effect on group formation, categories are neither atomized, as _per_ Furnivall, nor extensively organized, as in some plural regimes. Segmentation, social separation, the rigidity of boundaries, cultural discontinuities, and the mobilization of cultural pluralities are all limited. Thus, plural relations _per se_ do not necessarily "facilitate and enjoin" institutional or other cultural differences of overwhelming social significance. The presence of several dimensions of categorical differentiation is itself at variance with Smith's ideal-typical characterization of plural orders.

Perhaps most importantly, asymmetrical relations, and relations generally, are not _prescriptive_, but are subject to negotiation and contradictory normative evaluations and rationalizations--i.e., legitimations and the solidarities and social forces they imply. Furthermore, nodes of resource distribution recognize achievement and political loyalty--which follows class as much as sect or ethnicity--as well as

categorical distinctions. A political factor of great importance, which is undifferentiated in Smith's formulation, is the informal nature of domination and distribution, which, in Bahrain, is a transformation of tribal political institutions. These are intrinsically flexible, negotiable and diffuse, and their nature in great part explains the inconsistent enforcement of plural distinctions. If domination is in fact becoming more harsh and monolithic, it is not to be explained simply by the minority status of a differentially incorporated elite, but by the various contextual factors that have been noted in detail above. These factors, and the tribal aspect of the political process, cannot be understood unless the structuralist perspective is abandoned for one which can accommodate history, change, legitimation, the efficacy of social actors, and a good deal more complexity than Smith allows.

The situation is more readily translatable into Young's terms, with the elaborations noted in the introduction. Traditionally, complex patterns of pluralism and economic differentiation both overlapped and contradicted the cultural basis of the state. There was no legitimate consensus regarding stratification, and de facto domination was negotiated and limited. This is still the case, but under different conditions. Modernization and independence have had the predicted, expansive effects on identity, association and the normative ground rules of pluralism. Recent events have further complicated identity. As for ground rules: while pragmatism remains important, the ideological legitimations and sentiments for social and political

change have, in general, multiplied as a result of both development and recent events, though with some inconsistency. Modernization has transformed patterns of social relations, but without the emergence of extreme conditions of cultural pluralism, as in so many of Young's cases. Quite the opposite, in fact. On the one hand, the mobilization of cultural categories has been undercut by integration. On the other hand, like some other forms of competition, cultural mobilization has been prevented by political control and undercut by informal patterns of co-optation and distribution.

Given the contradictory implications of politics, development and recent events, it is unclear at this point how, or if, these various plural and anti-plural processes will be resolved. It <u>is</u> clear that the regime is, as the saying goes, stuck between a rock and a hard place. Happily, it is not our purpose here to devise evasive strategies, but merely to understand and, perhaps, to explain. Toward this end, we now turn to an analysis of the evasive strategies of the Bahraini government itself.

NOTES

1. A General Note on Sources. The history of the Gulf is not exhaustively recorded. Among the most useful early sources in European languages are travelogues and British reports, such as Niebuhr (1774), Wellsted (1838), Thomas (ed., 1856), Palgrave (1865), and Miles (1919). The primary source for the nineteenth century is Lorimer's classic Gazetteer (1908-15), published by the Government of India. Lorimer's work was based on his own observations and a series of summaries of Gulf affairs compiled by a prolific chronicler in the Indian Political Department, J.A. Saldanha (evidently a Goan). Some of these have been available (1904, 1905, 1906a, 1906b, 1906c). Another useful gazette was compiled by the British Admiralty (1915). Tuson (1979) has provided a catalog of India Office records and a brief history of British involvement through the Company, the Residency and the various Political Agencies. The British sources are balanced to a degree by Abu Hakima (1965) and Rumaihi (1980), who incorporate more Arabic sources. Landen provides an extraordinary analysis of traditional life in the Gulf and the effects of British involvement (1967). General accounts of history and more recent developments are found in Hay (1955), Wilson (1959), Humeidan (1967), Kelly (1968, 1980), Sadik and Snavely (1972), Halliday (1974), Anthony (1975), Long (1976), Peterson (1977), and Nyrop et al (1977). These are complemented by recent, popular travelogues, such as Izzard (1979) and Raban (1979). The best coverage of current events is found in Middle East economic Digest, Mideast File and the Quarterly Economic Reviews for the region published by the Economist.

The history of Bahrain is discussed in relatively few sources. Aside from sections in most of the preceding works, a few books, articles and theses have dealt with political, legal and social issues: Qubain (1955), Beling (1959), Al-Hamer (1968), Al-Baharna (1968), Nakhleh (1976, 1977) and Magruder (1978). Belgrave (1937) provides information for a critical period in Bahrain's recent history, and his memoirs (1960) provide a fascinating insight into the course and effects of British rule. Rumaihi (1976) discusses the same period from a rather different perspective, that of Bahrainis themselves. Finally, Khuri (1980) has been indispensable. He provides a relevant summary of historical material from both the English and Arabic literature. More important, his analyses of social change, legitimacy and authority are directly relevant to the issues at hand. Khuri conducted his research between 1974 and 1976 and concentrated on the local, or by-then-indigenous, elements of the population, which he was eminently qualified to study. My own research dwelt primarly on the foreign residents of Bahrain. My observations confirmed Khuri's judgments, for the most part, and I have attempted to adapt his analysis to the issues of pluralism, with a number of elaborations from my own study.

2. Arab culture is often stereotypically associated with the elaboration of the vocabulary, ideology, mythology, oral literature, and technology of camel herding; the camel is to beduin tribesmen what cattle are to the Nuer, snow to the eskimo,

etc. However, in other parts of the Arab world--especially southern Iraq, Bahrain, eastern Arabia, and parts of Oman--the date plays just as prominent a role in society and has undergone a similar cultural elaboration. Khuri (1980) discusses these phenomena in some detail. More generally, the areas mentioned appear to represent a "culture area" in many ways.

3. Like the camel and the date, pearl fishing and seafaring are subject to rich development and elaboration in Arab culture, and represent important elements of Arab society and civilization. On pearling, see Rumaihi (1976, 1980), Khuri (1980), and Lorimer (I: Appendix). On Arab seafaring, see Villers (1940, 1948), Hourani (1951) and Landen (1967).

4. The size of the main site and the presence of thousands of tumuli, apparently used for reburial, indicate that Bahrain was significant regionally for both commercial and ritual or religious reasons. Bahrain is commonly understood to have been the fabled Dilmun, to which Gilgamesh journeyed in search of the Tree of Life. This mythical association is commemorated in the names of various establishments in modern Bahrain, including a hotel and a social club (patronized mainly by British residents). There has been little popular interest in this significant pre-Islamic past and no discernible attempt by the government to exploit it, unlike the cases of Iran, recently, and Egypt, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

5. While the Portuguese held Bahrain, they built a large fortress. This still stands, in an advanced state of decay, and is, in fact, the qala'at under which the remains of ancient Dilmun were found and for which the archeological site was named.

6. The leader of the Arabs from the Iranian coast was a certain Shaikh Nasir, then Governor of Abu Shahr. He held both territories in a tributary relationship to Karim Khan Zand in Shiraz, which he immediately defaulted (Lorimer, I:837). Means of debt collection being what they were, Shaikh Nasir was imprisoned until a negotiated amount of revenue was paid. Until the Utub conquest, the Arabs of Abu Shahr and their allies ruled Bahrain, sometimes jointly, sometimes separately (Niebuhr, 1774:285-6).

7. The chaotic situation in the Gulf during the eighteenth century was no doubt in part a response to the absence of a hegemonic power in the area. This allowed more open competition to control trade, which, interestingly, increased during the first phase of European penetration (Abu Hakima, 1965:26-32, 43; Khuri, 1980:18-9). Of course, this increase was only temporary, but by the time declining trade did begin to have an impact, the British were already restraining competition.

The importance of Oman should not be underestimated. Though the Utub dominated trade within the Gulf, Oman was the dominant Arab commercial and political power in the Indian Ocean and in the long-distance trade. Masqat remained the main entrepot and the center of the pearl market. To a great extent, the Utub operated out of and were dependent on this emporium. In later

years, Omani ships carried European rather than Indian-produced goods. Nonetheless, until the whole system was destroyed, they carried a substantial portion of the trade to and from the Gulf (Landen, 1967:65).

8. These events have undergone some cultural elaboration. The leader of the attack is now enrolled in the hagiography of the Al-Khalifah as "Ahmad the Conqueror." The alliance between the Utub of Kuwait and Zubara is recalled to reinforce genealogical links and continuing political and economic ties between the Al-Khalifah, the Al-Sabah, and the states they rule.

9. The advent of steam service to the Gulf--like telegraph communications, naval power and administration--was not an independent development or an extension of technology from Britain itself, but an effect of the modernization of the Indian economy in Gulf waters. British shipping became dominant almost overnight, with an unanticipated assist from international political and economic forces. The worldwide cotton boom during the American civil war was profitable to both Arab sailors and British steamers. However, during the recession which followed the war, when trade was cut in half, the steamers reduced their rates. As a result, Arab shippers lost their share of the market. When trade revived in the late 1860's, it was the cheap and reliable steamers who profited. Arab seamen were limited to local distribution, marginal ocean trade, and illicit trades such as smuggling, slaving and gun-running (Landen, 1967:97-8). Thus, a system in operation for centuries was marginalized in one brief business cycle.

10. While the British were the ultimate beneficiaries of these developments, the immediate beneficiaries were, in many cases, Indian merchants. After centuries of withdrawal, they returned to the Gulf in force. By the 1870's, they had received reliable protection, exemption from local laws, and freedom in business and personal matters. British companies took over shipping and Indians inherited the mercantile sector; Arab merchants "retreated to their date groves" (Landen, 1967:157). The Arab mercantile sector remained strongest in the north, where fewer Indians operated and British influence was balanced by the Ottomans in Iraq.

British protection and other privileges undoubtedly encouraged and helped Indian merchants, but there were other factors as well. They had good commercial networks in India, access to capital, and knowledge of new markets, new methods and new forms of communication (Landen, 1967:102). In addition to utilizing their own connections in India, Indian merchants benefitted from the unwillingness of most European companies to send representatives to the Gulf by acting as agents for these companies. The "managing agent system" became a central institution of the mature imperial economy. The system, which was based upon product monopolies for agents, was supported by British control of shipping and, later, of customs and importing (Ibid.,135-7). The system was, expectedly, one of the first targets of local nationalist sentiment, and was eventually taken

over by Arab merchants. During my tenure in Bahrain, product monopolies were still a feature of the market system, but this time they were supported by the Bahraini government rather than the British.

In the late nineteenth century, Indians not only came to dominate importing, exporting, wholesaling, retailing and the distribution of European goods, but became bankers and government officials as well. Their position was strongest in Oman. Indians acquired control of customs in some ports, including Masqat and Manama. Through this connection and by virtue of their position as the principal bankers for rulers--the British were typically niggardly in their support of the dependencies they had created--Indians often had a great deal of political influence (Landen, 1967:144). Ironically, this led to conflict with the very authorities who sponsored the Indian presence. Indians had acquired an interest in maintaining the inefficient system the British wanted to change. In general, they negotiated their way between local parties and the British, thus playing the classic role of the "middleman minority" (Bonacich, 1973, 1980; Hamilton, 1978).

11. The developments in the Gulf during the late nineteenth century may certainly be described as a marginalization of local economies and their integration into the capitalistic imperial system. This constitutes only one phase of a long-standing and continuing dependent relationship of the Gulf to world systems. It is less clear that the processes occurring in the late nineteenth century constitute the "development of underdevelopment," in the normal sense of the term, as Ismael has argued (1979a, 1979b, 1982). With reference to Kuwait, she asserts that

> Its rapid development throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries resulted from the development of its role--productively and politically--in an emerging exchange pattern among productive centers in the region. It was the new structure of the relations of production forged by British penetration of the region that inhibited the historical process of the development of not only Kuwait but the entire region. (1979b: 170-1)

It is understood that, because of obvious ecological, demographic and technological limitations, Kuwait's development could only be linked, through a division of labor, to regional development (1979b: 170). Ismael sees a "dynamic link between productive centers and markets in the region" and "the development of an autonomous capitalist class" as an emergent process (Ibid.,159). Kuwait was linked to the regional system through a regionally oriented merchant class and a growing political alliance with Iraq (Ibid.,158). These propositions must be subjected to close scrutiny.

The extent to which the regionally oriented class was "capitalist" is mitigated by Ismael's own characterization of its Kuwaiti affiliates as merchants and her reference to the development of Kuwait as "growing mercantilism" (1979b: 158). Insofar as accumulation does not appear to have been oriented

toward production (except of ships, which Ismael fails to note), it seems useful in this case to follow common practice and distinguish "mercantilism" from "capitalism" proper. Insofar as productive forces hardly existed in Kuwait, it also seems pointless to call them either developing or underdeveloped.

It must be admitted that growth in the productive centers around the Gulf, mainly Iran and Iraq, was indeed capitalistic, though it is not clear that it was "autonomous." Abu Hakima--one of Ismael's primary sources--and others have argued that the growth of production and the increased value of trade and port traffic in the Gulf during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were largely a response to European demand for silk, cotton, carpets, etc. Economic activity in the Gulf--productive or mercantile, capitalist or otherwise--had become increasingly dependent on Europeans since the sixteenth century. European domination of the long-distance trade, the decline of the Ottomans and other Middle Eastern markets, and the direct articulation of European demand in the regional producing areas all contributed to a division of labor in world commerce and an intensification of activity within the circum-Gulf region. If the "development of underdevelopment" occurred, it began long before the nineteenth century. The marginalization and displacement that occurred during that period did not constitute an entirely new phenomenon, but the transformation of a pre-existing condition of dependence. Of course, it is evident that any argument for the autonomy of Kuwait or the Gulf itself--independent of any regional system including productive areas--is much weaker, insofar as these areas were oriented toward trade, extraction and services not just during the European era but throughout their histories.

The extent and nature of Kuwait's integration or "dynamic link" with Iraq must also be questioned. Like so many of the alliances made in the Gulf, this one was apparently little more than a disingenuous ploy to balance threatening parties, in this case the British and the Ottomans. Kuwait's agreement to fly the Ottoman flag--hardly an alliance--was in part a protest against the economic discrimination being practiced against Gulf shippers by the British. Bahrain also threatened an alliance with the Ottomans at the same time, which was understood by the British as a means of urging them to change tariff regulations in Indian ports (Lorimer, I: 881-2). It is not at all clear that Kuwait was an enthusiastic partner in the relationship. After centuries of neglect, in order to counter British activity in the area, the Ottomans had just reinforced their presence in Iraq and--in that combination of intimidation and diplomacy, threat and guile, which characterized most inter-governmental relations in the region--threatened to take Kuwait outright. A negotiated alliance, which might be repudiated at the appropriate moment, was not unknown as a means of averting violence. Kuwait's political and economic objectives, and those of Bahrain and other city-states in the Gulf, were the same as they always had been: to maintain an independent, if non-productive, role in the regional system and avoid domination by regional powers, which integration with Iraq would inevitably have meant.

Of course, there is no doubt that the "development of

underdevelopment" was in fact initiated in the Gulf, and still continues. However, it is argued here that the sequence of events followed that in other colonial areas more closely. Colonialism is usually based on extraction at first. In the process, the forces of production are transformed for capitalist purposes, only to be subverted and prevented from autonomous development. In the Gulf, the marginalization of the traditional economy preceded the period of resource extraction. This differs from the usual colonial process. However, forces of production were undeveloped in the traditional economy, and were not meaningfully developed for capitalist purposes until after the period of extraction began in the Gulf, i.e., after oil was exploited. It was at this point, following extraction and the development of the forces of (potential) production, that these forces were kept dependent and the "development of underdevelopment" can meaningfully be said to have occurred. We cannot fail to add that this was due as much to local propinquity as to domination by the centers of the world system.

12. It is interesting to note that patterns of authority emerging in Bahrain were similar to those that had developed among the Utub in Kuwait a century before. The Al-Sabah had held the greatest share of political authority in Kuwait, while the Al-Khalifah and other lineages predominated in trade and pearling. During the nineteenth century in Bahrain, the Al-Khalifah lost their mercantile function and differentiated themselves from other tribal groups, Utub and otherwise. As noted in the text, they immediately alienated the Al-Jalahimah, and they continued to alienate those who could make claims to equal status, i.e., other Utub, including subordinate lineages of their own family. Bahrain was different from Kuwait in one important respect: while tribal families became the richest merchants in Kuwait, in Bahrain they stayed in pearling or functioned as a rentier and military elite while the Huwalah dominated trade.

13. During the late nineteenth century, the British Political Resident in Abu Shahr had been represented in Bahrain by a "Native Agent," a local merchant. Finding him insufficiently influential, especially in protecting British Indian traders, and generally regarded as corrupt, the Indian Government sent a European Assistant Political Agent to Bahrain in 1900. He too was found insufficiently influential, in this case with regard to the dispute over the re-organization of customs. The post was upgraded and a Political Agent from the Indian Political Department was sent out in 1904 (Lorimer, I: 931-2).

14. In earlier times, the Baharnah of the islands and the mainland apparently maintained much closer ties than they do today, after generations of enforced separation and different nationality. During difficult periods, the residents of one place would flee to the other, usually from the islands to the oases on the peninsula. Such a migration occurred ofter the Omani invasion of Bahrain in 1718 (Lorimer, I:837). Niebuhr found Bahraini "fugitives" still, or again, in Al-Qatif (1774:294). On more than one occasion, Al-Khalifah oppression provoked similar movements.

On the other hand, Wahhabi oppression undoubtedly sometimes led to migration out of the oases. These phenomena notwithstanding, since the Baharnah were peasants and cultivators, they were much less mobile than townsmen and pearling groups.

15. The Baharnah have elaborated a "Golden Age" mythology of times before the Al-Khalifah. In one sense, the myths are a set of variations on the numerological significance of the number three. In another sense, they contain elements of theodicy, the rationalization of oppression under the Sunni Utub, and the generation of an ideology of self-respect. (See Khuri, 1980:28-9). The lot of the Baharnah in Bahrain was probably better before the eighteenth century, and exactions less drastic under Shi'a rulers, eg., the Arab tribes of the Persian littoral. There may also have been more social mobility under Shi'a rulers. However, cultural elaborations and myths notwithstanding, there was probably general continuity in the structural conditions of the peasantry.

16. See Rumaihi (1976). This subject was readily discussed by Bahrainis. The discrimination practiced at BAPCO against Bahraini employees combined patterns of hierarchy, differentiation and boundary maintenance found in both British and Indian society. The unanimity of their prejudices would seem to indicate that if ever two peoples deserved to be locked in the imperial embrace, to paraphrase Paul Scott, they were the British and the Indians. Aside from barriers limiting access to skilled, clerical and managerial occupations and wage discrimination in the jobs they did hold, Bahrainis were subjected to numerous social disabilities by both British and Indians. In the early years, Bahraini workers commuted on a weekly rather than a daily basis. However, they were not housed within Awali, the enclave, or town actually, built for employees of the oil company. European and Indian workers lived in houses and dormitories, while Bahraini workers were given huts outside the perimeter. Cooking and sanitary facilities were similarly inferior. Indian workers were ferried to and from Manama in buses, while Bahrainis were forced to ride in open-bed trucks. Bahraini workers were not allowed to use the clinic in Awali. Their movements in the town and in administration buildings were restricted. They were not even allowed to use the water coolers provided for British and Indian workers.

Bahrainis often responded with humor, in a style perhaps cultivated during many years of oppression: a Bahraini mechanic is reported to have asked his British supervisor whether he might be given a raise if he put on a bracelet (in imitation of his Sikh co-worker). On another occasion, a worker is said to have protested the humiliating searches Bahrainis were forced to undergo by presenting himself to his supervisor stark naked. Amongst themselves, Bahrainis targeted the British more directly: seeing dead fish in the water, a Bahraini fisherman concludes that a "Britisher" must be bathing in the area. The humor and self-deprecating irony mask feelings of bitter resentment toward the British and, perhaps even more, toward the status-conscious Indians, who, despite the fact that they were themselves a

subject people (and a dark-skinned people), diligently enforced the pettiest of discriminations and, in general, lorded it over the Bahrainis. Given patterns of Indian culture and the psychology of domination--the "kick the dog" syndrome, from which Bahrainis themselves were not immune--these actions are understandable, but they were seen by Bahrainis as a grave injustice.

17. As Khuri notes, "...the exercise of power and authority in government reflects genealogical depth; the closer to the ruler, the more power and authority allocated to a 'kinsman's' office, and vice versa" (1980:127). The allocation of offices is thus strikingly similar to the distribution of estates in earlier years. As the political value of an office would change during the course of social and economic development, control would pass to or from the ruling family. As the welfare state developed, the Ministry of Housing became a more important means of distributing revenue, and its control passed from technocrats to Al-Khalifah. As one might expect, the distribution of plots, grants and loans closely follows patterns of political alliance and, thus, these distributions constitute rewards for loyalty (Ibid.,121,123).

Governmental control may seek to prevent social change and development as well as orient it toward tribal ends. Until recently, the Minister of Education was a conservative shaikh who refused to modernize the curriculum to better enable Bahraini students to compete economically. The linkage between education and political dissatisfaction was well understood (except by the American AID advisor who recommended the overhaul). With typical irony, one Bahraini remarked that, of course, only the most ignorant could be Minister of Education.

18. Other groups in the society had marginal status. Many of the Jews in Bahrain migrated to Israel in the 1950's. Nearly all the rest left after the 1967 war, when local hostilities became intense.

The Persians represent a different case. Their status as Bahraini nationals is ambiguous. Due either to the rise of Mossadeq or the return of the Shah, or both, many Iranians migrated to Bahrain during the 1950's. Apparently, much of this migration was illicit. In any case, the Persian population grew considerably. Because of tensions between Bahrain and Iran, they were regarded with suspicion. Those who had been resident in Bahrain for many years and who were prosperous or thought politically reliable were granted nationality. However, even today, many have not been granted permanent passports. They are eligible for some government benefits, but not for others. Since they lack Iranian passports, they are, in effect, without nationality. For the most part, Persians have sought to be conspicuously uninvolved politically. Given the lack of opportunity for them in areas with high status, many turned to technical fields. In the 1960's and early 1970's, discrimination declined, and many advanced in the private sector or were incorporated into the government, though usually in technically oriented ministries. They are among the most highly educated and skilled members of the Bahraini work force. Others, especially

those with ambiguous civil status, are among the poorest members of Bahraini society. Since the Iranian revolution, their presence has become even more sensitive.

19. One interesting effect has been an increasing display of religiosity by many Sunnis, including the highly secularized Huwalah. Bahrain thus participates in the wave of negative reactions to the West that is passing through the Muslim world. Several factors in the current situation--the presence of many non-Arab and non-Muslim foreigners, the resurgence of Shi'ite fundamentalism, looming Wahhabism, economic and political uncertainty, and, perhaps, the realization from experience that development need not entail total Westernization--might motivate the rehabilitation of traditional identities, either out of sincere commitment or simply for public consumption.

20. Khuri could conduct his research in the mid-'70's and prepare an Arabic translation of his politically explicit work with reasonable expectations that it appear in Bahrain. The issue of legitimacy has now become so sensitive that both English and Arabic editions are banned.

Chapter Three

POLITICS, DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR MIGRATION

Before analyzing the implications of the political problems just discussed, I wish to re-emphasize the interconnections among sociocultural, economic and political issues and institutions. The Al-Khalifah claim superordinate status as Asil of pure blood. Their status is socially expressed not only through the articulation of tribal ideology, but through the maintenance of an appropriate level of material consumption. This has increased geometrically with affluence and independence, in a process of sumptuary competition within the family and with other ruling families in the Gulf. Of course, both status and wealth, in turn, require the maintenance of political control.

The counterclaims of the people have also been multi-dimensional. Though tribal ideology has actually gained greater legitimacy since independence (through "Khalijism"), the ideologies of other pluralities and, especially, modernism, assert the comparable worth of all individuals regardless of "blood." These ideologies articulate opposition to the political and economic regime of the Al-Khalifah--autocracy, distributions to the ruling family, etc.--as well as to their status claims. The political and economic bases of dissent in Bahrain have been linked since the 1930's, and the opposition has always demanded unions and a greater development of social services as well as representative government and a universal legal code.

It is not surprising, then, that the ruling family has

manipulated social institutions and its control over access to resources not just to maintain its position, but to deal with its problems. While the status claims of the Al-Khalifah do not admit compromise, political and economic ones do, to a limited extent. The rulers have brought members of other cultural pluralities into the government, and shaikhs have cultivated personal relationships with prominent individuals and constituencies (Khuri, 1980:245-6), a kind of political networking. The object is to give the appearance of consultation and participation and to co-opt individual leaders or potential leaders with political position, material rewards, and the sense of obligation that, in this part of the Arab world, still adheres in personal relationships. This policy was quite successful until the rulers became more arrogant, rapacious and repressive in the late 1970's. More generally, the government has used redistribution and economic policy as means of undercutting dissent. This was, in effect, its response to the crisis of the 1950's. Concessions were not made on issues of political structure or the distribution of authority, but attempts were made to increase opportunity and develop services.

It is my argument in this chapter that the political crisis of the mid-1970's was also resolved, or abated, through economic policy. The government was under pressure to provide opportunities and benefits for its people, to meet their economic expectations and counter their political alienation. At the same time, the government faced demands from the ruling family itself, to maintain their status consumption, and from its strongest

supporters, the mercantile and entrepreneurial elite, to encourage economic growth. The interests of these parties were, and remain, in contradiction. The interests of most of the people, and perhaps the long-term interests of the society as a whole, could be served by continuing the development policy of the 1960's and early 1970's, which was slower and more balanced. The immediate interests of the elites could best be served by unrestrained growth oriented toward infrastructure and services. With vastly increased resources at its disposal, and without the British there to force concessions on all parties, the government chose the latter policy alternative.

Rapid growth has been extremely profitable for the elites, who own rental property, receive government contracts, and dominate commerce. Of course, by overheating the economy, importing foreign labor, and turning development away from industry and production, this policy has limited the development of Bahraini manpower. To compensate for this, the government has developed a comprehensive welfare state, expanded public employment, and, in general, provided or encouraged a subsidized lifestyle for the people.

The increasing number of foreigners in the population, a direct result of rapid growth, has led to the development of yet another dimension of pluralism in the society--the distinction between Bahrainis and Non-Bahrainis. However useful they might be, all the new foreign workers also need to be controlled, both to maintain security and in response to political pressure from Bahrainis. Migration in this political context has led to changes

in the structure of the labor force. Not only do foreigners predominate in sheer numbers, but a dual labor market is emerging, with Bahrainis in the public and parastatal sectors or in positions of economc power and foreigners working as employees in the private sector. Differentiation on the basis of nationality is also made in the distribution of services and in the application of the labor laws.

The general trend, then, is toward the assymmetrical or differential incorporation in economic, social and political relations of Bahrainis and foreigners. However, this is only the general trend. The informal and illegitimate nature of tribal rule inflects this dimension of pluralism as well as those dimensions internal to the Bahraini population: the government is responsive to differences of power as well as to the claims that are implied in categorical status. Like Bahrainis, foreigners are in fact incorporated in accordance with their value to the regime and their relative power position, and these are only generally correlated with and based upon ascriptive affiliations.

As a result, the demands of government, elite and populace once again meet in contradiction: the government is, on the one hand, pressured to enforce the plural distinction between Bahrainis and Non-Bahrinis, while, on the other hand, it seeks to enforce a distinction between its friends and its foes. Some groups of foreigners--merchants, those from powerful nations, those occupationally advantaged for one reason or another, or those with powerful connections in Bahrain--are treated more favorably than others--laborers, those from weak nations, etc.--

and more favorably than many Bahrainis. As we might expect, these processes operate informally and often surreptitiously. Formally, all foreigners are subject to certain controls, but, in fact, there is differential treatment in accordance with economic stratum, nationality, religion, etc. For example, Indian workers are usually more poorly situated than other workers in similar occupations because India is weak; Indian Muslims and Christians are more favorably treated than Hindus; yet well-connected Indian merchants, who are Hindu, operate freely and with more privileges than many Bahrainis have. Of course, these facts have not gone unnoticed by Bahrainis, and, in the end, have only intensified the political pressure on the regime. To understand how the government got itself into this fix, and how it is trying to get itself out, we will now briefly examine the course of economic development in recent years.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ITS EFFECTS

GNP figures for Bahrain are not available. However, budget statistics indicate the magnitude of economic expansion in the 1970's: "development expenditure" of 5.4 million Bahraini Dinars (BD) in 1973 had grown to "capital expenditures" of 148.3 million BD in 1978. (These figures are taken from annual reports in The Economist's Quarterly Economic Review for the region, henceforth referred to as QER.) In the mid-1970's, the government initiated a gradual nationalization of some primary industries, such as oil production, refining, aluminum smelting and telecommunications. The aluminum smelter, Aluminum Bahrain (ALBA), was expanded.

Natural gas gathering and liquification were developed with 100% government ownership. The Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard (ASRY), owned jointly by the various states of the Gulf, was opened in 1978.

These acquisitions and industrial projects were expensive. Though their purpose--sustainable industrial development--was laudable, their social impact was overwhelmed by major expenditures for construction, service infrastructure, the expansion of government employment, and increased distributions, subsidies and benefits. After 1975, the coincidence of new wealth in the Gulf and civil war in Beirut led to the transfer to Bahrain and expansion of the Middle East's offshore banking industry. As its ports and facilities were modernized and expanded, Bahrain became the regional center for communications and international business. Social policy was accommodating. Like patterns of government expenditure, the development of the private sector stimulated construction, real estate and commerce. Private investors, both local and foreign, generally ignored productive industry.

This course of development might be explained in purely "economic" terms. There is an economic rationale for the policies followed: making hay while the sun shines. Calculating costs on the short-term, it is possible to argue that capital, labor and technology were, for the most part, procured from the cheapest markets. However, the long-term economic implications of these policies were clearly understood, and they were not the only policies available or considered.

Some events of the late 1970's clearly illustrate that what "economics," i.e., oil revenues, made possible, "politics," i.e., pressure from the government's primary constituents, made necessary. By 1978, a number of policy-makers, including the Minister of Labour and several Western advisors, became alarmed at the costs and effects of rapid development, especially in the labor force. Capital expenditure was cut, to a low of 125.6 million BD in 1980 (QER). The private sector was encouraged to invest in production. Efforts to train Bahrainis were initiated alongside more stringent controls on the importation of labor. The effects of these measures were soon felt: a few contractors became overextended, projects were slowed by labor shortages, rents and real estate prices tumbled. The entrepreneurial elite articulated its displeasure through personal relationships with various ministers and powerful shaikhs. A debate within the Cabinet followed, leading eventually to the resignation of the Minister of Labour (himself a shaikh from a prominent but collateral lineage) and an increase in development expenditure. However, training programs for Bahrainis had become popular. In the context of an ideology of "Bahrainization," of obvious political utility, they were expanded. The outcome of the experiment in fiscal restraint is an excellent illustration of the local political system at work.

Capital expenditure was restored to previous levels, and then increased. Under the auspices of the GCC, the Gulf states agreed to fund a number of major projects in Bahrain. A further expansion at ALBA and a rolling mill were planned. Major

industrial projects were set in motion--petrochemicals, steel pelletization, and heavy oil processing. A number of important construction projects were begun, again with outside financing--desalination plants, a causeway between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, a new suburban complex on the western side of Awal Island, and a new Gulf University. Finally, after years of restraint, a number of new licenses were granted in the banking sector. Construction was booming again.

The new boom was brief. This time the limiting factor was not second thoughts about policy, but the oil glut. Several projects were postponed or cancelled. The 1981-85 development budget was extended from four to six years. The government inaugurated a number of new revenue-raising measures, such as increasing the fees for licenses and charges for services and utilities. Rents and real estate prices fell. Bahrain remains prosperous, but continuing uncertainty about oil prices is a cloud on the horizon with political implications. Rapid growth stimulated a cycle of expansion and distribution. Expectations that this cycle continue are increasingly difficult to meet.

The general impact of economic growth during Bahrain's first decade as an independent nation was the substantial reversal of the balanced path of development that had been followed prior to 1971. Under British guidance, economic development had been relatively balanced. Investments were made in industrial expansion and diversification, as well as in infrastructure, services, commerce and administration. These policies remained in effect through the 1960's. Bahrain was still dependent on oil

revenues, but much less so than its neighbors. In fact, by the early 1970's, most of the government's revenue came from other sources, such as import duties. The opening of ALBA in late 1971, just before independence, appeared to set Bahrain on a new and promising economic course. In its own modest way, Bahrain was making some progress toward minimizing or even reversing the "development of underdevelopment" occurring elsewhere in the Gulf.

In the process, Bahrainis were being incorporated into the modern sector. Employment statistics were collected for the first time in the 1959 census.[1] They showed that foreigners represented about 17% of the population and 34% of the work force. In 1971, despite a 28% increase in the size of the economically active population, foreigners represented 18% of the population and 38% of the work force. In comparison to the rest of the Gulf, these proportions are small. More significantly, the stability of the figures indicates that a domestic manpower infrastructure was emerging and keeping pace with the modest growth of the economy.

Today, despite major investments, the economy as a whole remains dependent on government expenditure. The expansion of the parastatal sector has substantially reversed the differentiation of public and private institutions that was developing under the British. It would be inaccurate to characterize the economy as socialistic, but, nonetheless, centralized ownership and control of significant economic institutions is increasing.[2] Unfortunately, some of these institutions are not profitable, particularly aluminum and ship repair. Thus far, they have been

more important as means of distribution than as sources of sustainable economic activity. Aside from the fact that industry is not competitive in world markets, diversification and investment in the primary sector have been dwarfed by growth in the secondary and tertiary sectors. Even this growth is dependent on government expenditure and its spin-offs: contracts sustain employment, real estate values, and commercial demand. Finally, the population in general has become more dependent on distribution. This is nowhere more evident than in government employment. Between 1971 and 1981, the public sector expanded by 140-150%.[3] In 1981, 44% of all employed Bahrainis worked for the government.

The government, and thus the economy, remain dependent on oil. In 1973, oil revenue represented about one-third of the government budget. In 1975, it represented 70%, and in 1980, 80% (QER). Bahrain's domestic reserves are nearly depleted. Most of its revenue now comes from an offshore field it shares with Saudi Arabia. It is thus dependent on the Saudis to continue production in that field. Bahrain has also become increasingly dependent on outright grants from its neighbors, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in particular. Grants fund most new development projects and even some current expenditures. In recent years, grants have represented about 10% of budgeted revenue, and an undetermined proportion of non-budgeted resources (QER and IMF sources, personal communication).

In structural terms, the private sector is overwhelmingly concentrated in real estate, construction, finance,

communications, commerce and services. There are a few small factories, but these and the minority shares private parties hold in some industrial projects do not offset an emerging separation between a public industrial sector and a private service sector. Given political tensions, providing incentives to investment in sustainable economic institutions has been difficult, to the extent that it has been tried. The extraordinary profits available in commerce and, especially, real estate, have done little to discourage mercantilism and short-term planning. The private sector is encouraged to follow its ancient instincts.

Not surprisingly, given patterns of public and private investment, imports of manufactured goods and other products have increased: from 127.8 million BD in 1973 to 453.4 million BD in 1978 (Statistical Abstract, 1978). The rate of increase declined briefly, but began to soar again in 1980. Non-oil imports in 1982 were valued at 708.4 million BD (Statistical Abstract, 1982). There is some potential for import substitution on a regional basis. In the meantime, trade imbalances (and defense spending, according to IMF sources) have reduced Bahrain's currency reserves. Unproductive investments in the past and entrenched demand do not augur well for Bahrain's ability to either forego imports or find a sustainable or renewable means to pay for them.

Rapid development led to inflation, especially of real estate, construction and housing costs. The entrepreneurial and property-owning elites benefitted greatly from this inflation. The people in general have been shielded by subsidies on many items, such as gasoline and rice, and by increased distributions,

especially through loans and grants for housing. The foreign population shared the benefits of price supports but bore the brunt of other forms of inflation. Of course, these costs were to a great extent passed on. Increased costs of doing business were eventually reflected in contracts and, like price supports, ultimately were charged against the government budget.

MIGRANT LABOR

The rapid development of the last decade would have been impossible without vast quantities of foreign labor (see Table 3.1). The total employed population grew 137%, but the number of foreign workers grew 268%. By 1981, the number of foreign workers had reached the World Bank's "high-growth" projection for 1985![4] Migration nearly reversed the proportions of nationals and non-nationals in the labor force between 1971 and 1981.

The easy availability of foreign labor kept wages down. Like the stimulation of commerce and the real estate market, this has benefitted the private elite; just as Bahrainis in general have been shielded from cost-price inflation by subsidies, they are shielded from job competition by the availability of government and parastatal employment. Not surprisingly, salaries are somewhat higher in these areas than in the private sector. There has been a marginal increase in the labor force participation rate for all Bahrainis. Howver, this was accounted for solely by the entry of more Bahraini women into the work force.[5] In fact, the labor force participation of Bahraini males has declined, and unemployment has increased significantly (see Table 1).

TABLE 3.1.
POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE, 1971 and 1981

	1971 (%)	1981 (%)
Total Population	216,078	350,798
Bahraini	178,193 (82.5)	238,420 (68.0)
Non-Bahraini[a]	37,885 (17.5)	112,378 (32.0)
Employed Population[b]	58,243	137,892
Bahraini	36,311 (62.3)	57,178 (41.5)
Non-Bahraini	21,932 (37.7)	80,714 (58.5)
Recorded Unemployment[c]		
Bahraini	3.8	11.5
Non-Bahraini	1.6	1.0
Labor Force Participation[d]		
Bahraini	39.5	40.8
Males	74.2	70.1
Females	4.0	11.3
Non-Bahraini	76.7	84.7
Males	94.9	97.1
Females	19.9	35.4

[a]Despite a significant increase during the 1950's and 1960's, by 1971 the proportion of foreigners had returned to a figure very close to that found in the first census in Bahrain, in 1941. At that time, foreigners represented 17.7% of the population. Source: Censes, 1950, 1971, 1981.
[b]From the population 15 years of age or older. Source: Censes, 1971, 1981.
[c]Percentage of the "Economically Active" population in each category who are not working. Source: Censes, 1971, 1981.
[d]Percentage of the total population 15 years of age or older in each category who are working. Source: Censes, 1971, 1981.

Like economic growth in general, labor migration slowed in the late 1970's. However, it soon increased in response to the new round of projects and contracts. Many of these are still under construction, and the economy remains so overheated that foreign workers continue to pour in.[6] It is not clear who will man the new industrial projects when they are finished, given the constraints limiting the productive expansion of the local labor force. It is possible that the proportion of foreign workers in the labor force will increase significantly before it declines, if, indeed, that occurs in the near future at all.[7]

The structure of the labor force reflects the overwhelming concentration of recent growth in infrastructure and commerce (see Table 3.2). Employment is concentrated in administration, construction and services. Bahrainis have moved out of the private sector and into the public and parastatal sectors.[8] Oil and gas, "Basic Metals" (i.e., aluminum), and communications are predominantly Bahraini. Construction and the restaurant and hotel business are overwhelmingly foreign. In commerce, while most proprietors are Bahraini, most employees are Non-Bahraini. These patterns of employment signify the emergence in Bahrain of a dual labor market.[9] Bahrainis tend to be concentrated in positions of economic power or follow the lines of politico-economic distribution, i.e., as merchants and proprietors or as employees in the public and parastatal sector. As new industrial projects are completed, Bahrainis may even be displaced in the parastatal sector. Non-Bahrainis are increasingly segregated and made subordinate to Bahrainis as employees in the private sector.

TABLE 3.2. SELECTED CATEGORIES IN THE LABOR FORCE, 1981[a]

	Bahraini (%)	Non-Bahraini (%)	Total
"Employment Status"			
Government and Semi-Government Employees	25,130 (66.6)	12,628 (33.4)	37,758
Private Company Employees	19,116 (24.7)	58,193 (75.3)	77,309
Paid Servants	82 (2.5)	7007 (97.5)	7189
"Type of Economic Activity"[b]			
Petroleum and Natural Gas	3276 (76.5)	1009 (23.5)	4285
Basic Metal Industries	1411 (61.8)	871 (38.2)	2282
Fabricated Metals, Shipbuilding and Repair	930 (36.0)	1650 (64.0)	2580
Construction	3813 (13.1)	25,214 (86.9)	29,027
Wholesale and Retail, Employers and Self-Employed	3528 (83.2)	709 (16.7)	4237
Wholesale and Retail, Employees	1788 (17.6)	8383 (82.4)	10,171
Restaurants and Hotels	277 (7.4)	3454 (92.6)	3731
Financial Institutions	2319 (59.3)	1592 (40.7)	3911
Communications	1428 (77.7)	411 (22.3)	1839

[a]All figures from the employed population, 15 years of age or older. Source: Census, 1981.
[b]These figures are adjusted to remove workers in these categories who are employed by the government. They are intended as some measure of the private sector. Unfortunately, since parastatal companies are counted as private in the census, it is impossible to clearly separate "public," "parastatal" and "private" employment.

Nonetheless, it is the foreigners who often have the skills. Various aspects of development, especially the expansion of the public sector, have encouraged unemployment, underemployment and inefficiency among Bahraini workers. The "development of underdevelopment" is nowhere more evident than in the Bahraini manpower infrastructure. There have been few improvements in education and basic skills. Employers prefer cheaper, less demanding and more efficient foreign workers, and they avoid the costs of training when possible.

Bahrainization has become a charade. The Ministries pretend to limit migration and enforce the laws, while businessmen pretend they are complying and Bahrainizing; the ones who suffer are the workers who are "Bahrainized" so that their employer can make a show of repatriating them only to hire another foreigner. In some cases, training programs provide certificates and status but no skills; they temporarily shield Bahrainis from competition and low wages and give the illusion of progress while subsidizing inefficiency. Even the programs which do impart skills may be on a treadmill of technization, such that Bahrainis are never able to replace foreigners. Like the costs of land development, inflation, price supports, government and parastatal salaries and welfare benefits, the costs of training are borne by the state. The net result is that foreign workers become more entrenched and Bahrainis become more dependent on the government.

The policies of rapid growth and open migration have wrought startling changes to the landscape in Bahrain, but they have also caused a number of problems. Just as the policies of

rapid growth were a political necessity, so is the control of their immediate result, the growing foreign population. This is a complex issue. The observed outcome and the subtleties of the processes of control may be attributed to the fact that the government is under pressure to both allow and limit labor migration and to make it politically safe and beneficial--or at least acceptable--to the Bahraini population. The interests of the government and its constituencies, both Bahraini and foreign, vary and are in necessary contradiction, like so much else in this society.

With great numbers of foreigners entering and exiting, the first concern of the government is security, of course. Merchants are concerned to have a cheap, skilled work force that is available when needed and easy to control. The attitudes of the people in general are less straightforward. They have become accustomed to, and even dependent upon, the availability of cheap domestic help and the services provided by many foreign workers.[10] On the other hand, they have become more sensitive about competition where it occurs, about foreigners in positions of authority--especially if they are Asians--and about the benefits and working conditions of the expatriate elite. Affluence and the welfare state have heightened materialistic and consumerist orientations among Bahrainis. Independence and other recent events have encouraged cultural assertiveness. Materialism, cultural assertiveness and long-standing politico-economic demands together prompt the application of essentially nationalistic notions of distributive justice to the

participation of foreigners in Bahraini society. Finally, in the last few years, there have been signs among Bahrainis of anxiety about cultural loss or domination.

The aspirations, frustrations, anxieties, and envy of Bahrainis are often articulated as political pressure on the government to control and further limit the role of foreigners in the society, or to at least appear to be doing so. Relations between Bahrainis and foreigners have deteriorated, and incidents of violence against foreigners are reported to be increasing. Cultural barriers are being erected. Identity, distinctions between nationals and foreigners, and the ground rules of pluralism in general are in flux.

The social, cultural and psychological impact of the growing foreign presence will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter. At this point, with some understanding of the primary needs of the government and the demands and expectations of its constituents, we turn to an examination of the means through which they are met.

THE REGULATION OF MIGRATION AND NATIONALITY

The supply and control of foreign labor in Bahrain are maintained by a series of institutions: immigration policy, the nationality law, the commercial law, the law regulating voluntary associations, and the labor law. Save the first, all are technically elements of the jural code. However, it should not be assumed that they are universally or equitably applied. The laws are slackly drafted, allowing for a wide area of "administrative

discretion," in the words of a British lawyer working in Bahrain, i.e., manipulation in accordance with the demands of tribal authority and informal, personal relationships. They are also associated with a variety of extra-legal and, in some cases, illegal practices and customs.

Immigration policy is formulated through consultations among various ministries, with input from influential shaikhs, merchants, entrepreneurs and Western advisors. The most powerful party in these negotiations--and the primary instrument of the policy--is the Directorate of Immigration of the Ministry of Interior. The Directorate is under strict tribal control and, not unexpectedly, the policy is not a matter of public record. Nonetheless, its outlines can reasonably be deduced from their effects. In general, the government has been quite successful in avoiding threats to public security from foreigners. The foreign population is diverse. Conditions in the international labor market--i.e., oversupply--make it possible to manipulate the foreign population within broad limits without causing a high degree of inefficiency in migration or greatly affecting the cost or quality of the labor itself.[11] Though the country relies on old labor markets, eg. India and Pakistan, for many needs, new markets have been explored as well.

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 present data for the size and composition of the foreign population from the 1971 and 1981 censes and from Ministry of Labour surveys conducted in 1979 and 1982.[12] The implications of these data for community structure will be discussed in later chapters. For the present, it is important to

TABLE 3.3.

BAHRAINIS AND NON-BAHRAINIS, BY REGION OF ORIGIN[a]

	1971			1981				
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Workers[b]	Dependents
Total Population	116,314	99,764	216,078	204,793	146,005	350,798	N/A	N/A
Bahraini	89,772	88,421	178,193	119,924	118,496	238,420	N/A	N/A
Non-Bahraini	26,542	11,343	37,885	84,869	27,509	112,378	80,802	22,113
Non-Bahraini Arab	13,714	3287	17,001	9136	5163	14,299	6578	4296
Asian	7404	4810	12,214	69,710	16,999	86,709	68,875	12,795
European	1730	1472	3202	4615	4198	8813	4221	4151

N/A=Not Available

[a]Figures from Censes, 1971, 1981.

[b]Taken from statistics classifying the foreign population by "Reason of Residence", within regional categories. Not available for 1971.

TABLE 3.4.
THE FOREIGN POPULATION IN BAHRAIN
SELECTED NATIONALITIES

	1971 Census[a]	1979 Survey[b]	1982 Survey[c]
Total	37,885	50,150	56,436
Iranian	5097	703	586
All Arabs	17,001	N/A	2205
Omani	10,785	842	N/A
Jordanian/ Palestinian	1338	N/A	N/A
Egyptian	587	N/A	732
Indian	6657	23,415	32,382[d]
Pakistani	5377	13,134	9744
Other Asian	180	---	---
Sri Lankan	---	376	1019[d]
Bangladeshi	---	658	1710
Korean	---	2815	1232
Filipino	---	578	1303
Thai	---	1377	1410
British	2901	2556	2920
American	272	250	209

N/A=Not Available

[a] Total population in individual nationalities.
[b] Conducted by the Ministry of Labour. Private sector only. Workers only.
[c] Conducted by the Ministry of Labour. Private sector only. Employees only. A total of 359 non-Bahraini employers and entrepreneurs was surveyed, but not itemized by nationality.
[d] Does not include many personal servants in these nationalities.

note several security implications.

There are relatively few non-Bahraini Arab workers. There are therefore very few Palestinians, the group responsible for many economic and political tensions in Kuwait. In 1971, Omanis supplied much of the unskilled labor in Bahrain; by 1979 their numbers had dwindled. Most returned home as development picked up there. Their role in Bahrain was filled by Indians and Pakistanis. The small number of Arab workers counted in the 1982 Labour survey probably indicates that most Arabs employed in Bahrain work for the government. General observations confirm this; many Arabs work in education, health and security.

There appear to be fewer Muslim workers than might be expected, given ostensible preferential recruitment. Indians increasingly outnumber Pakistanis (see Note 6). East Asian groups are increasing in size. They provide a demographic counterweight to the ubiquitous Indians; they also provide levels of skills that are unavailable elsewhere or are available only at great cost. The Indian market has been effectively exhausted for some purposes, particularly technical skills and domestic labor. Sri Lankans, Thais, Koreans and Filipinos are hired to fill jobs that might otherwise have been taken by Indians or even by Westerners. In all these categories--Indians, Sri Lankans, East and Southeast Asians, and Westerners--Muslims are outnumbered by Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, etc.

By manipulating the origins of the work force, the government is able to meet development needs while minimizing the likelihood of alliances between foreign groups and disgruntled

Bahrainis based on Arabism or Islam. At the same time, foreigners lack an audience for any complaints about conditions. Indeed, in the charged atmosphere of development, cultural and other differences between Bahrainis and many foreign groups have become more sensitive issues, producing greater support, and even demand, for discriminatory policies.

Immigration officials also maintain effective control over residence--within the limits of graft beneficial to influential individuals. Almost all migrants in Bahrain are sponsored, and are thus legally in residence. However, they do not always work for their sponsor or perform the job for which they were recruited. These evasions of the law will be discussed below with the details of sponsorship itself. Illegal migration of the type common in the United States or in the United Arab Emirates is not a problem in Bahrain.[13] Though it has an extensive and accessible shoreline, Bahrain is such a small and closely-watched society that illegal residents do not go unnoticed for long.

Foreign communities are relatively permanent, and in some groups it is common to find individuals who have spent their entire working lives in Bahrain. However, the residence of individuals and families can be easily controlled and, if necessary, made temporary. The control over residence regulates individual behavior; in combination with other policies, this fragments the foreign population, so that even the large Indian community is no threat. Recently discussed proposals to limit the tenure of workers and legally restrict the migration of dependents would further limit the ability of foreigners to

become entrenched. (These matters are presently determined by the employer and the resources of the worker himself.) Of course, like the measures of control currently available to Immigration officials, any new restrictions would be applied in accordance with the status and power of particular foreign residents and their sponsors. Usually, the residence of foreign laborers and other unskilled workers is tenuous and uncertain.

The control of migration is reinforced by the Bahrain Nationality Ordinance of 1963, which, as enforced, provides virtually no possibility for the naturalization of aliens, whatever their origin. Bahrainis are defined as those whose fathers were recognized as Bahraini nationals, were born in Bahrain and ordinarily resided there. For the most part, the members of this category were those recognized as "Bahrain subjects" under British rule. The law does technically allow naturalization, under stringent conditions: at least 25 years residence (15 if the candidate is an Arab), knowledge of Arabic, ownership of immovable property, and being "of good character." However, no administrative means of naturalization are specified. In fact, the ruler must grant nationality and, furthermore, may disregard these conditions and grant it by fiat to anyone he chooses. Thus, despite the appearance of bureaucratic rationalization, the acquisition of nationality is determined by personal relationships with tribal authorities.

However long his tenure, the migrant almost invariably remains a "sojourner." Nationality has been granted to only a handful of individuals--some long-resident Indian and Pakistani

merchants and physicians and a few others who have given distinguished service to the government or the ruler. In most cases, the privilege has not been extended to their wives and families and is not heritable. Moreover, those granted nationality have subordinate status to prominent Bahrainis and little social acceptance among the local population in general. In these cases, the granting of nationality represents a political favor with significant financial benefits. It is an important part of the informal, patron-client, network brokerage system that links the tribal authority structure to some of the foreign communities through influential individuals, who are, in effect, both Bahrainis and foreigners. These networks can operate without the granting of nationality, too, as we shall see.

The denial of the possibility of nationality to the vast majority of the foreign population is a significant factor in defining patterns of pluralism in the society as a whole. It is a condition of the increasingly salient distinction between national and non-national. Aside from social and cultural aspects, this distinction has important practical implications: Bahrainis are entitled to a range of benefits and privileges denied to foreigners. These benefits and privileges provide further incentives for social and cultural separation and differentiation between the two categories.

THE REGULATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Among the most important privileges granted Bahraini nationals are those involving landholding and commerce.

Regulations in these areas are primarily of concern to foreign businessmen, whose relationship to Bahraini society is usually somewhat differently structured than that of other workers. Since the 1950's, it has been illegal for non-Bahrainis to purchase real estate. Exceptions are made for Saudis and Kuwaitis in practice. GCC agreements are to extend these rights to all Gulf Arabs. "Foreign" merchants, primarily Persians and Indians, held little property in Bahrain anyway, and most of what they did own had been sold by the late 1950's. The few pieces of property still in foreign hands, mostly shops and houses, are owned by long-resident Indian and Pakistani merchants. As property values in Manama have multiplied, real estate development has become a source of instant wealth for many Bahrainis.[14] Owning a bit of property enables these merchants to forego the astronomical rents they would otherwise have to pay. The ability to trade in land has been a significant condition of differentiation between local and foreign mercantile groups, just as eligibility for housing grants and other distributions has been a principal material means of differentiating between Bahrainis and Non-Bahrainis more generally.

Foreign business operations themselves have been subjected to increasing measures of control. As early as 1960, foreigners were not being granted new business licenses, though there was then no law forbidding it. Foreign businessmen may still belong to the Chamber of Commerce, which they helped found, and may vote, but they may no longer hold office. Since independence, in response to pressure from established and aspiring local

merchants, there has been continuous movement toward the complete Bahrainization of the mercantile sector.

In fact, according to the 1975 Law of Commercial Companies there were to be no more foreign-controlled firms in Bahrain. Statutes specify three types of onshore business operation. A non-commercial foreign company--i.e., one supplying professional, technical or other services--may operate in Bahrain as a branch of the parent firm through a local agent. This agent holds the business license and is reponsible for formal and legal arrangements. He receives a negotiable fee for his services.

The other types of firms specified in the law are commercial companies and private companies. The former may have a number of principals in various relationships and may or may not offer shares to the public. In any case, such companies are required to have more than 50% Bahraini participation. Private companies are recorded as wholely owned by a Bahraini. In both types, commercial registration, all licenses, and all registered product agencies (see Chapter 2, Note 10) are held in the name of the Bahraini principals. The attractions of nationality should be obvious. These regulations were designed to facilitate Bahraini participation in mercantile activities, in which they had previously suffered some disabilities. This goal was achieved in some cases. The laws also functioned as means of distributing the benefits of development--in a prestigious, if non-productive, sector--to a wider range of Bahrainis, at the expense of foreigners rather than Bahraini elites. Unfortunately, their effects somewhat undercut their intended purpose: a large share

of trade is still in the hands of foreign managers, if not foreign owners. Rather than creating a new class of Bahraini merchants, the laws created a class of agents and sponsors.

Though enforcement of the commercial laws is becoming more thorough, there are some loopholes and evasions. The great British trading companies, Grey-Mackenzie and African & Eastern, were only recently forced to take local majority participation. A few influential foreign merchants with established firms, mostly Indians and Pakistanis, have kept their shops and businesses under a 1977 amendment allowing "exempt companies." Even these firms are not allowed to hold agencies, acquire new licenses, or open new premises. The category was created as a political favor to families who have had long and close ties to Bahrain and the ruling family. The traders understand that the government is under continuing pressure and that the concessions are insecure. Perceiving that their days as independent merchants are numbered, and that they will probably not be able to pass their businesses on to their sons, some have taken local partners already. The strategies of these merchants will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

In a few cases, foreign businessmen have made arrangements with Bahrainis in which the latter register firms as private companies while the former provide all or most of the capital and run the business. Though the Bahraini party legally holds the license and 100% of the assets, by agreement he accepts a lump sum or a percentage of the profits as payment for his services, such as they are. The Non-Bahraini "partner" is dependent upon

the goodwill of the Bahraini and upon the moral authority of the merchant community to enforce the agreement. This sort of arrangement is risky, but it is the only means by which an ambitious foreigner can tap the lucrative commercial market. This strategy is rarely followed by the established foreign merchants in Bahrain. Most cases that came to my intention involved relatively recent migrants who extended a relationship of employment and sponsorship by a Bahraini of some influence to include mutually profitable business operations. Like the "exempt company," such arrangements reflect the informal, personal patterns of influence, authority and resource distribution that operate in the society as a whole.

THE REGULATION OF ORGANIZED SOCIAL LIFE

The collective life of the foreign population is carefully supervised by the government under the Licensing of Societies and Clubs Ordinance of 1959. This type of control primarily affects modern, educated, professional, white-collar and skilled blue-collar workers--those who are predisposed to form voluntary associations—rather than merchants and unskilled workers. The associations and formal organizations of foreign groups are required to register with a section of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Organizations which overtly address political and labor issues are not permitted, of course. Political influence involves the manipulation of personal relationships rather than the articulation of group structures. Brokers or leaders who fail to comprehend this can easily be corrected. Those who do

understand the system recognize the limits of organization and political action. This became a serious issue in the Indian community, and will be discussed in Chapter Eight. Social, cultural and sports associations are allowed. Foreigners' schools and religious institutions are represented through associations of members, staff, parents, clergy, etc. Some religious groups, particularly Christians, have more freedom to organize than others, like Hindus and Buddhists.

Associations have proliferated in recent years as the foreign population has grown. To a certain extent, the categorical bases and organizational forms permitted in these groups reflect the ground rules of pluralism that developed under the British. Tolerance in a broad "private" sphere was institutionalized and received general acceptance in the society as a whole. The current government prefers to continue this tolerance when politically feasible. Aside from a general notion that foreigners have a "right" to such organizations, they are perceived as relieving stress and promoting efficiency and social harmony; they are not merely allowed, they are encouraged. Clubs and other associations quite effectively channel the organizational energies of most foreigners. They also reflect the complex cultural pluralism present in the foreign population.

Though there is considerable latitude in the corporate bases of voluntary associations, regulation is quite extensive in other ways. The names, purposes and constitutions of the groups must be approved by the Ministry. In one of its crowning ironies, the government requires these organizations to maintain democratic

processes--elected officers, formally specified responsibilities, regularized finances, etc.--while relegating them to political insignificance. The constitution must be provided in Arabic translation as well as in English, a considerable obstacle for some groups. The individuals who establish the associations and, later, their officers and managing committees must be approved. Bank accounts are periodically audited. In fact, when the ordinance began to be enforced seriously in the mid-1970's, the government froze the bank accounts of all unregistered groups to encourage compliance. Public events planned by the associations must be approved, as must special speakers, entertainers and material to be performed. If tickets are sold, a percentage of the receipts is collected by the Ministry for a general public welfare fund.

A few expatriate organizations maintain old relationships of patronage with the ruling family or other prominent Bahrainis. They are sometimes able to lease premises at nominal rents. Otherwise, associations depend solely on their members, and sometimes on their home governments, for funding. For those groups which must pay market rates, the costs of space are a major obstacle to organizing. These factors--influence and affluence--vary from one group to another and greatly affect their organizational potential and structure.

Foreign schools represent a special case. Technically, all residents of Bahrain are permitted to send their children to Bahraini schools. However, since few foreigners are Arab and the schools are poor anyway, most send their children to schools

operated by national associations, religious institutions or the oil company. Most of these schools use English as the medium of instruction, and the better ones are popular with Bahraini parents as well as foreigners. As the foreign population has grown, these schools have become overcrowded. In order to help foreign groups cope with the problem, the government has provided land on long leases at nominal rents for most of these schools to rebuild. Facilities are to be provided by the communities themselves. This is a very unusual case of resource distribution to non-nationals mediated through organized groups.[15]

The regulation of expatriate organizations influences the structure of the foreign communities and the way in which they are integrated into Bahraini society. The organizational requirements, the costs of space, and all the political relations necessary to get an association approved and keep it running represent conditions for group formation in the foreign population. The rights of foreigners to maintain their own religious and cultural practices are recognized. However, the kinds of identity that are encouraged and the interests that may be articulated are limited. Government control does not create or, in itself, institute particular patterns of differentiation in the foreign population, but it does reinforce categorical and organizational fragmentation in general.

Patterns of control also subordinate the privileges and activities of foreigners to the demands of local politics. The manner of supervision is not oppressive. The message of government control, to these associations and to many other forms

of expatriate activity (like dissertation research), is an ambiguous one, placing the burden of the consequences on the foreigner--do what you want, within limits of course, but use your head and keep your nose clean. It is understood that the principals will be held responsible as individuals should there be problems or irregularities in forming or running an organization or in any of its activities. Anxiety arises over the possibility of unforeseen conflicts, which, in recent years, have usually involved complaints or disagreements with Bahrainis. In these situations, political influence comes into play, usually to the disadvantage of the foreigner. A tolerant attitude on the part of the government can be overridden by political demands that it be seen as favoring Bahraini nationals. As development and the foreign presence have become more politicized and emotionally charged, these demands have increased.

THE REGULATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The most important means of integrating, segmenting and fragmenting the foreign population are the labor laws and associated practices. It is possible to receive a permit from Immigration authorities for residence in Bahrain without working or having status as a dependent of someone who is. Such an arrangement was made for me: my sponsor was the Ministry of Information. The negotiations were conducted by the Public Affairs officer of the U.S. Embassy and the Minister himself. However, most temporary residents come to Bahrain as migrant workers. Though their purpose and role are thus "economic," their

status is inextricably linked to political and other social processes. These processes both articulate a demand for particular kinds and quantities of labor and establish the conditions under which workers live in Bahraini society, with profound implications for community structure and everyday life. They affect all workers, but to varying degrees, in accordance with occupation, the manner of recruitment, nationality, or influence in Bahrain. Merchants are protected, as are most professionals and workers in modern industries. The burden of labor controls falls primarily on laborers and unskilled workers from politically weak countries. Most of these are South Asians--Indians, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans.

With the assistance of British experts, the Government of Bahrain issued a new Labour Law for the Private Sector in 1976. This has since been followed by a number of elaborations and subsidiary decrees. Some significant categories of workers--mainly government employees and personal servants--are exempted from coverage under the laws. In general, the statutes provide for tight control of the labor market and even tighter control of the foreign population. Unions are prohibited, of course. The government has recently begun the long-awaited formation of "joint consultative committees," incorporating representation from workers, management and government. Workers will be allowed to express their opinions and grievances, but these institutions will hardly be the independent unions long demanded by Bahrainis. All workers are required to obtain "Work Cards" from the Ministry of Labour. These cards specify the occupation of the worker and

are supposed to be changed if the worker takes a different kind of job. The Ministry has established itself as a national employment agency. Employers are required to submit their labor needs, and Bahrainis seeking jobs register there. Ministry officials try to match supply and demand and provide benefits for the unemployed. This centralized coordination provides officials with detailed knowledge of the labor market. However, insofar as regulation is balanced by influence and personal politics, control is by no means hegemonic or prescriptively enforced.

The labor laws grant employers considerable authority in the workplace. A forty-eight hour work week is specified. Workers may be fined or suspended for a wide variety of infractions, such as tardiness, insubordination, etc. In general, employers take a laissez faire attitude toward business and see labor relations as a private matter. Except in the major industries and other foreign-dominated companies, where the atmosphere is more formal, relationships with employees are seen as personal, rather than "rational," and as individualized, rather than mediated by organizational nexes. Employers recognize only those restraints forced upon them. As we might expect, given the balance of power and privilege in the society, these restraints are differentially applied to employers and are systematically enforced only for Bahraini workers.

A number of concessions or protections for workers have been incorporated into the law, often over the objections of employers. The numerous Anglicisms in the code reflect the authority reponsible for these provisions. Several basic ILO

conventions have been ratified and included in the law. A modest minimum wage is specified, as are overtime provisions and liberal benefits for "annual leave," i.e., vacation. (Employers argue that workers often "agree" to work days off and forego vacations; comprehending the extortion involved, the government requires that some time off be taken.) A Social Insurance, i.e., social security, program is gradually being instituted for Bahraini workers. Workers not covered by the plan are entitled to "leaving indemnity," i.e., severance pay. This is currently set at fifteen days per year for the first three years of service and one month's wages for each year thereafter (Labour Law for the Private Sector, Article 111). Employees are also required to provide medical care (in coordination with government health facilities), benefits for injuries and sick leave. The law provides for shorter hours for Muslim workers during Ramadan.

Some distinctions between Bahraini and Non-Bahraini workers are made, but perhaps fewer than might be expected. The law stipulates that attempts must be made to find Bahrainis to fill vacancies and that, under ordinary circumstances, Bahrainis have priority in hiring. Though their interests are to be represented on the joint consultative committees, foreign workers may not serve on them. They do not participate in the Social Insurance plan. The most important distinction between Bahraini and Non-Bahraini workers is the requirement that the latter have Work and Residence Permits, as well as Work Cards. In order to receive these permits, they must have a Bahraini sponsor, or kafil. This institution will be discussed shortly.

Other distinctions between foreign and local workers may not be articulated as such in the law. Since most foreign workers are not Muslims, they work a full day during Ramadan. Few Bahrainis work under contract, so regulations governing contract employees principally affect foreigners. The contract, now standardized at two years, structures the trajectory of foreign workers' lives. It is also important in the calculation of benefits.

Employers are required by law to provide various allowances for foreign contract employees, such as travel and housing. In many cases, they provide other benefits as incentives, eg., furnishings, car, children's education, etc. For the expatriate elite, these benefits can exceed salary compensation. They are highest in the parastatal companies, such as ASRY. Both salaries and benefits are usually significantly higher for Europeans and Americans than for Asians. The public sector and most parastatal companies now commonly provide Bahrainis with cost-of-living benefits, family allowances and other perquisites to compensate for the benefits given to the upper echelons of the foreign work force. The significant difference here is that expatriate benefits are economic incentives while Bahraini allowances are political largesse. The former are differentially granted in response to supply and demand as subjectively interpreted, and, to a lesser extent, status. The latter are a response to political pressure articulated through the workplace. They represent the emergence of salary differentials between Bahraini and Non-Bahraini workers. These differentials are surreptitiously effected among laborers (see below) and are already overt in the

oil company and in government employment.

There are several weaknesses and ambiguities in the law. While it states that Bahrainis and other Arabs must be hired if available, the Ministry has only one week to fill a vacancy and the employer may decide if the candidate is suited to the job. This effectively undermines the Bahrainization provisions. The rights of employers to assess fines and penalties and the calculation of wages, overtime and benefits are still matters of disagreement. Benefit provisions have been manipulated to the detriment of contract workers, i.e., foreigners. It is now accepted practice in private firms to pay out leaving indemnity and other benefits at the end of a contract, then rehire the worker on a new one. Though the worker is in fact continuously employed, legally his tenure begins anew with each contract. As a result, vacation and sick leave do not accrue and the worker never receives the increased rate of leaving indemnity.

The main weakness of the labor law is that it is not enforced, particularly in its application to unskilled foreign workers. There are some practical problems involved here, such as the training of sufficient numbers of labor inspectors. Political problems are more intractable. Sometimes it is argued that enforcement of the law would hamper development, but the chief problem seems to be the fact that enforcement would abridge the privileges and cut the profits of a poltically influential group of Bahrainis, the merchants and contractors. Well-intentioned officials at the Ministry have responded pragmatically. They bargain with employers to hire a few Bahrainis when they grant

permission to import workers. Recent decrees have required major employers to provide funds or facilities for training.

The Ministry attempts to enforce these provisions and make sure that the training efforts are meaningful and productive. Of course, their efforts in these and other matters are primarily for the benefit of Bahraini workers. The Ministry is a much more effective recourse for Bahrainis against employers than it is for foreigners against sponsors. All workers may institute proceedings at the Ministry against their employers, but foreigners do so at their own peril. When the plaintiff is a Bahraini, such hearings become a public test of the regime's commitment to equitable treatment for its people. This gives the worker some leverage to counter the influence of the employer. A Bahraini might be fined or fired, but he will probably not be thrown out of the country. In any case, he is likely to work for the government or a parastatal company, where such problems are rare, or to have other resources and opportunities.[16] A foreign worker can make no meaningful public legitimation. It is widely believed that hearings are biased against foreigners. The fact that hearings are conducted in Arabic, with interpreters, puts most foreigners at a disadvantage. Even if the plaintiff is successful, he may be fired and repatriated.

Some provisions of the law are disregarded or are enforced only on a case-by-case basis in response to individual complaints. It is technically illegal to subcontract labor without a special license; nonetheless, it is done. Profit margins on labor for government contracts are regulated; however,

like costs for materials, labor costs are over-reported. Many contract provisions are simply ignored. Workers often do not receive the wages, allowances, travel costs, working conditions, benefits, or even the occupation specified in their contracts. These abuses occur in many sectors, but are especially prevalent in the construction industry. Construction workers are easy prey not just because they are ignorant and uneducated, which they are, but because they are desperately poor. A system of double contracts--one for the worker's Embassy and Protector of Emigrants, and another specifying actual wages and conditions--has developed, with the connivance of workers themselves. As a result, while Bahraini workers receive at least the minimum wage, many Non-Bahraini laborers receive less. An official at the Indian embassy estimated that 50% of the Indian workers in Bahrain were cheated in some way.

Most of the abuse in the system of labor migration is not built into the law itself, but is a product of the relationship between employer and employee. This is but one element of the politico-economic structure of development in general, which is, in turn, based on the personalized, tribal system of authority. For a foreigner, an employer is more than an employer, he is a sponsor, or kafil. The term denotes a "guarantor." It is derived from the tribal custom in which a tribesman guaranteed the passage and safety of an individual within the tribe's territory and also stood responsible for his behavior. Current usage is ironical, to say the least.

The sponsoring relationship may vary, depending on the type

of contract and the nature of the firm. Insofar as this generally determines the mediation of authority over individuals, it is of great significance in their personal and social lives. A foreign company operating in Bahrain may sponsor its own workers, usually on contracts concluded in the home country under its laws. The company is thus subject to external authority in its labor relations. Such companies may also import their own management structures, which usually benefits workers. Proprietors of "exempt" companies sponsor themselves and family members, who are thus protected. The Bahraini government and parastatal corporations may also sponsor workers. Labor relations in these institutions tend to be formal and are open to public scrutiny and the moral authority of the international community. Such is not the case with local firms and private sponsors. Many are responsible and reliable, but many are not.

Workers may be recruited as groups or as individuals. In the former case, regardless of the nature of the sponsor, a community of interests and a coping network are created through employment. They are reinforced by group housing, which is common in the construction industry and in parastatal companies. An individual contract under a private sponsor isolates the worker from the protection of a group and removes many of the constraints which might otherwise limit the actions of the sponsor. Workers in such positions are at greater risk of abuse and exploitation. The type of contract and sponsoring relationship often vary consistently with national and sub-national categories of foreign workers. These correlations have significant implications for community

structure.

To understand the power of the sponsor and the exploitation of the worker, it is necessary to examine the migration process in more detail. Procedures vary somewhat for foreign companies recruiting their own workers and for importing personal servants. The process for most workers is as follows. In order to import labor, the employer must first submit to the Ministry of Labour a list of the number of workers he wishes to hire in each occupation needed. This may be inaccurate; in order to avoid rejection or delay, the employer sometimes requests laborers rather than the skilled workers he intends to recruit. This evasion requires the collusion of agents and, often, of workers, as well. If the employer is requesting skilled labor, officials may try to force him to hire or train some Bahrainis. Usually they are less strict with requests for laborers or workers in other occupations they are not trying to Bahrainize. Officials are also interested to establish that the employer is solvent enough to pay the workers and that he has enough work contracted to keep them busy. The efficiency and nature of the Ministry's response to an employer's request varies with his political influence.

At the same time, the employer is in touch with recruiting agents, or works through networks of existing employees and other contacts, to get the names and particulars of the individuals he wishes to hire (which may include "laborers" with college degrees). Assuming that he is authorized to bring a number of workers, the employer then submits their names to the Directorate

of Immigration. The Directorate maintains lists of former troublemakers in Bahrain and elsewhere in the Gulf. It is also in touch with authorities of various labor exporting countries to screen out undesirables there who might try to emigrate. Assuming that the candidates are not found suspect, the Directorate issues a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for each worker and sends its approval to the Ministry of Labour. The documents from these ministries together are used to issue a Work Permit for each worker.

The employer then sends the Work Permit to the individual or his agent along with a work contract and, perhaps, a ticket or voucher for travel. The worker or agent uses the Work Permit to get an entry visa from the Bahraini embassy or consulate in his country. The visa, the ticket (which the worker may have supplied himself), and the contract (which may be false) are then presented to the Protector of Emigrants of the exporting country, if there is one. In some cases, the country's embassy in Bahrain first checks the contract.

If these documents are approved, the worker then travels to Bahrain and makes his way through customs. Soon after arrival he is required to take a physical examination (free). A clean bill of health and his visa are then used to issue a Residence Permit in his passport at the Directorate of Immigration. This permit and another form from the Ministry of Labour are then used to issue the Work Card. Both the Residence Permit and the Work Card are under the sponsorship of his employer. By this time, the employee is probably hard at work. The employee is not required

to leave the country and return in order to renew the contract or initiate a new one, but all the other steps must be repeated.

Abuse and exploitation do not eminate solely from Bahraini parties, by any means, but are found throughout the recruiting and migration process. The international labor market contains vast numbers of unemployed and underemployed workers who can be made available at bargain prices through effective means of communication and transportaiton. This situation of oversupply is meaningless without the decision to allow migration (or the decision not to control it), but when that decision is made and articulated, variably regulated competition ensues. Poverty, oversupply and competition are the conditions of exploitation in labor migration.

Social, political and economic conditions in different labor-exporting countries structure varying kinds of abuses. Indeed, the worst and most ingenious abuses are perpetrated by the migrants' co-nationals. As noted, these often involve the collusion of workers themselves. Aside from participating in the double contract maneuver and migrating as laborers rather than as skilled workers, would-be employees often lie about their skills. They may be selected for migration by agents according to the size of their bribe rather than the level of their abilities. Employers often force workers to pay their own travel expenses solely as a means of protecting themselves from fraud, and later reimburse workers who prove satisfactory. Skills tests are becoming more common at major recruiting centers, as part of a general rationalization of the migration process. Problems such

as these are especially prevalent in India, and may have been one of the factors stimulating officials and employers to explore East Asian labor markets.

In Bahrain, the tribal authority system which allows employers and sponsors to evade and manipulate their obligations also shapes other abuses of an extra-legal or illegal nature. The tribal system limits graft by officials themselves: reports of Immigration or Labour employees selling NOC's or Work Permits are rare. However, tribal authority is at the root of another, increasingly common institution, the so-called "free visa." It is, of course, not free at all, at least not for the worker. Normally, a migrant works for a particular sponsor at a particular job throughout his stay. This reinforces the employer's control over workers as individuals and the government's control over workers in general. Workers are not allowed to seek work elsewhere unless, for example, a contractor runs out of work, becomes overextended, or is otherwise unable to meet his obligations. In such cases, workers may take casual or temporary employment if they can find it. This arrangement provides a practical solution to the problem for all parties involved.

A worker on a free visa is left to his own devices throughout his stay. He is the wild card in an otherwise tightly controlled labor market. The worker pays kickbacks, in a lump sum or on a monthly basis, to his sponsor for the privilege of coming to Bahrain to find whatever work he can. Workers on a free visa are sometimes said to be surprised that their sponsor has no work

for them, but, usually, they know what they are getting involved in. They are enterprising individuals, who are prepared to take several part-time jobs to maintain themselves. They often work as drivers for Bahrainis or as personal servants for Europeans, who typically lack the connections and continuity of residence necessary to bring servants through the usual channels.

Free visas--as documents--are dispensed as political favors, most often to lesser shaikhs. Established proprietors, both Bahraini and foreign, sometimes bring in extra workers under similar arrangements. As economic conditions have become more tight in the last few years, free visas--as people--are reported to be rapidly increasing in number. Laws have been passed to penalize employers who hire free visas or other "runaways," i.e., workers who have left their employers for one reason or another. (The latter term indicates something of the paternalistic attitudes held toward foreign workers and the social legitimacy of their control.) If free visas and runaways are caught, their fate may be much worse than that of their employers and sponsors. Of course, since free visas often have powerful protectors, the laws may not be enforced.

While in Bahrain, the worker is subject to the authority of his sponsor. Again, this authority is most complete when the worker is on individual contract to a private company or individual. The sponsor often collects the worker's passport when formalities are concluded and does not return it until the worker leaves. This is against Bahraini law and international diplomatic conventions. It is, nonetheless a common practice, defended as a

protection against employees absconding or fleeing with unmet obligations. This limits any reponsibility the kafil might be forced to assume for his ostensible protege. It is also a very effective method of intimidation and control.

Workers are prevented from changing jobs without the permission of their sponsors through an extra-legal institution called the Letter of Release. The only parties who can hire workers away from other employers with impunity are the government and powerful shaikhs. This control was designed to limit inflationary pressure on wages and minimize illegal residence. Ideologically, it is linked to the sanctity of the contract. At another level, it is linked to the psychology and socio-cultural significance of domination. Even if a worker reimburses his sponsor for expenses incurred in recruiting, he may not be given a Letter of Release; even in cases of physical abuse, employees may not be permitted to break a contract; even if a judgment is obtained against an employer, enforcement will depend on his power and will to resist. The employee's options are either to find a protector more influential than his current sponsor or to endure the situation. Usually, the employee must wait until the contract is finished in order to change sponsors.

But even then the objections of the current sponsor may prevent it. This can occur through an institution known as the "blacklist." As noted above, prospective employees undergo a security check at the Directorate of Immigration before an NOC is issued. The primary concern of these officials is public security. However, it is alleged that Immigration officials may

decline to issue the certificate if a former employer complains about the candidate. Whether the complaint is based on the actual misdeeds of the employee, fear that the employer's business secrets might be betrayed to competitors, the employee's refusal to pay a kickback to renew or terminate the contract, or simply on spite, it is widely believed that it can effectively "blacklist" a worker. It is not clear that the blacklist is systematically used or even that it exists as a list. It is clear that through personal relationships influential individuals can, in some cases, prevent a worker from changing sponsors or returning to Bahrain after a contract. They can even get a worker deported. Of course, these efforts can be blocked by more powerful individuals.

More importantly, it is clear that employers effectively use the threat of the blacklist to keep workers docile and prevent them from demanding their rights, such as they are. The blacklist reinforces the individualization of authority that is institutionalized through sponsorship generally. It epitomizes the linkage between tribal authority and the private elite. It thus serves the political, economic and social interests of both groups while acting as a powerful means of social control.

The sponsor can exercise an extraordinary measure of control over the employee's working life--the conditions and tenure of employment, hours, wages, benefits, allowances, etc., whether or not they are specified in the contract. The contract itself can be so rigidly enforced as to constitute involuntary servitude. The sponsor can also extend his control into the worker's private

life. He may determine when and whether an employee travels, either for leave or for other purposes, such as illness, marriage, or family matters. Because a worker's dependents are covered by residence permits from his sponsor, the latter determines whether or not the employee may keep his family with him. If housing is provided by the employer, he can effectively prevent an employee from marrying in Bahrain. His decision to provide housing or an allowance--or nothing at all--determines the logistical problems and priorities in the worker's life: where he lives, and perhaps with whom, what he needs in his daily life, etc.

The nature of the sponsoring relationship, the sponsor's power in Bahraini society, and his disposition toward the worker set the conditions under which the worker lives, producing either a happy and productive career or misery and insecurity. In the latter case, the individualized nature of domination determines the manner in which the worker may seek a remedy--through the patronage of another Bahraini directly, or indirectly through friends and influential expatriates. Sponsorship and other social controls also determine the conditions under which the worker may seek to cope with the situation--through networks or other unobjectionable and unobtrusive associations. The sponsor determines most of the material conditions of the expatriate's life in Bahrain. Legally and practically, he is the primary mediator between the foreigner and Bahraini society, the broker and institutional nexus through which the former is incorporated into the latter. His position of extraordinary power is derived

from his role in development and migration, which, in turn, is based on his political influence, his economic clout, his position as patriarch and, in general, his status in the plural structure of Bahraini society.

Sponsorship and other governmental controls are effective not only against foreign workers and their various collectivities, but also against their governments. Once again, relative power is a factor. The American ambassador is likely to be effective in seeking a remedy should one of his constituents be abused. Of course, given American influence and the occupational positions and social status of most Americans, they are less likely to find themselves in difficulty than other groups. Other countries--India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, in particular--are less successful in protecting their nationals. They are reluctant to be too demanding with local authorities, given the buyer's market in labor; they need the foreign exchange and are willing to accept certain trade-offs to get it. The problems are compounded by the fact that workers from these countries are often unskilled or sponsored on individual contracts to private Bahraini parties. For economic and geopolitical reasons, Bahraini authorities can defy these governments with relative impunity in the interests of powerful Bahrainis. They may even do so as a favor to influential citizens of these states living in Bahrain who might, for some reason, be at odds with their home governments. The defiance is made easier when there is no embassy or consulate in Bahrain, as is the case with Sri Lanka. It is not surprising, then, that nationals of

these countries do not often use diplomatic channels as means of solving problems.

The relative power in Bahrain of an expatriate's home government constitutes a moral authority in the negotiation of his status. It thus affects the treatment he is likely to receive from the Bahraini government and in the society generally, though many other factors are involved as well. The principles of the political system--relative power and influence articulated through personal relationships--channel the individual, collective, and diplomatic recourse available to foreigners.

THE SOCIAL INCORPORATION OF NON-BAHRAINIS

Prior to the establishment of British hegemony in Bahrain, when tribalism dominated the structure of society as well as patterns of authority, "foreign" or outside groups--Arab, Persian, Indian, etc.--were incorporated into the society through personal relationships of alliance or cooperation with the ruling family or other parties. They were organized as separate enclaves, and had marginal status in the society as a whole. They were under the protection of the ruler, but their welfare was as uncertain as his control over his kinsmen and allies. Moreover, they were fair game in economic warfare or other hostilities.

In many ways, incorporation and social relations were no more formalized under the British. However, patterns of authority were different. The British represented and eventually enforced a reliable standard of justice for those who fell under their jurisdiction. The welfare of foreigners, who were likely to be in

positions with high status anyway, was no longer subject to the shifting patterns of power and influence that characterized tribal politics. As it grew and became more diverse, the foreign population no longer constituted tiny enclaves. Under British protection, foreigners were no longer marginal. Aside from their dominant role in the modern economy, as protection of social, cultural and religious activities became more dependable, these activities were more overtly displayed.

The British Agents consulted, and could be influenced by, individuals as brokers and spokesmen for various constituencies. Though foreigners were given clear status as such (i.e., as non-"Bahrain subjects") and definable political rights, the British explicitly recognized no institutions representing the people's political or economic interests on a formal, collective basis. They did not distribute resources on a categorical basis through individual brokers or formal organizations. They did not even allow embassies in Bahrain. In effect, they encouraged the perpetuation of traditionally-based categories and groups without encouraging the formation of extensive or complete organizations to articulate the interests of these groups and compete in larger social arenas.[17]

The departure of the British radically altered the political equation and the means by which contradictory interests could be articulated. Pluralism and the government's long-standing illegitimacy had to be re-negotiated. Since independence, attempts to meet the demands of plural constituencies and achieve legitimation have emphasized redistribution effected through

rapid social and economic development. A consequence of these policies has been a radical increase in labor migration and the size of the foreign population living in Bahrain.

The growing foreign presence has compounded the political problem, not directly, but indirectly, through its impact on the local population. Controls on migration and the status of foreign residents have emerged to meet the often contradictory demands of rulers, merchants and the people in general. These controls, and the politico-economic factors influencing patterns of recruiting, have had an important impact on the composition and structure of the foreign population and on the lives of the expatriates themselves. This impact is not merely economic and political, affecting only material interests. Through the pressures and anxieties it creates, it touches emotion and affect, identity, ideology and culture as well. It is from this generalized sense of context, one that taps the roots of primordial sentiments as well as recognized practical interests, that we seek to understand the social dynamic in which expatriate life in Bahrain is experienced and from which its social and cultural forms emerge.

Though restrictions and boundaries are becoming more rigid, in comparison to some other Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Bahraini society today is relatively open. Until recently, there has been little residential segregation in the major urban center, other than that which might be effected by economic differentiation. Expatriates have recognized rights of association and cultural and religious expression. It is this

very openness which allows the traditional political system--tribal, personal, informal, influence-based--to pervade the lives of expatriates. Because foreigners are not insulated in enclaves, or "segments," the patronage system operating in Bahraini society is replicated in, or extends to, relations between Bahrainis and foreigners. In most cases, efforts by migrants to effect changes in their lives must inevitably lead to an influential Bahraini and must be based on individual rather than group relations.

Because acquiring nationality is out of the question and residence is indefinite, the incorporation of foreigners into Bahraini society consists in the regularizing of relations, by both law and customary practices, between the people and institutions of Bahraini society and the growing foreign population. A few groups that are small, relatively affluent, politically advantaged, or highly organized achieve a high degree of unity and security. Generally, though, the social, political and economic structures of Bahraini society and the institutions and relations that have been developed to define and regulate the social status and role of foreigners have encouraged the fragmentation of the foreign population into numerous categorical, sub-categorical and network-based forms of organization. The prohibition of political and labor associations and the minor role even of embassies limits the organized representation or articulation of group interests by foreigners.

The sponsorship system, with associated practices, channels the articulation of such interests through the informal political structure in privatized form. The sponsor may be an office of

government, a relatively independent or powerful company, or an individual Bahraini. He may be an employer or merely an agent. In the former case, customary practice usually allows the extension of the sponsor's role. The sponsored party may be a company, a group or an individual. These dimensions of variation allow different means of articulating and negotiating interests, weighted by the influence the various parties are able to muster. For both Bahrainis and foreigners, these involve their political position, wealth, nationality and personal qualities.

By allowing, and even encouraging, the formation of voluntary associations for the expression of cultural, religious and recreational interests, the Government encourages association on the basis of national or ascriptive categories. The motives here involve social control, of course, but within a pluralistic paradigm based on traditional and British models. Alien groups are allowed such forms of expression, but no political power and only informal representation. This tolerance is balanced by expectations that the foreign presence be limited.

The conditions of migration and residence exert a profound effect on foreigners as persons. In almost all cases, notions of settling permanently are effectively discouraged. Though there are exceptions in the expatriate elite, in general, foreigners live in a situation of social subjugation and well-structured insecurity. They are separated in social interaction, if not in residence, from Bahrainis, and are often looked down upon. There are ever-present problems of job security: they might be found "redundant" and sent home; their contract might not be renewed;

they might incur the wrath of some powerful Bahraini and find themselves in trouble; they face the intimidation of Bahraini co-workers and neighbors; they are increasingly likely to be subject to violence; and, even if their job is relatively secure, they are unlikely to advance in their career or profession. Most expatriates face high living costs, relative to their background and expectations, and a number of logistical problems dealing with these costs. They often face a difficult adjustment to the physical and social environment of Bahrain. This is particularly distressing for those--women as well as men--who leave their families behind to work on "bachelor" status. Of course, if they do have their families with them, they face more problems with housing, education for children, and, sometimes, protection of female dependents. Compounding, and sometimes causing, all these anxieties is the sponsor, who remains a threatening figure at best. Migration to and residence in Bahrain thus creates sets of "needs," anxieties and practical problems, in the foreign population. The means that may be used for coping with these anxieties and problems are largely defined by the context of Bahraini society. They also involve processes of identity and group formation. These, in turn, are based on the demographic structure, cultural background and organizational potential of the migrants themselves.

The personal nature and social sensitivity of many of the insecurities, anxieties and problems of foreign workers prevents them from publicly articulating their difficulties and predisposes them to seek out those with whom intimacy and trust

can more easily be established. It is not suprising, then, that "imported" categories and criteria of differentiation might figure importantly in some aspects of social organization. As one Indian said, when you give up so much to come to Bahrain to make money, "you must have your own people." In fact, the challenges that life in Bahrain may present to status and self-respect, the pressures and anxieties of social existence, may make identity even more problematical and encourage the expression of religious, cultural and pre-existing affective interests.

In the absence of organizations capable of articulating political and economic interests, foreigners are led to rely on networks to resolve practical issues and problems. The importance of networks and categorically-based voluntary associations for coping and mutual support, of an emotional as well as practical nature, insures the continuing use and relevance of the particular low-level identities and categories of differentiation that expatriates import from their countries of origin. Despite the fact that relatively more general or universalistic bases of association may exist in the foreign population, the salience of these forms and criteria is limited both from within and without.

In sum, the processes and relations through which foreigners are incorporated into Bahraini society--and, at the same time, kept distant and subordinate to it--appear to have two effects in the foreign population: they tend to reinforce the cultural categories and identities and some of the organizational predilections of foreigners; and they do not encourage the formation of extensive and complete corporate groups with

"rational," or pyramidal, authority structures representing the practical interests of their members. As context, Bahraini society limits the form of organization and creates needs which can be best met by "primordially" defined consociates. Once established, categorically based relations and associations reproduce themselves without contradiction from the context, effectively fragmenting the population. A set of mutually reinforcing factors and processes, both internal and external to the expatriate population, encourage foreigners to organize themselves in small groups based on imported categories of great variety.

By virtue of the forms of relations and associations it allows, forbids, encourages or discourages, Bahraini society and government structure brokerage, entrepreneurship, and the distribution of power and resources. These structures constitute the second dimension of pluralism in Bahraini society, that between national and foreigner.[18]

CONCLUSION

Foreigners are no longer marginal in Bahraini society or confined to enclaves, as they were before British rule. They are too numerous--and, usually, not sufficiently important economically-- to be incorporated through relations of protection with the ruling family itself. However, by making all Bahrainis potential sponsors, the old system has, in effect, been transformed and extended to accommodate a vastly larger foreign population.

As a category, foreigners are incorporated into Bahraini society in a jurally subordinate position. Nationality is linked to a number of benefits and privileges. This differentiation has been accompanied by increasingly rigid social and cultural boundaries. A degree of corporate segmentation existed in the past as well; in this case, plural segmentation in niches or enclaves seems to have encouraged the reproduction of pre-existing cultural differences. Today, however, the phenomena of boundary maintenance--stereotypes, oppression, violence, etc.--are not the result of institutional development within separate niches, but of competition, interdependence and attendant anxieties. In fact, foreigners in general are not successfully relegated to a single, separate sphere in which institutions for foreigners as a general category might develop. Their general incorporation as a cultural category, Non-Bahrainis, is not mediated by similarly general institutional linkages or accompanied by similarly general forms of association and organization.

Through their occupations or their relationships to points of influence in Bahraini society, many foreigners overcome the legally specified disabilities and attain greater wealth, power and status than many Bahrainis. Yet, by virtue of less favorable occupations and linkages to Bahraini society, most foreigners are denied even the protections they are granted under the law. These differences in the de facto status of foreigners--the fact that they have many kinds of actual relations and positions--indicate that incorporation does not entail collective or categorical

disjunctions. In fact, it is mediated through individualized, personal relationships with Bahrainis, mainly the sponsor. As the type and status of the sponsor and the nature of the sponsoring relationship vary, so does the manner of incorporation.

The fragmentation of incorporating relations, the numerous disabilities of most foreigners, the degree of control exerted over their activities, and the fact that existing freedoms and rights are in jeopardy all point to the basic characteristics and problems of Bahraini society. All foreign parties--individuals, groups, embassies--must negotiate their way through the informal, personal relationships which constitute the decision-making apparatus in ministries and many other institutions. It is not surprising that most foreigners are at a considerable disadvantage in these negotiations.

Sponsorship and other forms of control clearly affect the general composition of the foreign population, some elements of group formation, and processes of leadership and brokerage. Groups are denied a formal political role. While an informal role is possible, it is effective only on a limited scale. In general, the foreign population may organize only for cultural expression or in coping networks. In all these respects, the organization of the Non-Bahraini population is similar to that of the Bahraini population. Of course, in their networks and cultural associations, and in their economic roles, most Bahrainis can articulate much more powerful political claims and demands than can foreigners. Bahrainis are able to legitimately claim a number of privileges and benefits usually denied to foreigners. However,

the presence of favored foreign groups, and disfavored local groups, indicates that the claims or rights of Bahrainis, though categorical, are not prescriptively recognized. The common use of low-level, non-political forms of organization illustrates well the pervasiveness of informal relations of authority and distribution in the society as a whole. The plural ground rules which distinguish Bahrainis and Non-Bahrainis are subordinated to those which differentiate rulers and ruled and structure status relations generally.

The various structuring factors in Bahraini society do not apply evenly to foreigners in two senses. As above, they may be affected by the power and influence of particular individuals and groups. They may also be affected by the general social and cultural background of the migrants. These backgrounds may partly determine migrants' power and influence in Bahraini society, of course, and their ability to overcome the restraints imposed by sponsorship and employment. Groups with large numbers of laborers and other unskilled and uneducated workers are the most limited in this regard. Imported cultural and social structures may either contradict or reinforce the fragmenting processes of Bahraini society, with variable effects.

However, somewhat independently of the influences of the Bahraini context, the backgrounds and resources of migrants may affect group formation and leadership and, in particular, patterns of fragmentation and segmentation within the general categories of the expatriate population. Through constraints internal to the foreign population, to be discussed in detail in

later chapters, voluntary associations are generally restricted to relatively well-paid and high status expatriates. The distribution of these workers is important in explaining group formation. For most foreigners, the most important forms of social relations are informal networks based on work cohorts, language, residence, religion, ethnicity, origin, perhaps down to the village level, or some combination of these factors. Groups differ in the distribution of these networks and in their patterns of cultural and social differentiation.

In this chapter, we have examined one "moment" of the dialectical process through which expatriate society in Bahrain is formed, the structuring of context. We now turn to the other moments of the process, the orientations and resources of the expatriates themselves, and the manner in which they interact with the context of Bahraini society to produce unique plural structures. A brief comparison of several national groups will be presented in the conclusion. However, the body of the thesis will be devoted to an analysis of the Indian population, which is by far the largest and most complex of the foreign communities. Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of group formation, in Chapters Six through Eight, we first present a history of Indian migration to Bahrain.

NOTES

1. Censes were conducted in Bahrain in 1941, 1950, 1959, 1965, 1971, and 1981.

2. Nor is the economy "capitalist," in any strict sense. Hill argues that the emergence of wage labor during this century, especially since the 1930's, and the further development of a money economy are indicators of "capitalist penetration" (1979:107n.). In fact, wage labor in Bahrain is structurally diverse. It varies by economic sector, nationality and type of contract. The overwhelming predominance of services and the fact that most employment and economic activity is ultimately based on oil revenue indicate that while there may be "capitalist penetration," there is not capitalism. The economy is based on rents and mercantilism, rather than production, and relations of redistribution and consumption dominate those of production, such as they are. These relations are at once political, social and economic. Therefore, to argue for the dominance of "modes of production"--in effect, the determination of the importance of redistribution by non-existent, or at least residual, relations of the forces of production--is, if you will, counter-productive. (See Chapter 2, Note 11.) The general arguments relating wage labor, class formation, industrial capitalism, etc., do not hold.

Our purpose is to avoid the other extreme (i.e., that of M.G. Smith), seeing "economic" relations as merely an expression of determining "political" relations. While politics may be "dominant," we argue that the structure of Bahraini society is "determined" by elements, relations, motives, and interests that are at once social, cultural, political and economic. The implication of "ground rules of pluralism" is to take a broader view in which the dominance of politics is itself seen as structured, rather than given or necessary.

3. This is a conservative estimate used here to make the censes comparable. The 1971 census provides no statistics for government employment *per se*. The estimate is based on a compilation of "Type of Economic Activity" categories from the 1971 and 1981 censes. The categories taken were "Public Administration and Defence"; "Sanitary and Similar Services"; "Social and Related Community Services"; and "Electricity, Gas and Water." The figures will include some private and parastatal employees and omit some government employees. The raw totals are as follows: 1971:14,444; 1981:34,495. The figure for "Government and Semi-Government" employment from the 1981 census, used in Table 2, is about 10% larger than the figure used here. Since the public sector was less elaborate in 1971, it seems likely that the compilation used here is a more accurate measure for that year than for 1981.

4. The 1981 World Bank study (Serageldin, *et al*, 1981), probably the most sophisticated of several forecasts, predicted that with high growth rates there would be about 81,400 foreign workers in Bahrain in 1985 (1981: 106). Other predictions may be found in Birks and Sinclair (1980a, 1980b) and State of Bahrain

(1979).

5. Unfortunately, Bahraini women remain a significantly underutilized "manpower" resource. They are educated in far greater numbers than their participation in the labor force would indicate. From primary through undergraduate levels, about 40% of all Bahraini graduates in 1981 were women. Only in postgraduate education does the proportion of men radically exceed that of women (83%-17%). There are a number of social and cultural constraints limiting the particiation of women, including the unavailability of scholarships to study in the West.

6. This may be deduced from statistics for Labor Permits, which lag behind revenue and budget growth by about one year. In 1976, 18,026 permits were granted, and, in 1977, an all-time high of 35,018. By 1980, the number had declined to 20,110, but by 1982, it had increased to 26,562. More recent figures are not available, but given the number of ongoing projects, they may be assumed to be much higher. Interestingly, in 1978, 47% (15,910) of the permits were granted to Indians and 23% (7894) to Pakistanis. In 1982, 61% (16,122) were granted to Indians and only 10% (2644) were granted to Pakistanis. We will try to account for this change in later chapters.

7. For perspective: the proportion of foreigners in the labor force is still lower in Bahrain than elsewhere in the Gulf. Migrant workers are estimated to be 70% of the labor force in Kuwait, 80% in Qatar, and 90% in the United Arab Emirates (Arabia, No. 13, September, 1982).

8. Two apparent exceptions actually prove the rule, and illustrate political subtleties in doing so. The workforce at ASRY (reflected in the "Fabricated Metals, Shipbuilding and Repair" category in Table 3.2) remains largely foreign. The industry requires highly skilled specialists, and Bahrainis have not yet worked they way through training programs in sufficient numbers to replace most of the expatriates. Moreover, despite extraordinary incentives, management has had difficulty getting Bahrainis and other Gulf nationals to remain in the lengthy programs. In the meantime, under political and economic pressure, most of the Portuguese workers who opened the facility have been replaced by other expatriates, especially Filipinos. Far from being Bahrainized, ASRY has been Asianized!

On the other hand, the banking industry has been successfully Bahrainized, or so it would appear. Banking is a highly presitigious occupation. It is both acceptable and desirable for Bahraini women. Local firms dominate commercial banking, and, for various reasons, such as language, they hire Bahrainis. Though offshore firms do not require the language skills of Bahrainis to the same extent, they have been pressured to accommodate demand for jobs in banking. They have done so, but mainly in the lower echelons. Bahrainis work as secretaries and, occasionally, as traders. They rarely hold positions as officers and are not considered for transfer and competition in the banks' international structures. Management remains foreign, mostly

European and American.

9. See Bonacich (1972); Edwards, Reich and Gordon, eds. (1975); and Hechter (1978).

Though segmented labor markets are found in both regions, the structure and effects of labor migration to Bahrain and the Gulf differ in many ways from patterns of migration to Europe in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. See Castles and Kosack (1973) and Castells (1975). A detailed comparison of the two cases is beyond the scope of this thesis, but will be the subject of future work.

10. Foreign nursemaids have long been common. In recent years, foreigners have even taken over the emotionally and religiously charged function of gravedigging, prompting one local to note that Bahrainis are now in the care of foreigners quite literally from the cradle to the grave.

11. Migrant workers in Bahrain are generally an enterprising lot, and their position in the labor force reflects their qualifications, with some exceptions (eg., college graduates working as laborers or servants). These qualities are important in the processes of migration that have occurred. However, these "supply" or "push" factors--or models based on utilitarian considerations and maximizing strategies, generally--do not explain migration. It is argued here that migration is not self-generated, but is "demand-induced" (Piore, 1979; see also Burawoy, 1976). The global condition of oversupply and the strategies and qualities of the workers are not relevant until a "decision," in some sense, is made to use migrant labor, or, as the case may be, to need labor but not use domestic resources. The articulation of Bahraini demand, which involves political and cultural as well as economic considerations and means, is discussed in the text.

The process of labor migration to the Gulf has undergone rapid evolution. Demand was originally articulated through individual employers and contractors to individuals and agents in and from the exporting countries. As demand grew, the response became more organized and so massive as to be overwhelming. Some Asian countries, such as South Korea and the Philippines, organized emigration to protect workers and to compete more effectively in Middle Eastern markets. To better insure the efficiency of migration and the quality of the labor, demand itself has become more organized. Migration is increasingly arranged on a government to government basis. Unfortunately, this has not eliminated abuse.

12. For reasons not given, the 1981 census reports do not provide information for the population or work force by individual nationality, but only by region or continent of origin. It is therefore impossible to make detailed comparisons between the 1971 and 1981 figures. To compensate for this problem, the figures for the 1971 census in Table 3.3 have been compounded to match the categories of the 1981 census. Reports from the Ministry of Labour surveys of the private sector do provide information for some nationalities of workers, but do not

give figures for the entire national populations. Some sense of the magnitude of growth in national populations may be gained by comparing the figures from the 1971 census with those from the 1979 and 1982 Labour surveys, remembering that the latter do not include non-working dependents or other residents (Table 3.4).

13. In the U.A.E., as in the U.S., most illegal migrants enter the country without formal registration. Both situations reflect a lack of political will to regulate the response to articulated demand. The problem became so serious in the U.A.E. that systematic measures were taken to regularize sponsorship in 1980. These were reported to have been effective, though they did little to reduce the preponderance of foreigners in the labor force (see Note 7, above). Illegal migration is still a "problem" in the U.S. It reflects political and economic interests similar in some ways to those noted here for Bahrain (see Piore, 1979).

14. The ruling family is in a particularly good position to exploit the real estate boom. The regularization of land titles under the British left all unclaimed land to the government, which is to say, the ruler. Land is distributed to kinsmen and supporters, who may, in turn, develop it or sell it to others, making fortunes overnight. The government has funded major dredging operations to reclaim land along the shoreline around Manama. The prime real estate thus created at government expense is then distributed. The sale and development of property has become a major source of income for shaikhs and merchants alike.

15. Of course, personal relationships with brokers for these groups were used in negotiating the lease arrangements. However, they did not involve personal politics in the usual sense, i.e., land was made available to all of the large foreign schools and not just to especially favored groups. This is not to say that political considerations were absent. They are evident in the fact that the plots are located at some distance from Manama. Most foreign schools had been located in central Manama, and moving them to suburban areas would both lessen friction with Bahrainis and free valuable land for development. In addition, most of the land in the area where the new schools were to be located was owned by prominent shaikhs, who were reputed to have received large sums when the government bought land in the area to use for other purposes. It is not unlikely that this factor was also involved in selecting sites for the new foreign schools.

16. This is not to say that there are no labor problems in parastatal companies. Indeed, they have been the scene of strikes and major organizing efforts by Bahraini workers. Problems in these companies tend to be collective grievances--over working conditions, wages or benefits, for example--rather than individual complaints about conditions specified in a contract but denied to a particular worker. On the one hand, foreign workers are much more effectively fragmented (through sponsorship) than are Bahraini workers; on the other hand, foreigners' efforts to organize are much more easily and effectively controlled when they do appear.

17. Indirect British rule in Bahrain was thus quite different from the direct colonial administration of Uganda, where resources and power were distributed to the Indian population through associations of various kinds (Morris, 1956, 1968). These distributions and patterns of authority generally were important in the formation of extensive categorical organizations in the Indian community there. The comparison with Bahrain will be developed in the conclusion.

18. Many of the characteristics of social change, development and labor migration in Bahrain appeared earlier in Kuwait--eg., tribal authority, a failed constitutional experiment, the politicization of distribution, the expansion of the public sector, increased subsidies and welfare benefits, and the underdevelopment of domestic labor. See Al-Ebraheem (1971); Abdulla (1973); Alessa (1978, 1981); Alrayes (1979); and Farah, Al-Salem and Al-Salem (1979). The differentiation between Kuwaitis and Non-Kuwaitis--which includes residential segregation, legalized wage differentials and eligibility for lavish benefits--has become so extreme that it is referred to as apartheid. Unfortunately (for the Kuwaiti government), most Non-Kuwaitis are Arabs, mainly Palestinians. Though Kuwait is much richer than Bahrain and the composition of its population, domestic and foreign, is different, so many other elements of the situation are similar that it seems appropriate to say that Bahrain is becoming "Kuwaitized" rather than "modernized." The spiral of differentiation between national and non-national that has occurred in Kuwait does not bode well for Bahrain's future.

Chapter Four

THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN BAHRAIN

Indians now constitute by far the largest foreign national group resident in Bahrain. However, this is a very recent development. Until the 1970's, Indians were greatly outnumbered by Non-Bahraini Arab groups and, during most periods, Persians. The Indian population grew steadily after the 1930's; it has grown geometrically since the early 1970's. This growth has involved major demographic shifts--age, sex, residence patterns, cultural differentiation, etc.--which have, in turn, led to changes in the structure and institutions of the community. The term we have used here, "community," is the gloss commonly used by Indians themselves for a great variety of collectivities and groups, in fact, for a great variety of types of groups. In a sense, our analysis seeks to explore the various structures or sets of social relationships to which the term community might refer. However, I am less concerned with the meaning of the term or its synonyms in varying usages than with the groups themselves, the subjective interests they represent and the exigencies to which they respond. My project, then, in this and the following chapters, is the analysis of processes of group formation--solidarity, differentiation, coalescence, leadership, action--among a culturally plural population resident in a society which is itself culturally plural, changing rapidly, and troubled by serious political difficulties.

Before beginning the discussion, a brief caveat may be

useful in orienting the reader away from stereotypical images of Indian society. It will become obvious, but needs to be clearly stated at the outset: the horizons of most Indians in Bahrain are not confined to caste or caste origins, and associated preoccupations with purity and precisely defined rank. Until very recently, most of the Indian residents of Bahrain were educated, skilled, urban and otherwise "modernized," and thus not oriented toward the expression of traditional relations in traditional terms. A full complement of castes was never present in sufficient numbers in an insulated environment such that the reciprocal obligations and elaborate social and ritual distinctions of the jajmani system could be expressed by those so inclined (Beidelmen, 1959; Pocock, 1962; Gould, 1964). Even when particular groups were present in substantial numbers, they were often not engaged in their traditional occupations.

In addition, the community contains large numbers of Christians and Muslims. Of course, this may not eliminate concerns with caste origins, exclusivitiy, etc., but, in combination with other factors, it greatly affects the manner of their conceptualization and expression. Furthermore, the community is largely male; for demographic reasons, marriage, endogamy and sexual relations cannot be given traditional salience, even if the people should be so inclined (which, despite the fact that they are in large part educated urbanites rather than unsophisticated villagers, is probably the case). Finally, Indians in Bahrain are "sojourners," i.e., temporary migrants; there is no illusion that they will become members of

the host society in any meaningful sense. The domestic sphere of their lives either has been left in India or has been only temporarily or partially brought with them to Bahrain. Even for those who have families, social relationships in Bahrain are at best a temporary extension of permanent structures in India, in which they continue to participate indirectly, and directly, during periodic vacations. These aspects of communal relations in Bahrain, and the absence of the constraints of Indian society, encourage the suspension of many aspects of status definition and differentiaton which might operate in the Indian context.

In short, it is important to emphasize the limited extent to which the "community" really is a community and the special, non-traditional--from the perspective of anthropological stereotypes--qualities of many of its members. These limitations and characteristics are due to the background, origins, and demographic structure of the population and groups within it, to the temporary residence of individuals and to the fact that the restrictions of Indian society have been replaced by the somewhat different restrictions of Bahraini society. Castes and other exclusive groups, to the extent that they <u>are</u> groups in Bahrain, must not be seen as interdependent, but as independent. Traditional attitudes have been compounded and transformed by cultural and religious diversity, education and social change.

In order to conceptualize the variation and primary social processes within the Indian population, three dimensions of opposition and differentiation may be distinguished: ascriptive categories of varying kinds; "traditional" and "modern"

orientations and styles of interaction; and prestige and socioeconomic status, which I will call "stratification." These dimensions are not distinct or mutually exclusive in social relations. The latter two are closely related, and only the first is clearly formulated in identity.

The Indian community in Bahrain is not quite India in microcosm, but, nonetheless, a great variety of ascriptive categories is represented. These categories form a variety of solidary groups, which differ considerably not only in their categorical bases, but in size, in the extensiveness and completeness of their organization, in patterns of authority and leadership, and in their social, political and economic position in Bahraini society. The primary lines of categorical differentiation and fragmentation are those of language, region of origin, and religion. Finer categories, such as caste and sect, are also relevant in some cases. Categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive or contradictory, but may be "nested" and used as situational alternatives. Individuals participate in a variety of social relations and maintain and reproduce an assortment of identities.[1] Group formation represents choice and strategy, on an individual and collective basis, that emphasizes particular identities and social relationships. The analysis of the structure of the community illustrates not only the effects of these choices, but the factors that shape them.

The growth of the Indian community has also produced collectivities of a more general kind. After all, one of the

categorical identities present is Indian nationality itself. Nationality may be less relevant than sub-categories in most exchanges among Indians, but it is often quite relevant in interaction with Bahrainis and other expatriates, including other South Asians. Nationality is the corporate basis of several organizations, the functions of which have changed over the years.

Differences between "traditional," or "conservative," and "modern" attitudes, identities, affiliations and definitions of interests are evident in sub-categorical groups, and are especially pronounced in these national, community-wide, or "All-India," institutions. The distinction between "traditional" and "modern" is not a dichotomous difference, but a gradual and continuous one. One is not either "traditional" or "modern," but is primarily involved in relations that are progressively more or less corporate or individualized in their bases, progressively more or less ascriptive than functional, progressively more or less "multiplex," etc. Degrees of traditionalism and conservatism may be distinguished, from participation in jajmani relations and preoccupation with purity and Sanscritic ideology, to the maintenance of endogamy and some practices of caste separation, to the general disregard of all restrictions. In addition, the organizational basis of traditional solidarities may vary in its extensiveness, completeness, and corporate control over individual behavior.

The parties involved in competition and conflict in Indian associations in Bahrain may be described and differentiated as

"traditional" or "modern" in terms of all these dimensions of social relations. Though the issues of conflict and the relative power of the parties involved are related to the context of Bahraini society, the patterns of alignment are to some extent the products of ongoing processes of change in Indian society (Kothari, ed., 1970; Srinivas, 1971; Young, 1976:281-326; Kolenda, 1978). Competition for leadership involves not only different sets of individuals drawing on different constituencies and bases of power, but different definitions of the community and the nature of its relationship to Bahraini society. Competition for leadership in the Indian community is, in a sense, the transplantation to Bahrain of a major opposition in Indian society. But these "internal," Indian processes have been influenced by the context of Bahraini society, its politico-economic system and the structuring of expatriate life.

Just as the leaders in the Indian community may be variably "traditional" and "modern" in their orientations and bases of support, so may constructions of the nature of social differentiation vary. As noted above, few Indians represent or mark social differences in terms of purity and rank, at least not while they are in Bahrain. However, most Indians in Bahrain <u>are</u> concerned with prestige and employ it as a means of social differentiation. This concern with prestige may be understood as a transformation of traditional concerns with hierarchy in the context of general processes of social change occurring in Indian society. Whatever its general significance there, in Bahrain, prestige is the basis of the cultural construction of

"stratification" in the Indian community and the basis of competition and exclusion both within and across general ascriptive categories.

The term commonly used by Indians themselves is "status," which is defined primarily in terms of occupation, education, influence, affluence and personal achievement. Given the structuring of opportunity in India, this may often coincide with caste or traditional rankings, of course. However, numerous exceptions--those low-born but highly placed--and the sub-categorical mixture to be found in most organizations indicate that "status" is a fundamental transformation of "caste" rather than its surreptitious reiteration. The recent migration of large numbers of Indian laborers and unskilled workers to Bahrain has undoubtedly made status differentiation more salient socially and culturally. Release from relatively more rigid hierarchies in India itself may also contribute to this concern with status. Indians in Bahrain are allowed to imitate their Indian social superiors without sanction. Yet, in Bahrain, they are not allowed to be anything other than Indians, of one sort or another. To the extent that the Indian population is itself bounded, status competition marks the refinement of Indian identity and not its rejection in favor of "universal" or Western identities.

The fact that organization is categorically-based indicates that it is still somewhat "traditional." On the other hand, the facts that organization encompasses sub-categories and erects boundaries on the basis of non-ascriptive criteria, as well as ascriptive ones, indicate that it also somewhat "modern." In

fact, in most cases, the non-ascriptive boundaries are more problematical than the ascriptive ones. Of course, the structuring of migration and residence and the various measures of social control imposed by the Bahraini context, discussed in Chapter Three, limit the extent to which these organizations and other elements of community structure can be seen as Indian at all, "traditional" or "modern."

The balance of this chapter is devoted to the history of the Indian community until 1971, the year of Bahraini independence. Independence and the succeeding economic boom radically altered the structure of the community and its position in Bahraini society. Chapter Five discusses these changes and the structure of the community in the early 1980's. The chapters that follow develop in detail some of the themes discussed above. Chapter Six discusses the Bhatia and Bohra communities, which are based on the categories of caste and sub-sect, and represent unique social forms in Bahrain. Special attention is given to the Bhatias, who have been major players in the Indian community as a whole, and, indeed, in Bahraini society itself. Chapter Seven analyzes patterns of differentiation and group formation in other categories of the population. Special attention is given here to the role of voluntary associations based on language, region and religion. Finally, Chapter Eight discusses All-India institutions and general processes of competition and leadership. In all discussions of group formation, an attempt is made to demonstrate the interweaving of contextual influences with the interests and resources of Indians themselves.

During the period to be surveyed in this chapter, from about 1890 until 1971, the Indian community grew considerably in size and economic significance. It moved from a position of marginality to one of social prominence. The Bahraini reaction to this and British rule in general led to some restrictions after the 1950's. As migration increased, the Indian population became an increasingly "modern" one. After 1947, Indians coalesced as a national category, clearly differentiated from Pakistanis and other groups. However, they did not become organized as such to a significant degree. Internally, there was some status differentiation and more categorical differentiation. This was expressed in the formation of voluntary associations of a recreational nature. By the end of the 1960's, the basic outlines of the present structure of the community had emerged.

INDIANS IN BAHRAIN: THE EARLY YEARS

The ancient association between India and Bahrain was mentioned in Chapter Two. Though it is impossible to link these early sojourners to present-day migrants, it is interesting to note that the Thattai Bhatias, the main group active in recent centuries, were from Sindh, not far from the sites of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, and were engaged in the same occupation, trade. It is unclear when the Bhatias started coming to the Gulf. Individual families claim to have been trading in Bahrain for as long as 300 years. The earliest document, a title for land bought by the Bhatias from the ruler of Bahrain, is dated 1230 A.H. (1814-15 A.D.). The Bhatias were wholesale merchants in pearls

and importers of grain and cloth. There were also a number of Lohanas in Bahrain in the nineteenth century. Like the Bhatias, they were from Sindh and engaged in commerce.

In the late nineteenth century, these Sindhi trading castes were joined by merchants and traders from Gujerat. Two family firms of Hindu sonis, or goldsmiths, were established around 1890. They prospered and were eventually followed by others. A few other Gujerati Hindu merchants came to Bahrain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but, if we may judge from their descendants, they were lone entrepreneurs and did not form small colonies. However, just such a group was formed by Da'udi Bohras, a sub-sect of Mustalian Shi'a from Gujerat. According to community traditions--which nicely illustrate the mysteries through which God's will is made manifest--a number of Bohra traders had planned to go to Africa, but decided at some point in the journey to go to Bahrain instead. Upon their arrival, in 1896, they were taken to the ruler and asked if they could read the Qur'an. Only after demonstrating their adherence to Islam were they allowed to remain in Bahrain. These Bohras were soon followed by others. Their main items of trade were pearls and cloth.

The statistics collected for Lorimer's Gazetteer included a census of Bahrain, conducted in 1904-5. The figures for the various Arab groups and the Persian population are only rough approximations, but the count of Indians and other British subjects is quite precise, if somewhat ambiguous.[2] At that time, there were 15 Bohra merchants and 69 Hindus ordinarily resident

in Bahrain (Lorimer, II: 1160). The Hindus were mostly Bhatias and Lohanas, and their numbers grew to 175 during the pearling season (Ibid.). The pearl trade in the Gulf had become somewhat decentralized, and Masqat no longer served as the locus of the market. Instead, Indian merchants travelled to the major ports of the region to buy. Bahrain had become the most prominent of these ports. Indians recall, usually from the stories of their fathers and grandfathers, the great flurry of trade during the last few weeks of the pearling season, when the merchants came to Bahrain in force. Vast sums of money changed hands and most of the year's business was transacted in a short period. A flurry of retail activity would follow as accounts were settled and new purchases made.

According to Lorimer, all the Indian merchants lived in Manama (II: 1160). The Arab residents of Manama were mostly Baharnah and Huwalah. Informants recall that the pearl market, the port, customs and all the warehouses were located there. The Indian merchants lived above their business premises in the heart of the suq and were residentially segmented from other groups in the population, Arab and Persian, who lived in the various quarters surrounding the market. An anecdote frequently told by old merchants and their descendants may perhaps convey something of the ambience of this period, which many harken back to as a golden age: if he saw someone about in the suq at night, the watchman would sound the alarm, unless the interloper were wearing a dhoti, the emblem of the "Banyan." (Though this term refers only to Vaisya traders in Indian usage, to this day it is

used by Bahrainis and other Gulf Arabs to refer to all Hindu merchants.) The Bhatias had built a temple on the land they had acquired from the ruler. Muharraq had become a sizable town, but its population was largely tribal. The Indians who provided services, like the Sonis, maintained shops in Muharraq but resided in Manama; they crossed the channel by boat four times a day--in the morning, at lunch, in late afternoon, and, finally, home again in the evening.

The merchants were not accompanied by their families (Lorimer, II: 240). As temporary residence and the absence of dependents indicate, conditions in Bahrain were harsh. Aside from social privations, the climate was unhealthy. Though some merchants did stay throughout the year, their residence was not continuous or permanent. Migration patterns were both circular and rotational. Particular individuals would remain for some time, then return to India and be replaced by another member of the firm, usually a brother, an uncle or a son.

Despite hardships, business was good until the mid-1920's. An aged Bhatia merchant estimated that the Indian population in Bahrain numbered about 500 when he first arrived in 1914. Numbers of Bhatias, Sonis and other Gujerati merchants had increased. A number of Muslim merchants and traders, mostly from the Punjab, had also become established. However, the community was no longer purely commercial.

THE BRITISH AND OIL

The establishment of the British Political Agency and of several British firms led to the recruitment, rather than spontaneous migration, of new categories of Indians in new occupations. This accelerated with the administrative reforms of the 1920's and the development of the oil industry in the 1930's. A few mechanics and skilled blue collar workers were hired. The former tended to be Sikhs while the latter were more often Goan. The British also employed Indians, usually Muslims or Goans, as cooks and servants. Belgrave, the Political Advisor, recruited a number of ex-Indian Army Punjabis, mostly Sikhs, to serve as a police force in 1926, but they were so unpopular that most were repatriated by 1932 (Belgrave, 1960:38-9). A few non-commissioned officers stayed on to train the new local police, as did the bandmaster, a "venerable, bemedalled old soldier" (Ibid., 40). The garrison at the Agency was Indian, of course.

Most of the new Indian migrants were not mechanics, soldiers or cooks, but clerks and professionals, usually with high status and often with real power. Belgrave's secretary was an Indian, as was the judge during the 1930's and 1940's. The Agency staff were Indians. The accountants, clerks and appraisers at Customs were Indians, even after it came under British direction. Some of the physicians and most of the nurses at the hospitals and clinics were Indians. Public building was done under Indian foremen, often to Belgrave's design, and the first Director of Public Works was a retiree from the Indian civil service (Belgrave, 1960: 91). The clerical staff at BAPCO, and almost all the

employees at Gray-Mackenzie, African and Eastern, Cable and Wireless, the steamship lines, and the Imperial Bank of Iran and the Middle East (later the British Bank of the Middle East) were Indians.

In recruiting the new workers, British administrators and executives drew upon the talent known and readily available to them in India. The centers of Gulf administration and British activity in Western India were Karachi and, especially, Bombay, which had long been a destination for internal migrants in India. Some of the new white collar and skilled workers came from the old centers of migration, Sindh and Gujerat, but many were drawn from other areas, especially the South--Madras, South Kanara, Malabar, Mangalore and Goa. As the occupational structure of the community changed, so did its categorical composition.

The mercantile sector underwent major changes in the 1930's. Crises occurred in the pearl market as early as 1924-5, and by the time of the global economic depression in 1929, the pearl market had collapsed. Many Bhatias closed their businesses and returned to India. Testimony is equivocal, but it seems likely that some were bankrupted. Others left simply because the local market had shrunk to a fraction of its former size and was no longer profitable. When the oil industry developed soon afterwards, the European population increased rapidly. As the British presence grew and the local population acquired more cash, the demand for imported goods increased. This demand was met not by the Bhatias, but by a new type of trader, the "general merchant," a retailer handling a broad range of merchandise. The

general merchants were the forerunners, and in most cases the forebears, of later department store operators. Some of these general merchants had built their businesses serving the British communities in Basra, Khorramshahr and Abadan, and now followed them into new territory. They were drawn from several of the more educated and modernized castes and communities of Western India--one was a Sulaymani Bohra, one a Parsi, and several were Amils. Though the last are considered to be an upper stratum or segment of the Lohana caste (Enthoven, II: 381), there was apparently no connection between the new arrivals and Lohanas already resident in Bahrain. In fact, these Lohanas left Bahrain during the 1930's and 1940's, but the Amils stayed on.

In 1941, the year of the first thorough census, 1424 Indians were living in Bahrain. They represented 1.6% of the total population and 8.9% of the foreign population. Of course, this included individuals from the whole of the subcontinent. The figure may actually represent a decline from the population in the late 1930's; a number of Indians, especially merchants, returned home to sit out the war. On the other hand, the war effort--in which Bahrain's refinery played a significant role--brought many new workers. Demographic statistics, other than population by nationality, are not available. Some Indian workers lived in Awali, but most were still concentrated in Manama. The new economic bases of the community certainly led to continuous, year-round residence for most workers. However, few of them had brought their families to Bahrain at this point.

Institutional development within the community was minimal.

The absence of families was probably a limiting factor in social activities. The Bhatias and Bohras maintained community associations. The Sonis were also closely knit, though apparently without any formal organization. Most other groups lacked the numbers and common occupational or economic interests that might have warranted organization. There were two exceptions to this generalization, both religious. As early as 1935, Sikhs organized for communal worship in a building adjacent to the Hindu temple and also owned by the Bhatias. In the mid-1930's, a Roman Catholic congregation was formed in Bahrain. In 1939, Franciscan Capucins built the Sacred Heart Church and a school. The membership of the church was largely Goan. It did not serve as a basis of categorical organization or action for political purposes, but it does seem to have functioned to articulate networks and informal relations among the Goans. The closeness of the Goan community and the church is illustrated by the fact that when Bahrainis threatened to burn it down in the 1950's, Belgrave arranged for Goans to guard it (Belgrave, 1960: 230). These religious organizations differed from the groups formed by Bhatias, Bohras and Sonis in important ways: they lacked an economic basis, they were less complete in their functions, and their categorical basis was not compounded by multiple ties and kinship links in Bahrain and in India.

Interestingly, the first recreational voluntary association in the community was not based on a particular ascriptive category, such as caste or sect, or even on broader regional, linguistic or religious distinctions. In 1915, the Bahrain Sports

Club was formed by four Muslim businessmen, two Christian clerks and a Parsi physician.[3] The BSC, as it is called, was based not on traditional ascriptive categories, but on their denial in modernism. It was not based on Indian models, the panchayat or sabha, which were the organizational forms of the Bhatias and the Sikhs, but on a British Indian model, the Gymkhana Club. Aside from details of organization—democratic—and activities—cards, tennis--the inspiration for the BSC is nowhere more evident than in a "symbolic" element, its motto, in Latin--Nil Desperandum, "Nothing Daunting."[4] It is not surprising that the organizing committee included no Bhatias; but it was their traditionalism, not their religion or caste, per se, which prevented them from joining.

According to the Club's Golden Jubilee souvenir, the BSC had grown to about 50 members by 1936. It remained modernistic in its orientation. However, religious and regional distinctions came to mitigate, complicate, overlay, or underlie, as you like, the modernism. Many of the new members were Hindu and Christian. The religious sentiment so evident in India during the 1930's was apparently imported to Bahrain. The formation of the Bahrain Cricket Club in 1937 effectively split the BSC along religious lines. The former became mostly Muslim and Punjabi while the latter became largely Hindu and Christian.

The British presence "Indianized" some aspects of the public arenas of Bahraini society. When the ruler of Bahrain died in 1932, the Viceroy acknowledged his son as the new ruler by delivering a "kharita," a custom commonly used for Indian

princes--despite the fact that Bahrain was ostensibly an independent state with treaty relations to the Indian Government (Belgrave, 1960: 77). In Bahrain, a "durbar," the elaborate ceremony of Indian princely authority, was held to mark the occasion (Ibid.). Thus, accompanying the establishment of British authority and British-dominated administration was the symbolic transformation of Bahrain into a princely dependency.[5]

This was accompanied by changes in the status of Indians in Bahrain. In earlier days, Indian merchants formed personal relationships with the rulers of Bahrain and with other merchant groups. These were sometimes accompanied by practical, functional relationships: the Bhatias were the shaikhs' bankers, the Sonis made their jewelry and ornaments. Since the 1850's at least, Indian and local merchants had sat together on a council to resolve their disputes (Lorimer, II: 250). Despite alliances and economic relationships, Indians were socially separated from most Bahrainis; they were outside and marginal to arenas of competition and domination among Shaikhs, Huwalah, Baharnah, 'Ajam, etc. Though the functional relationships between Indians and the ruling family gradually passed, the personal relationships were maintained. So were cooperative relationships with other merchants: in 1939, Indian, Persian and Arab merchants all participated in the formation of the General Merchants' Association (which became the Chamber of Commerce in 1949). The merchants might also congratulate the ruler on 'Id, as is the custom to this day, and attend his majles, or open court, on occasion.

However, their presence in Bahrain and their position in the marketplace had long since ceased to depend on him. British protection of Indians and their property had become secure. The recognition of formal British authority in Bahrain was immediate: in 1900, soon after the arrival of the first Assistant Political Agent, a "deputation" of Hindu merchants, evidently all Bhatias, brought him their grievances over trade relations in nearby Qatif (Saldanha, 1904: 75). The rest of the Indian population was employed by the British, either in administration or in British-owned firms. They had no relationships or alliances with the ruling family or other Bahrainis. Thus, as the Indian community grew, it became less linked to or dependent upon the society in which it lived.

It also became less marginal. Two inter-related processes were involved here: changes in Bahraini society and changes in the status of Indians. The emergence of new status distinctions accompanied the emergence of new economic and political institutions (though the former were not merely a reflection of the latter). British protection and concessions to Indian employees and residents altered the public sphere of Bahraini society, giving Indians greater freedom of expression. For example, Holi and Diwali were public holidays in Bahrain, and were openly celebrated. Residential patterns also changed. As the population increased and families started to migrate, Indians rented or, in a few cases, bought houses in the quarters around the suq, the same areas in which Bahrainis lived. In the new broadened economic and social arenas, Indians were no longer

marginal or entirely separate; in fact, they were socially superior to most Bahrainis. The new structures incorporated all, but did so hierarchically: British, Indian, Bahraini. This situation--a change from the dependent marginality of Indians to their independent prominence--led immediately to labor disturbances at BAPCO and engendered lingering resentment among Bahrainis.

THE POST-WAR YEARS

The Indian population grew significantly after World War II. The late 1940's and the 1950's were years of economic growth in Bahrain. There was some local expansion, particularly at BAPCO. In addition, development in Eastern Arabia was serviced through Bahrain. The transfer of the British Political Residency from Abu Shahr to Bahrain was a third major factor. All these developments affected the sectors which employed Indian workers in white-collar and skilled occupations—the companies and administrative institutions owned and run by or for the British.

In the 1950 census, Indians, Pakistanis, Goans and Anglo-Indians were all tabulated together, despite the recent separation of India. The count of 3043 represented 16.5% of all Non-Bahrainis and 2.8% of the total population. Though Indians were still greatly outnumbered by Iranians and Non-Bahraini Arabs, their proportion of the foreign population had nearly doubled (see Table 4.1). Their economic importance undoubtedly exceeded their numbers. No demographic statistics were collected for individual nationalities. The census report does note that

TABLE 4.1.
THE INDIAN POPULATION IN BAHRAIN

Census	Category	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of Foreigners	Percentage of Total Population
1941	Indians[a]	N/A	N/A	1424	8.9	1.6
1950	Indians[b]	N/A	N/A	3043	16.5	2.8
1959	Indians	2698	1345	4043	16.6	2.8
	Goans	324	112	436		
	Pakistanis	1471	812	2283		
	Total	4493	2269	6762	27.7	4.7
1965	Indians	3208	2175	5383	14.0	3.0
	Pakistanis	2333	1599	3932		
	Total	5541	3774	9315	24.2	5.1
1971	Indians	3991	2666	6657	17.6	3.1
	Pakistanis	3326	2051	5377		
	Total	7317	4717	12,034	31.8	5.6

[a] Includes Indians, Anglo-Indians and Goans.
[b] Includes Indians, Pakistanis, Anglo-Indians and Goans.

most Indians still lived in Manama and that most did not bring their wives and families (Government of Bahrain, 1950: 7,8).

Other general characteristics of the population may be deduced from figures for religious affiliation. Five categories were distinguished: Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus and Others. Though Bahrainis and Non-Bahrainis are not separated, it is likely that a handful of the Jews and most of the Others--probably Sikhs and Parsis--were Indian. However, numbers in these categories are small (Jews, 293; Others, 49). The census counted 975 Hindus and 2932 Christians. Subtracting the British, American and other European population (2208), 724 Christians remain. Since there were few Bahraini Christians and nearly all the other foreigners were Muslim (Arab or Iranian), it is likely that most of the remaining Christians were Indian. The distribution of the various major religious groups may then be roughly estimated as follows: Muslim, 43%; Hindu, 32%; Christian, 23%; Parsis, Sikhs, etc., 2%.

In the 1959 census, Indians, Pakistanis and Goans were listed separately. The figures were, respectively, 4043, 2283, and 406, for a total of 6762. This represented 27.7% of the foreign population and 4.7% of the total population. Their numbers had more than doubled since 1950 (see Table 4.1), but Omanis (7314) still outnumbered all the South Asians together. The 1959 census provided figures for individual nationalities by gender for the first time. Females represented the following proportions of the three South Asian categories: Indian, 33.3%; Pakistani, 35.6%; and Goan, 25.7%.

The 1959 statistics for religious affiliation separated Bahrainis and Non-Bahrainis. However, Hindus were included with foreign Others (2128). Again subtracting the number of Europeans and Americans (2825) from the total number of foreign Christians (4813) yields a difference of 1988. If it is assumed that most of the Others were Hindus, Sikhs or Parsis and that most of the remaining Christians were Indian, Pakistani or Goan, the distribution of the South Asian population may be estimated as follows: Muslim, 40%; Christian, 29%; Hindus, etc., 31%.[6] The proportion of Christians had increased, but the distribution was similar to that found in 1950. It is apparent that the number of Indian Muslims was small. Assuming that all Pakistanis were Muslims, subtracting their numbers from the total would yield the following religious distribution for Indians and Goans: Christian, 42%; Muslim, 11%; Hindu and others, 47%.

The significant proportions of Indians among the South Asians and of Christians among the Indians in the 1950 and 1959 censes indicate the growing importance of Bombay and South India as fields of recruitment. Though many Sindhi Hindus, especially Bhatias, migrated to Bahrain after separation, the south was the major source of the educated, skilled workers needed in the growth sectors of the Bahraini economy and labor force. South Indian Christians, in particular, were preferred for clerical positions.

Patterns of migration in Indian business, which remained mostly Sindhi and Gujerati, were still circular. Family firms predominated, and when they wanted to expand or saw opportunity

for new ventures, they communicated through kinship and caste networks at home. The recruitment of other Indian workers was based on British-Indian networks of employers, employees and government officials in India and in Bahrain. As greater numbers of employees were needed, recruitment patterns became well-developed. However, the labor market was still highly disorganized, and migration was diffuse. Like many other British institutions, employment practices succumbed (and, to a great extent, may have been pre-adapted) to the Indian environment. Even at the turn of the century, patterns of recruiting for Bahrain show the occupational specialization of communal groups in India--Sikh mechanics, Christian clerks, etc. This reflects not only the domination of these occupations and the supply of labor in India by particular groups--achieved through complex processes of monopolization and market protection—but the extent to which communal/occupational stereotypes had been accepted and used by the British. These stereotypes were assimilated by Bahrainis and are still used by employers and recruiters today.

Many British businesses in Bahrain were only branches of larger companies in Bombay, Karachi or other cities. Executives might articulate demand through the home office or to friends in similar businesses in India. They might ask current Indian employees or the employees of associates, in India or Bahrain, to recommend candidates for jobs. Of course, the primary networks used by Indian employees to meet increasing demand were those of community and kinship: uncles would find jobs for nephews, fathers would find jobs for sons, etc. Britain, India and Bahrain

were linked by an intricate web of personal relationships.

The agent in Bahrain of a prominent British life insurance company, a Parsi, related the manner in which he, the company, and the life insurance business became established in Bahrain. The Political Advisor, Belgrave, noted the potential for life insurance services in the growing economy. While home on leave, he communicated this to his brother-in-law, who just happened to be a director of the aforementioned company. Bahrain was not a very attractive post and was hardly important enough for a British agent, so the request for someone to take it was passed down through the company hierarchy in India. Though declining to go himself, one of the Indian agents convinced his son, then a recent university graduate looking for a career, to take the position. The son went, as much out of deference as ambition it would seem, expecting to return after a year. When he recounted the story, he had been in Bahrain for twenty-eight years and had made the business a considerable success.

A more curious British link was described by another man. He was an Amil from Sindh, whose family had been general merchants in Bahrain until their business failed in the mid-1950's. Prior to coming to Bahrain in 1941, his father had built a large business serving the British communities in Basra and Abadan. He carried a letter of introduction from the First Secretary of the Governor of Sindh, which he presented to the Political Agent in Bahrain. Not unusual, perhaps. However, the details of the connection are more arcane and Kiplingesque: the Indian businessman and his son (my informant), Belgrave's Indian

secretary, Belgrave himself, the Political Resident in Abu Shahr, and the British High Commissioner in Basra were all Masons, forming an invisible network in the Eastern empire!

The composition of the Indian community had changed considerably by the end of the 1950's. The arrival of women and children in significant numbers, described by informants and evident from census statistics, was primarily a result of improvements in conditions and services after the war. Of course, this change also required economic resources adequate to support dependents in Bahrain. The presence of families greatly affected social life, in and out of formal organizations. Male informants are quick to note that the food was much better. Some semblance of a real community structure, with balanced demographics and a fuller range of activities, was created, especially for the more affluent groups, like the Bhatias and Sonis. The communities were still not self-reproducing; all persons, especially women and children, returned to India on a regular basis for lengthy periods. However, enough children were present at any given time to inspire the establishment of a school. At first, lessons were given by a few of the educated men in their spare time. Later, professional teachers were hired, and the Indian School opened its doors in 1953 or 1954 (reports vary). From the beginning, the school was controlled and financed by Bhatia merchants.

Institutional development continued, along a path that was greatly influenced by the changing categorical and economic composition of the population. In 1951, a Zoroastrian organization was formed, the Zoroastrian Anjuman. The membership

was mostly Parsi. It was a special-purpose group, created to deal with a crisis, the death of a Zoroastrian. Most of the new Indian associations were formed by South Indians. In the late 1940's, non-Catholic Malayalee Christians formed the Malayalee Christian Congregation. Social clubs based on southern regional categories appeared. In 1947, the Keraleeya Samajam was formed, and in 1953, the Young Goans Sports Club. The BSC continued to grow, and an increasing number of its members were South Indian Hindus and Christians. The BSC was not as Western and cosmopolitan as it had originally been, and the new clubs were even less so. (For example, the motto of the Keraleeya Samajam is in Malayalam.) Nonetheless, they were drawn from the educated, skilled and relatively more modernized elements of the Indian population in Bahrain, who were, in turn, drawn from some of the more educated, skilled and modernized elements in Indian society itself.

The formation of these associations indicates that numbers and resources had reached the threshold necessary for group formation. (Other factors, collective will and a permissive political environment, are assumed.) Their basis and composition indicates that while some of the finer ascriptive distinctions were either not important or not salient in Bahrain, major categories remained significant. Though they were categorical, clubs were not extensive and complete organizations. They were extensions or formalizations of pre-existing networks based on ascriptive ties, but the collectivities they incorporated lacked the multiplex ties of caste, for example. These groups, and the coalescence around linguistic and religious categories, may be

understood as an organizational compromise between the needs and orientations of community members and the potential offered by the environment. Lower level categories were, in most cases, not present in sufficient numbers to warrant formal organization, to the extent that these categories were relevant to the members of the community at this time. (It is likely that they would have been somewhat more relevant for a larger proportion of the population than is the case today, after two more generations of modernization in India.) In an alien environment, even a relatively hospitable one, forming social relationships and expressing meaningful cultural interests were issues that had to be creatively resolved. The most obvious, and available and acceptable, basis for dealing with these problems were the solidarities most often taken for granted in India itself, language and religion.

For the most part, the categorical boundaries these groups marked were not problematical. That is, they protected neither resources nor categorical status. It is not clear that they successfully marked and protected prestige at this point, either. Clubs marked ascriptive identities, of some form, but they did so in a Western or modern way. They marked that part of a categorical population, Indians in general or some sub-group within, who sought simultaneously to differentiate themselves categorically from other groups and in terms of status or prestige from other members of their own category. They were relatively successful at the former. However, status claims within regional and linguistic categories appear to have been

without substance, largely, it would appear, because at this point these groups still lacked a significant lower stratum to exclude. Except perhaps for the BSC, there is no indication at this point that membership was selective or closed, i.e., that the clubs sought or were able to exclude members in the appropriate category on the basis of prestige or status. At this time, the BSC did exclude blue-collar workers. In fact, this evidently contributed to the formation of the Young Goans' Sports Club; most of the Goans who formed the club were technicians and operators at the refinery. Thus, "stratification" had begun to emerge in the community as a whole, but not within narrower categories.

Still, the primary form and structure of social relationships outside work were networks based on categories and, to a lesser extent, individual interests. Associations or clubs were a supplement and, in some cases, an extension of these relationships and networks. This is most clearly the case for the Bhatias, Bohras and Sonis, among whom there appears to have been a gradual formalization of networks and informal groups. Most Indians lived within a small area of central Manama, but were not segregated residentially, either from each other or from Bahrainis and other groups. Proximity allowed them to visit easily and carry on a wide range of social and cultural activities. People in particular categories--sometimes as specific as caste and kinship, but usually more general ones, such as region, language and religion--tended to congregate together. As numbers grew in particular categories, they would

break off for many purposes.

The Gujerati Hindu population, for example, was quite diverse. Sonis were present in substantial numbers, and they associated with one another in most activities. Other Gujeratis, from a variety of backgrounds, met in one another's houses to visit and socialize. Networks and smaller groups would mesh to form larger groups for some purposes, such as the celebration of various religious occasions and holidays. If current patterns are any indication, the Sonis and other merchants dominated these gatherings, but individuals from a wide range of castes and occupations participated. One man played a central role in the articulation of networks. He had been in Bahrain for decades and knew everyone who was there. Since he was a customs inspector, he was the first to find out about new arrivals. He was a reliable source of gossip, but also the instrument through which new migrants were incorporated into existing informal social groups.

INDEPENDENCE IN INDIA: UNREST IN BAHRAIN

The independence and separation of India led to changes in the formal status of Indians in Bahrain and in the structure of the community, or, as it became, communities. Few Indians were eligible for British passports. Bahraini nationality had by this time become more clearly defined, but few Indians either sought or were eligible for it. So, nearly all became citizens of India or Pakistan. The population had become increasingly segmented since the 1930's, as Muslims, who were mostly Punjabis, became socially distant from other groups. The separation was formalized

in 1948, when the Bahrain Cricket Club became the Pakistan Club. Increasingly, nationality itself--rather than religion, region or language--served as the basis for the social and institutional separation of these groups.

An Indian Association was formed in 1947. However, under the rationale that Bahrain was not a sovereign state, the British did not permit the Indian government to open an embassy or consulate. The Indian Association incorporated a substantial proportion of the Indian population, but it was a special-purpose organization, limited in its ability to organize the population and represent or articulate their interests. At this time it was not a social or recreational club.

British relationships of patronage with Indians continued, and were apparently little affected by independence and the new diplomatic status of Indians. For example, the Political Agent was a sponsor of the BSC and laid the cornerstone for the new Pakistan Club. Like the recruitment of Indian workers, the application of British authority to Indians was diffuse and, in many respects, individualized. There were fewer formalities than might be expected. Licenses to open a business were not required until the late 1950's. Indians travelled on separate passports, of course, and needed visas, but residence permits were not required until 1968. Workers and their dependents simply registered at the Agency. The Agent was receptive to the complaints and problems of Indian residents. Prominent Indians were consulted about issues, both as knowledgeable individuals and as channels of communication and spokesmen for particular

groups.

The structure of British-Indian economic relationships remained unchanged until the mid-1950's. For the time being, the rights of Indians to work and trade in Bahrain were recognized and protected. The economy of Bahrain was still largely an extension of British and British-Indian economic institutions. Economic ties between Indians and British remained informal; thus, written contracts were seldom used for employment. One aspect of the distribution of resources and opportunity under the British must be emphasized: their reliance on the private sector for development. (Nobody, except the shaikhs, got much out of the government.) Resources might be distributed to Indians through British-owned or managed economic institutions, but there was no distribution, to individuals or collectivities, through political institutions.

There was no attempt by the British to organize the Indian population as a whole for administrative, diplomatic, economic or any other purposes. The limitations on resource competition through political institutions and on the articulation of interests on an ascriptive or collective basis discouraged the formation of organized groups. The absence of an Indian embassy, the limited role of the Indian Association, and the purely social functions of Indian clubs are expressions of patterns of authority and control under the British administration. At the same time, they are expressions of the cultural interests of the Indian residents. Cultural expression was encouraged by British protection and the maintenance of social arenas in which Indians

could participate freely. Though its ability to articulate its common interests politically was limited, the community was effectively exploiting the structuring of opportunity by the British in the private sector. Some groups, like the Bhatias and Bohras, expressed not only continuing ascriptive solidarities, but continuing reliance on group resources in economic activity. For most of the Indian population, on the other hand, the exploitation of economic opportunity was effected through the manipulation of networks, in India and Bahrain, which neither required nor were responsive to collective action.

The restriction of Indian access to the social arena in Bahrain and changes in their actual, as opposed to diplomatic or formal, status came not with the independence of India, but with the political mobilization of Bahrainis in the 1950's. In some spheres, the British administration had sought to balance diverse interests. The assumption in British regulation of the mercantile sector seems to have been that open access was equal access. However, given the better resources of many Indians, policies of fair and equal treatment had, in effect, operated against Bahrainis. A similar situation emerged in public employment. The recruitment of Indians was rationalized on the basis that qualified Bahrainis were unavailable; yet, there were few attempts to make them available. This was apparently seen as beyond the province of government. Of course, discriminatory motives were probably involved to some degree. Some policies, especially in the private economic sector, made no pretense of fair and equal treatment. The Bahraini grievances that had been

accumulating since the 1930's exploded in the mid-1950's. Indian independence had altered the potential legitimations for competing claims; political unrest in Bahrain made it necessary to recognize Bahrainis' claims to pre-eminence in their own country. When the government of Bahrain did begin to undertake centralized development on a larger scale and intervene in the policy-making of the private sector, the unambiguous status of Indians as Indian nationals became the basis of restrictions on their position and participation in the society. Unlike the situations in other overseas Indian communities, there was no pretense that Indians in Bahrain were citizens.

The definition of the social arena, which had legitimated Indian participation and granted Indians high status because of their economic roles and their relationships with the British, came under assault in practical terms as well as ideological ones. In the late 1950's, training programs were instituted at BAPCO and the more odious forms of discrimination against Bahrainis were eliminated. In the mid-1960's, BAPCO undertook a major modernization of its facilities. Many Indians were made redundant and repatriated. (Arrival and departure statistics for 1967 show a net outmigration of 783, perhaps as a result of changes at BAPCO.) In other sectors as well, such as medicine and administration, Bahrainis were trained and educated. As Bahrainis were incorporated into the modern economy, they replaced and competed with Indians. Their improved educational and occupational position, along with powerful political ideologies and legitimations, altered the balance of statuses in the social

arena. At this point, the dominant definitions of social status remained "modern"--i.e., the "nationalization" of the social arena was not accompanied by a cultural "Arabization"--but Bahrainis were able to improve their position relative to Indians.

Changes in the mercantile sector were more extensive than in the bureaucracy and industrial work force. The purchase of real estate by foreigners was restricted in the mid-1950's. By 1960, licenses were required to open new businesses. Soon thereafter, as a matter of policy, new licenses were not being granted to Indians. In any case, Indian businessmen were not responding to changes in the market. They were culturally and commercially oriented toward the productive capacity of the Indian economy in general and toward a few traditional trade items, grain and cloth, in particular. As local purchasing power increased and tastes became more Western, it was Bahraini merchants who made the links with European and American manufacturers to supply the automobiles, refrigerators, air conditioners, bacon and biscuits now in demand. Only the Sonis continued to dominate their traditional market; tastes in jewelry were changing, but, for the time being, only among the Bahraini elite. Otherwise, by the late 1960's, Indian merchants were relegated to a minor role in importing and the wholesale and retail business. Old relationships with Bahraini merchants were weakened: Indians lost their seat on the municipality board and took a back seat to locals in the Chamber of Commerce.

THE 1960'S

The Indian community continued to grow during the 1960's, but not as rapidly as during the preceding decades. In the 1965 census, 5383 Indians and 3932 Pakistanis were counted, for a total of 9315 (see Table 4.1). This represented an increase of 37.8% in the six years since the previous census. These groups now represented 24.2% of the foreign population, a slight decrease, and 5.1% of the total population, a slight increase.[7] The proportion of females--and, presumably, of children, as well--was increasing: in 1965, 40.4% of all Indians and 40.7% of all Pakistanis were female. Figures for religious affiliation from the 1965 census are not available.

By 1971, the Indian population had increased to 6657 and the Pakistani population to 5377 (see Table 4.1). Together, these groups numbered 12,034, a 29.2% increase since 1965. Indians and Pakistanis constituted 31.8% of all Non-Bahrainis, a marked increase since 1965, and 5.6% of the total population, a slight increase. Though the number of South Asians had increased nearly ninefold since 1941, the total population was growing so fast that this represented less than a fourfold increase proportionally.[8] The South Asian population grew 114% between 1941 and 1950, and another 122% between 1950 and 1959; despite considerable economic growth, it grew by a more moderate 78% between 1959 and 1971.

Figures for religious affiliation of Non-Bahrainis are available once again for 1971, but only under three categories, Muslims, Christians (6474), and Others (2668). Since the foreign

population as a whole was still composed mainly of Arabs, Iranians, Indians, Pakistanis, Europeans and Americans, it is reasonable to estimate the religious composition of the Indian population by the same method used for the 1950 and 1959 censes. Subtracting the number of Europeans and Americans (3474) from the total number of foreign Christians (6474), and assuming that most of the balance and most of the Others were Indians, we arrive at the following distribution of the Indian population: Muslim, 18%; Christian, 43%; Hindu, etc., 39%. This is not significantly different from the estimate for 1959. The large proportion of Christians indicates the growing predominance of South Indians in the population, which is confirmed by informants' recollections. The change by the Indian School from Hindi to English as the medium of instruction, beginning in the late 1960's, is a further indication of the origins of the community and, more generally, of their educational background and aspirations.

In 1971, the Indian population was 40.0% female and the Pakistani population, 38.1%, a slight decline from the 1965 figures in both cases. Age distributions are not available, but by 1969, according to its own officials, the Indian school had grown to 500 pupils and leased a second building to accommodate them all. In addition, many Indian children attended the Sacred Heart School. (There were also two Pakistani schools.) Though migration and residence were still cyclical, and despite the slight decline in the proportion of females between 1965 and 1971, the Indian community in particular had moved significantly toward a demographically "normal" distribution since the 1950's.

Counting Indians and Goans together for 1959, 55.5% of the growth in the Indian population between that year and 1971 was represented by females. Since only 6.2% of the total economically active Non-Bahraini population in 1971 was female, it seems likely that within the Indian community, at least, dependency was increasing and labor force participation was decreasing slightly.

This may be interpreted as an indication of improving living conditions and of the generally favored economic status of Indian workers. The 1965 census report notes that Indians and Pakistanis were still largely concentrated in white collar occupations, as clerks, or in the retail business (Government of Bahrain, 1969a:32). A great deal of infrastructural development occurred after the 1950's, but the construction laborers were mostly Omanis.[9] Though they were losing jobs to Bahrainis, the Indians who were employed remained in comfortable positions, for the most part. Improvements in the occupational and social status of Bahraini workers vis-a-vis the South Asians probably limited the number of Indian and Pakistani workers, but did not yet significantly degrade them. However, even as Indians achieved an unprecedented demographic balance and, perhaps, sense of community, their status was being undermined.

The ascendance of Bahraini business and the improved position of Bahrainis in general eventually led to changes in patterns of employment for Indians. Greater numbers of Indians began to work for Bahrainis, rather than for the British or for themselves. Though most Indians were white-collar and skilled workers, an increasing number were not. As early as the 1950's,

in imitation of the British, Bahrainis began to hire Indian cooks, especially Goans.[10] In the 1960's, some Indians were employed as drivers, housemaids, ayahs (nursemaids) and laborers. These developments signify the emergence in the Indian population of a segment or stratum significantly lower in status and occupation than the established norm. In short, by the late 1960's, the various factors which had buttressed the position of Indians in Bahraini society--occupation, education, westernization, and the British connection--were all being undercut.

A combination of factors--greater numbers, especially of women and children, a modern and gregarious orientation, and an administration still benevolent in many ways--contributed to the emergence of a number of associations and formal or semi-formal organizations in the Indian community. The ordinance of 1959 concerning clubs and societies, discussed in Chapter Three, recognized the organization occurring among both Bahrainis and foreigners and may have contributed to the formalization of some associations.[11] In at least one case, a new organization represented a response to legal and administrative changes. Others represented segmentation as more categories and sub-categories arrived in greater numbers. Some reflected status competition and assertion, and some represented both ascriptive differentiation and status competition.

New regulations for the registration of property in the early 1960's prompted the Bhatias to create two separate organizations, the Thattai Hindu Mahajan (or Thattai Hindu

Community) and the Thattai Hindu Mercantile Community. The temple was registered in the name of the former, while other communal real estate was registered to the latter. The Keralite Christians began to fragment. In 1959, a Syrian Orthodox prayer group split off from the Malayalee Christian Congregation. In 1969, they built St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Shurch. In 1962, the Mar Thomas, another South Indian Christian sect, split off from the Malayalee Christian Congregation and formed a separate group.

The Gujerati Sonis maintained an organized structure, though it is not clear how formalized it was at this time or whether it was registered. Organization appears to have been occasional and limited to special functions. Some of these were restricted to the Sonis, but, over the years, a wider spectrum of the growing Gujerati Hindu population was included in others, such as the celebration of holidays. The articulation of networks--in which the Sonis, other merchants, a few professionals, and other well-placed, long-standing residents were the prime movers--was adequate to serve these purposes. Given the diversity of the Gujerati Hindu population and the traditionalism of many Sonis, shared cultural interests were limited and unlikely to be expressed in the form of a broadly based voluntary association. Tamils of sufficient number and the necessary inclination were also organizing, but it is unclear whether or not they formally registered an association during the 1960's.

The categorical boundaries of these groups--Sonis, Gujeratis Hindus, Tamils--were not problematical ones. This was evidently not the case with another group, the Goans. As early as

1957, Konkani speakers from (then) Bombay State and Madras were meeting informally. In 1971, they formed the Karnataka Sports Club. This organization will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven. At this point, we merely note that the formation of this association was evidently a response to a manipulated ambiguity between linguistic and regional categories, Konkani and Goan. The Konkani speaking population had increased significantly by the late 1960's, by which time Goa had also been incorporated into the Indian union. A number of the new Konkani speakers were not from Goa proper, but from what was then the new state of Karnataka, especially the Mangalore area. Though they were of Goan descent, spoke Konkani and were Roman Catholic, because they were not from Goa proper, they were excluded from the Young Goans' Sports Club.

These formal and informal groups reflect the interests of Indians in associating with others of a similar background. Language, regional culture and religion remained the primary bases of cultural interests. To a certain extent, these institutions marked status within categorical groups as well as defining ascriptive boundaries. Among Gujerati Hindus, the articulation of networks in organization did not preclude broad participation in community events, but it did restrict the role of those who were not included in leadership networks. Though my knowledge of club policy in the 1960's is sketchy, it is likely that the membership of the Keraleeya Samajam, and even that of the Young Goans' Sports Club, incorporated only a fraction of their respective categorical populations.

The use of voluntary associations to mark prestige and status was more apparent in institutions ostensibly drawing members from the whole population. An Indian Ladies' Association was formed in 1960. It was composed mainly of the wives of merchants and professionals. The BSC was by far the largest of the Indian associations. Its composition remained largely Hindu and Christian, white collar and well-placed. These organizations were drawn from the "modern" elite of the Indian community. They were exclusive in terms of prestige stratum, rather than ascriptive category. On the other hand, because it was the representative organization for the newly-independent and democratic Republic of India, the Indian Association could not maintain an exclusionary policy. It admitted the growing number of low status--and, in some cases, low caste--Indians migrating to Bahrain. As it grew, its status declined. This led to problems that will be discussed in detail in Chapter Eight.

In 1964, a local chapter of Toastmasters was started. The membership was multi-national, but most were Indian professionals and well-placed executives and managers. In 1965, a Rotary Club was started. Its few Indian members were among the most prominent figures in the community. The limited size of the first group and the limited Indian participation in the second are perhaps significant. Most Indians remained oriented toward Indian categorical affiliations, rather than functional or individual interests. These groups, and especially the latter, may also represent the status limitations of the vast majority of Indians in Bahrain and the degree to which Indians, in general, were a

distinct and separate social category. I will return to these groups in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

In 1971, on the eve of Bahrain's independence, the status and position of Indians in Bahrain was unclear. There had been some restrictions, mainly economic, but these did not yet effect the openness of Bahraini society or the ease and comfort with which Indians could express themselves culturally and organize, albeit for limited purposes. Though economic institutions incorporated all groups in the society, and all were, to some extent, included in the same status arena, there was segmentation of national groups in this arena. As a national category, Indians were clearly differentiated, internally and externally, from other groups, foreign and local, including Pakistanis. Except for a few highly modernized members of the elite, Indians associated primarily with each other, with varying degrees of attentiveness to finer distinctions. The configuration of interlinked economic, political, social and cultural factors that structured the plurality of national and foreign groups was in flux. The position of Indians was challenged both politically and economically. As the British accommodated Bahraini demands, relations became more competitive in some spheres, while the dominance of Bahrainis by Indians in others was effectively reversed. Though they remained a privileged group, the eroding position of Indians is reflected in the decline in the rate of migration during the 1960's.

With noted exceptions, the groups that had been formed in the Indian community were not extensive and were oriented toward cultural and recreational rather than political or economic purposes. They exhibited two interlinked processes, categorical segmentation and stratification. For the most part, formal organization marked distinctions along regional, linguistic and religious lines. Caste distinguished the Bhatias and Sonis from other Sindhis and Gujeratis, respectively. The same may be said for the Bohras, whose categorical definition approaches caste in many ways. Interestingly, these distinctions were not necessarily hierarchical; from the perspective of caste ranking, other Sindhis and Gujeratis had higher rank. On the other hand, some of the sectarian distinctions among Malayalee Christians apparently did have hierarchical connotations, in terms of either original caste ranking or the status of their religious founding fathers. In any case, all of these groups marked the uniqueness as much or more than the rank of the categories upon which they were based.

Other groups marked status in modern terms--occupation, income, education, influence, achievement--within categories of various kinds, such as region, language, or Indian nationality itself. While categorical differentiation was well-developed, stratification was not. The organizations which most effectively distinguished among Indians in terms of status were those which drew upon--and cast their status claims toward--the Indian population as a whole, eg., the BSC and the Indian Ladies' Association.

Whether or not they made hierarchical assertions across

categories (i.e., claims of ascriptive rank), the groups based on regional, linguistic, or other lower-level categories were only moderately successful in differentiating prestige strata or validating prestige claims, to the extent that they attempted to do so. There were several reasons for this. Many institutions, such as those of caste or religious affiliation, made no distinctions of prestige within the categories they organized. Those which did, or sought to do so, were limited by the fact that populations within categories were in most cases not very large, such that the organization of formal groups necessarily included a substantial proportion of the population interested in participation, thus limiting the organizations' exclusiveness. Third, the Indian population, in general, was drawn from the more educated, skilled and modern elements of Western and Southern India. The exceptions, the most traditional groups, were among the most prosperous. There was as yet no sizable proletariat within the categories that had become organized or in the population as a whole. This did not preclude finer distinctions by status, of course, but it made them less salient. Finally, the environment of Bahraini society remained relatively benign and affordable for Indians, such that the value of clubs as "refuges," if you will, as distinct from their value as status markers, was negligible. Like many other aspects of the structure and position of the Indian community, this was to change in the 1970's.

NOTES

1. Young notes that a hypothetical rural Indian tenant farmer has an astonishing array of identities and roles to draw upon in social interaction: (1) occupation; (2) social stratum or class; (3) family; (4) subcaste; (5) caste grouping; (6) language; (7) region; (8) faction and party; (9) clientship to any kind of notable, including his landowner; (10) religion; (11) rural person; (12) Indian. There are no Indian tenant farmers in Bahrain, but the bases of identity and social relationships are otherwise as complex and diverse. In understanding the processes of pluralism operating in the Indian community, we follow Young in analyzing the types of identity that are "activated" as relations and groups are formed. (Young, 1976: 38-9).

2. Lorimer gives slightly different figures elsewhere (II: 253). The Non-European British subjects counted in Bahrain include four Eurasians, 69 Hindus, 122 Muslims (rising to 150 during the pearling season), and five Jews. The Eurasians were presumably clerks at the Agency. The number of Hindus is in agreement with that given in the census of Manama (II: 1160). The number of Muslims given here is much larger than the other figure given (also at II: 1160). It is likely that many, if not all, were Indian, but it is unclear who they were. It is improbale that this figure refers to the guard at the Agency, which was mostly Sikh. According to Pakistani informants, some Punjabi Muslim traders came to Bahrain in the early years of this century. Though the small number of Bohras is listed as a separate category, the censes of Manama and Muharraq (II: 1160 and 1270, respectively) do not note any Punjabi Muslims separately. Nonetheless, it is possible that the Muslim British subjects referred to at II: 253 were these Punjabis. The Jewish British subjects mentioned by Lorimer were probably Indian. There were a number of other Jews in Bahrain, but most were Iraqi; though they were under British protection, they were not British subjects. Belgrave also mentions the presence of a few Indian Jews in Bahrain (1960: 148).

In Lorimer's census of Manama (II: 1160) he estimates 1500 Persians, 1250 Baharnah from Eastern Arabia, 500 Najdis and over 1000 other Non-Bahraini Arabs. Indians thus represented a tiny proportion of the foreign population in Bahrain at that time.

3. Khuri claims that the Bahrain Sports Club was founded by the British and that, since Indians had no club of their own and were associated with the administration, they were admitted to the BSC (1980: 173). As we have noted, the founders of the BSC were all Indian. None of the handful of Britons in Bahrain in the 'teens seem to have belonged to the club. At some point, the Political Agent did become a patron of the BSC. When a British club was founded in 1939, the Gymkhana Club (was any other name possible?), Indians were not permitted to join. The relationship between British and Indian, in Bahrain and throughout the empire, was one of patronage and hierarchy. The fact that Indians established a British social form, a recreational club, even before the British themselves were able to do so was due to the

fact that they were present in substantial numbers earlier than were the British. Of course, this proximate cause, numbers, presumes the assimilation of British values by Indians. The BSC nicely illustrates the hegemony of European cultural models in status competition and the pathetic treadmill of imitation and social segmentation in the imperial plural system. If the bond between the British and the Indians was less solidary than Khuri portrays it, it nonetheless seemed a conspiracy to the Bahrainis, and, to a certain extent, it was.

4. My thanks to David Maybury-Lewis for the translation.

5. The fact that Bahrain's "national" flag is based on the tribal banner of the Al-Khalifah is regarded by many Bahrainis as symbolic of the Al-Khalifah's appropriation of the country. In this vein, it is amusing to note that Bahrain's "national" anthem was composed by a Royal Marines bandmaster from the East Indies Squadron flagship (Belgrave, 1960: 131). The theme is used frequently to introduce television news and as background for film clips. One of the favorite subjects of television news is the comings and goings of dignitaries, usually for talks on "subjects of mutual interest," unspecified. Many of these dignitaries are Al-Khalifah and tribal leaders from elsewhere in the Gulf. The sight of ministers, shaikhs and princes kissing noses and otherwise displaying the warmth of traditional relationships with kinsmen and allies to the accompaniment of the regimental brass is a fascinating display of the social and cultural contradictions of form and content Khuri so trenchantly describes.

6. Subtracting the number of Iranians and foreign Arabs from the total number of Non-Bahraini Muslims leaves a figure approximating 38% of the South Asian population. This is reasonably close to the proportion arrived at here by estimating the number of Christians, Hindus, etc., and subtracting them from the number of South Asians.

7. The number of Omanis was increasing more rapidly than the South Asian population, to 12,628 in 1965; thus the decline of the latter as a proportion of the total foreign population. The Bahraini population was approaching a demographic transition and lower fertility. This, in combination with an increasing rate of economic expansion, created a situation in which the main foreign groups, including Indians and Pakistanis, were growing at a faster rate than the local population. In 1965, the percentage of Non-Bahrainis in the total population reached a high of 21.1%. Thus, South Asians could be both a smaller proportion of the foreign population and a larger proportion of the total population.

8. The period 1965-71 was one of demographic recovery for Bahrainis: the total proportion of foreigners declined to 17.5%. This was due mainly to a decline in the number of Omanis and Iranians. Thus, the significant increase in the proportion of foreigners who were Indian and Pakistani.

9. The Omani population had declined a bit by 1971, to 10,785. See Notes 7 and 8, above. However, there were still nearly as many Omanis as Indians and Pakistanis together. The status of Omanis is indicated by the fact that in 1965 only 12.6% of the population was female.

10. According to Arab informants, this was a response both to changes in local tastes and to changes in the manner of conducting business, which led the important merchants to entertain Westerners more frequently.

11. Apparently, the ordinance was intended as a means of social control directed primarily at Bahraini associations, which proliferated during the 1940's and 1950's and were important in organizing the riots and demonstrations of the mid-1950's. It is not clear that enforcement was rigorous for Indians. By the early 1970's, when the new government took over, many Indian associations either were not registered or failed to re-register, prompting the Bahraini government to take action, as noted in Chapter Three.

Chapter Five

THE INDIAN COMUNITY TODAY

The processes of differentiation and group formation long evident in the Indian community developed more fully with the explosion of migration that occurred during the 1970's. The migration of large numbers of laborers and other unskilled workers led to pronounced stratification within the population. At the same time, ever-larger numbers of professional, white-collar and skilled workers also arrived. This led to a further elaboration of ascriptive differentiation, expressed in the emergence of more formal organizations. These processes will be discussed in some detail in this chapter. But first, it is necessary to assess the basic demographic and economic parameters of the population, its current categorical composition, and its distribution in Bahrain.

The extent of growth between 1971 and 1982 was indeed extraordinary. Unfortunately, it has not been accurately measured. As noted in Chapter Three, the statistics from the 1981 census do not tabulate individual foreign nationalities. However, using other figures, it is possible to indicate the course of growth. The Bahraini government keeps annual records of arrivals and departures at the port and airport, which may be used as an approximate measure of net migration. Some statistics for Work Cards and Residence Permits issued to Indians and for registered live births to Indians are also available.[1] These complement the migration data. All these figures are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1.
INDIAN COMMUNITY: POPULATION GROWTH, 1968-1982

Year	Net Migration[a]	Births[b]	Work Cards	Percentage of Total
1982	N/A	N/A	16,122	60.7
1981	7784	623	12,727	57.3
1980	6237	493	10,281	51.1
1979	4221	444	13,142	50.3
1978	5467	331	15,910	47.0
1977	10,201	262	10,277	39.1
1976	7426	223	5813	38.9
1975	5712	---	3811	33.3
1974	1250	---	2032	31.3
1973	2408	---	1844	39.6
1972	-399	---	730	19.2
1971	340	---	---	---
1970	318	---	6364[c]	---
1969	257	---	5954	---
1968	40	---	5661	---

N/A=Statistics apparently collected, but not available.
---=Statistics apparently not collected.

NOTES:
[a]Calculated from arrivals and departures at the port and airport.
[b]Registered live births.
[c]The number of Residence Permits, which were issued to all individuals. The total number of Residence Permits issued is not available, and, therefore, the percentage held by Indians cannot be calculated. For comparison: in 1968, 18,277 Residence Permits were issued to Omanis; in 1969, 16,148; the figure for 1970 is not available.

The statistics for residence permits appear to have been a reliable measure of the Indian population from 1968 to 1970; the sum of the number of Residence Permits granted in 1970 and net migration for 1971 is very close to the number of Indians counted in the 1971 census (which, for reference in the following discussion, was 6657). Unfortunately, later statistics for Residence Permits are not published. With the 1971 census as a starting point, figures for net arrivals and births provide some sense of growth during the 1970's and beyond. There is a significant increase in the number of arrivals in 1975. This coincided with major increases in development expenditure at that time, which followed growth in revenue by about one year. Migration peaked in 1977, and dropped considerably in 1978 and 1979, during the slowdown in spending. Then, in 1980, it began to pick up again. It may be assumed that net migration has continued to grow since 1982, if perhaps at a less spectacular rate than during 1975-77.

The pattern of births demonstrates growth, of course, but also seems to indicate that rates of dependency in the population are not as directly responsive to spending as are rates of migration. The steady growth in the number of births reflects the steady growth in the number of Indians who are resident on a semi-permanent basis--or, at any rate, long enough to bring families and have children--and who are relatively well-placed--i.e., employed in occupations which give them the financial means to support their families in Bahrain and afford them sufficient leverage with employers to successfully negotiate the migration

of dependents. These patterns of employment and the implications of larger numbers of dependents for the social life of the community will be discussed in more detail below. The co-occurrence of declining rates of migration and increasing birth rates among Indians seems to indicate that the regulation of government spending and other controls can effectively slow the tap, but do little to empty the basin.

It is important to note that, despite the substantial number of births, very few marriages take place among Indians in Bahrain.[2] This does not signify high rates of illegitimacy or super-human fertility, of course, but the fact that the social lives of most Indians in Bahrain are limited in important ways. Marriages and most other important life-cycle rituals take place not in Bahrain, but in India, in the presence of the primary community. The ties that bind Indians in Bahrain are often extensions of those existing in India, but the latter remain the most significant and permanent relationships in people's lives. Thus, the Bhatia community in Bahrain is considered a subsidiary of the larger community in Bombay. Most births and nearly all initiation rituals, marriages and deaths occur in India. The most important death rituals are held in India even for those who die in Bahrain. The limited nature of social relationships and institutions in Bahrain appears to facilitate the continuation of caste and communal endogamy despite, in some cases, a great deal of social mixing while overseas.

The number of Work Cards issued to Indians is another measure of population growth, though not a direct or particularly

accurate one. Prior to independence, Work Cards and Permits were not used. In fact, as noted in the preceding chapter, contracts of employment were not common. The current government takes a more centralized approach to labor matters, and, indeed, to economic development in general. Relationships between the Bahraini government and Indians are more formalized and contractual than they were under the British. So are relationships between Indians and Bahraini employers, though here the contract is often merely an instrument of exploitation and more a matter of form than substance. In both cases, formalized relationships reflect the erection of boundaries and limits to the participation of Indians in Bahraini society. Despite some limitations,[3] the figures for Work Cards issued clearly demonstrate a pattern of growth, decline and renewed growth of about the same dimensions at about the same times as the net migration statistics. When nationalities are compared, these figures also indicate another interesting trend: within the increasing use of Asian labor in general, there has been an increasing reliance on Indian labor in particular.[4]

On the basis of the 1971 census, net migration and natural increase, University of Southern California demographers estimated the size of various foreign national populations in Bahrain in the mid-1970's, at the height of the boom. They first adjusted the 1971 census count of 6657 slightly upward, to 6806. They estimated that by April, 1976, the population had grown to 17,540. One year later, in April, 1977, the population was estimated to have grown to 25,880 (State of Bahrain, 1979a: 29).

The annual rate of growth between 1971 and 1976 was 31.5%; growth between 1976 and 1977 alone was 47.6% (Ibid., 31). Using documented increases since 1977, it seems reasonable to estimate that the Indian population had grown to at least 55,000 by late 1981 and has by now probably increased to over 60,000.[5] For comparison with earlier censes: an Indian population of 55,000 at the time of the 1981 census would have represented 48.9% of all Non-Bahrainis and 15.7% of the total population (see Table 5.2). This would have been more than a seven-fold increase in the Indian population during the ten years since the 1971 census.

Though other demographic statistics for the Indian population are not available, it is possible to provide a rough estimate of the sexual distribution. It seems likely that only about 11,500, or 20.9%, of the Indians in Bahrain were female, a figure much lower than the proportions in earler censes.[6] It is clear that despite increasing numbers of families and dependents, the population had moved away from the normal sexual distribution that was being approached in 1971.

It is impossible to estimate the number of pre-school Indian children in Bahrain, and I have therefore not attempted to arrive at a figure for all children. However, as the growing number of births and increasing enrollments at the Indian School show, the number is increasing. The Indian School has grown rapidly in recent years, especially since the new facilities opened in 1980-81. Available figures are presented in Table 5.3. A substantial number of Indian children also attend other private schools, mainly the Sacred Heart School.[7]

TABLE 5.2. THE INDIAN POPULATION IN BAHRAIN

Census	Category	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of Foreigners	Percentage of Total Population
1941	Indians[a]	N/A	N/A	1424	8.9	1.6
1950	Indians[b]	N/A	N/A	3043	16.5	2.8
1959	Indians	2698	1345	4043	16.6	2.8
	Goans	324	112	436		
	Pakistanis	1471	812	2283		
	Total	4493	2269	6762	27.7	4.7
1965	Indians	3208	2175	5383	14.0	3.0
	Pakistanis	2333	1599	3932		
	Total	5541	3774	9315	24.2	5.1
1971	Indians	3991	2666	6657	17.6	3.1
	Pakistanis	3326	2051	5377		
	Total	7317	4717	12,034	31.8	5.6
1981[c]	Indians	43,500	11,500	55,000	48.9	15.7

[a]Includes Indians, Anglo-Indians and Goans.
[b]Includes Indians, Pakistanis, Anglo-Indians and Goans.
[c]Estimate.

Table 5.3.
ENROLLMENT AT THE INDIAN SCHOOL

Academic Year	Enrollment
1971-72	319[a]
1972-73	475
1973-74	603[b]
1974-75	767
1975-76	862
1976-77	1023[c]
1977-78	1081
1978-79	1250
1979-80	1270
1980-81	1530[d]
1981-82	1830

[a]Figures for 1971-72 through 1977-78 are from the Ministry of Education. Later figures are from Indian School officers. Statistics may have been collected at different points in the school year. It seems that figures through 1978-79 were taken at the ending of the school year, while later figures were definitely taken at the beginning.

[b]According to Indian School officials, enrollment reached 500 pupils in 1969.

[c]According to Indian School officials, there were 900 pupils in 1976-77. These counts may have been taken at different times during the school year.

[d]The new Indian School at Isa Town opened for this school year.

Other trends in Indian School enrollment are important indicators of general issues and social processes. As the school has gradually changed from Hindi to English as the medium of instruction, one year at a time, enrollment in successively higher forms has increased. This reflects the growing population, of course, but also Southern origins and the importance of English to upwardly mobile Indian parents generally.[8] Despite the increase in enrollments in successively higher forms with each passing year, the largest enrollments continued to be at the primary and intermediate levels. This may be attributed to other parental strategies, often discussed by informants. Though the Indian School had become an acceptable place to send children, opportunities to enter good universities were improved if children attended higher-quality--and better-connected--secondary and "higher secondary" schools in India. These schools were also cheaper in many cases. The maximization of opportunity and cost were balanced with the value to parents and children of keeping the family together. As the children matured, the balance shifted. It was common for Indian parents to keep their children with them in Bahrain until they finished the intermediate level at the Indian School, then send them to India to finish their education at boarding schools or living with relatives. If there were few children of about the same age, their mother might remain in India with them.

For Indian workers who remain in Bahrain for some time and are able to bring their families with them, education of children is an important factor in family cycles. The family may be

together in India, then separated while the working member--almost always the male--establishes himself in Bahrain, then together until the children reach adolescence, then separate until they matriculate, and then together again if the wife rejoins her husband or he returns to India. (But, if the educational strategies have been successful, the children may be in Delhi, Canada, or, perhaps, back in Bahrain.) This pattern is not limited to the Indian population, but is present in other groups with sizable numbers of dependents living in Bahrain, such as Pakistanis and, of course, the British, for whom it is a venerable tradition of expatriate life. The skewed distribution of infants, children and adolescents in the foreign population as a whole (see Note 7) is attributable to precisely this cycle.

THE LABOR FORCE

Statistics collected in the 1981 census do not provide information in sufficient detail to assess the occupational and economic position of the Indian community. However, some data may be taken from the 1979 Ministry of Labour survey, in which the sex, age, education, income and economic position of various nationalities of workers were tabulated. The survey was limited to the private sector and, though it was extensive, it was not exhaustive: government employees, personal servants, most independent workers and many workers in small firms were not counted. There were probably many Indian workers in all these categories. Despite shortcomings, the survey provides a broad profile of the Indian community which clearly illustrates that

major changes had taken place since 1971. Potential inaccuracies will be noted as I go along.

Of the 23,415 Indians counted, 22,898 were male and 517 were female. A significant number of foreign working women was undoubtedly missed in the survey.[9] Many women, including Indians, work in uncounted sectors--especially government employment and personal service--and the participation rate for foreign women, in general, is much higher than for Bahraini women. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the work force is overwhelmingly male and that, of the relatively small female Indian population in Bahrain, few are working women. The sexual distribution in the labor force appears to hold for most foreign nationalities.

The age distribution of the Indians in the 1979 survey (Table 5.4, males and females combined) exhibits the classic profile of migrant labor populations. Most workers (83.6%) are between the ages of 20 and 39. This distribution is probably somewhat different from the situation in 1971. First of all, most workers today are recent migrants. Here we draw supporting evidence from the 1981 census: of the total foreign population, 71.8% had been in Bahrain four years or less, and 46.1% only two years or less. Secondly, as we shall see, today's Indian workers are concentrated in occupations requiring youth and physical vigor. In 1971 and the years before, larger proportions of the working population were highly skilled, had resided in Bahrain for longer periods of time, and, therefore, were older.

The educational background of the Indian workers in the 1979 survey is presented in Table 5.5. The population is notable for

Table 5.4.
INDIAN WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR
1979 MINISTRY OF LABOUR SURVEY
AGE

14-19 Years	109
20-29 Years	10,790
30-39 Years	8795
40-49 Years	2931
50-59 Years	696
60-69 Years	94
	23,415

Table 5.5.
INDIAN WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR
1979 MINISTRY OF LABOUR SURVEY
EDUCATION

No Education	13,130
Read and Write	1590
Primary School	1313
Intermediate	517
Secondary	3228
Secondary, Commercial	145
Secondary, Technical	272
Technical Diploma	328
University	1545
Other University	507
Other Higher Education	724
Not Available	116
	23,415

Table 5.6.
INDIAN WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR
1979 MINISTRY OF LABOUR SURVEY
INCOME (IN BD/MONTH)

0-49	2010
50-69	6934
70-89	5066
90-119	3297
120-149	1876
150-199	1806
200-249	1002
250-299	531
300-399	538
400-599	261
Over 600	94
	23,415

the sizable concentrations at the bottom and top. The finding that 56.4% of the surveyed workers had no education is probably not accurate, and is perhaps more a measure of their economic status than their background.[10] Though the survey figures may be exaggerated, they cannot be dismissed; there undoubtedly are great numbers of uneducated Indian workers in Bahrain today, which represents a significant change from the situation prior to 1971. The number of Indian workers with university degrees and other higher education was 2776, 11.9% of the total number of Indians surveyed. For comparison: the total number of Bahraini workers in these categories was 1225; and for all Non-Bahrainis, 6732. Of course, many educated Bahrainis work for the government. That fact in itself indicates a great deal about the distribution of technical expertise among Bahraini workers and within the labor force as a whole. The fact that 41.2% of the university-educated foreign workers in the survey were Indian indicates that India is still a major source of quality manpower.

Information regarding income was also collected in the 1979 survey. The figures, presented in Table 5.6, do not include allowances given, if any. They are notable for the predominance of workers earning low salaries--which, in this case, is probably reasonably accurate--and the small number of workers in the upper income brackets. The fact that employers admit to paying wages quite obviously below the legal minimum to so many workers perhaps indicates something about attitudes toward enforcement of the labor law. The fact that few Indians are well-paid, despite high educational levels, is an indication of their relative power

and status in the labor market. The effects of competition and unrestricted migration on income are not felt equally by all workers. Many Bahrainis and Europeans are shielded, the former by the state and the latter by preferential treatment within corporate structures. Indians in positions comparable to those held by Bahrainis or Europeans often do not receive comparable salaries and other compensation. As noted in Chapter Three, this is increasingly being formalized through different salary scales for Bahrainis, Europeans, and Asians.[11]

The survey classified workers by both occupation and industry (Tables 5.7 and 5.8). In both cases, categories are very broad and have sacrificed relevance to the local situation in order to achieve comparability to international systems of classification--which is not surprising, since they were prepared by American economists recruited through AID. Occupational categories, in particular, make it impossible to distinguish skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Still, a number of generalizations about Indian workers and the Indian population as a whole can be drawn from these figures.

It is immediately obvious that the labor force is composed largely of young males because it is concentrated in "production" and laboring occupations, especially in the construction "industry."[12] This also accounts for the low average income of Indian males. Of the 517 women in the survey, 76.6% were in clerical occupations, which are much more highly paid than construction jobs. In Bahrain, the construction industry is labor intensive, subject to the competitive pressure of huge labor

Table 5.7.
INDIAN WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR
1979 MINISTRY OF LABOUR SURVEY
INDUSTRY

Agriculture and Fishing	351	1.5%
Mining and Quarrying	316	1.3
Manufacturing	3031	12.9
Electricity, Gas and Water	9	0.0
Construction	10,721	45.8
Wholesale, Retail, Hotels and Restaurants	5599	23.9
Transport, Storage and Communication	1086	4.6
Financial, Insurance and Real Estate	651	2.8
Community, Social and Personal Services	1651	7.1
	23,415	99.9

Table 5.8.
INDIAN WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR
1979 MINISTRY OF LABOUR SURVEY
OCCUPATION

Professional and Technical	1271	5.4%
Administrative and Managerial	155	.7
Clerical and Related	2555	10.9
Sales	843	3.6
Services	2804	12.0
Agriculture and Fishing	334	1.4
Production and Transport Operators and Laborers	15,453	66.0
	23,415	100.0

markets, and, of course, not unionized. On the other hand, because British and Indian control established their status and because they require education and good English, clerical workers are subject to less market pressure and are better paid, whether they are male or female. The average income of Non-Bahraini laborers in the survey was BD76 per month; of Non-Bahraini, non-supervisory clerical workers, BD161; and of Non-Bahraini stenographers and typists, BD228.[13]

Large concentrations of Indian workers are also found in manufacturing, commerce and in the hotel and restaurant sector. Most manufacturing in Bahrain requires semi-skilled to highly skilled labor, such as machinists, electricians, pipefitters, welders, mechanics, etc. These occupations are fairly well-paid, and are areas of competition with Bahraini workers. Indians have long been employed in them. The number of Indian workers in manufacturing certainly grew between 1971 and 1979, but not by the same magnitude as employment in other sectors; the expansion of the Indian labor force mirrors that of the economy as a whole, i.e., it is concentrated in construction and services.

Prominent among those services is commerce. The vast majority of Indian workers in commerce are no longer businessmen or proprietors, of course. Some are managers and accountants, but most are relatively poorly-paid shop workers. Indians also occupy a wide range of jobs in the hotel business, from chambermaids and waiters to desk clerks and supervisory personnel. In some hotels, almost the entire staff, except for the chefs and upper management, may be Indian. Salaries are low, except for

managerial personnel, though gratuities can be a significant supplement to income.[14] In fact, especially in internationally-owned hotels, some of these jobs, such as table service, require a high level of sophistication, by European standards, in service and self-presentation. Their occupants tend to be educated young men from urban centers, such as Bombay and Delhi, where they may have been trained in their employers' Indian branches. Regardless of income, the jobs have little prestige by Indian standards. As such, they contradict the backgrounds of their occupants and are a source of embarrassment and shame, affecting social relationships in Bahrain and in India.

Low incomes and large numbers of laborers signify a major change in the economic structure and position of the Indian work force since 1971. Prior to the 1970's, most laborers were Omani or Yemeni. Indians were concentrated in prestigious and relatively well-paid positions, based on and protected by the British connection. In the mid-1970's, Indian and Pakistani laborers were recruited to replace the Omanis and man new construction projects. The 1982 Labour survey indicates that while the Pakistani work force declined significantly, the number of Indian workers continued to grow through the slump and afterwards. The number of Indian workers increased to 32,382 in the 1982 survey, while the number of Pakistanis fell from 13,134 in 1979 to 9744 in 1982. Indian labor continues to be cost effective for Bahraini employers. It is also quiescent and compliant, especially relative to Pakistani labor. (I will return to this subject below.) Though the educational statistics

collected in the survey may be exaggerated, it is clear that the laborers are less educated, affluent and sophisticated than either the current or the previous generation of clerks, professionals and businessmen.

In terms of the common indicators of status--education, occupation, income--the Indian community as a whole has suffered a marked decline. Its position has been undercut by independence, the higher occupational and social status and greater wealth of Bahrainis, on the one hand, and by the flood of Indian laborers and unskilled workers, on the other. Insofar as economic status and social prestige are subjectively linked among both Bahrainis and Indians, these changes have had a significant impact on relations between Bahrainis and Indians and on the structure of the Indian community itself. The former issue was touched upon in Chapter Three and is discussed in the conclusion of this study. As to the latter: the emergence of an Indian "proletariat" has led to pronounced stratification across the entire population, while the continued growth of an Indian "middle class" has contributed to the further development of processes of categorical and organizational segmentation and, in addition, produced competition for leadership within the community.

CULTURAL VARIATION

The basis of organizational development is not just middle-class aspirations, of course, but patterns of ascriptive differentiation in the population. No precise or even rough measures of these patterns are available. However, using information from passport renewals and its many contacts in the community, the Indian embassy estimated the regional composition of the population. It is apparent that the earlier trend of increasing migration from the south has continued. The proportions suggested by the embassy are as follows: 40-50% from Kerala; 20% from Bombay and Maharashtra; 10% from Goa, Madras (sic), and other parts of South India; and 20-30% from all of North and West India, from Bengal to Gujerat and the Punjab.

My own observations and discussions with leaders and members of the community suggest that the lower range would be more accurate for the last group. There is a sprinkling of individuals from all over the north, but, other than Punjabis (who are mostly Sikhs) and Gujeratis, there are no sizable groups from North India. Workers from North, Central and East India tend to work for national concerns, such as banks, Air India, or the embassy, or to have been recruited through national recruiting institutions, such as corporations, government agencies, or the Foreign Ministry itelf. The estimate of Non-Keralite South Indians seems somewhat low. Goa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu--but not Andhra Pradesh--are all represented in substantial numbers. Also, of the number noted as from Bombay and Maharashtra, very few are actually Marathi. Most are migrants from Sindh, Gujerat,

Goa and Karnataka. Though Bombay remains an important center for migration, it is evident that the south, and Kerala in particular, has become the major focus of direct recruiting activity.

This distribution may be contrasted with an estimate of the composition of the student body at the Indian School, provided by school officials. Their classification combines regional, categorical and linguistic distinctions--reflecting the preoccupations of the pedagogue--and is as follows: Bhatia, 20%; Gujerati, mostly Soni, 20%; Southern, i.e., Kerala, Madras (sic), and Telugu speakers, 25%; Konkani speakers from Goa and Karnataka, 15%; Punjabis, mostly Sikhs, 15%; others, 5%. These figures may be used as a rough indicator of those groups within the Indian population who are able to bring their families to Bahrain, presumably because they hold occupations or positions of relative affluence. The most notable contradiction with the general figures is in the Keralite category; despite large numbers, relatively few Malayalees in Bahrain have their families with them. In fact, most of the Indian laborers and unskilled workers in Bahrain are from Kerala. By contrast, though they are present in relatively modest numbers, the Bhatias, Sonis and Sikhs are often accompanied by their families.

It is no longer possible to estimate the general religious composition of the population from census statistics. The religious categories in the 1981 census have been reduced to three: Muslim, Christian and Other. The numbers of Non-Indian and Non-Pakistani Asians are now so large that it is not feasible to

assume that most "Others" are Hindus and Sikhs or that most Non-European Christians are Indians. Observation in places of employment and social clubs indicates that Christians and Hindus continue to predominate in the upper strata and in favored occupations. However, some changes are readily apparent. The number of Sikhs and Muslims has increased significantly. The former have migrated from the Punjab or Bombay and fill skilled occupations in construction--masons, carpenters, etc.--or technical jobs--eg., most obviously, air conditioner repair.

Of the new Muslim migrants, some are Bohras, but most are from Kerala. Mopillas, as Keralite Muslims are called, represent 30-50% of the Keralite population in Bahrain, by different estimates. A few Mopillas have lived in Bahrain for some time, and are well-established businessmen. Other Mopillas run most of the small hotels in Bahrain (a global economic niche, they claim). Unlike other groups of Indians, many Mopillas are from rural areas and are relatively poorly educated. For these reasons, most Mopillas in Bahrain are laborers or unskilled laborers. Prominent Mopillas report high levels of exploitation, both within Kerala and in Bahrain. The free visa appears to be especially common among Mopillas, as among Keralites generally.

Economic differentiation is present within nearly all the other categories of the Indian population, as well as among the Mopillas, though in differing forms and to varying degrees. This makes it difficult to correlate category and occupation or socioeconomic stratum, except very generally. The Bhatias are still quite well-off, but most are now employees of Non-Bhatia

companies, rather than independent businessmen. The Bohras are similarly split between businessmen and other workers. While Bhatia employees tend to be managers and professionals, Bohra employees are often shopworkers or other semi-skilled workers. Many Sonis have recently migrated on free visas, and work freelance or in the shops run by established goldsmiths. Though many other Gujeratis are still merchants, professionals and white-collar workers, there are also many Gujerati unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Most regional and linguistic categories contain a similar mix of businessmen, professionals, white-collar, blue-collar and unskilled workers. The bottom end is especially large in the Keralite population. The blue-collar segment seems especially large among Goans and Karnatakese. The type of economic differentiation and the extent to which it is present in various categories have been important factors in community structure, as we shall see. Economic differentiation is often associated with particular forms of contract and sponsorship, which also affect group formation in particular categories and in the community generally.

FORMS OF SPONSORSHIP

A number of factors--Bahraini independence, restrictions on foreign residents, the formalization of economic and political relations with Bahraini society, the predominance of Bahraini business interests, population growth, changes in the labor market and in patterns of employment--have undercut the status and position of Indians in Bahraini society. These changes are

reflected in patterns of recruiting and in the types of contract and sponsorship present in the Indian community. Merchants and businessmen who operate exempt companies are sponsored by their firms, i.e., by themselves. They recruit through caste and communal networks, as before. For the most part, it is only the Bhatias and Bohras who are in this position.

A number of Indians work for and are sponsored by the government, parastatal companies, or foreign firms operating in Bahrain. These individuals are drawn from all regional, linguistic and religious groups, but, because they tend to be educated and highly skilled, they usually occupy relatively prestigious positions in these groups and in the population as a whole; they are an important part of the Indian upper stratum. Recruitment may occasionally be through company branches in India, as in the old days, but most foreign operations in Bahrain today are American, European and Asian banks and construction and service companies, not the old British firms. They recruit on the open Indian market, through newspapers and agents. The current trend is toward government-to-government recruiting for government employees and professional workers in the private sector. As migration to the Gulf has increased, it has been rationalized at the supply end. Like other Asian countries, the Indian government now maintains a service for the recruitment of workers, though it presently handles only professional and highly technical occupations.

Most Indian workers in Bahrain work for private Bahraini employers in small or moderate size companies. The occupations

covered under this kind of sponsorship range broadly, from important executives in local firms to laborers and servants. They may be recruited as individuals or on a group basis. Employers still use references from current employees to recruit in some cases, but agents and recruiters supply the vast majority of the labor, especially when a number of workers are required at once, as in construction. These factors—recruiting practices on the Indian side and private sponsorship on the Bahraini side--have a profound influence on the lives of Indian workers. We will have little more to say about recruiting in India. However, it bears repeating that the disposition of the Bahraini sponsor is an important factor in the lives of Indians in Bahrain. In general, all workers under private sponsorship are more vulnerable than workers in similar jobs under publicly accountable sponsors. Treatment usually varies with occupation and usefulness to the employer, and, therefore, to the extent that occupation varies by category, sponsorship and its burdens also vary by category.

Aside from his control over the working life of the Indian employee, the sponsor exercises considerable influence in the worker's private life, primarily through the various benefits which the employer may--or may not--provide for the worker. The practical exigencies of the worker's life may be seen as structured by the conditions of sponsorship, employment, and residence in general. In turn, these exigencies may be seen as underlying the structuring of relationships and collectivities. Perhaps the clearest and most important example of the linkages

between the exigencies of context and the structure of social life is to be found in housing, residence and household form.

RESIDENCE AND HOUSEHOLD

The extraordinary growth of the Indian community has, perhaps not surprisingly, been accompanied by changes in patterns of residence and household form. These patterns may be seen as the product of several interrelated factors: the type and conditions of sponsorship, as above; the structuring of the real estate market in Bahrain; general demographic changes in the society; and the cultural orientations and social and economic resources of the migrants themselves, especially those related to the "stratification" of the population.

In finding housing and forming households, Indians are not permitted to purchase real estate, of course, even if they could afford it. Given this condition, three alternatives or strategies remain open. First, they may seek housing on the open rental market. This is done by workers with a broad range of financial resources, from merchants who sponsor themselves, to workers of various kinds who request or receive an allowance from their employer in lieu of housing, to laborers and others who are denied housing benefits by their employers. In most cases, these workers must seek out the cheaper rental units and form group households, in some combination. Second, workers may be provided with individual housing units, usually apartments, by their employers. In this case, the employer determines the size and quality of housing and the location of residence. He may also

limit the size of the household and, perhaps, its composition as well. Third, Indians may be provided with group housing in barracks. These are located in camps, usually at some distance from Manama. Living conditions and services provided may vary considerably. This form of housing is provided by BAPCO and other parastatals for their lower echelon employees and by most construction contractors.

In finding housing, or what they perceive to be better housing, Indians face many limitations and difficulties, which they must negotiate around or creatively resolve. The "rational" resources for finding housing, "estate agents" and the English language newspapers, are oriented toward the top end of the market and, in any case, the housing that does come onto the open market is often beyond the range affordable by most Indians. Access to most housing is restricted, either because it is owned by Bahrainis who distribute it to their employees or because it is leased by other companies, who in turn distribute it to their employees. The apartments or allowances granted by employers are often considered inadequate. In addition, apartments and houses in Bahrain are customarily rented completely unfurnished. Since new furnishings, appliances and housewares are also beyond the means of most Indians--and are generally given low priority by expatriates, given their temporary residence and primary orientation toward saving as much as possible--there is a thriving redistributive market.

This market is largely informal. The sponsor is the first recourse in coping with everyday needs that may be difficult to

meet through the open market. Workers negotiate with their employers for the best units, for larger allowances, for permission to bring spouses, and about a myriad of other problems. These negotiations are a product of the individualization of incorporation, which gives the sponsor extraordinary power but also involves him in the private lives of his employees. The persistence of Indian employees in requesting one thing or another is seen by Bahraini sponsors and company personnel managers as both amusing and exasperating. The insignificance of the requests, from the Bahraini point-of-view, contributes to stereotypes of Indians as mean, petty and utterly without self-respect. The other primary resources for finding housing and dealing with housing-related problems are personal relationships and networks among Indians themselves. People in positions or occupations with access to information—accountants and clerks in the large private concerns, advertising clerks at the newspapers--are at the center of distributive networks. Needs are articulated through all social relationships--at work, in the neighborhood, in clubs, etc.--and can be met quite efficiently.[15]

The residential choices of Indians are also restricted by the residential patterns of Bahrainis and, in some areas, by emerging residential segregation. At the turn of the century, when the community was still tiny and composed of only a handful of merchants, Indians lived in the suq, usually above their shops. Later, as the population grew and families arrived, Indians moved out into the surrounding quarters of central Manama. Many of those who worked for BAPCO lived in Awali, of

course, but, otherwise, there was no longer segregation of the Indian community into a separate ghetto or quarter. Indians and Bahrainis, usually Baharnah and ʿAjam, lived alongside one another in central Manama. As a result of suburban growth and government housing developments, many Bahrainis have moved out of central Manama.[16] Those who remain tend to be poor and, for categorical and ideological reasons, otherwise underprivileged. Many of the new migrants of the 1970ʿs, especially Indian and Pakistani laborers, moved into central Manama, making the composition increasingly South Asian (but still poor). At the same time, Indians were prohibited from living in the developments constructed for Bahrainis.

Many Indians have moved to the suburbs or to quarters outside the city center, where they live among middle-class Bahrainis. Affluent Indians, like many Bhatias, have moved to the suburbs of their own accord, to escape the congestion of central Manama. Others live in the suburbs or in the old quarters around the city center because their employers own buildings in those areas and distribute the apartments to them. Regardless of the reasons for doing so, living in most suburban areas confers prestige. Housing there is usually newer and of higher quality.[17]

Several household forms may be distinguished. They sometimes vary with location, but, generally, they reflect the background and orientations of the individuals involved, as refracted by the nature and conditions of sponsorship and employment. A few Indians maintain joint family households, especially the Sonis. These are rarely complete extended family households. First of

all, a number of family members are usually in India. In addition, most apartments are too small to accommodate a large extended family, and detached houses, of a quality acceptable to these people, are either unavailable where they want to live or cost more than they are willing or able to pay. When substantial numbers of closely related people are in Bahrain, they usually live in a combination of stem and nuclear family households. The latter are very common. They are the housing arrangements of choice for those who can afford them, even among otherwise traditional groups, such as the Bhatias and Bohras. Most of the well-placed workers who bring their families and are provided apartments by their employers form nuclear family households. However, they may take in a relative or a friend, as well. This is also a common practice among workers with families who receive allowances and find their own housing, producing similar household forms.

Other households tend to be all male. "Bachelor" households, as they are called, are composed of men on contract without their families, and not necessarily of unmarried men. They can take three general forms. Employers often provide apartments for male workers to share. Similar households may be formed by men with allowances, or, less often, using their own resources. The composition of these households is negotiated with employers or is a matter of choice. In the latter case, households may reflect the continuation of relationships in India or relationships formed in Bahrain on the basis of ascriptive categories or other interests. It is important to note that these households, and all

the forms noted above, are relatively small and are composed of Indians who are relatively well-paid and securely employed. They might still seek improvements in their housing situation, but, in comparison to other workers, they are valued employees of relatively considerate employers.

This is not the case in the other bachelor household forms. Laborers who do not receive allowances from employers, or receive very small ones, often form large households. They may be joined by other workers who could live in camps provided by employers, but prefer to live with friends at their own expense. These households are usually in buildings in central Manama which have been vacated by Bahraini families moving to Isa Town or another suburban location. The composition of these households usually reflects relationships formed at home or in Bahrain on the basis of ascriptive ties or geographical origin. The third bachelor household form is that of the labor camp itself, where workers are commonly housed in barracks. These may vary in size, but are usually divided by nationality and, within large and varied nationalities, like Indians, by region, language and, perhaps, religion.

The large bachelor households and the labor camps differ from other household forms in terms of the occupations, income and status of the individuals involved. Household form is thus an indicator of stratification within the population as a whole. Members of the same ascriptive category may be more distant socially from members of their category in a different stratum than from members of different categories in the same stratum.

Though large bachelor households may be located in Manama alongside the apartments of more affluent Indians, there is likely to be little interaction among the occupants.

Substandard housing is a major problem among foreign laborers, most of whom are Indians and Pakistanis. A number of factors combine to produce overcrowded, squalid and unsanitary living conditions in many of the large bachelor households. Municipal sanitation officials report occupation by 40 or more workers, and even as many as 200, in a house that might once have been occupied by a Bahraini family with five to ten members. Infectious diseases, like cholera, rarely occur spontaneously in Bahrain. However, cases are occasionally imported, usually by laborers. When they are incorporated into these households, they can easily spread the disease to other members of the household. Bahraini owners often are not concerned to maintain these properties. In most cases, the ground is probably worth far more than the structures on it, so that threats by municipal officials to destroy unsafe buildings represent little in the way of an incentive for improvement. Owners are merely milking the property--and the laborers who inhabit it--for as long as possible before selling or developing it.

The laborers themselves have few resources to invest in maintaining the properties. Many of them receive meager allowances or none at all. In any case, whatever their resources, their primary interest is to save money. Their willingness to accept substandard conditions and their lack of interest in making improvements, to the extent that they could do so,

compound the neglect of property owners.[18]

The economic and political structures of labor migration--summarized in the power of the sponsor--sometimes produce similar housing problems at the camps run by private employers. These employers, who are usually construction contractors, build their camps in isolated areas and truck workers to their work sites. In general, conditions at camps are a sensitive issue for Bahraini employers.[19] In private discussions, workers described isolated, unsanitary conditions in which few facilities and services were provided. When seeking repairs and improvements within the company, they got the run around; they were referred from one manager or branch of the company to another, each insisting that the other had responsibility for camp maintenance. Workers were often not aware of recourse available through the Ministry of Health. Of course, there are certain hazards involved in appealing to higher authorities. Workers described the selective firing and repatriation of those who showed what management deemed to be an excess of initiative. It is no wonder that many preferred to live in large households in Manama; conditions may have been equally squalid, but there was, at least, the consolation of friends and other diversions.

Parastatal companies with sizable numbers of Asian workers--ALBA, ASRY, BAPCO—also maintain barracks, usually at or near the location of their facilities. Because they are more open to public scrutiny and adhere more closely to international labor standards, conditions in these camps are much better than in those maintained by private contractors. The organization of

their camps is similar to that described above, i.e., with national and sub-national groups divided. This recognizes and structures residence around the ascriptive categories salient within the labor force, while at the same time preventing large, troublesome solidarities. It is thus a negotiated compromise between the needs of management and those of the workers. At ASRY, in particular, the national composition of the work force is very complex.

At ALBA, attempts to use elected representatives from national categories of workers to mediate relations with management have been fairly successful. It is interesting to note that the representatives of the Indian workers in this case were educated men; despite their background, they were in semi-skilled occupations, and, despite their occupations, they had status among their fellows because of their education. Managers working for a private contractor reported a less successful experiment. An attempt to set up committees based on nationality--Indian and Thai, in this case--to handle complaints and problems was frustrated because Indian workers tended to take up problems as individuals with their supervisor or the personnel office rather than use a group spokesman. Other personnel officers reported similar individualistic behavior, and the persistent petitioning noted earlier. This was contrasted with the behavior of Pakistani laborers, who were said to be less communicative about complaints and to act collectively more often, to the consternation and alarm of management.

Several characteristics of laborers, whether in camps or in

the large urban households, are important in defining their position in the national community as a whole, or, as is more or less the case, outside the national community as a whole. Their occupations do not provide sufficient income for them to participate in the social activities of more affluent workers. It is especially difficult for those in camps to participate. In some cases, no transportation is provided by employers and communication with Manama, the social center of the community, is therefore limited. Laborers also tend to be more transient than other workers, and do not become as involved in informal networks. There are also social barriers to the participation of laborers and semi-skilled workers in most voluntary associations. Their occupations usually have low prestige. Though there are exceptions, most laborers lack the education, sophistication, manners, Western tastes and language skills necessary to make them acceptable in polite Indian society in Bahrain. There is thus a range of interlinked factors--occupation, income, education, residence, cultural orientation--dividing laborers from skilled, white-collar and professional Indians. The boundary is not a precise one, but the former are, for the most part, actively excluded from the associations and social organizations dominated by the latter.

In effect, then, the organization of this vast underclass is limited to residence and other networks and those institutions which might be instituted by employers. Whatever solidarity may exist among Indians generally, as Indians, is not expressed in organizational form. It is likely that the Bahraini government

would not allow such a large population to form an extensive formal organization, even if its purposes were ostensibly to be limited. As we shall see, the government suppressed efforts to merely disseminate information and articulate the practical interests of workers, much less actually organize them. It also seems likely that, by allowing the formation of voluntary associations based on region and other Indian sub-categories, the government actually encourages the fragmentation of the community. This argument will be taken up in detail in the following chapters. Notwithstanding all the influences of the context, it is also my argument that the barriers to extensive organization in the Indian population as a whole are internal as well as external, and that these internal limitations are partly practical--lack of resources--and partly cultural--lack of prestige. The great majority of the Indian population is unable to participate in the formal organizations of the community or is prevented from doing so by status boundaries, or both.

Unlike the lower stratum, the upper stratum of the population has formed a myriad of voluntary associations. In the following section I will briefly summarize the nature and bases of these organizations.

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The number of voluntary associations in the Indian community has increased since 1971, when we left off the narrative. In some categories of the population, existing organizations have grown in size, while in others, organizations and solidary groups have proliferated. The nature, number and extensiveness of voluntary associations in particular categories are related to a combination of factors: population size; demographic balance; categorical and social differentiation present within groups; the economic, political and social position of group members; and, the cultural background and orientations of the group. The clubs and associations reflect a variety of levels and dimensions of categorical differentiation. Region of origin, language and religion continue to be the primary bases of differentiation. In some organizations, and, especially, in less formal social relationships, these general distinctions are compounded by additional and finer categories, such as caste, sect and district of origin.

It is important to reiterate and emphasize the fact that the primary purposes and functions of voluntary associations are recreational. While these purposes may reflect "needs" that are in part responses to the Bahraini environment, only to a very limited degree do associations articulate what may be called material interests; they are more "expressive" than "instrumental" in function (Jacoby and Babchuk, 1963). They are thus very different from the voluntary associations described among migrants in other situations (Fallers, 1967; Cohen, 1969;

Skinner, 1978; Shack and Skinner, 1979). The distributions of the Bahraini government to expatriates, such as they are, are delivered individually, through employment, or, more generally, through the market and the utilization of common public facilities. The government regulates the size, basis and purposes of clubs and associations. Formal groups of moderate size, based on mid-level categories (eg., language or region) are allowed to form in considerable numbers. Tiny, narrowly-based groups are not allowed to proliferate, except in one highly restricted sphere, that of Christian religious congregations. For a variety of reasons, going somewhat beyond government control, large, broadly-based organizations do not exist. Associations do not articulate--are not allowed to articulate--the political and economic interests of Indians as individuals or as collectivities. Associations and their leaders--in their capacities as group leaders--have little influence with either the Bahraini government or powerful Bahraini individuals. In short, though clubs and associations are the focus of a great deal of energy, their role in the lives of Indians and in the affairs of the community is usually restricted.

Despite varying categorical bases, Indian social clubs have some characteristics in common. Unlike British clubs, which are open throughout the day, most Indian clubs are open only during the evenings and on weekends. This reflects the busy working schedules of most Indians and the relatively limited number of dependents with leisure time. It also reflects the limited financial base of most Indian clubs; unlike the British clubs, in

most cases, Indian clubs are unable to provide swimming pools, tennis courts, etc., and a full-time staff to maintain them. Most of the members in Indian clubs are male. In the case of a couple, membership is usually held in the name of the husband. Women are often incorporated through an auxiliary, or "ladies side," as it is called. British clubs differ in these respects, too; whether or not they join with their husbands as couples, large numbers of British women hold direct, voting memberships.

One of the primary attractions of social clubs is liquor, which most offer at reduced rates. Workers come to the clubs to relax, have a beer with friends, read the newspapers and catch up on the news and gossip from home. Many clubs maintain active sports programs, though facilities are often a problem. Few clubs are able to provide tennis courts, but most have card rooms, dart boards, and billiard tables. Leagues for team sports, such as tennis, hockey, rugby, squash and cricket are organized among the various expatriate and Bahraini clubs. Clubs compete to attract the best sportsmen, regardless of their categorical backgrounds. Many clubs now offer video movies to members. (On one visit to the Young Goans' Sports Club, I found a large audience taking in that American slice-and-dice epic, "Friday the Thirteenth.") They also maintain active social calendars. Hawzi, an Indian variant of bingo, is played at least once a week in most clubs. Some, especially the Goans, Karnatakese and the BSC, sponsor dances and beauty pageants regularly. Gambling, games and other activities may be seen as an expression of the upwardly-mobile, middle class orientations of most club members. Interestingly, none of the

clubs hold banquets and, in fact, none have the full dining facilities that are a prominent feature in British clubs. Some clubs, like the Keraleeya Samajam, offer cultural events, such as plays, music and dance, and encourage the artistic talents of members and children with contests and recitals.

Clubs do have some practical functions, and these are both psychological and material. As workers sip their beer and chat, the conversation will, at some point, almost inevitably turn to Bahrainis, Bahrainization and the anxieties of expatriate life. It is a form of group therapy; as they collectively revile Bahrainis, and Arabs in general, Indians reformulate their own identity, regain self-respect and release tension. Clubs also serve as the venue for the articulation of redistributive networks and the exchange of information. They are thus an extension of the personal networks which are so important for Indians.

In nearly all cases, the resources voluntary associations control and the interests they express are limited. Clubs are self-supporting, through modest dues, usually one-half to one dinar per month. Prizes for the many events and contests are often supplied through donations from businesses. The ability to manipulate networks and employers to obtain donations and other goods and services at reduced rates is an important criterion of leadership in many clubs. However, the resources available through dues and donations are hardly sufficient to give leaders coercive authority over members. Political connections and influence--through, for example, a relationship of trust with a

powerful sponsor or employer--is another important criterion in the selection of leaders, since they must often deal with Bahraini authorities. This influence is rarely adequate to give club leaders dominance over members or even to allow them significance as patrons. These roles are usually reserved for workers' sponsors.

There is a differentiation of leadership function in many clubs. As noted earlier, a democratic apparatus is formally required and, usually, is the effective means of acquiring and delegating authority. However, democratic processes have made concessions to the Bahraini context. The presidency of most clubs is a largely ceremonial office, offered by the elected managing committee to influential individuals who can serve as brokers in disputes with Bahrainis or negotiations with the Bahraini government. The focus of "political" competition within clubs is the managing committee, that is, the various club offices, especially that of general secretary. The general secretary is usually the day-to-day administrator of club affairs. The financial and social success of a club often depend on his energy, organizational ability and fiscal acumen.

In describing their qualifications, general secretaries often mention leadership in institutions in India, such as college government, children's schools, Lions' or Toastmasters' Clubs, etc. They do not mention regional and linguistic associations, caste associations or political parties. Regional and linguistic associations are usually present only among urban migrants in India itself (Lewandowski, 1980; Nair, 1978), and may

not have been present in the home environments of many leaders. Caste associations and political parties are more prevalent in India, but may not have been important to club leaders or within their horizons. There is certainly a degree of self-selection present in the migratory process; those who are committed to castes and parties tend to stay in India, while "individualists" tend to migrate. On the other hand, since caste associations and political parties in India are not relevant in the Bahraini environment, informants may have consciously or unconsciously omitted mention of their involvement.

In any case, club leaders bring organizational experience and a considerable amount of ambition with them to Bahrain and adapt their talents to the potential offered by given structural forms. In many cases, that potential may be greater in Bahrain than in India; i.e., aspiring leaders may actually face fewer restrictions in Bahrain than in India, where an established elite may dominate social positions. One effect in Bahrain of this ambition is a tendency to schism in associations, resulting, in these cases, not from categorical differentiation but from leadership competition. Self-ascribed motives of club leaders (and critical evaluations of others) center around the notion of "service" and the deprecation of "egoism." These motives are no doubt sincere to a great extent. However, in some cases, one is compelled to comment that they do protest too much; the ideology of "egoism" obscures ambition while that of "service" rationalizes it.[20] Prestige is important in leadership competition. It is also important in followership. Club members

say they join because life in Bahrain is boring. Yet they are quite attentive to the fact that membership offers a measure of status. Many of the individuals who join clubs in Bahrain, or seek to do so, probably faced even more or stronger restrictions in India than did club leaders. For both leaders and members, clubs offer a means of marking prestige. Because clubs are important arenas for cultural expression and status striving, it is necessary to emphasize the cultural interests involved in their formation, as well as note the limited material interests they serve.

In the following pages, I will briefly describe the organizational structure of the community at the time of research. Three distinct types of groups are differentiated: "caste communities"; regional, linguistic and religious organizations; and community-wide, or "All-India," organizations. They will be outlined here, and then developed in detail in the following three chapters.

Only the Bhatias and Bohras qualify as "caste communities." These groups are defined on the basis of low-level ascriptive categories, they are extensively organized formally, and they are closely knit informally through multiplex ties of kinship, religion and group culture. They are also relatively traditional or conservative, both because this is their background in India and because this background is encouraged by organized community life in Bahrain. There is still only one Bohra organization, the Bohra Association. However, in addition to the two pre-existing Bhatia organizations, the Thattai Hindu Mahajan and the Thattai

Hindu Mercantile Community, there is now a third Bhatia association, the Bhatia Mitra Mandal. Like the Thattai Hindu Mahajan, it incorporates the entire community, at least in theory. In fact, most participants in the Mandal are not merchants, but Bhatias working in various capacities for other individuals or companies. Thus, like the Thattai Hindu Mercantile Community, it marks status differentiation among Bhatias, primarily on the basis of occupation.

There are substantial populations from some other castes in Bahrain, such as Gujerati Sonis and Keralite Nayars. Though the former may even be called an informal "community," these groups do not have formal organizations, principally because they lack the political influence and established presence of the Bhatias and Bohras. In some respects, the Parsis are also similar to a caste. While they do have a formal organization, the Zoroastrian Anjuman, they do not have a communal structure. This may be attributed to the modernistic, or individualistic, orientations of most Parsis. The vast majority of castes and other sub-categories present in the population lack the numbers, the resources or the inclination to express themselves in any organized form.

There are many other solidarities in the Indian community, and, insofar as they are categorical, they are ipso facto exclusive on an ascriptive basis. However, they are expressed through other dimensions and levels of differentiation, such as region and religion. The categorical boundaries of these groups are not always clear, and they may be compounded by other

ascriptive distinctions and by status boundaries. Their organizations also serve fewer functions than those of the Bhatias and Bohras, are usually not based on communal structures, and incorporate the categorically-defined population less extensively.

Regional organizations have appeared among the Gujeratis, Tamils, Keralites, Goans and Karnatakese. I will only list the groups and outline their bases of recruitment at this point. They will all be discussed in detail in the following chapters. A new Gujerati association, Sri Gujerati Samaj, was formed during fieldwork. Its members are Hindus. There was some uncertainty in the definition of the group's membership because of caste distinctions in the population and difficulties in formalizing a pre-existing communal structure, which was itself complicated by differences of caste and occupation and varying degrees of cultural conservatism. Tamils, also mainly Hindus, are represented by the Tamil Sangam. This association was having serious organizational problems at the time of fieldwork. In addition to the Keraleeya Samajam, which is mainly Hindu and Christian, there is now a Mopilla organization, the Kerala Muslim Jama'ath. Though it is drawn from a religious category, it is primarily a cultural association. Both of these groups mark boundaries of prestige and status, which are especially significant in the large Keralite population. Of the many Hindu caste and Christian sect categories present in the Keralite population, only the latter are organized.

Goans are still represented only by the Young Goans' Sports

Club. The regional background and culture on which this group is based also entail other categorical affiliations, those of language, Konkani, and religion, Roman Catholicism. There is some overlap in these categories with Karnatakese associations. These include the Karnataka Sports Club and two new groups, the Konkan Singers and the Kannada Sangha. The first two were organized by Roman Catholic Konkani speakers from Karnataka. While regional categories separate the Young Goans and the Karnataka Sports Club, common language and culture bring individuals from both areas together in the Konkan Singers, while common religion brings them together in the Sacred Heart Church. The Kannada Sangha is exclusively Karnatakese. It is based on a different language category, Kannada, which also involves a different regional culture and, for the most part, different religious categories. Prestige distinctions are marked by all the Goan and Karnatakese groups, but they are much less significant than among the Keralites.

Though the government tries to prevent overlap, it permits regional and linguistic associations without categorical restrictions. This is not the case with religious groups. Hindus and Muslims are the most restricted. There is only one Hindu temple, that belonging to the Bhatias, and access is limited for many Hindus. There are a few informal groups, but most Hindus who worship do so at home. Only one Indian Muslim group, the Bohras, have separate facilities for worship. The organization of other Muslims is restricted to recreational purposes, as in the Kerala Muslim Jama'ath. There are obvious sensitivities here, to the

Bahraini people in the Hindu case and to the Bahraini government in the Muslim case. Sikhs have maintained a temple in Bahrain for many years, but the community was having problems and seemed to be under increasing public pressure. Zoroastrians are allowed to organize in Bahrain, but they do not have facilities for public worship. In their case, this is due to the small size of the community and strict traditions governing the erection of fire temples. Of course, were these restrictions not there, it is unlikely that the government would allow a temple anyway.

Only Christians are allowed real freedom to organize and worship in Bahrain. They make up for the paucity of institutions in other religions: there is a profusion of churches and congregations representing numerous sects and denominations. There is an especially large number of Roman Catholics, most of whom are Goans and Karnatakese. Most of the non-Catholic groups are Keralite. In both cases, congregations are defined not just by sect boundaries, but by language; they are as much regional associations as religious ones.

Though it seems fair to say that most Indians in Bahrain are somewhat "modern" in their orientations, they are variably so--Bhatias, Bohras and many Gujeratis are quite conservative in some ways, while Parsis and most southerners are highly westernized. There are varying degrees of attachment to caste and other ascriptive categories and to traditional culture generally. This is nowhere more evident than in the celebration of holidays. Examples will be given in Chapter Seven. Insofar as they involve the marking of internal and external categorical boundaries and

prestige or functional distinctions, these varying degrees of attachment to tradition and ascriptive solidarities greatly affect the kinds of associations that are formed.

The linguistic and regional solidarities which form the basis of most social clubs, and which seem broad from the perspective of caste and sect, must themselves be counted as narrow from the perspective of associations based on more general categories, such as nationality itself. In addition to the All-India groups mentioned previously--the Indian Association, the BSC, the Indian Ladies Association--others were formed during the 1970's. A local chapter of the Chinmaya Family, a Vedanta study group, and an Indian Fine Arts Society were both registered in 1974. Though most members of these groups are southern Hindus, the boundaries they mark are really more of prestige than category; both recruit from the educated elite of the community. The Indian School Association was given more formal and extended organization prior to the building of the new Indian School. This involved a dispute between the old leaders of community, Bhatia merchants, and new leaders drawn from the modern, professional elements of the population. These issues will be discussed in detail in Chapter Eight. In 1971, another All-India association of sorts, an Indian embassy, was opened in Bahrain. Its role in the community will also be discussed in Chapter Eight.

This rough sketch of the categorical parameters of group formation will be fleshed out in considerable detail in the following chapters. Before proceeding, it is necessary to clarify the nature of prestige boundaries within the Indian population

and describe the boundaries around it.

INTERNAL PRESTIGE BOUNDARIES

In an earlier section, some of the practical constraints to the participation of laborers in organized social life were discussed. It was also argued that sociocultural factors were involved. In this section, I will sustain and elaborate that argument. As the Indian population has grown, membership in clubs and voluntary associations has become a more effective marker of social status. Membership is closed in most of the more popular clubs, such as the BSC, the Keraleeya Samajam, the Young Goans' and the Karnataka Sports Club. Some clubs have long waiting lists for membership. As their constituencies grew, clubs accepted members until their facilities became strained. There is some ambiguity about this: overcrowding is a matter of perception. Government officials would prefer that existing clubs expand rather than new ones be formed. However, aside from previously noted tendencies toward schism, there are financial and social constraints to expansion, especially in the convenient areas where most clubs are presently located. The closure of membership probably reflects both these constraints and boundary maintenance. In any case, it has led to competition for membership in which the influence and status of potential members have become more salient than in the past. Though the full membership votes on new members, applications are handled by the managing committee, and thus may be subject to influence and favoritism. This may, in turn, fuel factional disputes within

associations.

Individuals with less prestigious occupations and backgrounds are systematically excluded. The boundary is quite clear where laborers are concerned, but ambiguous for skilled and technical workers. The number of skilled blue-collar workers is quite large in some categories, such as Konkani speakers, and many of them belong to clubs. The Keraleeya Samajam is somewhat more selective, reflecting the large population it has to draw upon, and, perhaps, a greater concern with status. The BSC has superordinate status (in modern terms, of course); though it is not exclusively white-collar, it is the most selective of all. People with high prestige, sufficient incomes and the inclination to do so often join several clubs, perhaps the BSC and one or more regional groups. Those with lower status, fewer resources and less energy join only one club, usually a regional one. Thus, while club membership in general distinguishes prestige strata within the population as a whole, there is some differentiation, also in terms of prestige and through membership, within the stratum the clubs incorporate.

Boundary maintenance in clubs is achieved through selective recruitment and collective sanctions. Clubs enlist members through a referral system and evaluate candidates on the basis of "status" and "behavior." The former includes ascriptive criteria, like caste, to a limited extent, but is defined primarily in terms of achieved criteria, such as occupation, income, education, organizational ability and experience, connections and influence and, in some groups, athletic and artistic ability. The

length of time a prospective member has been on the waiting list may also be taken into account. The "behavior" of applicants is observed during visits to the club and unacceptable "behavior" of members may be censured by formal reprimand or even expulsion. The areas of concern involve aesthetics and manners: vulgarity, language, treatment of women, and politeness and self-control in general, especially while under the influence of alcohol.

While what is defined here as unacceptable behavior is stereotypically associated with low-caste or untouchable Indians, especially by vegetarian and otherwise non-indulgent Hindus, in the context of social clubs, the evaluation of behavior is taken out of its caste context and associated with more modern criteria, such as education, income, etc. It is still an effective means of excluding and intimidating Indians of low status. This sort of intimidation, perhaps over a lifetime, has made them aware of the evaluations of their social superiors and conscious of their unworthiness and inferiority, from these cultural and aesthetical perspectives. They are reluctant to approach clubs for membership even when their resources might allow it, so that exclusion by those of higher status is accompanied by a degree of self-exclusion. Again, the boundaries are not always clear, given substantial numbers of upwardly mobile blue-collar workers, marginal white-collar workers, and new migrants whose lack of connections makes them harder to evaluate. Generally, though, in combination with practical factors--such as residence, lack of disposable income, and little leisure time--the marking of prestige status effectively prevents

laborers from participating in clubs, other voluntary associations, and organized social life generally. This unfortunate situation only compounds their vulnerability.

EXTERNAL BOUNDARIES

The distinctions Indians make among themselves, which to a large extent structure the boundaries of categorical and All-India organizations, generally operate within external boundaries, those imposed by Bahrainis and the European and American residents of Bahrain. Indians are clearly defined in Bahraini society, both formally, by nationality, and concretely, in social interaction. This is evident in patterns of participation in those social institutions which are ostensibly universal or international in membership, such as Toastmasters', Lions' and Rotary Clubs. These groups are elements of the widest modern status arena in the society, and thus place Indians in competition with other groups. Indians do in fact participate in these organizations, to varying degrees. The national composition of these clubs and the extent of Indian participation are useful indicators of the status of both the clubs and their members.

A list of the past presidents of the Toastmasters' Club indicates that all were Indian, mostly Christian and Hindu. The Hindus appear to have been mostly Gujeratis and Bhatias, while the Christians were mostly Keralites. They were not among the most prominent members of the Indian community. A distribution of the membership by nationality was not available, but the fact

that Indians were the presidents of the club indicates that they were probably the major component of the membership. This, in turn, indicates something about the status of the group: in comparison to other international clubs, it was relatively low.

More detailed information is available for the Lions' Club, which was established in 1978. Its membership was about half Indian at that time. Most of the rest of the membership, and nearly all the officers, were Bahraini or European. Again, the Indian members were mostly Hindus and Christians, and mostly from South India. Like the Indians in the Toastmasters' Club, they were well-placed professionals and managers, but they were not among the most prominent Indians in Bahrain. The asymmetry between Indian members and Non-Indian officers indicates that the latter had relatively greater status and power.

There were few Indian members in the Rotary Club. There are actually two Rotary Clubs, the one in Manama, noted previously, and another in the suburb of Sulmaniyya, established during the mid-1970's. Though there were no Indian officers in the Sulmaniyya club, there were a number of Indian members. In the Manama Rotary Club, only a handful of the members were Indian, and all were prominent businessmen. They were also among the most important figures within the Indian community itself. Most of the officers in the Rotary Clubs were British managers and professionals or Bahraini businessmen and bureaucrats. Of course, the minimal degree of Indian participation does not necessarily mean there were few Indian Rotarians in Bahrain, but merely that few were admitted into the organization there. This might also

apply to the Lions' and Toastmasters' clubs. However, there seem to have been fewer barriers to Indian participation in those organizations. The cosmopolitan sophistication of the Rotary membership and the dues and fees charged, which amount to many times those in Indian clubs, put these groups out of the economic, social and cultural range of nearly all Indians. Those Indians who did belong were not necessarily among the most "modern" members of the community, but they were among the most affluent, influential and prominent.

If the membership in the Rotary Clubs is seen as an indicator of social boundaries, we may draw some interesting conclusions. The first of these is that fairly clear boundaries do in fact exist. There is a fair amount of informal social interaction between Indians and some nationalities, but this is generally limited to the upper strata. Though there are numerous Indian social organizations, Indians generally do not participate in the formal organizations of other national groups. The reverse is also generally true: except for the BSC, which has a number of Bahraini members, Indian clubs include very few Non-Indians. These boundaries exist not only between Indians and Europeans and between Indians and Bahrainis, but between Indians and other South Asians, including Pakistanis. This reflects the cultural and national differences among expatriates, of course, but it also indicates that the foreign population as a whole, and not just the Indian population, is segmented socially and fragmented organizationally. The same contextual factors that shape the organization of categories within the Indian population, and

limit it to cultural and recreational purposes, also shape the organization of the foreign population in general.

Secondly, the membership in the Rotary Club indicates that, while the population is fragmented, it is also roughly stratified, again like the Indian population itself. The stratification here is defined in terms of modern criteria, but it actually follows ascriptive criteria—nationality—much more closely than stratification within the Indian community. Since independence, exclusively Bahraini prestige and status arenas have emerged, or re-emerged after decades of eclipse by British and modern status arenas. Indians and most other expatriates are marginal to these arenas. Though the modern status arena that emerged in the 1930's and 1940's is still present, in the context of independence, development, political difficulties, increasing migration of both Europeans and Asians, and inter-group tension, access to this arena has become ever more restricted for Indians. Correlatively, the position of Bahrainis has improved. Forty years ago, the hierarchy was British--Indian--Bahraini, more or less; today it is Western--Bahraini--Indian/Asian.

Looking at the population as a whole, it is possible to discern two plural alignments, one differentiating nationals and non-nationals and the other differentiating groups based on a combination of occupation, prestige and origin. The last often goes beyond nation-state to continent. (It is perhaps no accident that statistics for foreigners were tabulated on this basis in the 1981 census.) The linkage of occupation, prestige and origin is generally accurate because Europeans tend to be professionals,

Asians tend to be laborers, etc. Of course, the Indian population spans this range. Their assimilation to the Asian category and the negative evaluations of the society at-large are sources of concern to many Indians, to which we return in later chapters. Though their position has declined, the fact that Indians still participate at all is perhaps an indication of their status relative to other Asians and of their enduring significance in Bahraini society.

CONCLUSION

The central fact of the structure of the Indian community in Bahrain is the absence of extensive and cohesive organization. Such community-wide organizations as exist are relatively weak and often the locus of disagreement. Few of the categorical or sub-categorical groups in the community are extensively organized. The social and cultural life of the community centers around networks and residential units and, more formally, sub-communal clubs and associations, differentiated by category and prestige. Except for the Thattai Hindu Mercantile Community and, perhaps, the Bohra Association, none of these institutions has significant economic or political power, and the political aspects of power in these cases are invested in particular individuals, not in the institutions themselves. In the preceding pages, we have attempted to convey the interaction of internal and external factors in explaining this situation.

The fragmentation and stratification within the community is in large part a reflection of the diversity of the population

itself. The diverse orientations of the people and the different sizes of their groups offer varying potentials for organization. Fragmentation reflects patterns of differentiation and change in India itself. The Indian population is segmented through attachment to various collective or individual, ascriptive or national or international occupations, identities and values. Though some elements of the community are quite "traditional" in their orientations, it is evident that there are limits and inconsistencies in their traditionalism, and the majority of the community are decidedly "modern" in their attitudes and aspirations. These attachments orient people toward participation in various kinds of groups. They also affect leadership. Both leaders and followers may be variably rooted to particular categorical groups and oriented toward different styles and patterns of authority. The various groups noted in the Indian community must be seen as a product of the interests of Indians themselves, given the demographic and categorical composition of the community and the resources available to its members.

Yet, at every step, the structure of the Indian community and its patterns of group formation and leadership are shaped by the requirements and exigencies of its context, Bahraini society. Political and economic relationships between Bahrainis and expatriates, especially Indians, provide at best a limited role for community-wide organizations. In fact, government limitations on expatriate organizations specifically preclude the representation and articulation of economic and political interests on a collective basis. The voluntary associations of

Indians and other foreigners differ from those of Bahrainis. Though Bahraini clubs are fragmented, they are the loci of political discussion and debate over issues which Bahrainis hold in common. Because the participants are Bahraini, the clubs thus take on political functions (Khuri, 1980: 186). Foreign clubs may serve as the fora for the internal articulation of common complaints, but they do not organize collective action, nor do they have significant political influence. The causes and effects of these limitations have been indicated in the preceding pages, and will be discussed in more detail later. Economic relationships, and most political ones as well, are mediated by the sponsor of the individual worker. Given the nature of the Bahraini political system, power and influence flow from the sponsor, or from some other Bahraini, to the expatriate, either directly or via an influential member of his community.

While limiting the role of formal organizations, the Bahraini environment establishes a pervasive need for bases of support in dealing with both psychological and material problems--adjustment, loneliness, separation from home and family, pressure at work, difficulties with the sponsor, discrimination or abuse, and the expense of living in Bahrain. This support is provided in clubs and associations and, more generally, through informal groups, such as networks, residential cohorts and other personal relationships. It is hardly surprising that these relationships and groupings would be based on ties which allow the establishment of intimacy and trust, the "primordial" ties of language, religion, etc. Some of the more

particular categories, such as caste, which also have affective and cultural potential, are represented in substantial numbers. However, whether or not individuals might seek to organize around these solidarities, government controls prevent them from doing so in most cases and divert their organizing energies toward the broader categories. The linguistic and regional institutions which provide support and express the cultural and recreational interests of the community are not only allowed, but encouraged.

Finally, the manner in which power and influence may be acquired and articulated in Bahraini society affects leadership and the formation of cohesive organizations. Though all are foreigners, the leaders of different "factions" in the Indian community, and to a lesser extent, their followers as well, are differently incorporated into the economic and political structure of Bahraini society. It is not merely the cultural background and style of the Bhatia merchants that makes them different from Indian professionals and managers, but their influence in Bahraini society and the nature of that influence. As a result, the institutions that seek to represent, if not actually incorporate, the Indian community as a whole have been influenced by the diverse interests of the population, by the direct controls of the Bahraini government, and by the roles which different, and differently situated, leaders have sought to establish for them.

From this general survey of the current composition and organization of the community, we now turn to a more detailed examination of some of the groups and institutions within it.

NOTES

1. In 1968, the Immigration Directorate was established and began issuing Residence Permits to all foreigners, including Indians. Prior to this, Residence Permits were issued to Iranians and Non-Bahraini Arabs by the Political Agency. They were not required for Indians, Pakistanis or British subjects. In 1972, the Directorate of Labour began issuing Work Cards (referred to as "Labour Permits" in the Statistical Abstracts). The Statistical Abstract began publishing numbers of registered births in Bahrain by nationality only in 1976.

Natality statistics are based on reports of live births at government hospitals and clinics. These facilities have received wide acceptance among Bahrainis, but access is still limited in rural areas. For both practical and cultural reasons, the figures for Bahrainis may represent a slight undercount. This is probably not the case for Indians and other expatriates, most of whom live in easy proximity to facilities, bring with them a ready acceptance of modern medical practices, and suffer no discrimination in the use of government facilities for these purposes. (However, a separate clinic was being instituted for foreign workers, in response to overcrowding and public pressure from Bahrainis. A new clinic was being built for Bahrainis in the area, while the workers were to get the existing facilities, which were old and somewhat shabby.)

Mortality statistics are much less reliable. In fact, according to officials at the Health Ministry and Statistical Directorate, deaths are still often not reported by Bahrainis. While the general acceptance of modern facilities for births, illness, etc., illustrates the pragmatism of the people and the effects of social change, the resistance to reporting deaths is an interesting marker of continuity in the boundaries of patriarchy and the definition of the private sphere in Bahraini society. Mortality statistics for separate nationalities of foreigners are available only from Sulmaniyya Hospital, the main government facility. These numbers represent less than half the total number of foreign deaths reported, which are not tabulated by nationality. It is my opinion that the figures are so unreliable as to be useless. It does seem clear, though, that mortality is low: in 1981, the most recent year for which figures are available, 22 Indian deaths were reported at Sulmaniyya Hospital. Even if the actual total is somewhat larger, the figure would be small compared to the number of births. As we shall see, the majority of the Indian population is composed of young males. It is reasonable to conclude that low mortality is primarily a result of this demographic characteristic.

2. In 1981, only nine Indian men registered marriages in Bahrain. Most of these were to Non-Indians. The number of Indian women in registered marriages was somewhat larger, 25; most married Bahrainis. (There were also 23 divorces of Indian women by Bahraini men in 1981. This pattern is also found in earlier years for which statistics are available. Bahrainis, and other Arabs in the Gulf, occasionally use agents to contract marriages, usually not their first or only marriage, with Indian, Pakistani

and Sri Lankan women, usually from rural areas. The marriages often do not last long and represent, in effect, temporary concubinage.) Numbers of marriages in earlier years for which statistics are available are even smaller. Most of the registered marriages were mixed marriages, i.e., involving an Indian and a person of another nationality, usually Bahraini. It is probable that this was the main reason they were registered.

It seems likely that most Indian marriages in Bahrain were religious or communal ceremonies and were not registered. The Catholic Church reports about 30 marriages per year, many of them between Indians. Figures for other institutions were not collected, but the number is evidently small. For example, during my tenure in the field, there was only one marriage each in the Bhatia and Soni communities, despite the relatively large numbers of females in these groups, and these were regarded as extraordinary. Marriage is the institution in which "traditional" ties remain strongest. It is not surprising that marriages are contracted through the home community and performed in its presence.

3. Figures for Work Cards issued in 1972 and 1973, and perhaps those for 1974 and 1975, reflect the gradual start-up of the new system for registering workers. Secondly, as noted in Chapter Three, a new Work Card is issued when a foreign worker renews his contract or changes jobs; so, by 1978, the figures include many renewals.

4. As the proportion of Indians has increased, the proportion of Pakistanis has decreased. In 1978, 23% of all Work Cards were granted to Pakistanis (7894), but only 10% (2644) in 1982.

5. I have estimated the population using two methods. Combining net migration and natural increase since mid-1977, I estimate a total net increase of 31,600 by the end of 1981. Figures for net migration and births are used without adjustment. It is assumed that net migration figures are reasonably accurate, i.e., that there is no substantial illegal migration. This accords with the reports of officials and government advisors and with my own observations (see Chapter 3). An arbitrary number of 50 deaths has been subtracted each year. The Government estimate of population size was based on figures through April, 1977. Therefore 60% of the migration and birth figures for that year have been used. Annual net increase (migration + births - deaths) for each year is as follows: 1977 - 6248; 1978 - 5748; 1979 - 4615; 1980 - 6680; 1981 - 8357. The total net increase would then be 31,648. If the figure of 31,600 is added to the April, 1977, Government estimate of 25,880, the Indian population, as of December, 1981, would have been about 57,500.

In the 1982 Ministry of Labour survey, 32,382 Indian workers were counted. They represented 64.6% of the total number of Asian workers in the survey. According to the 1981 census, there were 86,709 Asians in Bahrain at that time. If Indians represented similar proportions in the Asian population in 1981 and in the private sector work force in 1982, then the Indian population at

the time of the census would have been 56,014. Given the similarity of these estimates, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Indian population numbered at least 55,000 by late 1981.

6. The census tabulates statistics only for "Asians" or all foreigners taken together. The different nationalities of Asians and other Non-Bahrainis may--and in some cases clearly do--have different demographic profiles. Because of the presence of new Asian groups, such as Sri Lankans, Koreans, Filipinos, etc., Asians cannot be assumed to be either Indians or Pakistanis, as in the past. Therefore, as with the general population, an assessment of other demographic characteristics must be arrived at by approximation and deduction.

Females represented 24.5% of the total foreign population in the 1981 census (27,509 of 112,378) and 19.6% of the Asian population (16,999 of 86,709). Assuming an equal proportion of females among all Asians and an Indian population of 55,000, then about 10,800 of the Indians would have been females. However, if the proportion of females was similar throughout the entire foreign population, then there would have been about 13,500 Indian females. Though at least 40% of the foreign population as a whole was probably Indian, only 623, or 27.1%, of the 2303 Non-Bahraini live births registered in 1981 were Indian. Because of intervening factors--differential fertility and employment of women, to name two—it is not reasonable to estimate the female population from the proportion of live births, but this figure and sexual distributions in the American and European categories in the 1981 census indicate that the proportion of women in the Indian population was less than that in the foreign population as a whole. Yet, on the basis of observation and employment figures, to be discussed in the text, it seems likely that the proportion of females in the Indian population was slightly higher than that among Asians generally. A reasonable estimate would seem to be 11,000 to 12,000.

7. According to the 1981 census, there were 7711 foreigners aged 0 to 4, 9328 aged 5 to 14, and 4073 aged 15 to 19. It is likely that many of these children, especially those under 15, were Indian.

The students at the Indian school were almost all Indian: in 1975-76, there were 11 Non-Indians, and in 1976-77, 16. Only a few figures for enrollment at private schools are available: in 1975-76, 331 Indian children attended other private schools, 308 of them at Sacred Heart; in 1976-77, 367 Indians attended other private schools, 350 at Sacred Heart; in 1977-78, 393 Indian children attended other private schools, though statistics for that year do not specify which ones. Very few Indian children attend Bahraini schools: only 34 did so in 1977-78, and 30 of these were in primary school.

A comparative sense of the distribution of children in selected foreign nationalities may be gained from the following table. Educational information is from the Ministry of Education and is available only for the school year 1977-78. Births are taken from the 1978 Statistical Abstract.

Nationality	Children in Private Schools	Children in Bahraini Schools	Births
Indian	1474	34	331
Pakistani	1443	186	389
British	1109	Nil	73
American	340	Nil	10

8. The importance of the English language in inter-national group relations and within the Indian community must be emphasized. This might come as something of a surprise to those who accept the ideological equation of Indian society and Hindic language and civilization. Hindi is not a commonly spoken language in Bahrain, even among those who know it. English is the link language between Arab and migrant. Many Indians, and most other foreign workers, are hired at least in part because of their knowledge of English. This is, of course, the product of British control and continuing multinational corporate influence. Many elderly Bahrainis, especially those involved in trade with India, learned and still speak Hindi. Some were educated in India. Few younger Bahrainis have reason to learn foreign languages other than English.

Given the importance of English for opportunities at the national level in India and for overseas work, it is not surprising that most families have their children in English-medium schools. In response to the aspirations of parents, the Indian School not only converted to English, but affiliated itself with the Central Board of Education in Delhi for certification and the validation of diplomas. Since substantial numbers of Indian workers in Bahrain are in skilled and professional occupations, it is not surprising that they speak English. It was more surprising that great numbers of migrants neither use nor know Hindi. Few Indians in Bahrain come from those areas in India where Hindi is the vernacular. The Tamils resolutely refuse to learn it, or so they say. Of course, most South Indians probably do have some facility with the language. However, it is their third language, after their native language and English. For some, English is the first language. Amongst themselves, even those who know Hindi well, like the Sindhis and Gujeratis, speak their regional language. It is only in communication between individuals from two different Hindi-using groups, or between Hindi-speaking Indians and the occasional Bahraini who knows Hindi but not English, that Hindi is used.

9. It is apparent that most foreign working women were omitted from this survey and from the 1982 survey as well, which counted only 2221 Non-Bahraini female workers. Indian women represented 2.2% of the Indian workers surveyed in 1979, and foreign women in general represented 3.0% of the surveyed Non-Bahraini work force. According to the 1981 census, on the other hand, total foreign female employment was 6797, or 8.4% of the total foreign employed population of 80,714. Of these, 1336 worked for the government and 3225 were personal servants, two categories not included in the surveys. (Foreign working men were not undercounted to the same extent as foreign working women because the former are concentrated in those firms which were

surveyed. The 1979 survey counted 48,649 male foreign workers; the 1982 survey, 56,795; and the 1981 census, 73,917.) Still, the numbers of working men are relatively so large that the inclusion of uncounted working women does not significantly affect the proportions. Though women represent a small segment of the foreign labor force, a much larger proportion of the foreign women of working age is employed than is the case for Bahraini women, as noted in Chapter Three. The groups with the highest participation of women in the labor force appear to be the British, Indians and Sri Lankans.

10. The fact that data were apparently not collected by ministry officials or with their attending and visible presence is one source of suspicion, especially in firms with large numbers of workers. This proportion does not correspond with personal experience, either. Though my contacts did not represent an adequate sample in such a large population, I encountered too many educated and skilled Indians who took positions as unskilled or semi-skilled workers--either because these jobs were lucrative relative to the Indian market or because they hoped, wrongly in most cases, to be able to progress after arrival—to believe that such a large proportion of the Indian workers in Bahrain are in fact completely uneducated.

The statistics might be questioned from the Indian side, as well as from the Bahraini side. This proportion does not reflect the general characteristics of the Indian labor force available for export. Migrant workers tend to be neither the elite of Indian society, who are well-placed there, nor the bottom end, who lack even the resources to bribe agents, but ambitious and able individuals with some resources who face limited mobility in India itself. Finally, the source of most Indian unskilled labor--or, as I argue here, of Indian labor that is, regardless of qualifications, engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations--is Kerala, the state with the highest literacy rates (and one of the highest unemployment rates) in all of India.

11. For comparison: the average monthly income for Indians in the survey was BD106; for Pakistanis, BD92; for Bahrainis, BD217; for Britons, BD547; for Americans, BD825; and, at the top of the list, for those few Kuwaitis in the survey, BD1325. Interestingly, while the average monthly income of Indian males was BD104, that for females was BD201. This gap can be attributed to occupational differences between males and females.

12. Of course, this does not preclude the effect of other factors. For example, the use of male rather than female workers for clerical and other service occupations is a function of cultural and historical factors, both in India and in Bahrain, which affect training, recruitment and migration, and, therefore, the sexual distribution of both the supply and the demand for labor.

13. Tabulations from the survey do not provide income figures for occupations by sex; it is therefore impossible to conclude whether or not there was a differential between male and

female clerical workers. There was a moderate difference between the average monthly incomes of Bahrainis and Non-Bahrainis in clerical positions, BD197 and BD161, respectively. However, there was a marked difference in average monthly income among laborers: Bahrainis earned BD127 and Non-Bahrainis earned BD76. This variation seems to indicate that competition between local and foreign workers occurs in clerical occupations, while Bahrainis are given preferential treatment in laboring occupations. The latter is confirmed by discussions with both workers and officials. Employers often hire a few Bahraini laborers in order to gain approval for importing foreign workers. The Bahraini workers are paid more, but do less, or virtually nothing, by some accounts. Their employment is, in effect, a politically negotiated subsidy of continued local inefficiency. Though it appears that the private sector is at least paying part of the costs of these subsidies, in fact, costs are either passed on to the government or squeezed out of foreign workers, usually both.

14. The numerous luxury hotels in Bahrain are used for business purposes by the many international companies operating in Bahrain and the Gulf. They are also used for recreational purposes by Arabs visiting from other parts of the Gulf, usually Saudi Arabia. These guests are affluent and tip generously. In the latter case, especially, the services called for may include procuring women. Prostitution of a relatively expensive sort is practiced in many of the hotels, usually by British women it would seem. The bellboys, often Indian, are the middle men in this trade and get a cut from both ends.

15. The effectiveness of these links can be assessed from personal experience. When attempting to purchase items listed in the newspaper, I almost invariably found they had been snapped up even before publication; when attempting to sell items, I received numerous calls even before the paper was out; putting the word out to friends brought an equally expeditious response. In all cases, the alert consumers were Indians.

16. The Bahraini population has grown rapidly throughout this century, especially during the 1950's and 1960's. As it grew, large numbers of villagers moved to Manama. At the same time, the expansion of Manama converted some outlying villages into suburbs. Finally, beginning with Isa Town in the late 1960's, the government has instituted major housing developments, subsidizing rents and providing building grants and loans. During the 1970's, Isa Town grew considerably and a number of housing and apartment complexes were built around Manama and Muharraq. Finally, in the 1980's, a huge new housing development, Hamad Town, is being constructed on the Western side of Awal island.

Housing development in Bahrain has become a major form of distribution. At first, religious favoritism was a major factor in the development of Isa Town: most of the plots went to Sunnis. The population is now mixed and selection is by loyalty more than sect. The first stages of Isa Town were relatively well-planned, with adequate spacing, services, etc. Later stages and developments at other locations have become a planning

boondoggle. Most newer developments are apartments, rather than houses. They are both inappropriate and too small for the families they are meant to accommodate. Moreover, the apartment buildings are crowded into the area allotted for them with no space for children or recreation and no provision of services. The families granted these apartments are often the urban and rural poor and lower middle class. Moving them out of the city has freed valuable land for development. Moving them into the new apartment blocks is a less than mediocre attempt at appeasement and a transparent attempt at social control.

The firm which has been granted many of the contracts to build the government apartment blocks manufactures pre-fabricated forms and assembles them in situ. The building system and technology were of European design and the company began with European participation. However, the Prime Minister is commonly known to have been one of the principals (technically illegal). Perhaps because of European management, the company provided adequate facilities for its workers and did not overcharge for labor on government contracts, unlike most private contractors. As a result--and, perhaps, partly because production was too low for the process to be efficient--the firm did not make money. Subsequently, a large share (presumably including that held by the Prime Minister) was bought out by the government.

17. On the other hand, having grown tired of living in the suburb of Hoora, where many Bhatias have moved, one wealthy merchant rented and renovated a spacious apartment in the suq near his business. Gentrification is indeed a global phenomenon!

18. The situation taxes the resources of sanitary services. Buildings are occasionally condemned and pulled down. Unfortunately, this only has the effect of punishing the victim; workers must simply seek a similar situation elsewhere, perhaps intensifying overcrowding in other buildings, and the municipality has actually done the property owner a favor. Officials understand that, given the standards and situation of workers, the solution lies with regulation of employers and landlords. They also understand that, given the influence of landowners, such regulations--or, at any rate, the enforcement of such regulations--is not likely.

19. My access to private camps--that is, those run by contractors rather than parastatal companies--was limited. Bahraini contractors and entrepreneurs sometimes even refused to identify the nationalities of their workers. As the foreign presence has become a more sensitive issue, they have come under pressure from the Ministry of Labour and public opinion. A newspaper story about conditions in one camp heightened contractors' sensitivity. Since the media are so effectively controlled as to be self-censoring, I surmise that the appearance of this story was no accident. The government is unable to enforce the law, but exerts pressure whenever possible, in this case with a story in the English media. This would have little effect on the Bahraini population, but might bring the issue into the open, exert the pressure of public opinion, and, perhaps,

legitimate feeble attempts at enforcement.

I was allowed to visit only one private camp, and then only with Indian friends who went to conduct a religious meeting. Management personnel also consented to discuss the organization of the camp. The camp was maintained by the producer of pre-cast concrete forms for construction mentioned above in Note 16. Perhaps because of the company's quasi-official status and European management, conditions at the camp were much better than those described by workers at other camps. There were no reports of underpayment of salaries, failure to provide benefits, etc. Facilities were simple and crude, but sanitary. The camp was isolated, but some diversions, such as movies, were regularly offered. About 750 workers lived in the camp. Of these, about 150 were Thai and the rest were Indian. Asians on the administrative staff were given apartments in the camp. The other workers lived in concrete-block barracks. Each of these contained six large rooms plus sanitary facilities. A central mess was provided in a separate building. Each room housed from eight to twelve workers. Bunks were provided, but no storage space; workers kept their few belongings in small suitcases under the bunks.

The barracks and rooms were divided by linguistic and religious group--Sikhs, Gujeratis, Tamils, Malayalees, etc.--as a matter of policy. This established networks or mini-communities of considerable affective and practical importance to the workers. Officials emphasized their desire to provide some cultural footing for the workers in an otherwise alien environment, but they also appeared to understand that efficiency and productivity were enhanced by such a system. This segmentation in housing and other measures of control appear to have prevented the emergence of problematical solidarities or sizable blocs within the Indian work force. In fact, the fragmentation of the Indian population at the camp was enhanced to such an extent that the attempts of the company to organize labor relations, within limits of course, were frustrated.

The camp of one of the Korean companies operating in Bahrain provides a marked contrast. The facilities were of higher quality and were maintained with the cleanliness and order stereotypically associated with Korean workers. The company itself was under Korean management. Because it was kept responsive to the demands of Korean labor and the controls of the Korean government, conditions in Bahrain were much better than in locally owned and managed companies. The culture of labor relations encourages high productivity, but applies strong moral pressure on management that reinforces adherence to the stated conditions of employment.

20. The negative valuation of "egoism" is present not only among <u>modern</u> Indians. It is an important element of Hindu ideology, especially in Vaishnavism. In a highly stratified society, it served to limit aspirations; in a society dominated by narrow ascriptive ties and small groups, it discouraged individualism and reinforced traditional solidarities. Among modern Indians, aside from helping to avoid unfavorable self-evaluations of status, it seems to articulate the loss of this sense of community and, perhaps, attempts to reformulate it.

Chapter Six

BHATIAS AND BOHRAS: "CASTE COMMUNITIES" IN BAHRAIN

The Bhatias and Bohras have been mentioned frequently in the preceding chapters. In this chapter I will provide a more extensive analysis of their history, culture, community structure and social position, in both India and Bahrain. Since the Bhatias have been more significant actors in the Indian community and in Bahraini society, they are discussed in greater detail. It may be recalled that both the Bhatias and Bohras have a long history in Bahrain. The Bhatias, a trading caste from Thatta in Sindh, were the most important pearl merchants in Bahrain, and claim to have been trading there for centuries. The Bohras, members of a Shi'ite sub-sect in Gujerat, did not arrive until the late nineteenth century. However, they too established themselves as pearl merchants and traders. In carrying out their business, both the Bhatias and the Bohras made alliances with the ruling family of Bahrain, which gave them religious and social privileges and allowed them to establish enclaves. These enclaves were the bases of later communal organizations. Though their political alliances have changed somewhat, as has their role in Bahraini society, these groups still enjoy a relatively secure and protected position. These contextual factors are important in understanding the manner in which traditional social and cultural institutions have emerged in Bahrain.

In the preceding chapter, it was noted that the Bhatias and

Bohras represent unique forms in the Indian community. They are closely-knit and "traditional," or "conservative," groups that are extensively and formally organized around the particular categories of caste and sect. It was argued that these qualities may be attributed to both their political influence and their social and cultural background. Political influence, especially at a point in history when the Bahraini government could be more responsive to its Indian allies than is the case today, allowed the Bhatias and Bohras to develop formal corporate associations. The presence of these associations, in turn, facilitated the integration of new migrants and encouraged narrow, traditional identities and cultural orientations. The background and orientations of both groups in India is relatively conservative, and these qualities have been reinforced in Bahrain. It is also important to note that both the Bhatias and Bohras have collective material interests in Bahrain, a temple and community property in the former case and a mosque and ma'tam in the latter case. These interests have encouraged communal organization.

Despite the many similarities, there are also significant differences between the formal, communal, corporate organizations of the Bhatias and Bohras. While the Bohras in Bahrain represent a small segment of a relatively large category in Indian society, the Thattai Bhatias represent a small segment of a <u>small</u> group in Indian society. The limited size of the Thattai Bhatia community as a whole and the geographic distribution of its members allow them to maintain close, multiplex relations in India. The community in Bahrain is a coherent extension of these relations;

this reinforces its "communal" qualities. The Bohra community, on the other hand, is more of a "caste community" in Morris' terms (1968); while it is highly communal in Bahrain and is based on the low-level category of sect, its members are less likely to have known one another in India and to have been intimately associated there. Community formation is to a greater extent an adaptation of the group to the migratory context than is the case with the Bhatias. While communal solidarities among the Bhatias are to a great extent the product of pre-existing social relationships, among the Bohras they are more the effect of tradition and religious authority among new or recent consociates. At the same time, economic differentiation has led to significant rifts in the Bhatia community. These are present in the Bohra community, but their expression is limited, principally by religious authority it would appear. Paradoxically, then, by the measure of group cohesiveness and the significance of traditional patterns of authority, the Bohras in Bahrain are more "traditional" than the Bhatias.

THE BHATIA COMMUNITY

Today, the Bhatia caste is usually placed within the Kshatriya varna, rather than the Vaisya, the stratum in which most merchants and traders are ranked.[1] The Bhatias claim to be Yadavs, or descendants of Yadu, who is considered to be a descendent of Krishna, one of the principal avatars of Vishnu. This descent entails Rajput origins and military functions. According to community tradition, after a checkered history of

migration and military exploits, the Bhatias, then called "Bhatis," established a kingdom in the Jaisalmer district of the Punjab (now the eastmost district of the Indian state of Rajasthan), just to the northeast of Sindh. They survived the Ghaznavid incursions, but were driven out by later Muslim invaders, suffering great losses. As was expected of high-born Hindu women, the widows became satis, that is, they committed ritual suicide by throwing themselves upon the funeral pyres of their slain husbands. After the Muslim victory, surviving adults, children and old people fled. Some travelled as far as Afghanistan, but most migrated into Sindh, to the south. They later moved from there into Kutch, Kathiawar and Gujerat, and, much later, into Bombay, the Karnatak, etc.

British historians have consigned much of the early Bhatia genealogy to the realm of myth, but accept caste traditions regarding developments in recent centuries (see Campbell, 1901; Enthoven, volume I), including the date of 1295 A.D. for the Muslim conquest of the Bhati kingdom in Jaisalmer (Enthoven, I: 135). At some point in their travels, the Bhatis became Bhatias; the circumstances of this change are not mentioned in the literature. At first, the Bhatias fell upon hard times in Sindh and Kutch, but by the nineteenth century they had risen to great social and economic importance. However, their ascent, or re-ascent, was neither immediate nor complete. Campbell notes that in Sindh some of the Bhatias had "sunk" to be fishermen, and ate fish and drank alcohol (1901: 117). In speculating on the possible low origins of the Kutchi Bhatias in Zanzibar, Pocock

notes that Bhatias in Sindh, who were admitted to be relatives of these Kutchi Bhatias, still ate meat; that the houses of their ancestors in Kutch were in the fish market; and that prior to 1872 they had killed cattle and sold hides (1955: 71-2).[2]

These seem to have been the exceptions. By this time most Bhatias had long abandoned the sanguinary customs of their ancestors. Many Bhatias converted to Vaishnavism "about the beginning of the sixteenth century" (Campbell, 1901: 118). They became strict vegetarians, taking neither meat, fish, alcohol, nor even garlic or onions (Ibid.). In 1741 A.D., the Bhatias of Mandvi in Kutch, as a group, became adherents of the Vaishnava sect of Vallabhacharya (Enthoven I: 143). The conversion of whole communities to the sect appears to have been common (Parekh, 1943: 355); insofar as religious practice was taken out of the hands of individuals, this would seem to imply a high degree of corporate organization, an issue I will take up shortly. Thakur notes that all Sindhi Bhatias were followers of the Vallabhacharya sect (1959: 135). At that time, adherence to the sect entailed accepting descendants of Vallabh, who were called "Maharajas," as spiritual leaders. Vallabhacharya's philosophy of shudh advaita, or "pure non-dualism," and the rituals and teachings of his sect, called the pushti marg, or "path of grace" (Bhatt, 1979; Marfatia, 1967; Parekh, 1943), remain central to Bhatia life and identity.[3] In Bhatia practice, these teachings emphasize bhakta--love and devotion of, in this case, Krishna--as the means of achieving a cleansing of the spirit and "salvation." Though the temple in Bahrain is dedicated to Shri Naji, the most

awesome manifestation of Krishna, the central image in the shrine is Balakrishna, the child Krishna, the usual focus of bhakta in Vaishnavite practice.

Also, probably gradually and in dialectical interrelation with the Sanscritization of the caste, the Bhatias became traders and merchants. Unlike other conservative Hindu groups, the Bhatias maintained "broad views" and allowed merchants to undertake overseas travel (Campbell, 1901: 118). Many became merchants in Africa, the Persian Gulf, Arabia, and the Far East, as well as in India itself. Trade and religion became the basis of the Bhatia "ethos." The migration of the Bhatias eventually culminated in a transformation of the caste: its Brahmanic status (varna) as Kshatriya was successfully (re-)validated as it acquired wealth and influence through mercantile activities. In the religious status competition stimulated by its economic and political struggle--and, perhaps, later by the reinforcement of caste hierarchies under the Raj—it maintained higher standards of Sanscritic practice than might have been the case in the past (whatever its actual Brahmanic status).

Eventually, the Bhatias became differentiated into separate sub-castes. By the late nineteenth century, the two main groups were Sindhi and Kutchi Bhatias. Though they acknowledged common roots and lived in close proximity in Karachi and Bombay, they did not intermarry and do not do so today. There were divisions within the Kutchi Bhatias (Enthoven, I) and also within the Sindhi Bhatias.[4] Among the latter, these divisions were primarily geographical in nature. In Sindh, Bhatias were concentrated in

the towns, such as Shikarpur, Hyderabad, Karachi and Thatta. Though there was organization, in the form of a panchayat, for all Sindhi Bhatias, the communities in individual towns were also organized through panchayats (Thakur, 1959:73). In addition, over millenia, the path of the Indus and other physical barriers had effectively divided Sindh itself into three cultural subareas: Lar, or Lower Sindh; Vichilo, or Middle Sindh; and Siro, or Upper Sindh. Thatta fell within the first of these. These areas defined differences of dialect, dress, custom, and, for the principal castes in Sindh, "territorial circles of endogamy and community life" (Ibid., 197). Thus, different levels of organization--town (eg., Thatta), subarea (eg., Lower Sindh), and caste as a whole (i.e., Sindhi Bhatias)--were important for different purposes.

Alongside subregional and local social divisions, and perhaps contributing to them, there was some economic specialization in Sindh. Aside from the fishermen reported by Campbell, who, we may safely assume, were excluded from the rest of the caste on the basis of occupation and Sanscritic practice, there was a mercantile division of labor among the Bhatias who did become affluent and prominent: those in Upper Sindh concentrated in internal distribution and trade items, such as Punjabi wheat coming down the Indus to market, while those in Lower Sindh concentrated more in the overseas trade, in these grains, in cloth and, of course, in pearls.

The Bhatias in Bahrain clearly distinguish themselves as Thattai Bhatias, with reference to the town of Thatta. Thatta seems to have been the primary center for the Bhatias in Lower

Sindh until Karachi and Bombay emerged as mercantile centers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many Thattai Bhatias moved or set up branches in the new cities.[5] However, they still kept close links, in the form of property and households, with the home area, which maintained the coherence of the local caste division. At the partition of India, the Bhatias and other Sindhi Hindus migrated as kinship and neighborhood groups. These in turn formed colonies and townships in urban India, mostly in the Bombay metropolitan area, in which language, religion and marriage practice were reproduced (Thakur, 1959:195). The Thattai Bhatias were concentrated in the Kandivalli and Borivalli suburbs. Thus, the organization of the sub-caste was maintained during this wholesale relocation and, indeed, was probably strengthened by even greater proximity and reliance on one another for mutual support and survival in the new environment. It was impossible to assess the boundaries of endogamy today, either for Thattai Bhatias or Sindhi Bhatias in general, nor is it clear what other Sindhi Bhatia divisions might remain. However, descriptions of relations in Bombay and the nature of the community in Bahrain indicate that Thattai Bhatias remain organizationally separate for some purposes. Self-reference by those in Bahrain as Thattai Bhatias would seem to indicate that some distinctions are still made.

In Bahrain, Bhatias had no reason to differentiate themselves from other Sindhi Bhatias because none were present, at least not in significant numbers. However, especially in the context of Gulf commerce, Thattai Bhatias in Bahrain did clearly

differentiate themselves from Kutchi Bhatias. Any distinction between Thattai and other Sindhi Bhatias was an "internal" one, and is today relevant primarily in Indian contexts; the salience in Bahrain of the distinction between Thattai and Kutchi Bhatias was based on their common activity as overseas merchants and the continued presence of both groups in the Gulf. These groups achieved an interesting division of labor in the Gulf market during the period of British hegemony, and perhaps before as well. Thattai merchants operated in Southern Iran, Bahrain, and southward in the Gulf to what are now the United Arab Emirates; Kutchi Bhatias operated in Oman and, through obvious political and commercial linkages, in Zanzibar and around the South Arabian coast. Many of the Indians in the Gulf described by Wellsted (1838), Palgrave (1865) and Landen (1967) were probably Bhatias. Bhatias did not trade in Kuwait, Iraq or other areas of the northern Gulf. In fact, it would appear that until the British period very few Indian merchants ventured into this area. Today there are a few Kutchi Bhatias in Bahrain, but they are not merchants. According to some Thattai Bhatias, they might be permitted to join the Bhatia Mitra Mandal, but none seem to have belonged, and the Kutchi and Thattai Bhatias I knew expressed no sense of undifferentiated Bhatia solidarity.

Life in Thatta was centered around family, local caste community, town and village. Thatta itself had been in economic decline for some time (Hughes, 1874: 812-816), and, by the nineteenth century at least, the locus of economic activity--the emerging cities of Karachi and Bombay and overseas ports--was

clearly separate from the permanent domestic center of the caste. The pearl business--which operated between the producing areas in the Gulf and the market in Bombay, without entailing any sizable operation in Thatta itself--became the most prestigious occupation and brought great wealth to the Bhatias. Mercantile profits were invested in property, and some Bhatias became great landowners in Sindh. The Bhatias became one of the most prominent mercantile groups in the province, and, according to community members in Bahrain, one of them was given the title of Raisaheb by the British administration. In order to indicate the affluence of the period, Bhatias often recalled that in those days all the eating utensils, including the water jugs, were of silver.

The Sindhi Bhatias were a well-organized caste, which enhanced their position in regional economic, political and prestige competition. In general, pollution, untouchability and caste ranking were not highly contentious issues in Sindh. Most of the Hindu population was composed of one caste, the Lohanas, and there was a large and often hostile Muslim population. These factors encouraged solidarity among Hindus and minimized the utility of dogmatic distinctions (Thakur, 1959: 25, 71-2). Among the few groups contesting the given caste hierarchy were the Bhatias. While other merchant castes often intermarried, and wedding feasts were open to other groups in the local population, the Bhatias were strictly endogamous and kept their ceremonies closed and separate; they refused food from all other castes save Brahmins (Ibid., 70).

The status claims of the Bhatias were directed primarily

toward the Lohanas and the administrative-political elite drawn from that caste, the Amils. It was, in effect, a dispute between two groups of similar Brahmanic status (both are Kshatriya and both claim descent from avatars of Vishnu, the Lohanas from Ram, the Bhatias from Krishna) over different "substantiations" of caste (Dumont, 1970): the Lohanas traditionally held superiority on the basis of their wealth and political power, while the Bhatias were economically ascendant and claimed higher status on the basis of purer Sanscritic practice. To facilitate this sort of group competition, the Bhatias were highly "corporate" in Smith's sense (1969a), i.e., their institutions maintained boundaries from within and reproduced a significant degree of cultural distinctiveness.

There was also a great deal of status competition within the Bhatia caste and its sub-castes. Like other Kshatriya castes, the Bhatias are divided into a number of exogamous nukhs, or "clans." While rules of exogamy were followed, often to such extensive degrees of collaterality that marriage partners were hard to find, the real basis of marriage alliance was status, defined primarily in terms of wealth. These status divisions were not named, or marked categorically (as they were among the Lohanas), but were marked in terms of the negotiable, more easily adjustable, and more continuous measure of dowry, which was paid in the form of ornaments according to standards set by the panchayats. (It is not clear how much of this actually went to the bride and how much may have gone to the groom's family.) Marriage was hypergamous, on the basis of status so defined,

especially in the middle and upper strata. Because of this practice and a disproportionate sexual ratio, males of lower status had to "buy" wives, i.e., pay bridewealth to contract marriages outside the caste (usually with poor Lohana girls), for which they were fined (nominally, a compromise which allowed status differentiation yet minimally satisfied all caste members and enhanced solidarity) (Thakur, 1959: 90-95, 98-102). Wealth and status were closely associated with leadership and authority in the community. However, in Thatta these factors were balanced by the charismatic authority of some families. In Thatta, and especially among migrants to Bombay, the power of wealthy merchants was also balanced by the religious and charismatic authority of the Maharajas.[6]

The point of the preceding discussion is to provide some background information about the Bhatias, but also to establish, independently of my observations in Bahrain, their conservative traditions and highly organized character. The wealth and influence of the Thattai Bhatias in India were based on activities overseas, of course, and it is to those activities and the "communities" there that I now turn. It is evident that the conservative communalism of the Bhatias in Thatta was reproduced in Bahrain. Though some repetition is necessary, in summarizing the circumstances of Bhatia life in Bahrain I have sought to complement what has already been said as much as possible.

As described by long-resident community members, and depicted in the stories they recall their fathers and grandfathers telling, Bahrain at the turn of the century was a

harsh and unpleasant place. The climate was hot and unhealthy. Even water was a problem. The Bhatias had secured their own well (evidently for religious reasons), but it was some distance from the area where they worked and lived. Many remember carrying jugs of water on their shoulders as one of the arduous tasks of everyday life. Most Bhatias living in Bahrain before the 1940's were "bachelors." Separation from home and family life was a burden. Men shared housing, which in the early days was usually above the warehouse or shop space. They also did the cooking, a major chore given their culinary tradition and vegetarian diet. An enterprising Sindhi Brahmin eventually opened a mess for the bachelors, which was a central institution in the life of the community for many years.

Many Bhatia firms operated in Bahrain during the prosperous years around the turn of the century. However, few Bhatias lived in Bahrain continuously. Individual members of family firms would share the responsibility of manning the overseas posts—one would stay in Bahrain for a year or so and then be replaced by a kinsman. Many Indian businesses still operate on this basis. Not surprisingly, the men who tended to the year-round buying and selling of commodities were usually the younger members of the firm. Buying pearls was different. It required years of experience and personal relationships with Arab ship captains and wholesalers. However, it could be accomplished in a relatively brief period, and was thus amenable to the migration patterns favored by senior members of firms. They only came for three or four months in the late spring and summer, and then returned to

Karachi or Bombay to market the pearls.

A few Bhatias became wholesalers themselves, and may have funded fishing boats. However, they never engaged in the fishing activities proper, which remained the province of Arab captains with Arab and Persian crews. At some point, for reasons that are unclear--perhaps more local purchasing power, perhaps better sources of supply in India--Bhatias began trading more actively in other goods, such as cloth and grain. They also began exporting dates from Hasa in nearby Eastern Arabia. This business did not last long, though. There were always political problems there, and after the consolidation of the Sa'ud kingdom the activities of Hindu merchants were even more restricted.[7]

The port at Manama was a major warehousing center for transhipment to Eastern Arabia and the central Gulf. As a result, the customs office was important both politically and economically. As noted in Chapter Two, it had been sold as a revenue farm. The Indians who ran the customs were Bhatias. Though Bhatias insist that the assessment of customs duties was made fairly and equitably, the British insisted that the fees paid to the ruling family were far less than they should be. It seems likely that the customs produced a tidy profit for the family which held it, and it was this to which the British objected, rather than to corruption, favoritism or other irregularities.[8] One of the first British actions upon establishing a political agency in Bahrain in 1900 was an attempt to persuade the ruler to end the Bhatia "management contract" at the customs and allow the British to install an officer there.

For some time this attempt was unsuccessful. Though the shaikhs and their tribal allies were militarily the strongest force on the islands, they were continually short of revenue. Bhatias had capital and the only safes on the island, and thus served as bankers to the ruling family. The rulers sold out the customs farm years in advance. In fact, even as the British were negotiating an end to the arrangement, the Bhatias and the ruler were negotiating an extension.

Though the British eventually won out, Bhatias and other Indians stayed on as employees; the last Bhatia clerk at customs did not retire until well after World War II. During the many years when they were the main Indian group living in Bahrain, the Bhatias acquired the respect and acceptance of the local population, among whom they were known as banyan (sing. banyani). This was evidently a corruption of vania, the Vaisya trading castes along the West Indian coast where Arab merchants operated. It became a generic term for Indian merchants. (It was also the generic category used by the British for Indian merchants; see Note 1.) Perhaps the most important legacy of this early relationship between the Bhatias and the ruling family of Bahrain are mutual respect and a sense of gratitude on the part of the latter. This greatly affects Bhatia status in Bahrain today. The support the Bhatias once provided for the Al-Khalifah in their struggle to maintain some degree of "native authority" is now being reciprocated.

During World War I, as part of the war effort, British regulation of customs in Bahrain was especially tight. This

served some imperial interests directly: it allowed control over the movement of contraband in the area, especially weapons. (Many local merchants were sympathetic to the Turkish cause, out of both Islamic solidarity and anti-British feeling.) The British were also concerned that local needs be adequately provided for. In an effort to prevent price-gouging and shortages--as merchants held inventories off the local market waiting for prices to rise or sent them elsewhere in pursuit of a higher price--the British kept a rough tally of stocks for major commodities, controlled profit margins on them, and prevented shipments when necessary. They instituted extraordinary measures of control in the market, many of which are still maintained by the Bahraini government. Then, as now, many Bhatia families had branches in both Bahrain and Dubai or other ports in the south-central Gulf. During the war, some firms restricted their operations in Bahrain and enlarged those in Dubai, which was a far less "organized" port and, thus, a far more profitable one.[9]

When Japanese cultured pearls destroyed the natural pearl market, the major item of trade for the Bhatias became almost valueless. The loss of purchasing power in the local economy made it difficult to sustain trade in other goods. Many fortunes were lost, though apparently less among Indian merchants than among the Arabs and Persians. The latter groups had more often engaged in speculation and had bought land in Bahrain with their profits. Lacking buyers, the land became as worthless as the pearls. Bahrain fell upon hard times, made worse by the worldwide depression. Many Bhatias simply closed up shop and moved back to

Thatta.

Even after the discovery and development of oil, the number of Bhatia firms operating in Bahrain was only a fraction of what it had been previously. The pearl business had supported a large number of small firms, and when it ended the nature of the economy changed. By the late 1930's, the local population had regained its purchasing power. The migration of many British and American workers to Bahrain also enlarged the market. But it was a kind of market the Bhatias were not prepared to exploit. The Bhatias were neither shopkeepers nor general merchants. Other Indians and, increasingly, British and Arab merchants quickly came to dominate the emerging market sectors. Because pearls, foodstuffs and cloth were the respected and prestige commodities within the community, there was little desire to move into other areas. In the estimation of older merchants looking back on those years, this was an important factor in the decline of the market share held by Bhatia merchants. It is also interesting illustration of the significance of the status preoccupations that had developed over centuries of prosperous trading.

Living and business conditions during World War II were difficult in Bahrain. British control of the port was even tighter than it had been in World War I. British lines dominated shipping, and space was stricly apportioned in line with the war effort. Bahrainis had money, but getting goods to market became the problem. Getting such commodities as rope, rice and sugar out of those parts of Asia disrupted by the war was also a problem, but, since there were no competitors, profits were

assured for those who could find supplies and get them to the Gulf. Considerable fortunes were made by those who persevered and had good connections. One firm was consistently able to get supplies and made such profits that they quickly emerged as not only the dominant Bhatia firm in Bahrain but as the richest family in the entire caste in Thatta. However, the caste itself was about to experience its greatest calamity since the invasions of the thirteenth century--the separation of India.

Families packed their valuables and moved first to Bombay, where the caste had long-established business connections and a resident sub-community. Despite assurances of later restitution, the Bhatias never received payment for what had been left behind. The losses for some were tremendous. Property and businesses, in which centuries of mercantile profits had been invested, simply had to be abandoned. The loss of wealth undercut the political elite of the community and accelerated the re-ordering of the status hierarchy. Commerce had served to establish a propertied elite; the loss of property created a status vacuum, allowed competition, and made mercantile activity once again the main means of achieving prestige. At the same time, a new regional and global economic order made it difficult for as many members of the caste to engage in mercantile activities as in the past.

From Bombay, many Bhatias migrated to the Gulf: the indirect result of the loss of the Thattai Bhatia homeland and forced emigration from Sindh was increased migration to Bahrain and the other Bhatia enclaves in the Gulf. Families that had closed their businesses after the pearl crash now re-opened them, in some

cases moving back into houses uninhabited for years. They found it easier to re-establish links in Bahrain than to start anew in India itself. Wives and families also began to migrate in substantial numbers. Living conditions in Bahrain had improved greatly since the last stable business period, prior to World War I, and growing investment in infrastructure from the 1950's made Bahrain an increasingly attractive place to live. Business was very good, though, as noted, the Bhatias did not acquire anything like the market share they had held decades earlier.

By and large, the new businesses entered into or expanded their participation in the traditional lines of Bhatia trade--foodstuffs and textiles. A few mavericks bucked tradition and moved into new sectors, such as hardware, electrical goods and construction materials. Though they were at first berated by other businessmen in the community, they were vindicated in the end: the most prosperous Bhatia firms in Bahrain today deal in these unorthodox lines. Some attempts at change were undermined by the traditional orientations noted above, and were less successful: according to a Bhatia observer, for a while in the 1950's, one Bhatia firm had a minor American automobile distributorship, but, due to lack of interest, seldom took the demonstrator out of the garage. Other groups, such as local Arab merchants, responded more quickly to changes in the market. Of course, beginning in the 1950's, political factors and legal changes further weakened the position of the Bhatias and other Indian businessmen and reinforced the lead taken by locals.

Despite the growth of commerce after the war, an increasing

proportion of the new Bhatia migrants were not merchants. For the first time, Bhatias began working in Bahrain as employees of firms other than those owned by their families, which is still referred to as "serving" in the community. The Bhatia definition of "service" is an interesting reflection of the traditional ideology and identity of the community. "Service" has negative connotations, but is otherwise quite different from the definition used by other groups, the British, for example. These people are not servants or menials at all, but, for the most part, professionals and white-collar workers, such as accountants and managers. Though highly valued in the growing modern economies of India and Bahrain, these occupations had low status within the community. To be anything other than a merchant proprietor was to be a servant of someone else. These attitudes are rooted in the linkage of the family and its reputation to the firm, on the one hand, and to the potential of mercantile enterprise to generate surplus, on the other. For both families and particular individuals, respect and status within the caste came from wealth and the ability to provide resources for the community.

The traditional Bhatia ethos and code of behavior, which guided both the achievement of these goals and the display of their attainment, involved a combination of mercantile and religious values and what might well be described as a delight in the contradiction between appearance and reality. The model of masculine behavior is the warrior Arjuna, the protagonist of the Bhagavad Gita. In the course of the story, he learns to do his

duty, but without absorption or entrapment in its mundane, materialistic dimension. The proper demeanor of the Bhatia male was, and is, one of modesty and humility. Sumptuary display is limited to the domestic sphere, and especially to the family's women (whose fascination with pearls and, in more recent times, diamonds, cannot be denied). There is a consciously understood linkage, articulated through notions of dharma and bhakta, between this display, the resources it demands, the duty that is being done, and the proper devotion of husband for wife. The reciprocal devotion of wife and mother for husband and children, and of all for Krishna, binds the family in a circle of love intended to create harmony for both practical and spiritual ends.

At the same time, this display is an expression of the family's social status. Similarly, despite the modest demeanor of the merchant, the basis of his status is public recognition--which may not be demanded--of his honesty, reputation, mercantile skill and wealth. In short, to be magnanimous and generous to those one loves and to the community, one must have resources and, traditionally, acquire them in a particular way, that is, by building or maintaining a successful business, preferably with one's family. A minimal but important expression of the economic wherewithal and unity of a family is its ability to employ all of its males in the firm. If a man's reasons were seen as worthy, he could justifiably ask that the firm be divided or he be provided with capital to pursue an independent venture. However, to have to work elsewhere than in the family firm in an occupation other than that of merchant was regarded as a sacrifice for him and a

sign of misfortune for the family. It was, however, a sacrifice that increasing numbers of Bhatias had to make.

The crash of the pearl market, the world-wide depression, and the separation of India represented a series of calamities which together undercut the relatively stable occupational base of the caste. Bhatias were forced to seek new opportunities in the growing modern economies of India and the Gulf. The adaptation of the community to these new economic possibilities has been very successful. Despite the complacency of some businessmen, in general, education and accomplishment in any field are encouraged. Work as an end in itself is highly valued.[10] Entrepreneurship quickly generated a new elite in the caste in India. The independent businessman is still the most highly respected economically active member of the community, but the type of business he might maintain is rather different from that of earlier generations. Some overseas merchants are still quite wealthy, but, with a few exceptions, only a fraction of their income is derived from their overseas mercantile operations. The wealth of the new elite in the community is based on industrial capitalism, banking, and real estate development in Bombay rather than on the mercantilism and landlordism of Thatta.

While, in the past, all, or most, might have been able to operate family firms--in an economy of family firms—all cannot be industrialists and real estate tycoons. Most must "serve," though, as noted above, they do not do so in menial positions. Today, the majority of Bhatias work as professionals, technocrats, and businessmen in the modern sense, that is, as

executives in companies which they or their families do not own. In addition to education and hard work, there was an element of chance and good fortune in the employment of Bhatias in privileged occupations. The movement of Bhatias into serving occupations actually began in India before partition, mainly out of economic necessity. Just as linkages with the British in Sindh, Gujerat and Bombay had provided Bhatias and other Indian businessmen with knowledge and connections, such linkages were important in placing Indians in new sectors. Karachi was the West Indian headquarters of Imperial Airways. So many Bhatias were able to find employment in the company during and after the war that when its name was later changed to B.O.A.C., it was jokingly referred to as the Bhatia Overseas Airway Company. When B.O.A.C. routes and facilities in the Gulf became Gulf Aviation, and, later, Gulf Air and Bahrain Airport Services, the Bhatias stayed on. Many remain even today. Some have direct responsibility, but increasingly, they work as advisors to their Arab replacements. Most "serving" Bhatias are in secure and well-paid positions.

Together, these two developments--a change in the nature of independent firms and the movement of most workers into new occupations--have effected a transformation of the economic base of the caste. Given the limitations on entrepreneurial activity in Bahrain, the elite in the community there still operates within the framework of the family firm. However, the distinction between proprietor and employee is an important one. Its implications will be discussed below. First, I will assess the

current position of the Bhatias in their traditional sphere of activity, trade.

The events of recent decades have taken their toll on Bhatia merchants in Bahrain.[11] Today there are about thirty Bhatia firms, but only five or six of these are real "houses," that is, businesses recognized as significant within the general business community in Bahrain. None of them deal in foodstuffs. The developments of the 1970's have led to the marginalization of Bhatia businesses still in this line of trade. Import licenses for brand-name products have been transferred to local firms, while "cold stores" (supermarkets) operated by Bahrainis have increasingly integrated importing and retail distribution. The government subsidizes the prices of major food items, such as rice, and now imports them itself. As a result, Bhatia dealers in foodstuffs have lost some of their main commodities and must trade in off-brands of other products. A few have become mere shopkeepers.

The principal issues now facing Bhatia merchants and, indeed, all foreign businessmen, are those of increasing regulation of their role in the market and, especially, the problem of local participation in their businesses. Bhatias have given several different responses to the problem of Bahraini participation. Brief mention of alternative strategies will illustrate the important factors in the situation and the nature of relationships with the local business community.

Though they were offered dispensation as "exempt companies," some Bhatia firms have taken local partners anyway. This has

allowed them to maintain important product agencies. It has also been seen as a wise move politically; better to take a reliable partner now than wait until forced to do so, when one's bargaining position and, perhaps, social pressures might have worsened and the whole business be lost. A few have taken this chance and kept complete control of their companies. They eschew agencies for non-registered products, work aggressively at the supply end to remain profitable, and move carefully to avoid harmfully competing with or otherwise arousing influential local parties. They sometimes criticize those who have taken partners as rash. They also appeal to the ideals of independent proprietorship; in the words of one prominent merchant, "A partner is a boss."

The future of all Bhatia companies is in doubt, of course. In the meantime, those who retain control of their companies must depend on ingenuity to maintain their market position. Those who have taken partners face a different, or additional, challenge. The maneuver has been successful for most, but disastrous for a few. The difference lies in the status and disposition of the partner. He may be content with a share of the profits commensurate with his investment and allow the Bhatia or other foreign merchant to run the business as before, though legally the foreigner would be on a "management contract" to the firm and not an independent proprietor. Most foreign businessmen in this position insist that the negotiated partnerships are genuine, i.e., that the local has indeed invested his fifty percent plus in the firm's capital, or is in the process of doing so. The

foreigner may take a note in lieu of cash for the local's share. The local is then to acquire his share, and the note be paid, over a long period of time. Since this sort of transaction is an extended one, and the situation can change, there are some uncertainties involved. However, insofar as the foreigner receives compensation for the legal transfer of assets, the arrangement provides reasonable protection.

There are reports and allegations that in some cases the arrangements are less secure. The note may be a mere formality legitimating the foreigner's claim to the assets of the firm should a dispute arise; the note will in fact never be bought, the local simply receives an agreed sum or percentage for providing the arrangement, and the fact that the foreigner still maintains control is recognized in a "management contract" giving him most of the profits of the business. The foreigner has the promissory note as protection and recognition of his de facto ownership of the firm's assets, but, if the value of the local's legal share of the firm's assets greatly exceeds the value of the promissory note, the foreigner may be in jeopardy. Finally, in some cases, there is no note; rather, the arrangement is based on a verbal agreement, itself based on trust and the reputation of the parties in the market. This can be a very uncertain arrangement for a foreigner, even one with decades of experience in Bahrain.

Problems may arise if the local partner decides to play a more active role in the firm--if, for example, he is a businessman and wishes to integrate the company into his other

operations--or if he is dishonest. In a well-known case, one Bhatia merchant encountered such problems. His family were long-standing merchants in the Gulf, with branches in Bahrain, the Emirates and even Kuwait. The mainstay of their business was consumer electronics, and, in order to maintain the agencies vital to this line of business, they took a partner in Bahrain. The partner subsequently claimed ownership of the majority of the firm's assets, for which he had not paid, and further demanded that he be allowed to buy out the minority share still legally held by the Bhatia merchant. Since the commercial law does not provide for forced sellouts, the latter issue was readily decided in the Indian's favor. However, since he lacked all the proper documents, i.e., a valid promissory note, the ownership of the majority share was a more difficult issue to resolve.

The Bhatia eventually won the case, though the battle was long, expensive and personally trying. His victory was largely due to the fact that, while he was highly respected, the local partner was widely regarded as disreputable. In the end, the court and the committee of merchants who reviewed the case recognized the moral and financial aspects of the case rather than the legal ones; though the Bhatia merchant could not substantiate his continuing claim to the assets of the firm, it was understood that the local partner had not paid for them. The Bhatia was jokingly admonished for taking a known scoundrel as a partner. However, he had feared forming a partnership with an established businessman who might eventually seek an active role in the business. (About the time his case was being settled, just

such a misfortune befell the branch of his family in the Emirates; their partner opened his own outlets and used political muscle to stop deliveries of goods to their shops.) The Bhatia merchant applied for permanent dispensation from taking a partner, but a decision was delayed indefinitely. He was thus left in control of his business on a very insecure basis.

Though they sometimes express hope for the future, many Bhatia merchants concede that the handwriting is on the wall. Their strategies reflect attempts to position themselves for the inevitable and maximize returns until Bahrain enforces the more rigid controls already in effect elsewhere in the Gulf. The implications for capital investment, long-range planning, and other business decisions need not be elaborated. Of course, it should be remembered that, despite their difficulties, as both proprietors and employees the Bhatias are among the most secure Indians in Bahrain.

Despite the changes they have undergone in recent decades, the Bhatias remain relatively conservative and closely knit. They are religiously devout and are strict vegetarians. Marriages outside the caste are rare and divorce is even rarer (though, as one merchant quipped, "We are learning"). Mothers and grandmothers still arrange marriages for their children, often without consulting them, as has long been their prerogative. Though the distinction between entrepreneurial and serving sectors (or, in Bahrain, mercantile and serving sectors) implies differences of prestige and wealth, it has not led to a cleavage in marriage pools or sections, largely, it would appear, because

the endogamous unit is too small to allow very many restrictions. Endogamy and the absence of internal divisions enhance solidarity. Patterns of social interaction are still highly communal, oriented toward immediate family, kin and affines, and other Thattai Bhatias. Linkages between the community in Bombay and those overseas are close.[12] Though many community members might have been born in Bahrain or elsewhere in the Gulf, they still travel regularly to India for visits, occasions, religious rites and pilgrimages. Initiation rites and nearly all marriages take place in India. Even some funeral rites for Bhatias who die in Bahrain are held in India.

The coherence of the caste and the importance of caste-specific standards of behavior have been enhanced by the small size of the group, its geographical concentration, and the presence of community organizations. There are only about 400 Thattai Bhatia households in Bombay, and 200-250 in each of the two principal Gulf communities. The total Thattai Bhatia population in Bahrain today is about 1000. With favorable economic and demographic circumstances, it is possible to maintain a genuine face-to-face community and an extensive group organization. (As we shall see in Chapter Eight, with such a small constituency, it is also easy to effectively use influence to protect community interests in the political context of Bahraini society.) Thattai Bhatias in Bombay and the other towns of the Gulf are similarly concentrated and maintain similar forms of organization. Community associations had great importance as support groups in India after partition. It is possible that the

coherence and salience of associations is even greater today in Bahrain and elsewhere in the Gulf, where the support function is still quite relevant and communication and interaction are easier than in India.

Though the caste remains traditional and close in many ways, the occupational and status distinctions within it have led to disagreement over leadership and authority. It is unclear how or to what extent these issues are manifest in India, but in Bahrain they are evident in the "mercantile" and "service" factions noted above. The differences between the approaches and positions taken by the two factions, or "sides" as the Bhatias would call them, reflect the cultural and psychological implications of their economic and occupational differences. That is, the different structural positions of these factions appear to have encouraged the development of somewhat different identities, aspirations and definitions of leadership.

Merchants tend to have a more permanent and continuous concern with their work than do those in service, who are permitted a clearer differentiation between work and leisure. In addition, merchants remain the true flag carriers of the caste ideals; they derive their status and self-respect from wealth and reputation, and are permitted the luxury of maintaining the traditional models of simplicity and modesty. As a group, then, merchants show less willingness to devote their own or the community's resources toward leisurely and recreational pursuits of a non-traditional nature. They desire and expect some adherence to traditional political processes, in which they

either held positions of leadership or at least were consulted with respect and deference. In exchange, they funded the major projects of the community.

Aside from the fact that their economic interests are differently structured, those in the "serving side" tend to be better educated than the merchants. Their identity is to a certain extent derived from these characteristics. They have a broader range of interests and more time to devote to them. They are more susceptible to external, "modern" definitions of status. They chafe at the traditional quid pro quo. Thus, two parties with differing approaches toward leadership and social institutions have emerged.

The occupational and cultural differences within the community are reflected in membership in its associations, the Thattai Hindu Mahajan, the Thattai Hindu Mercantile Community and the Bhatia Mitra Mandal. While most Thattai Bhatias belong to the Mandal, its active membership is drawn largely from the "service side" of the community. It is purely a social club in function. Members meet occasional Fridays and evenings for some of the activities pursued by most social clubs in Bahrain--socializing, refreshments, hawzi, games, but, unlike most other social clubs, not drinking. The Mandal has no property of its own and no role in administering community property.

Authority in these matters is reserved for the Mahajan and the Mercantile Community. The Mandal is quite distinct from the Mercantile Community with regard to constituency and purpose. As the name implies, the latter is composed almost entirely of

active proprietors in Bahrain. Merchants tend to look upon the activities of the Mandal with benevolent derision, as childish games. The difference in outlook between businessman and salaried worker is nowhere more evident than here. While these two parties are effectively separated in the Mandal and the Mercantile Community, they participate actively together in the Mahajan, and it is in this institution that different definitions and approaches to authority have been apparent.

Factionalism in the Mahajan is most evident in positions taken regarding the management of community property. This property includes the temple and its courtyard, or "ground," some residential and commercial property adjacent to the temple, and a cremation ground. The temple property was acquired during the early nineteenth century, and a deed from the ruler at that time is held by the community. The temple is located in the heart of the city center, near the old pearl market and the old Bhatia residences. Also on the temple property stood a Sikh temple, which will figure in the following chapter.

Prior to the 1950's, both the temple and the adjacent property were registered in the name of the community, which at that time meant the Thattai Hindu Mahajan. Then the British began to regularize titles to all land and re-register it, evidently at about the same time foreigners were prohibited from buying more property. The community first sought to re-register all the land as religious property, hoping to thus ensure that it would remain theirs in perpetuity. However, they were informed that should they do so, the property would be subject to the same regulations

as waqf land (that is, Muslim religious endowments), including government control over the distribution of income. The Bhatias then decided to divide the property. They registered the temple as religious property, "owned" by God, but administered by the Mahajan. A separate body, the Thattai Hindu Mercantile Community, the merchants association, was created to hold the title for the plot adjacent to the temple. In the lower level of the temple is some warehouse space, let to Bhatia merchants, with the rents going to the Mahajan. The plot adjacent to the temple was occupied by a building of flats, rented to community members, with the nominal rents going to the Mercantile Community.

The cremation ground was evidently acquired at about the same time as the temple site. It is located in a garden area to the south of the city center, an area which is now prime property for luxury residential development. Wood is still used as fuel, and the ashes are either cast in Bahrain, at the seashore, or taken to India to be distributed at the appropriate holy places there. The cremation ground is available to all Hindus in Bahrain, but is under the control of the Bhatia community and, in particular, of the Thattai Hindu Mahajan. These were the institutional arrangements as of the late 1970's.

There has been debate and disagreement within the community over the maintenance and modernization of both the temple and the cremation ground. The details of the latter case are simpler, and it is thus perhaps a better place to begin. First, the government directed the community to move the site of cremation out of what had become a residential area, partly because of neighborhood

complaints and partly to make way for development.[13] An alternative site was offered outside the city. Plans were made to build an electric crematorium to replace the traditional method. The crematory ground committee, which was controlled by prominent merchants, failed to act expeditiously. They favored the old site, which was closer, and sought to avoid installing an electric crematorium for religious reasons. Others charge that they were so involved with business that they neglected the issue and that they were avoiding the expense of the electric crematorium. They deny these charges. Evidently, they had hoped that a more acceptable alternative might present itself. Unfortunately, this did not happen. The initial property offer by the government was withdrawn and a plot even further out of town was offered instead. The switch to electric cremation appeared unavoidable. By the time I left the field, the new site was ready and needed only the hook-up of electricity to be used. The problem had been solved, but in an inefficient manner. Divisions within the community were aggravated and, perhaps, valuable political capital was wasted by temporizing.

Disagreement within the community was more apparent, and even acrimonious, in the protracted dispute over the renovation of the temple. The years had taken their toll on the building, and it was in need of extensive repair. The definition of "need" was in part a function of changes in the orientations of community members, especially those in the "serving side." As their tastes changed, many came to want a more comfortable and elaborate structure. Together with most "middle class" Indians in

Bahrain, as their status in the country has been increasingly questioned and assaulted, they have become more sensitive about it. Many see the temple as an expression of status and identity.

These external definitions of status are less important to merchants for several reasons. As noted previously, they are less concerned with the opinions of outsiders than are professionals and other employees. They are more likely to articulate a preference for simplicity and modesty, which is interpreted by others as meanness, absorption in business matters, and lack of concern for community affairs. Perhaps because they have more to lose, or perhaps because they are closer to channels of power, or both, the merchants are also much more sensitive to the potential value of keeping a low profile in Bahrain--by, for example, maintaining an unobtrusive temple--than are serving Bhatias. In any case, work on the temple was delayed until it became a major issue within the community. The merchants eventually prepared a plan to renovate the temple and develop the surrounding property. Before turning to the dispute over this plan, it may be helpful to review the institutions and positions involved.

The primary function of the temple is as a place of worship, of course. As noted, the Bhatias are Vaishnavites. Though a Brahmin is employed at the temple, his function is not the performance of Vedic rituals, but darshan, serving and caring for the image of Balakrishna housed in the temple. The elaborate routines of darshan--which represent a mundane but important dimension of bhakta--are integrated into the daily lives of community members, many of whom work and live in the vicinity of

the temple and visit it frequently. In addition to its function as a place of worship, the temple is used as for meetings by various groups. The temple hall is used by several religious study groups and, occasionally, for lectures and talks by visiting teachers and religious men. For these occasions, the sacred space in the temple is screened off. A number of groups also use the courtyard, or ground, which is presently uncovered and thus not air-conditioned, for meetings and social occasions. Among these groups is the recently formed Bhatia Mitra Mandal.

While merchants do not object to the use of the temple ground by the Mandal or other groups, they are somewhat more critical of the use of the temple hall itself, especially by non-Bhatias. It is alleged that some of the merchants (and other Vaishnavites in Bahrain using the temple, as well) do not like Hindus of low caste entering the temple. The main objection they articulate, though, is to holding meetings and other services in a place of worship, which they see as defiling the house of God. There is also opposition to the individual responsible for organizing many of these activities.

Though this man's family has a long-established business in Bahrain, during a period of difficulty in the 1950's he made the "sacrifice" of leaving the family firm to serve.[14] He is now the chief accountant in a large local firm. He is also a very religious man, but in a somewhat different sense than in traditional Bhatia practice. His personal orientation is toward contemplation, gnana, as well as bhakta. More important to the issue at hand, he has helped promote religious study groups. He

regards these as contributing to the general rebirth and growth of Hinduism, developments which conservative members of the community see as neither necessary nor desirable, especially in the social climate of modern Bahrain. Some of the groups, such as the Chinmaya Family, are above reproach, but others are not held in high esteem.[15] By virtue of his influential position in the community--he has served as an officer in both the Mahajan and the Mercantile Comunity--he has secured permission for these religious groups to meet in the temple, as much out of practicality as out of doctrinal agreement (meeting places are expensive and difficult to find).

Aside from holding different definitions of Hinduism and of sacred space, some members of the community take exception to this man's style of leadership. They see in his activities not only a defilement of the temple, but in his teaching--which they call "preaching" by a self-styled guru--a kind of egoism in contradiction to the traditional Bhatia religious ethos, the humility of the bhakti. These religious and personal differences were combined with competition for authority and factional oppositions in the dispute in the Thattai Hindu Mahajan over the renovation of the temple. The developments were as follows:

The merchants drew up a three-phase plan for the modernization of the temple and the development of the adjacent property. The plan included renovating the temple proper; rebuilding the storage space below into a separate meeting hall; adding kitchens (one for the temple, i.e., the god, and one for the hall and social occasions held there); adding apartments for

visiting teachers and other notables; and, finally, rebuilding, covering and air-conditioning the temple ground. The adjacent property would be developed into an arcade of shops with flats above. A separate entrance into the temple would be provided so that worshippers would not have to contend with delivery trucks and the commotion of mercantile activities on the adjacent property.

The financial arrangements were to be as follows: The Mercantile Community would provide all the funding, budgeted at hundreds of thousands of dinars. The Mahajan would be paid ground rent for the part of the shop arcade which would lie on temple (i.e., Mahajan) property. This would reimburse them for revenue lost by converting the warehouse space under the existing temple into a meeting hall. The Mercantile Community would control the arcade and receive rentals from it. The Mahajan would receive any rentals from the halls, i.e, the one under the temple and the one built on the present ground.

However, according to the merchants' plan, groups could not use the temple itself for meetings, only the hall below or the adjacent ground/hall, and any group, including other Bhatias, would have to pay to use these facilities. Even the Bhatia Mitra Mandal would pay a nominal fee to hold its meetings on temple property, though this might involve an accounting fiction rather than a real transfer of funds. The only exception to be made was for parchh, a general condolence assembly held the third day after a death in the caste. (Mourning rituals are coordinated among the various Bhatia sub-communities, wherever the death may

have occurred or the ashes be distributed.) This would pre-empt any planned activities and would be free for any Bhatia. From the perspective of the Mercantile Community, both they and the Mahajan would receive more revenue through this plan, the temple would be restored to a more acceptable condition, and the religious activities of the other groups, though not forbidden, would be limited by the new financial arrangements.

At first it appeared that the Mahajan would agree to the plan. The committee which had been appointed to deal with the temple renovation--of which the religious leader was a member--seemed to accept it when the merchants unveiled it to them. But in a general meeting of the Mahajan the plan was rejected. Some merchants believed that the religious leader saw the implications of the plan which would limit his and other groups' activities, and that, out of self-interest, he stirred up the Mahajan by charging that the merchants were merely trying to dominate the community for the profits they would get from the arcade. It is likely that there would have been some sympathy for this view, if indeed it was presented to the Mahajan. There is no evidence that it was, but, in any case, the factions were at an impasse.

Eventually, the Mahajan drew up a counter-plan. Its terms were as follows: the lower level warehouses under the temple would remain, while the upper hall, the current temple proper, would be enlarged and extended around to a second floor to be built over the current temple ground. The lower level of this addition, the current courtyard, would be converted into a small arcade of shops. The rentals for the warehouse space and for the

shops would go to the Mahajan. It would continue to set policy for the use of the hall and other facilities. The Mercantile Community was free to develop its property as it wished. It was asked to respect the desire of the Mahajan for independence and income and to fund the new plan.

The merchants were somewhat affronted by this turn of events. The dispute degenerated into a disagreement over secondary issues, used by the opposing sides to illustrate their good will and to legitimate the positions they had taken: the Mahajan did not provide a separate entrance for the temple, and trucks carrying freight to the warehouse space would congest the area for worshippers; there was not sufficient space for the shop arcade the Mahajan had proposed; the revenue for the Mahajan was not sufficient under the Mercantile Community plan, and so forth. The issue had not been resolved when I left the field and construction had not begun on either plan.

Leaving aside the unkind charges on both sides--that the merchants only sought profits and domination through economic power, and that the Mahajan was being duped into greedy action by an egotistical, self-styled guru--it is apparent that well-intentioned people in both camps differed somewhat in their goals and beliefs and markedly in their perception of the situation. Despite continued closeness and unity in many areas, decisive changes had taken place in the economic bases and political processes of the community. The traditional linkage between wealth and both community obligation and political influence was being more effectively questioned than had been possible before.

Interestingly, this same sort of conflict appeared in the institutions of the Indian community as a whole. This problem will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

The communal solidarity of the Bhatias must be re-emphasized: they might disagree markedly over the conduct of community affairs yet have amicable social relationships and be linked closely by ties of kinship and alliance. Indeed, given the size of the community, it is almost impossible not to be linked by such ties! Whatever their differences, caste ties were still strong enough to assure mutual assistance when problems arose. (See Note 14.) Nonetheless, factionalism with regard to internal issues, which I have traced to social and economic changes, is more evident among the Bhatias than in the other "caste community" in Bahrain, the Bohras.

THE BOHRA COMMUNITY

Though they are Muslim rather than Hindu, it does not seem inappropriate to characterize the Bohras in Bahrain as a "caste community." Numerically, they are a small group, and they maintain a high degree of close personal knowledge of and contact with one another through face-to-face relations. They are highly endogamous, and maintain distinctive patterns of dress, diet, and religious observance. The Bohras are differentiated from other Shi'a in Bahrain--Baharnah, Persian, Pakistani, etc.--by nationality, language, sect, and the group culture which accompanies these characteristics. The Bohras have been less affected by Shi'ite fundamentalism than local Shi'a. Cultural differences and exclusiveness are factors here, but it is evident that the political position of the Bohras in the society--as foreigners who are favored by the rulers of Bahrain--also separates them from local Shi'a.

Like the Bhatia associations, and unlike the clubs and associations of most other social categories, Bohra social institutions extensively organize the category around communally defined activities, relations and practical interests. This has enabled them to perceive themselves and act more effectively as a group in Bahraini society. In India, the Bohras were concentrated in Gujerat and, later, Bombay. This facilitated the coalescence of local groups into the kind of corporate organization at the regional level that has been the characteristic response of Hindu castes to Indian independence and economic and political competition. In sum, though they are a Muslim sect rather than a

Hindu caste, and whether or not they acted like a caste in local systems in the past, the Bohras display a similar form of organization in modern India as well as in Bahrain.

Aside from religion, there are some significant differences between the Bhatia and Bohra communities. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Bohras represent a much larger group in India. Though personal relationships have been important in Bohra migration to Bahrain, the community there does not represent the same sort of coherent extension of the community in India. There is a strong basis for group solidarity, so that new migrants are easily incorporated into an intimate community. However, there is not the same degree of pre-existing intimacy found in the Bhatia community. The authority structure in the Bohra community is also quite different from that of the Bhatias, in that religious authority is very powerful. Bohra clergymen in Bahrain have an important voice in community affairs and link the community in Bahrain to that in India through the religious hierarchy. Religious authority facilitiates unity, but it also mutes the effects of economic differentiation, encourages an inward orientation among community members, and separates the Bohras from other Shí'ites in Bahrain. We will explore the implications of these characteristics below. But, first, a little historical background is in order.

The Bohras are but one branch of the Shi'ite Muslims, and, in fact, there are several types of Bohras. To unravel the skein of their sectarian genealogy, it is necessary to return almost to the beginning of Islam. Dissension arose in the 'umma, the Muslim

community, over succession to leadership after the death of the prophet himself. Though, at first, the issue was evidently grounded in the personal qualities of various candidates, the ideological basis of debate soon crystallized around two opposing principles of succession, election from among a pool of candidates versus hereditary succession from the line of the prophet (Lewis, 1966: 50-63). The former faction prevailed and established Sunni Islam (from al-sunnah, "custom"). The latter, the shi'ah, or "party," of 'Ali, the son-in-law of the prophet, soon became a persecuted sect of opposition. The leaders of Sunni Islam, whether chosen by election or hereditary succession (from established ruling dynasties, rather than from the lineage of the prophet, and, thus, on traditional rather than charismatic bases), were called khulafa (sing. khalifah, often Anglicized as "caliph"). The leader of the Shi'a, as the sect was soon known, was chosen from among the descendants of the prophet, through his daughter and 'Ali, and was referred to as imam.

The restriction of the office of Imam to descendants of the prophet by no means prevented disagreement as to its rightful holder. Quite the contrary, the Shi'a are well-known for schism over precisely this issue, which has resulted in the proliferation of sub-sects. The first, and major, division occurred over succession to the sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq. (Many Shi'ites, including the Bohras, count him as the fifth Imam, having elevated 'Ali to the position of asas, or "foundation," and begun the lineage of Imams with Hasan, the elder son of 'Ali.) One party accepted Musa Kazim, the fourth son

of Ja'far, as the proper successor. They have become the orthodox branch of Shi'ite Islam, so to speak, and are now referred to as Ithna 'Asharis (after ithna 'asharah, "twelve," the number of Imams believed to have lived among men; the twelfth Imam disappeared and is believed to have gone into mystical occultation, from which he is to return as the Mahdi, or messiah).

The other faction favored Isma'il, the second son of Ja'far. They and their descendants constitute the other main branch of the Shi'ites, the Isma'ilis. Because of persecution under the Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad, the Imams often found it necessary to remain in hiding, or "underground," we would say. Very early on, the office of da'i--construed as the hijab, or "veil," of the Imam--was established as a channel of communication between the Isma'ili Imam and his followers. The Isma'ili Imams fled the central Arab lands and eventually founded a ruling dynasty, the Fatimids (after Fatima, the daughter of the prophet and channel of the lineage's charisma), in Egypt.

The Isma'ilis divided over succession to the eighth Fatimid Imam/Khalifah, Al-Mustansir. Some favored one son, Nizar, while others favored another son, Musta'li. Nizaris and Musta'lians thus became the major branches of the Isma'ili Shi'ites. One lineage of the Musta'lians remained in Egypt, as puppets under military rulers. The rest of the Musta'lians and the Nizaris left Egypt. The Nizaris went to Iran, and thence to India. The leader of the main Nizari group, who are referred to in India as Khojahs, is the Agha Khan.[16] He is believed to be a direct lineal

descendant of Isma'il, Fatima and the prophet, and, thus, is the living Imam. The Musta'lians established themselves in Yemen, where the sect soon underwent an important transformation. Abu al-Qasim Taiyib, the second successor to Musta'li and the twenty-first Bohra Imam, went into occultation, i.e., disappeared, in 1130 A.D. Thenceforth, Musta'lian Shi'ites were governed not by a living Imam, but by the da'i al-mutlaq, or Supreme Da'i, who was believed to be in correspondence with the hidden Imam, and therefore deserving of absolute obedience.

The Isma'ilis had been sending missionaries to India since the eleventh century. After the Nizari-Musta'lian split, a succession of da'is led the Indian Musta'lian community, in close correspondence with the Supreme Da'i in the Yemen. In India, the Musta'lian Isma'ili Shi'ites were known as Bohras, evidently from the Gujerati vohoru, "trade," signifying the occupation of the first converts (Enthoven I: 197-8). However, all converts were not traders: a large number of cultivators also became Bohras. At some point, the sect divided. Though both groups are still called Bohras, the mercantile class remain Musta'lian Isma'ilis while, interestingly, the cultivators have become Sunni Muslims.

Eventually, in 1539, the twenty-fourth Supreme Da'i in the Yemen moved the headquarters of the sect to India. Not long afterward, the sect divided over succession to the twenty-sixth Supreme Da'i, who died in 1591. The Musta'lians remaining in Yemen favored Sulayman ibn Hasan as his successor while most of those in India favored Da'ud Burhan al-Din. Thus emerged the two main sects of Bohras today, the Sulaymanis and the Da'udis. The

Da'udis are by far the largest group. Though they split twice more, over succession to the twenty-ninth and fortieth Da'is, the resulting sub-sects (called Alias, or Nagoshis, and Hiptias) are small. Most Bohras in India, and nearly all those in Bahrain and the rest of the Gulf, are Da'udis.

The center of the Sulaymani sect remains in Yemen. Its adherents live in both Yemen and India, and are relatively few in number in both places. For centuries, the Da'udis had their headquarters at various sites in Gujerat, such as Ahmedabad, Jamnagar, and Surat. Though the community still speaks Gujerati and maintains shrines and other community institutions in Gujerat, the spiritual center of the sect--the main mosque and the residence of the Supreme Da'i--is now in Bombay. A few Da'udis live in Yemen, and a number still live in cities and villages in Gujerat. However, during the course of this century, most have moved to Bombay. According to community leaders in Bahrain, there are now some 500,000 living there. This may be an overestimate, but there are quite clearly far more Da'udi Bohras than Bhatias.

Though few in number, the Sulaymani Bohras in India became a "progressive" group (Hollister, 1953: 274); they quickly moved into the professions and other modern economic sectors, modifying religious practice when necessary. This may perhaps be attributed to the absence of powerful religious authority. At any rate, in the presence of such authority, the Da'udis remained, and are still, a conservative, inward-looking, tightly organized community. An elaborate religious hierarchy coordinates the

affairs of individual communities overseas and in Indian cities, towns and villages.

The "reactionary" and authoritarian stance of the Sayyidnas, as the Da'udi Supreme Da'is are called, led to a major confrontation in the community in the nineteenth century. In an important court case contesting jurisdiction over community property and funds, the Sayyidna was recognized as the trustee of these assets, rather than their owner (Hollister, 1953: 296-7, 304).[17] Though the Sayyidna's temporal power has been limited, it is still considerable; his spiritual authority is absolute. The conservative positions frequently taken by the religious hierarchy are a lively issue in the community, both in India and in Bahrain, but, significantly, disagreements have been settled through negotiation rather than schism.

The main Muslim trading groups of Western India were the Bohras and the Khojahs. As among the Hindu trading groups, there was a division of the overseas market among Muslim traders, that is, members of different groups tended to concentrate in different areas. Maintaining stable trading positions involved personal relationships between leaders of trading communities and local polities, linking both groups in ways that might make it difficult for new communities to become accepted and acquire local patronage. The economic efficiences of communal links--for credit, employment, supply and marketing--complemented these political factors in helping particular groups acquire and maintain local monopolies. Perhaps, too, this was a mutually accepted means of carrying on trade and avoiding conflict. For

various reasons, then, different communities exploited different niches. The Khojahs were the dominant Indian Muslim traders in Oman and Zanzibar, but were few in number in the central Gulf. The Bohras operated along the southern Arabian coast, in what are now the United Arab Emirates and, later, in Bahrain.[19]

As noted earlier, most of the Bohras in Bahrain are Da'udis. The circumstances of their arrival were mentioned in Chapter Four. Like the Bhatias, they established links with the ruling family. Some Bohras traded in pearls, but many traded in cloth, and from the beginning many have been shopkeepers. Like the Bhatias, the first Bohra merchants came as "bachelors." Individuals would come to Bahrain for two to three years, then return to India and rotate with another member of the business. Only in recent decades have they brought dependents in substantial numbers. One family of Sulaymani Bohras arrived soon after the turn of the century and later became general merchants. Their descendants operate one of the main department stores in the country. The head of the company in Bahrain has been granted Bahraini nationality, but the rest of the family now have Pakistani nationality. Significantly, they are not members of the Bohra "community." In speaking of Bohras in the following pages, we refer to members of the Da'udi Bohra community, unless otherwise noted.

The Bohras quickly found their place within the mercantile class in Bahrain; a number of them participated in the formation of the first Chamber of Commerce. After the decline of the pearl trade, when the Bhatias concentrated in the wholesale

distribution of foodstuffs and cloth, the Bohras further concentrated in retailing and the cloth business. A few went into hard goods, such as tools and hardware. These remain their primary areas of commercial activity. Most are prospering, and the booming market for construction materials has been very profitable for some. Like the Bhatias, a few Bohras still own shops and houses in Bahrain. Also like the Bhatias, a few of the larger firms have offices elsewhere in the Gulf, mainly in the United Arab Emirates.

Aside from the Sulaymani Bohra just mentioned, a few Da'udi Bohras, a physician and a merchant (including the individual's family in the latter case, which is quite exceptional), were granted Bahraini nationality in the mid-1970's. Though the Bhatias are more influential in some ways, it is interesting that none of them have been granted Bahraini nationality, though a number have sought it. (Several factors may be involved here, but the likely negative public reaction to granting such a favor to prominent Hindus would seem to be the main one.) The Bohra response to the new commercial laws has been similar to that of the Bhatias; aside from the merchant with nationality, who kept his firm, of course, some have taken partners and some have availed themselves of exempt company status. The Bohras do not appear to have been treated differently because they were Muslim.

The Bohra community grew slowly over the years, to about 350 by the early 1970's. Since the boom, the population has grown considerably, to about 800 or more. In the process, the occupational bases of the community have changed, an issue to

which I return momentarily. As noted previously, the community is extensively and coherently organized. The formal basis of this organization is the Bohra Association. This group is composed of all male adults in the community, but active participation is in effect limited to heads of households, and, more specifically, to the notables who sit on the managing committee. Most of these are businessmen. Like the Thattai Hindu Mahajan, the Bohra Association is not a social club, but is limited to the purpose of administering community property and affairs.

The Bohra Association controls the other major institutions of the Bohra community, its mosque and ma'tam, which are contained in a single structure (traditional among Bohras). Because the mosque and ma'tam are reserved for Bohras, they represent foci of collective practical interests and centers of community life--in an organized, corporate sense--to an even greater degree than the temple does for the Bhatias. The entire community meets in the mosque/ma'tam for religious services (with the women behind a screen on these occasions), for feasts, holidays and other events. The structure symbolically represents the unity and distinctness of the community while reinforcing these characteristics in practice.

Though the major Bohra merchants play an important role in community affairs, the principal leader of the local community is the Bhaisaheb, or Amilsaheb, who is appointed by the Sayyidna in Bombay. He and other appointed religious personnel not only supervise the organization of the community, but may sanction the behavior of its members. The religious leadership uses both the

carrot and the stick--appointments to lay positions of responsibility in the community and the threat of excommunication--to influence the behavior of individuals. The exercise of this religious authority has enhanced the corporate nature of the group (i.e., its boundaries and cultural distinctiveness) in both Bahrain and India.

Sayyidnas have differed in their policies and in the extent to which they are willing and able to control individual Bohra communities, both in villages or towns in India and overseas. According to informants in Bahrain, in the old days, local committees—i.e., businessmen--were more important in running the affairs of communities. This state of affairs was undoubtedly reinforced by the legal limitation of the Sayyidna's authority. However, in the early decades of this century, the Sayyidna remained in office for an unusually long period of time and managed to effectively consolidate the power of the religious center by "packing the court," as it were. The center remains powerful today. As is the case elsewhere in the Muslim world, the winds of conservatism are blowing through the Bohra community, mostly from the top down.

The present Sayyidna, the fifty-second, has tried to enforce some policies—such as more modest dress for women--that have met with considerable resistance, especially in the overseas communities. Bohra women in Bahrain were adapting by wearing conservative dress for religious and communal occasions, but keeping their normal attire, Punjabi or Western dress, at other times. Though they might chafe at religious directives, educated

and otherwise Westernized Bohras sought to work with the clerical leadership, rather than openly oppose it. There has been tension between conservative leadership and progressive elements for generations, and the uneasy but effective cooperative relationship described by Hollister (1953: 304) has perhaps become routinized. On the other hand, the fact that the central offices were willing and able to offer financial assistance to the local community--in the building of a new mosque, for example--was undoubtedly of some significance in the negotiation of the working relationship between somewhat-Westernized merchants and ever-conservative religious leaders.

The distinction made within the Bhatia community between "mercantile" and "serving" occupations and factions can also be made within the Bohra community, but for several reasons it does not have the same significance. First of all, merchants and shopkeepers represent a larger proportion of the Bohra population than they do among the Bhatias. Not only is the Bohra serving sector proportionately smaller, but the Bohras in managerial and professional positions are relatively fewer in number than in the Bhatia community. Unlike most serving Bhatias, most serving Bohras work for other Bohra merchants and shopkeepers. In fact, many Bohra shopkeepers got their start in Bahrain by working for other Bohras until they acquired the experience and capital to start their own businesses. Finally, with recent migration, the Bohra community has come to include a number of semi-skilled workers in less favored positions (i.e., non-professional jobs in non-Bohra firms), again unlike the Bhatia community.

This occupational mix has affected the demographic balance in the community and the political alignment over cultural and religious issues. Relatively fewer Bohras than Bhatias have their families in Bahrain because fewer of them have the resources to maintain them. Because they work for Bohra merchants, most members of the serving sector in the Bohra community lack the independent economic position of the serving Bhatias. Many of those Bohras in the lower ranks of the serving sector also lack the affluence, education and will to modernize--within the limits of caste organization--that are found in the Bhatia serving sector. The religious conservatism mentioned above is often more characteristic of these serving Bohras than of merchants. The Bhatia serving sector is relatively homogeneous in terms of socio-economic stratum, and lines of division tend to pit merchant against non-merchant. However, the Bohra serving sector is stratified. And, thus, while Bohra merchants retain a greater measure of direct economic influence than Bhatia merchants, in concert with the few professional Bohras, it is they, and not the majority of the serving sector, who seek to moderate, rather than perpetuate, the conservatism of the religious hierarchy and the community in general. Differences of opinion tend to oppose merchant and professional to shopworker and clergyman.

However, it is important to emphasize the fact that these differences of opinion are given limited expression. Though its exertion may be negotiated, rather than simply enforced, Bohra religious authority represents a source of coherence in the community. The effects of the divergent interests present among

community members are minimized and the sorts of disputes found in the Bhatia community are prevented. It is significant, but perhaps not surprising, that there is no equivalent of the Bhatia Mitra Mandal, or of the Thattai Hindu Mercantile Community, in the Bohra community. The unanimity of the Bohras in building their new mosque--the one section providing materials and finances, the other labor--represents a marked contrast to the affair of the temple renovation. In the context of Bahraini society, and evidently of Indian society as well, the Bohras have retained a conservative, unified and corporate stance.

This has to a considerable degree separated them from both other Shi'a in Bahrain and from the rest of the Indian community. While the boundaries in the latter case seem to be imposed internally, by the Bohras themselves, in the former case they are also external. This may, in turn, contribute to the coherence of the community; perhaps because they are Muslim, the Bohras feel the exclusion of Bahraini society and the delicacy of their position even more keenly than do the Bhatias, and their involutionary tendencies are reinforced. We will take the two issues in turn.

As to relations with the Indian community: Though the Bohras send their children to the Indian School and participate in its activities--through sitting on its committee and making substantial donations--they are less active in other Indian community affairs than might be expected, given their relative wealth and influence. Few belong to the BSC, for example. (By way of contrast, the founder of the Sulaymani Bohra department store

family was also one of the founders of the BSC.) Most Bohras are simply not the modern (in a relative sense, of course), upwardly-mobile, middle class joiners that predominate in social clubs and other Indian community activities. The conservatism and social distance separating Bohras from other Indians are reproduced through internal, or communal, institutions. These institutions and their effects appear to be in great part extensions to Bahrain of the centuries-old adaptations of a Muslim community in a Hindu land, of an ascriptive community that does not compete for status in a social system of ascriptive communities that do. It remains to ask how and to what extent these characteristics might be affected by factors particular to the Bahraini environment.

It seems likely that, in recent years, events and social processes in Bahrain have encouraged rather than discouraged the participation of Bohras in Indian community affairs. In fact, the active participation of the Bohras in the Indian School is evidently a recent phenomenon. It was probably due in part to the opening up of the school committee that occurred with the building of the new school. However, as this institution was opening up, the Bohras also seem to have become more interested in participation. On the one hand, this is mundane practicality: more Bohra families and children have migrated in recent years. On the other hand, the atmosphere of plural tension in Bahraini society may encourage the Bohras to seek solidarity with other Indians.

In past relations with Bahrainis, the nationality of the

Bohras was less salient than sectarian distinctions--i.e., the fact that there are no Musta'lians or Isma'ilis in Bahrain. To the extent that sect was important in defining Bohra identity in Bahrain, it may have encouraged the Bohras to remain an enclave tolerated within but separate from Bahraini society. At the same time, religion and tradition separated Bohras from the rest of the Indian community, while security under the British administration gave them no reason to change. Today, Bohras are separated from Bahraini society by both sectarian differences and nationality; as the latter factor has become more salient in inter-national-group relations, the Bohras have increased their participation in the activities of the Indian community. Said differently, in earlier years, the Bohras maintained clear boundaries between themselves and both Bahraini Muslims and other Indians; as the boundary between them and Bahrainis has become more complex and more contentious, that between them and other Indians has relaxed, if only in a limited area.

Political tension in Bahrain during the late 1970's was one of the principal factors complicating the boundary between the Bohras and local Shi'a. The antagonism in Bahraini society between the rulers and local Shi'a presented the Bohras with a dilemma: on one horn was potential solidarity with other Shi'ites, while on the other was the political necessity of remaining conspicuously uninvolved with troublesome local parties. In choosing the latter alternative, the Bohras increased tension between themselves and the local Shi'a: it is not just sect and nationality which divide the two, but the Bohras'

alliance with local authorities, which is necessary for trade and even for their continued residence in the country. This was no doubt a problem for them even under the British, but it is much more severe today.

Insofar as it is religious beliefs and activities which separate Bohras from Bahrainis and other Indians, at least on the surface, it may be useful to briefly examine them, with special reference to their salience in the Bahraini context.

For dogmatic--and perhaps practical--reasons, the Bohras do not use Arab Shi'a mosques. They pray only three times daily, rather than five, and respond to the call to prayer differently than do other sects. They do not pray immediately, but wait two minutes after the call has ceased before beginning. These and other elements of belief and practice--distinctive dress, shrines, and feasts; fasting for thirty days during Ramadhan regardless of the moon; etc.--are consciously used to differentiate Bohras from others, i.e, to construct identity. They rationalize distinct practice and mark from within boundaries that are, at least in this case, also imposed from without--it is likely that Bohras are not particularly welcome in Arab Shi'a mosques.

The old Bohra mosque and ma'tam are located in a Baharnah quarter of the city center. Many other ma'tams are located nearby; in fact, the largest Persian ma'tam is just across the street. For reasons that were unclear--evidently a combination of community growth and local pressure--the Bohras had decided to build a new mosque. Originally, they had planned to build it near

the old structure. Land was purchased and construction had even begun when a complaint arose in the neighborhood. The project was abandoned, at considerable loss, and an alternative site was sought. One was finally found south of the city center, near the Bohra cemetery. Significantly, this plot was received as a grant from the government. Most of the financing for the new building was provided by the local community, but the sect headquarters in India was also contributing. Construction was progressing quickly with volunteer labor from community members. Leaders had still not disposed of the first site.

The distinctiveness of Bohras and the boundaries between them and other Shi'ites, especially Bahrainis, are perhaps most evident during Ashura, the commemoration of the martyrdom of the early Shi'ites. During the first ten days of the month of Muharram, activities take place both within individual ma'tams, and, in the form of collective displays and processions, in the streets of the town and villages. Ma'tams are organized on an ascriptive or local basis, and each holds services for members. These services include prayers and sermons, but the main events are recitations in which the events of the martyrdoms, especially that of Hussein, the second son of 'Ali, are recited in detail, to the accompaniment of chanting, singing, flagellation and the open expression of emotion.

The Bohras meet in their ma'tam during the evenings of the first seven days of Muharram and in the mornings of the eighth, ninth and tenth. Emotions are stirred and expressed within each service, but the tension is not fully resolved until the climax

on the tenth, Ashura proper. After the final events, a communal feast is held; it marks the return to everyday life in the solidarity of the community. The Amilsaheb presided over the services in the ma'tam, giving sermons and recitations of the tale of Muharram in Gujerati. His narrative was occasionally punctuated by special, well-known songs in Gujerati and Urdu delivered unaccompanied by professionals from India. The recitations and, especially, the songs stimulated the empathy of the audience and aroused the emotions of pity, outrage and sorrow which make 'Ashura such a profound religious experience for many Shi'a. They were accompanied by generalized weeping, chanting and, occasionally, rhythmic chest-beating. However, these displays were kept to a minimum. This highly emotional experience appeared to be well-structured and coordinated; signals marking the intervals of singing and chanting were clearly visible and usually obeyed. Only on the last day was the assembly given an opportunity to wholly give themselves to chanting and flagellation, and then only for a short period of time. There appeared to be a serious effort to control the spontaneous emotions of the assembly--and not just for the sake of the anthropologist somewhat conspicuously sitting in their midst.

The importance of reining in these profound sentiments was emphasized. This control has its roots in India, but is not without relevance in Bahrain. Just as the Holocaust figures prominently in the identity of American Jews, the sectarian riots of the 1940's and 1950's figure in the identity of Bohras. Social distance and negatively charged boundaries between Bohras and

Hindus are rationalized in terms of the riots.[19] Bohras acknowledge that in the past their processions and activities were no less gory than others'. However, the need to control the sectarian passions that arise during Ashura has led to the curtailment of some activities in India. These practical considerations are reinforced by an interpretation of the dying words of Hussein instructing his followers to mourn for him only in a proper manner, that is, without using instruments for self-mortification.

These restrictions were extended to Bahrain. Though many foreign Shi'ites participate in the organized activities in Bahrain, the Bohras do not. They march in neither the small preliminary processions held in the streets of the quarter during the first several days of Muharrram nor in the large public processions on Ashura. Collective Bohra activities are held apart and indoors. Though it is recognized that a few Bohras may participate in the organized processions on their own, they are expressly forbidden to do so.

This separation is rationalized in terms of opposition to the bloodletting which normally accompanies the processions. Bohras and Bahraini Shi'ites exhibit an interesting example of mutual negative stereotyping with regard to flagellation and the expression of the sentiments of Ashura. The Bohras say that it is proper to strike the body only with the hand. Should the repeated blows of the hand draw blood, then this would be accepted by the martyrs in whose names the services are performed. Bohras acknowledge that occasionally some of their number conceal

objects in the hand to draw blood when the chest is beaten, though this is not correct. To strike the body with chains, blades, swords, etc., as they say some Arab, Persian and other South Asian Muslims do, is a more serious impropriety. Many Arabs hold the reciprocal belief that it is the Bohras, rather than themselves or the Persians, who are the greatest bloodletters during the Muharram procession, using chains with small blades attached to strike their backs and shoulders.

Since Bohras were restricted in their activities in Bahrain, it was impossible to give these claims a balanced test. However, it did appear that, in Bahrain at least, the Bohras claims about other Shi'ites were accurate. In the procession in 1979, a great many of the marchers used swords, chains with blades, and other instruments. This occurred most often in contingents from Arab ma'tams and (judging from dress and appearance) in some Pakistani groups. The Persians usually used the instrument common in Iran, a large number of short and light chains attached to a handle, which is struck over the shoulders and is less likely to break the skin. Of course, there may have been Bohras participating in the procession illicitly as individuals. Indeed, one might ask why the instructions against participation were given so frequently and emphatically if there were not some likelihood that they would not be followed. However, the ascriptive organization of procession groups limits outside participation. If any Bohras did participate, they were few in number; the corporate control of behavior was effective.

Aside from their opposition to this bloodletting, Bohras

acknowledge that they do not march in the Ashura processions for a practical reason of, I would argue, overwhelming significance: they wish to avoid the anti-government political overtones--and the danger of violence in any confrontation with the police--that the procession and other Shi'i rites have in Bahrain. Because they are foreigners, these political overtones are more important to them than they are to the Bahraini Shi'a. The influence and favored position of Bohras in Bahrain depend on their ability to maintain an alliance with the government, rather than provoke it. Also, quite aside from the issue of government-Bohra relations, the affair of the new mosque seems to indicate that relations between Bohras and Bahrainis, especially Shi'as, are less than cooperative. Among the passions that might arise in the activities of Ashura are those dividing national and foreigner. The Bohras maintained that they had never marched in Ashura processions in Bahrain. Though it is impossible to confirm this, given the long-standing tension between the Bahraini government and local Shi'as--and the long-standing relationship between the Bahraini government and the Bohras--it may well be the case.

Ironically, it is the Muslim Bohras, rather than the Hindu Bhatias who are in the more delicate position in Bahraini society. Any potential religious solidarity with Baharnah, 'Ajam, and other groups is undercut by their pre-existing relationship with the government and by their need, as foreigners, to maintain a low profile. The boundary between the Bohras and other Shi'a groups in Bahrain has been reinforced by the politics of

religious pluralism there. As religious and political tensions re-emerge, the corporate control of Bohra behavior serves not just to maintain the cultural uniqueness of the group, but to protect its members and the position of the community as a whole.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages, I have drawn attention to many of the unique characteristics of the Bhatias and the Bohras and to the differences between them. For the purposes of understanding group formation, these differences may be summarized in terms of patterns of authority: while these patterns are in flux among the Bhatias, the more coherent leadership of the Bohras allows and encourages the maintenance of boundaries and the corporate control of behavior. The Bhatias themselves were evidently much more cohesive in Sindh before partition. The situation in the community in Bombay today is unclear. However, it seems likely that the absence of a systematic, society-wide, ranked hierarchy of Hindu castes in Bahrain, and its transformation in modern Bombay, has undercut the importance of corporate control of behavior, such that the differences present within the community are given more open expression. On the other hand, the salience of religious boundaries in India and of sectarian and national boundaries in Bahrain has reinforced the corporatism and conservatism of the Bohras, despite the fact that different economic and political interests in Bahrain would seem to encourage factionalism.

These differences aside, before proceeding to a discussion

of other Indian groups in Bahrain, it is important to once again draw attention to common characteristics of the Bhatias and Bohras in Bahrain. Perhaps the most important factor is that mentioned at the close of the preceding section: the politically favored position of these groups. Though the Bhatias would never find the potential ascriptive solidarities within the Bahraini population that the Bohras have (local Shi'a), both groups have had a special position in Bahraini society in the past, and still maintain alliances with the ruling elite. Inseparable from these political factors is their common economic role in the society historically and their current high status in this regard. These factors have enabled the Bhatias and Bohras to maintain active formal associations in Bahrain. These associations have been encouraged by, and have in turn reinforced, traditional, conservative orientations and relationships. Taken together, these qualities account for the extensive, communal organization present in these groups today.

In all these regards, Bhatias and Bohras differ from most other groups in the Indian population. For a variety of inter-related reasons--recent migration, economic position, lack of influence--most other Indians lack collective material interests in Bahrain. At the caste or sub-sect level of identity, solidarity and cultural differentiation, these groups do not constitute real "communities" in Bahrain (with the notable exception of the Sonis). Nor are they able to formally organize themselves around these categories in a meaningful way. (It should be recalled that the organizations of Christian sub-sects

are limited, special-purpose groups.) The evidence suggests that most other Indians are somewhat less traditional or conservative anyway (again with the exception of the Sonis). However, whatever their orientations may have been in India, because these groups are unable to organize in Bahrain, such elements of identity and culture may be given only limited expression, and traditional solidarities are further discouraged. Of course, the individuals involved are not without other options, and it is to these options--the compromises made, the other solidarities exploited, and the groups thus formed--that I now turn.

NOTES

1. There appears to have been continuity in Bhatia identity as Kshatriyas, but the acceptance and implications of this status in Sindhi society are more complex issues. Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Burton notes that there were no Kshatriyas left in Sindh, though a number of traders, including the Bhatias, claimed such descent (1973: 313). He and Hughes (1874: 290) classify the Bhatias--and, for that matter, the Lohanas, who have also now validated Kshatriya status--as Vaisya. This attribution may have been more a reflection of the Bhatias' occupation and social rank at the time than of their actual Brahmanic status (varna). It should be remembered that rank within a caste system was not necessarily a function of claimed or attributed varna; that is, the claims of Rajput descent might be accepted, yet the caste might not be accorded the perquisites of high rank, in terms of marriage, commensality, etc. The attribution of Vaisya status by the British at that time is more likely to have been an assumption on the basis of their knowledge of India and current preoccupations in the definition of the caste system. Earlier in the nineteenth century, these preoccupations centered around race, the Aryan migrations, etc. Later, they centered around occupation. In the 1891 census, for example, the Bhatias (and Lohanas) were classified as a sub-category of Vanis (or Banis, or Vanyas, or Banyas), i.e., traders, and the entire caste classification in the census was subdivided under occupational divisions.

If the assigned social rank of the Bhatias, vis-a-vis other local castes, was lower in earlier times, and it apparently was, this was probably due to a lower economic position or less thorough Sanscritic practice, or both. However, references in some sources (eg., Enthoven and Parekh) indicate that the Bhatias began a process of Sanscritization as early as the seventeenth or eighteenth century. By the time Burton and Hughes were writing, they had been rising in social prominence for some time and were contesting the Sindhi caste hierarchy. The caste complement in Sindh was relatively simple, since most of the population were Muslims and most of the Hindus were Lohanas. The Bhatias did not dispute the rank of the Brahmins, of course, nor was their position vis-a-vis occupational castes and the few untouchables an issue. On the other hand, the Lohanas and other trading castes could meaningfully be the target of status claims. Evidently, the Bhatias had traditionally been ranked on a par with the other trading castes below the Lohanas. As noted in the text, the rank of the Lohanas was based on their numerical preponderance, wealth, and the political functions which many of them served. (The term "Amil" is actually an office title, but it was so completely identified with the Lohanas who were recruited to fill the posts that the upper stratum of the caste--whose ability to differentiate themselves from the rest of the caste greatly depended, in turn, on the offices they held--became known by that name.) By the late nineteenth century, the effects of Sanscritization, the British corroboration of their history in Jaisalmer, and, of course, their wealth, seem to have enabled the Bhatias to successfully claim Kshatriya status and commensurate

rank, as defined in terms of commensality, etc. (see Enthoven, I: 145; Thakur, 1959: 69-70).

The accounts of Burton and Hughes are incorrect in two senses: by the time they were writing, the Bhatias (and the Lohanas) were Kshatriyas, but it was rank, rather than varna cum occupation, which was the issue.

2. Pocock does not provide a source for the information about Sindhi Bhatias, though he may have been referring to Campbell, who gives a similar report (or to Enthoven, who repeats it). Pocock notes that the Kutchi Bhatias stopped dealing in hides and, in fact, paid a fine for having done so. He argues that by admitting that killing cattle was for them a sin, the Bhatias were articulating a claim for higher Brahmanic, or Sanscritic, status than they might previously have been accorded. When the fine was assessed and paid, this claim was validated. Pocock does not argue that this may have been "traditional" behavior for Bhatias, but he does imply that their accepted rank may have been somewhat lower than the position they sought in the mid-nineteenth century. Of course, this is amenable to explanation as a temporary lapse, and, indeed, Pocock notes that Bhatias explained their prior occupation in Kutch as fishmongers in precisely these terms. In any case, the Kutchi Bhatias were, in Pocock's terms, "highly Brahmanized" (i.e., Sanscritized, in the current terminology, after Srinivas (1971)). Interestingly, at this point, in the African colonial context, the Kutchi Bhatias were no longer proud of this "traditionalism" (my term), and were criticized by more Westernized groups for their conservatism.

3. The sect of Vallabh (1479-1531) became very popular in the Muslim areas of Western India (Parekh, 1943: 291). Aside from the Bhatias, its more illustrious adherents have included the family of Mohandas Gandhi. As a non-dualistic philosophy, Vallabhacharya's teachings entail the possibility of union with Brahman. The physical world is construed as maya, or unreal, not in an absolute sense, as a domain in which man is trapped and unable to experience Brahman, but as a veil of phenomenal unreality which can be pierced to reveal in experience the essential oneness of the physical world, man and Brahman. The means for achieving this is bhakta, selfless love or devotion. The ideal is that of the gopis, the female devotees of the youthful Krishna. According to Vallabh, bhakta entails offering, by stages, one's body, mind and wealth to God. Unfortunately, in later years, this was interpreted in vulgar terms (see Note 6). The term pushti marg is often translated "way of enjoyment," referring perhaps to this tendency, but, more generally, to the fact that the renouncer, or sanyasi, has no place in Vallabhacharya's teachings. Bhakta is possible at any stage or position in life. This is not to say that it will be successful; a closer translation of pushti-marg would be "way of grace" (Marfatia, 1967: 70-76). Salvation, the "endowment of fruits," and "even the performance of good or evil deeds" are functions of divine grace (Ibid., 71-72). In addition, devotion is understood to be a private matter (Parekh, 1943: 334). Thus, there are

similarities to Protestant Christianity and "elective affinities" to a mercantile way of life.

4. Census statistics may provide a better sense of the size and distribution of the Bhatia castes. In 1891, there were 8678 Bhatias in Sindh. They were concentrated in three districts: 4020 were in the Shikarpur District, near the boundary between Middle and Upper Sindh; 1366 were in Hyderabad District in Middle Sindh; and 2152 were in Karachi District, in Lower Sindh. The last contained both Karachi and Thatta, for which separate figures are not available. By comparison, in the Bombay presidency there were 22,663 Bhatias. Of these, 13,468 were in Gujerat and 8983 were in Bombay. Unfortunately, Kutchi and Sindhi Bhatias in Bombay are not differentiated. (For another comparison: in the Presidency there were also 120,871 Bohras, nearly all of them in Gujerat.)

The last year for which complete data are available is 1911. (There is no total for Sindh in 1921, the census of 1931 was disrupted by civil disobedience, that of 1941 was curtailed because of the war, and caste is not tabulated by the federal government.) There were then 7827 Bhatias in Sindh. The relative distribution was about the same, but numbers had declined in all the main centers, perhaps indicating migration to Bombay, or inaccuracies, of course. The number of Bhatias counted in the Presidency was significantly smaller, 18,915, suggesting an error. The 1901 count of 17,897 suggests that the 1891 figure was incorrect. In these censes, the great majority were still in Bombay City and Gujerat, especially Kutch and Kathiawar. (The 1911 count of Bohras in the Presidency was 122,342).

5. Thatta is situated about sixty-five miles east of Karachi and about the same distance upriver from the main mouth of the Indus. It is located just beyond the floodplain of the river, which is easily navigable and has long served as a highway between the Punjab, Upper Sindh, and the sea. Since the delta of the Indus continues to grow as silt is carried downriver, it is likely that the town was much closer to the sea in earlier centuries. Thatta may well have held an important position in the ancient trade between the Indus Valley and the Middle East, long before the Bhatias arrived. It was sometimes the seat of the government of Sindh. Under the Mughals, Thatta was a thriving city and a major center for the manufacture of textiles. However, a series of reversals--disease, the conquest of Sindh by the Kalhoras and then the Talpur Baluchis, the rise of Karachi in the nineteenth century, and, finally, the competition of Manchester textiles--sent Thatta into a decline from which it never recovered (Hughes, 1874: 812-816).

As Karachi and Bombay grew, a number of Bhatias from Thatta established offices there, and, later, residences as well. (See Haider (1974) on the history and commercial development of Karachi). Trade in India and overseas was carried out through the new cities. In 1839, there were about 600 Bhatias, both Sindhis and Kutchis, in Karachi (Hart, 1855: 212). Later figures for the city are not available, but it may be presumed that the Bhatia community continued to grow. The Bhatia population in Bombay was considerably larger, and again included both Sindhis and Kutchis.

Carless and Hart both note the wealth and influence of the Bhatias and other Hindu merchants in Karachi under the Talpurs. The influence of the merchants "arises from the desire of their rulers to increase the trade of the port, and encourage those who, in the course of their mercantile pursuits, contribute so largely to the revenues of the country" (Carless, 1855: 196). By threatening to leave the city en masse, the merchants were able to secure the removal of a Governor who had forcibly converted a Hindu to Islam (Hart, 1855: 213). Revenue collection was in great part in the hands of Hindus (Haider, 1974: 44). In short, it appears that, in a polity and system of regional maritime competition similar to those in the Gulf, the Hindu merchants were able to enforce a similar plural structure through similar sorts of influence and political ties. As in the Gulf, the system in Karachi changed with the British administration; but, as in the Gulf, the Bhatias then became even richer.

6. As it grew and became prosperous, the sect of Vallabhacharya became more exclusive and more profane. Prestige was enhanced by excluding the lower castes who had once been admitted (Parekh, 1943: 346). The notion of bhakta was vulgarized, and the descendants of Vallabh, whose understanding of the founder's philosophy and doctrines was minimal, took upon themselves the role of object of worship and devotion. This gave them great power and led to moral scandals. About 1820, the British Resident in Kutch charged that the Maharajas controlled the property of the Bhatias and cohabited with their wives and daughters (Ibid., 354).

The problems were most serious in Bombay. New wealth and the greater freedom of women in the city invited abuse (Ibid., 362). Interestingly, as Parekh argues, the laissez faire plural structure of the British administration in the city encouraged these improprieties: such behavior was not tolerated in the princely states, and some Maharajas were exiled or imprisoned by princes in Gujerat, but the British were afraid to interfere with the religious life of their subjects, and, so, the Maharajas flourished in Bombay (Ibid., 356, 362). In 1855, the Bhatias decided to restrict the hours when women could visit the temples to those during which the Maharajas supposedly had official duties, but this had little effect. Then, a journalist who had written an article about the problem was sued for libel by one of the Maharajas. The Bhatias (probably the Kutchis, but perhaps the Sindhis, too) met and decided not to testify in the case. However, some leaders were charged with conspiracy to obstruct justice, tried and found guilty. When the libel case went to trial, a number of Bhatias did testify, and the defendant was acquitted (Ibid., 357-9).

The reputation of the sect was damaged, but the ultimate effects were beneficial. Lay leaders emerged and the Maharajas, rarely called by this title anymore, were forced to conform to communal definitions of moral behavior. The doctrines and teachings of Vallabhacharya were re-examined and the sect eventually grew in size and social standing (Ibid., 370-2). Today, one of the main functions of the descendants of Vallabh is the initiation of young people into the sect, a rite called the

brahman-sambandh. (Bhatias thus undergo two initiations, the brahman-sambandh and the wearing of the sacred thread.)

7. One Bhatia merchant recounted the story of his grandfather's adventures among the unruly beduin of the mainland. On a trip to Qatif to buy dates, the Indian merchant was captured and taken as a slave by Arab tribesmen. However, he was ransomed by a Bahraini Arab friend and fellow merchant, who was also buying dates there, for the great sum of fifty rupees. The British could do little to protect British Indian merchants while they were on the mainland itself, and alliances with Arab merchants were brought to bear.

8. Given the difficult situation of the rulers, the Bhatias were able to negotiate to their advantage. They could levy moderate dues and still make a profit. It is unlikely that the duties were assessed too unevenly, i.e., that the basis of profit was favoritism. Arab merchants would not have stood for it. The ethos of the Bhatia merchants in Bahrain was one of strict honesty and trust, upon which their reputations depended. Because of their honesty, and their marginal position outside the status arenas of Bahraini society, Bhatias were able to arbitrate disagreements among Arab merchants and mediate delicate financial transactions. Sonis had a similar privileged knowledge of the secrets of Bahraini families, since they knew who bought and sold gold, and, often, why. Bhatias and other Indians were thus "middleman minorities" in a sense, but less middlemen between the colonial polity/economy and the periphery than between the plural groups of the periphery itself, i.e., Bahrain. We cannot ignore the fact that the Bhatia merchants who emphasized the ethos of honesty were, at the time of the recounting, in a distressed position in which it was prudent to emphasize this ethos. Nonetheless, some Indian merchants clearly played roles in which trust was required, and this trust was unlikely to have been forthcoming if Indians had unduly antagonized local merchants.

In fact, there was a kind of class solidarity among merchants. They were organized to resolve their own disputes, which kept other parties from appropriating the responsibility, and perhaps some of their wealth as well. Though highly competitive, the market was, and still is, oriented more toward cost price competition than selling price competition (see Geertz, 1979). Firms were built and fortunes made by finding cheaper and better sources of supply, rather than underselling to destroy competition and acquire a market monopoly. With all the political and economic connections of British India, Indian merchants had a strong edge in such a market. Of course, these market characteristics work against the consumer by keeping profit margins high. They may also keep marginal businesses from going under. It seems that, in earlier days, this system was worked out by mutual agreement among the merchants, to assure their common interests and avoid problems which might lead to intervention. Under the British and the current government, protections against "harmful competition" are instituted by law. The solidarity of established merchants is still strong; it is the aspiring proprietors that are feared most by the Bhatias and

other foreign merchants.

9. After World War I, the growing British presence in Bahrain made it the center of Bhatia activity again. However, in the 1950's, Dubai was once again ascendant. It was still a more open port, and one of the most lucrative activities there was smuggling gold to the new state of India, which had instituted import restrictions. Unfortunately, these did little more than drive up the price of gold inside India. While the authorities in Bahrain were generally successful in preventing smuggling, it is commonly believed that the ruler of Dubai himself was one of the principal traffickers. The profits from smuggling were turned into legitimate enterprise when oil was developed in the Emirates. The market there is still more open than in Bahrain, and it is much larger. Not surprisingly, then, the Bhatia community in Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi is a bit larger and more prosperous than the one in Bahrain. Though restrictions have been slower coming in the Emirates, they have been applied more thoroughly. It is not clear how long the Bhatias and other Indian merchants will enjoy the market there.

10. One businessman maintained that he continued to operate a large but (allegedly) only marginally profitable business, rather than live off investments, in part just to give his sons something to do, so they would not become playboys, lose respect for their families and fritter away their lives. He was a modest man, but the reflexive ideology of the story, and his modesty, were often-repeated themes. They appeared to have had the desired effect on his sons.

11. The economic instability of the period between the late 'teens and the mid-1940's considerably accelerated the normal reproductive cycle of Bhatia businesses. Firms usually recruit within the family, which limits possibilities for coherent expansion. So, like family businesses elsewhere, Bhatia firms tend to divide at a certain point. The problem is usually a surfeit of kinsmen. When the number of partners becomes too large, the size of individual shares becomes smaller, and individuals are more likely to feel that they can do better for themselves. Also, as the group of partners becomes larger, more generations and degrees of collaterality must be embraced. Eventually, the trust and non-economic ties essential to making the firm successful become weaker. Amicable relations among brothers, uncles, nephews and cousins are highly valued and forestall these tendencies somewhat. In stable circumstances, demographics usually wins out as the third generation matures. In very good times, this cohort may be incorporated successfully for some time. However, if at any time partners do not get along, it is readily accepted that dividing the business is better than destroying it through bickering and inattentiveness to the marketplace. Should the individuals involved not be able to reach a settlement among themselves, other members of the business community are called upon to arbitrate. To take a case to court would be disapproved of strongly.

This normal cycle may be broken if the family does not

produce enough competent sons, or loses them for one reason or another. This was the fate of one prominent firm in Bahrain after the Second World War. Disturbances in the marketplace, such as those which occurred after World War I, are more likely to accelerate the break-up of firms. This may occur in two ways. First, of course, there are occasional bankruptcies. There were some of these in the pearl crash. Also, in the early 1950's, several firms overextended themselves when the market was booming and then came perilously close to insolvency in the recession which followed. But informants emphasized that bankruptcy is rare. It is regarded with horror; avoiding it is essential not just to maintaining one's livelihood, but to keeping the respect and reputation that are an important part of identity and business success. (Most investment capital still comes from within the community, and from within the family if possible. Indebtedness to banks or other parties was negatively associated with both fear of bankruptcy and loss of independence. Inability to pay debts owed to one's family and consociates involves an immediate loss of status.)

Businesses in trouble usually divide before they get to the point of failure. Remembering the emphasis placed on building or maintaining a successful business--with the wealth, reputation, and prestige it confers--it is perhaps understandable that when a business reaches a point when one or more partners feel they can do better on their own, pressure to divide the business will begin to build. Disagreements among partners arise much more frequently in difficult periods. When busines is bad or the firm is in trouble, a partner is more likely to feel that he is a better manager than his uncle or brother (it is less likely that he would move against his father or grandfather), and that his incompetent relatives do not deserve the shares they are drawing. Also, of course, when business is bad, these shares are more likely to dwindle to the point of dissatisfaction. The period of the 1920's, 1930's and early 1940's saw the break-up of many firms, less in order to pay debts than in order for individual businessmen to make a go of it on their own.

On the other hand, by the 1950's, some of the firms that survived were reaching maturity and were ready to collapse of their own weight. In fact, this was the fate of the firm which had been so fortunate in securing shipments of precious commodities during the war. Under a strong individual, the management had been cohesive for decades. The firm divided once in the 1950's, not long after his death, and divided again in the 1960's. One of the partners, a grandson of the man who built up the business in the early years of this century and a nephew of the man who had been its driving force during the 1940's, bought out the other partners and elected to stay on with the business in Bahrain. He and one of his sons rebuilt the firm into a respectable "house," largely by pursuing new lines of business. The influence of the family within the community had declined after the division of the firm and declined even further as he ignored community affairs to rebuild it. In the late 1970's, well on the way to accomplishing this, he was attempting to recoup lost prestige by taking a more active role in the Mahajan.

12. The following anecdote will perhaps illustrate the traditions of the community and the mechanisms which enforce them: It is traditional to deliver wedding invitations in person to the invited guests. Since most of the community will be invited, these may number in the hundreds. Thattai Bhatias used to be concentrated in a few neighborhoods of Bombay, so this formidable task was at least manageable. Since they are now more widely distributed geographically over the highly congested metropolitan area, visiting community members to deliver invitations has become an almost impossible job. One family decided to make a bold, if apparently sensible, attempt at reform by mailing some of them out. Perceiving this as both an insult and an impermissable heterodoxy, the guests failed to attend the wedding. No one has tried mailing wedding invitations since.

13. To my knowledge, Hindu temples are maintained and open cremation practiced only in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. They are established rights of the Hindu population in Bahrain, but (like all rights) are subject to re-negotiation. The fact that they are still allowed is in part due to Bhatia influence. But there are pressures nonetheless, which probably account for the removal of the cremation ground to a distant site. Bhatias rationalized the change from natural to electric cremation in financial terms--i.e., the cost of wood--but political pressure was probably involved here as well.

Hindus face problems in the Emirates as well. There are growing restrictions on Indian businessmen, many of whom are Hindus. Also, Chinmayananda, who has never been denied entrance to Bahrain, was denied a visa for Dubai in early 1980 because of local editorials against him.

Hindus frequently state that they are treated well in Bahrain. This was evidently true in the past, but it increasingly represents wishful thinking, a desire to be seen as uncomplaining, and, through such behavior, to convince Bahrainis that they are, or ought to be, as tolerant as they once were. These changes may be attributed in part to growing Sa'udi influence and in part to a growing Arab/Islamic/nationalist reaction. The latter is partly a negative reaction to rapid Westernization and to the growing foreign presence. It also seems to be partly a complementary adjustment among all Muslims to the challenge to their religious identity that Shi'ite fundamentalism represents.

14. Unfortunately, the period of difficulty for his family did not end in the 1950's. When his father returned to India in the 1970's to retire, the brothers remaining in the business quarreled and eventually divided the business. One of them was left near bankruptcy, into which he soon fell. He was taken to jail, which was a great humiliation for the family and the community. Interestingly, he was assisted not only by other members of his family, but by the most powerful merchants in the community, including those who opposed his brother in the temple dispute.

15. One of these is a Hindu revivalist group, based on the

teachings of the Satvichar Darshan trust in Bombay. This group espouses swa dhyaya, or "self-study." Like many Hindu sects, old and new, there are individualizing aspects. This group also seeks a new social understanding of Hinduism. It argues that, through interlinked notions of dharma and bhakta, duty and devotion, the old caste system was useful in providing social order and personal security--which Western institutions fail to do. However, it decries the aspects of rank and pollution in the caste system as unnecessary and improper accretions. It re-defines Hinduism as egalitarian, allowing the re-affirmation of tradition and the rejection of some Western standards. The movement admitted Hindus of all backgrounds. In Bahrain, the members of the study group included the Thattai Bhatia "religious leader," a Kutchi Bhatia and his wife, a Gujerati Brahmin and a Gujerati cobbler cum accountant. The personal journey of the last from intense feelings of inferiority to self-respect and a re-acceptance of his family and background took place within the (therapeutic, we would say) context of this group.

Another group which acquired a bad reputation in the Bhatia community were the so-called Hare Krishnas, familiar figures on the American scene. Proselytizers, devotees and gurus occasionally travelled through the Gulf (evidently on tourist visas), and their knowlege of Vedanta initially impressed many Bhatias. The "religious leader" invited a Hare Krishna swami, an American, to speak at the temple. Hare Krishna teachings emphasize bhakta, but the philosophical underpinnings of doctrine and practice are strictly dualistic. After the swami's talk, the Bhatia religious leader commented that they shared many attitudes, but that Bhatia understandings were somewhat different. He was conciliatory and sought a pluralism in which both traditions might be seen as different means to the same end. The swami was not prepared to allow this, and took great umbrage over other questions which politely challenged his beliefs and attitudes. The event ended in a shouting match, and the swami stormed out. The consensus of opinion among Bhatias and other Vaishnavites present was that the swami had not displayed the behavior expected of a master toward those less learned than he (Krishna and Arjuna being the template, of course). The Bhatia religious leader later reported that a dead rat had been found on the speaking chair in the temple, a sign that it had been defiled. He evidently bore the primary responsibility for the fiasco, which did little for his reputation among the merchants. In a later comment, one of the merchants involved in the plans for the temple renovation stated that they wanted to restrict access to "accepted" gurus.

16. Properly speaking, the term Khojah refers to both the current followers of the Agha Khan and a group which split off from them in the nineteenth century over a dispute about the authority of the Imam (discussed in the following note). Those who rejected the authority of the Agha Khan became Ithna 'Asharis.

17. In a similar case among the Khojahs, the Agha Khan, as the living Imam, was recognized as the owner of community assets,

and not just the trustee. This led to a split in the sect (see the preceding note) and was important in the re-organization of overseas communities in the 1930's (see Morris, 1956, 1968).

18. At the turn of the century, Oman was still the largest market center in the Gulf. It supported substantial numbers of both Hindu and Muslim traders, but with another interesting division of territory. The main center for the Hindus, many of whom were Kutchi Bhatias, was in Masqat, while the Muslims, mostly Khojahs, were centered just up the coast in Mattrah. For reasons that are unclear, the Khojah community included large numbers of dependents, unlike the Hindu community there and both Hindu and Muslim communities in Bahrain (Lorimer, II: 1185, 1200).

19. I cannot fail to add that, despite these boundaries and centuries of Islamic practice, Bohras follow many practices they admit to be Hindu in origin. For example, they wear white because, they say, this was the garb of the Hindu group from which they converted. They even observe Diwali and begin their accounts on that date, as do most Gujerati Hindu businessmen; they do not conduct the elaborate lakhshmipuja rituals, though.

Chapter Seven

REGIONAL, LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Of the many categorical solidarities present in the Indian population, relatively few are organized, and no other groups share all the characteristics of the Bhatias and Bohras. That is, they are not simultaneously "communities" and formal organizations based on the narrow categories of caste and sect. Nor do other groups enjoy the economic position and political influence of the Bhatias and Bohras. When other categories at this level of differentiation have become organized, they have formed special-purpose groups, rather than the relatively complete ones of the Bhatias and Bohras. More generally, it is different kinds of categories entirely—much more general ones--that have developed communities and formal organizations. It is important to note that "community"--that is, a high incidence of face-to-face interaction and non-contractual, informal, often multiplex relationships among a definable category of persons--need not necessarily entail formal organization, and vice versa. Boundaries of community and organization may vary, generally or situationally, and, in addition, may be in flux.

Six groups will be discussed in this chapter: Zoroastrians or Parsis, Sikhs, Gujeratis, Tamils, Goans and Karnatakese, and Keralites. (The reasons for characterizing what appear to be eight categories as six groups will become evident in the text.) Language and region are the principal categories upon which these groups are based. In two groups, the Parsis and Sikhs,

religion--in the sense of general systems of belief and practice with a broadly-defined group of adherents--is the basis of group definition. However, even in these cases, and especially in the latter, language and regional or "ethnic" culture are simultaneous givens of identity and perceived solidarity. In a similar way, some of the regional categories presume religious affiliation.

In all these cases, except the Parsis, internal differentiation has played a role in the organization of the larger categories. Among the Tamils, this has involved disagreement over the definition of linguistic and regional culture. "Stratification"--differentiation in terms of economic and prestige criteria—is an important element of group formation within some categories, especially the Keralites. Categorical differentiation within regional and linguistic groups is also important. Of the various sorts of low-level sub-categories present, only those of Christian sect have achieved formal organization, again with the greatest prominence among the Keralites. The boundaries of category and sub-category, of community, of stratum, and of formal organization vary among these groups. The case studies which follow draw attention to these characteristics and to other processes of group formation. I do not suggest that they are all alike, except in the sense that the categories of caste and sect have very limited expression, and, thus, these groups all differ in important ways from those already discussed.

Again, the primary categories expressed in formal

organization are those of region, language and religion. To orient the reader, a brief summary of the main institutions discussed in this chapter is provided here. Zoroastrians, or Parsis actually, are represented by the Bahrain Zoroastrian Anjuman. The Sikhs have long maintained one institution, the Sikh Temple, and in the late 1970's another one was emerging. Gujeratis recently organized a club, Sri Gujerati Samaj. This was complemented by a well-established informal Hindu community and semi-formal organization among the dominant caste in the population. Tamils briefly formed an association called the Tamil Sangam. In these cases, language is co-extensive with the religious or regional category. Goans and Karnatakese have formed clubs on both regional and linguistic bases, which, in their cases, are not necessarily co-extensive. There are two regional clubs, the Young Goans' Sports Club and the Karnataka Sports Club. In addition, one new group, the Konkan Singers, cuts across the regional categories by organizing individuals in both who speak a common language. Another recently formed group, the Kannada Sangha, splits the Karnataka regional category by language. Finally, Keralites are represented by one ostenibly non-sectarian club, the Keraleeya Samajam, one Muslim association, the Kerala Muslim Jama'ath, and, as noted above, numerous Christian congregations.

A few general distinctions may be made between the three northern groups--the Parsis, Sikhs, and Gujeratis--and the three southern groups--the Tamils, Goans and Karnatakese, and Keralites. The South Indian groups, especially the Keralites,

are much larger, and, in general, they are more recent migrants. These characteristics are associated with less "normal" demographic and economic profiles and a higher degree of stratification than are found in the North Indian groups. In addition, with the exception of the Parsis, North Indians tend to be more "conservative" or "traditional" than South Indians. This is evident in attitudes toward caste categories and in much social behavior. The tension between status and democracy, or stratification and equality, characteristic of the upwardly-mobile, modern Indian middle class, is pronounced in the South Indian communities.[1] Two comparative examples, the use of alcohol and the celebration of holidays, are developed in the case studies.

Despite these general differences, the supra-regional categories of North Indian, or Hindic, and South Indian, or Dravidian, cultures and civilizations--which Young calls the nearest approximation to "cultural aggregates" in the Indian national arena (1976: 309)--do not themselves have social or organizational importance in Bahrain. These categories have become a basis of identity and action in India, especially since independence, and particularly in the context of urban economic competition (see Lewandowski, 1980). They are not salient in Bahrain, principally, it would seem, because Hindization, colonial preferences favoring South Indians, and the affirmative action schemes now in place in some Indian states (eg., Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra) are less relevant and do not structure expectations and economic opportunity. In general, though their

superior levels of English give South Indians an economic edge in Bahrain, competition is not structured around these categorical differences. Bahraini society offers little incentive and no overt encouragement for the use of such categories in social organization. On the contrary, the use of regional and linguistic categories for the integration of new migrants and for group formation has further limited the significance of broader categories. Even the most common "South Indian" institution in India, a fine arts association, is not to be found in Bahrain. The emergence of supra-regional organizations in India seems to occur in special circumstances, which are not present in Bahrain.

ZOROASTRIANS AND PARSIS

As a religious category, Zoroastrians might seem comparable to Muslims or Hindus or Buddhists. However, as a social group in India, Parsis, they represent something more like a caste, that is, a social category at a much finer level of differentiation. The population is relatively small, much smaller than that of some Hindu castes or Muslim sects. Except for a distinction between priests (dasturs) and laymen, now relatively unimportant, and a dispute over calendrical reckoning, also of limited significance, there is no ascriptive differentiation within the group.[2] In this sense they differ from Indian Muslims, Sikhs, and Indian Christians, and differ radically from Hindus. They are extensively and completely organized as a corporate group, and, until recently, they have been rigidly endogamous, with a well-developed ideology of purity (though this is linked to Iranian

origins rather than to samsara, dharma, and related Hindu notions). Communal ties are based more on religion than occupation or rank, but they are otherwise similar to those of caste.

However, Parsis are among the most modernized of Indians, and attendant processes of Westernization and individuation have greatly affected group organization. Though associations maintain religious institutions and provide welfare services--it is commonly said that no Parsi need ever go without food, shelter or medical care--these organizations remain largely "invisible," in the words of one informant. They are special-purpose institutions, and are not an important part of the everyday lives of most Parsis. Nor, for that matter, are informal relationships or even religious activity itself, for most people, however fervently beliefs may be held. In other words, the Parsi "community" has lost many of its "communal" aspects. This is clearly evident in Bahrain.

Though there is an occasional Iranian Zoroastrian (but evidently none among the ʿAjam), nearly all Zoroastrians in Bahrain are Parsis. They are very few in number, perhaps only fifty or so individuals. They are extensively organized through the Bahrain Zoroastrian Anjuman. However, they are not a "community," either Zoroastrian or Parsi. Despite the presence of this organization, they lack the multiplex ties and sustained communal interaction that characterize caste and sect among the Bhatias and Bohras. They are included here, rather than in the preceding chapter, for this reason. It is perhaps significant

that the categorical basis of organization was Zoroastrian rather than Parsi. Religious ties are weak and must span national and linguistic differences. Ties among Parsis, as such, might offer more potential for overt or tacit development in the context of formal groups and informal relations. However, they have not been imported, nor have they emerged in Bahrain.

A number of factors are involved here: the nature of the group as a whole, the backgrounds of migrating individuals, patterns of recruitment, occupations in Bahrain, and finally, group relations and structure in Bahrain. Most individuals are professionals, managers, or other business employees with modern and either pan-Indian or international social and cultural aspirations and horizons. Religion and sectarian issues are relegated to a limited private sphere. Individualism and detachment from ascriptive solidarities have been reinforced by migration and the absence of informal groups in the population. Recruitment has for the most part been on an individual basis; though networks have been important in migration, they have been personal networks. The group was at one time organized around a prominent merchant family, but no segment of a local community in India has been imported in the migration process and used as a base for further migration. There are no substantial kinship-based groups of Parsis, nor is there a concentration of them in any particular occupation, nor are there significant collective economic interests.

Group institutions and activities have done little to develop solidarity. As noted in Chapter Four, the Bahrain

Zoroastrian Anjuman arose not to deal with the affairs of daily sectarian life, but, rather, to deal with the issue of death. The birth of a stillborn child in the 1950's created the need for a community cemetery, or aramgah. Land for this purpose was granted by the ruler, and an association was formed to administer it. This remains the primary function of the Bahrain Zoroastrian Anjuman. The important religious institutions of Parsis in India, the fire temple and the "tower of silence," or dokhma, a structure for the exposure of the dead, do not exist in Bahrain. (Burial, with strict formal prescriptions, has long been an acceptable alternative to exposure, and the building of a temple is evidently not regarded as an urgent matter even when a substantial community is present (see Enthoven, III:177-221), much less when the community is as tiny as that in Bahrain.) Given the impermanence of residence, the small size of the population, and the absence of priests and kin groups, the traditional initiation rituals--investment with the sadra and kusti, sacred shirt and waistband--are not performed in Bahrain. The other prominent Parsi institutions in India, those devoted to social welfare, are not present in Bahrain either. Most Parsis are well-placed and are unlikely to require such services. Should an emergency arise, networks can be manipulated without requiring the establishment of formal organizations in Bahrain. In sum, the institutions which define the practical and everyday interests of Parsis in India are not present in Bahrain.

Finally, group leadership has done little to develop communal relations, especially in recent years. Until the mid-1970's, the

Anjuman was led by a prominent merchant. Under his patronage, they held a large celebration at Nawruz, the Zoroastrian New Year, and occasionally met for gahambars, communal feasts held at several points during the Zoroastrian year. After the new commercial laws were promulgated in 1976, rather than take a Bahraini partner or seek exempt company status, the head of the family sold out and moved to Britain. Other members of the family are still working in Bahrain, but they have not played the same role in the Anjuman. The new leader, the local agent for a large British firm, eschewed an active role for himself and sought to limit the functions and activities of the Anjuman. This posture seemed to reflect personal religious orientations, i.e., "modern" ones. There were evidently other factors, too. He perhaps thought the group should maintain a low profile for political reasons. To be less charitable: he was widely reputed to be a stingy man. Most of his co-religionists probably shared his religious attitudes, but they would nonetheless have enjoyed his largesse, had it been forthcoming. In any case, gahambars were no longer being held. Though Nawruz was still celebrated, even this was relatively low key, in recent years being simply an open house at the leader's residence.

The Zoroastrian or Parsi "community" is an exaggerated example of an Indian category whose constituents have broken nearly all the ties that bind ethnic, caste and sectarian groups together. Their group life and communal identity has been privatized and strictly limited in scope. As educated, highly skilled people drawn from urban India, Parsis in Bahrain have to

a large measure imported this individualization and the tendency to organize their social life much more in accordance with class or individual interests than with categorical distinctions. The absence of important institutions in Bahrain and the relatively secure positions of most Parsis there decrease the incidence of group interaction and the need for support networks, thus minimizing the extent to which communal identity and relationships are likely to emerge. The attitude of the present leadership and the current political situation further limit the development of identity and group relations.

Given these conditions, it is perhaps surprising that there is a separate formal organization for the group at all. Had there not been an indulgent British administration in power when the "need" for such a group emerged, it is possible that the Anjuman would not exist. Though Zoroastrians are technically ʾahl al-kitab, People of the Book, they are also foreigners. Moreover, the Wahhabi ideology that is a growing influence on policy is less concerned with distinctions between Muslims, People of the Book and kafirs than with the more general one between Muslims and "Others" (at best!). The influence of prominent Parsis and the generally benevolent attitude of the Al-Khalifah might be outweighed by political considerations were the Zoroastrians only now seeking a cemetery and a formal organization to run it.

SIKHS

In India, Sikhs are known as soldiers, craftsmen, technicians and farmers. These stereotypes are reflected among

Sikhs in Bahrain. The hiring of Sikhs as soldiers and policemen ended with British rule (actually, long before in the latter occupation, due to the antipathy of locals and Arab co-workers) and today guards and mercenaries are usually Pakistanis, either Pathans or Baluchis. Leaving aside the military element, it is fair to say that the first Sikhs came to Bahrain with the first machines, or soon thereafter. This may have been as early as the 1910's. Certainly by the 1930's, Sikh mechanics were employed at BAPCO and in Manama (see Chapter Two, Note 16).

With the development of the modern economy, the Sikh population grew. Many of its members are still in technical trades at various levels of training and expertise, from mechanics to engineers. However, most Sikhs in Bahrain today are construction workers, primarily in "trades," i.e., semi-skilled to highly-skilled occupations, such as electricians, carpenters, masons, etc. Though the great majority of Sikhs in India are farmers, there were none in Bahrain until a few years ago. In an interesting experiment, Shaikh Muhammad, the youngest brother of the Amir, recruited about 200 Sikh agricultural laborers to redevelop his extensive gardens. At the time of research, this was the only use of Sikh agricultural labor in Bahrain. Only a few Sikhs have become businessmen, and their trade, to a man, is air conditioning maintenance and contracting. According to informants, only one owns his own business; the rest are in partnership with Bahrainis.

The Sikh community remained small until the 1970's. According to one estimate, there may only have been 100 Sikhs in

Bahrain in 1971. The population grew rapidly during the boom, to as many as 2000 in 1977 and 1978. However, because so many of its members are involved in the construction industry, which has been subject to rapid expansion and contraction with the level of government expenditure, the Sikh population has been relatively unstable. In 1979, during a construction slump, it was estimated to have declined to 1500 or less. Most Sikhs have migrated to Bahrain direct from the Punjab, but many have migrated from the large Sikh community in Bombay. As the occupational distribution suggests, the community is largely male, that is, composed of men on "bachelor status." Nonetheless, there are a number of families, and a contingent of Sikh children attends the Indian School. Many Sikhs, especially those with better jobs, live in apartments in and around Manama. Many of the construction workers live in camps provided by their employers. The agricultural workers live on the estate of their employer, which is near Budayya, a large village at the northwestern corner of the island. This residential distribution, largely a product of employment, in turn affects participation in community institutions.

Sikhs in Bahrain maintain two temples, or gurdwaras. One of them was built only recently, and will be discussed shortly. The other was begun in the 1930's, or perhaps even earlier. It is controlled by a voluntary association, founded in 1935 as the Sri Guru Singh Sabha. When the independent government of Bahrain required all associations to register, the Sikhs claimed exemption as a religious institution and changed the name to the

Sikh Temple to clarify the issue. Leaders emphasized that the main purposes of the organization are religious observance, moral guidance, and, to a lesser extent, community welfare. My observations indicate that this was an accurate description, and the Sikh Temple was in fact not registered at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Religious services, or diwan, consisted of readings from scripture, prayer and, occasionally, a communal meal, or langar. Of course, they are occasions for socializing and provide a forum for discussion of community affairs. The activities which figure so prominently at other Indian social clubs, such as games and drinking, are absent at Sikh meetings. The number of Sikhs in attendance at services is relatively small, perhaps 75-100. This, coupled with the fact that the Temple provides only limited interaction and few services for a group with few pre-existing ties, indicates the limited extent to which Sikhs in general may be said to constitute a "community."

In 1979, the Temple became preoccupied with group interests of a generally practical nature--the continuity of the institution itself. These issues will be discussed below. Complex "cultural interests" were also served. The temple was consciously used to provide an incentive for Sikhs to maintain the high moral standards toward which their religion is oriented. Common themes in Sikh discourse--as in Hindu discourse--involved the loss of morality in the community--materialism, egoism, immodesty, taking alcohol, eating flesh, etc. These themes indicate conflict--socially, culturally and psychologically--between tradition and

modernity. While the issues are relevant in India, they are particularly salient in Bahrain for two reasons. First, there is less communal control or guidance in Bahrain. Evidently, the more worldly and ingenuous members of the community easily succumbed to temptation in the permissive environment. Sikhs were proud that proper standards could be and were being maintained within the temple if not outside. Secondly, an emphasis on the moral correctness of their own traditions, implying a positive reaffirmation of identity, may in part be seen as a response to their disparaged position in Bahraini society. In a similar case, Ballard and Ballard (1977) attribute a resurgence of traditionalism among Sikhs in Britain in part to growing hostility in the local population.

The emphasis on religious conservatism among Sikhs in Bahrain was probably not related to ongoing plural processes in India, that is, to the escalating problems between Hindus and Sikhs and the growing agitation for an independent Sikh state. The situation in India did not approach critical levels during research, and there was no religious violence in Bahrain. As we shall see, there was some conflict and a good deal of ill will between the Sikhs and some Hindus in Bahrain. However, this was a dispute with particular Hindus over issues historically rooted in Bahrain. General, "imported" antipathies were not evident at that time, even at a rhetorical or ideological level.

The temple and its association served as an arena for mediating tensions in the community, and in Sikhism generally, regarding status differentiation and leadership. Status

distinctions among Sikhs combine caste and prestige factors. Though the founders of Sikhism sought to eliminate caste, it remains an important part of Sikh society, especially in India (H. Singh, 1977; I.P. Singh, 1967); it is, as one informant said, "in their hearts." Jatis are recognized: Khatris, Jats and Aroras are recognized as higher castes, Ramgarhias as somewhat lower, and there are even Sikh untouchables. Sikh informants in Bahrain and commentators in the literature (eg., H. Singh, 1977) both emphasize the linkage of status and jati to occupation; thus, Khatris (evidently a variant of kshatriya) are soldiers, Jats are primarily farmers, Ramgarhias artisans, etc. In fact, in Bahrain, caste was described in terms of occupation, rather than category, per se. The effects of modernization are factored into traditional distinctions: Jats have also become soldiers, Ramgarhias have become engineers and technicians, etc. Marriage tends to follow caste category, but other social relations and the determination of prestige take occupation and other factors into account as well, and may therefore be somewhat more complex.

In assessing the relative importance of caste and other factors among Sikhs in Bahrain, it is instructive to compare the community there with that in Leeds, studied by Ballard and Ballard (1977). At first, most migrants to Leeds were from one caste of relatively low rank. Even as the population became more complex categorically, it remained a bachelor community, and caste distinctions were disregarded. Many religious practices, such as leaving the hair and beard uncut, were commonly abandoned. However, as families and more conservative elements

migrated, caste distinctions became salient again; as local hostilities grew, religious conservatism was reinforced in reaction. In the early stages of the development of the community, leadership was based less on caste than on established residence and local influence, i.e., the ability to provide housing, find jobs, etc. In later years, these processes were complicated by the formation of bureaucratic linkages, which limited the importance of informal patronage, and by the emergence of affluent and influential elements who also had high status in terms of caste.

There are both similarities and differences in Bahrain. Sikhs there usually display the more obvious symbols of identity, the beard and turban, and evidently always have. This contrast with the situation in Britain is probably due not to recruitment from different groups in the Punjab, but to different plural environments: while Sikhs in Britain were pressured to conform to local standards as much as possible (though, of course, they could never change their color), in Bahrain they are strongly discouraged from doing so (precisely when color can in many cases be an ambiguous means of differentiation). In other respects, the community in Bahrain seems to be following the developmental path of that in Leeds, but has not (or not yet) evolved so far. It is still primarily a bachelor community, which seems to limit the salience of caste distinctions for a variety of reasons--the scarcity of women and, therefore, of threats to honor, or izzat, another important prestige orientation among Sikhs; the contraction of few marriages, if any, with the same effect; and a

strong orientation toward saving, leading men to accept coresidence, commensality and social interaction with those who might be, in other circumstances, beneath them. Sikhs in Bahrain have long been drawn primarily from a single occupational stratum, artisans and craftsmen. This would probably minimize the incidence of caste distinctions in general.

Helweg (1979) and Ballard and Ballard (1977) indicate that caste endogamy was followed among Sikhs in Britain, while H. Singh (1977) argues that it appears to be much less important among Sikhs in North America than among Sikhs in India. No attempt was made to assess the matter among Sikhs in Bahrain, but given their orthodoxy in religious matters, it is likely that caste was important for marriage. However, except perhaps among those Sikhs with families in Bahrain, caste categories did not play a significant role in social relations. Personal status involved occupation, but not in the rigid terms of caste categories. Individual qualities and elements clearly related to the expatriate context were more important in defining personal status. Caste categories did not play an overt role in leadership, at least not in the Sikh Temple (though they may have been involved in relations between the two temples). The primary elements here were influence and patronage, which are related to the local context rather than to traditional distinctions. Political and economic processes in Bahrain put a premium on informal linkages. This, in turn, tends to favor established residents. In fact, most leaders were long-standing residents with some influence and connections.

In sum, due to the demographic and economic base of the community and because of the social context in which it is found, caste is less important in Bahrain than in Britain. Two developments might encourage the Sikh community in Bahrain to move further in the direction of that in Leeds. If the community in Bahrain achieves some longevity, becomes more stable and more families migrate, caste may acquire a larger role in community affairs than is presently the case. If members of a higher caste acquire political connections and achieve some form of group organization, this too may reinforce caste differences. This possibility would seem to be the more easily exploited: in a political system like that in Bahrain, there are many avenues to power, and new linkages can always be made.

In fact, the establishment of the second temple may represent just such a development. Shaikh Muhammad set aside a bit of land and supplied materials so the Sikh workers in his employ could build their own temple.[3] The property was not granted to them and it was unclear whether or not they might be evicted or charged rent in the future (a fact emphasized by envious informants at the Sikh Temple, who were having their problems at the time). Nonetheless, the structure was built and decorated, and was in regular use at the end of research. The patronage of a powerful employer enabled these Sikhs to effectively circumvent the established status hierarchy in the Sikh Temple. The mere presence of the new temple as an independent institution represented competition, and the fact that the Sikhs in Budayya were probably Jats meant that status

claims might be articulated in terms of caste. Sikhs from Manama were allowed to attend the temple, and some did, but it was not under the control of the Sikh association. When I left the field, it was unclear what effect the new temple would have on the community--whether it was becoming divided, or if the basis of any split would be caste or simply leadership competition based on networks of influence and patronage.

Within the Sikh Temple itself, the old association, there is no differentiation on the basis of caste categories. However, there is differentiation based on other factors. The highest offices in the association, those of president and general secretary, are limited to singhs, or "lions," defined as Sikhs who follow all of the "five K's" of Sikh doctrine--kes (uncut hair), karha (the iron bracelet worn on the right wrist), kirpan (the sword, now reduced to symbolic dimensions), kangha (a comb worn in the hair), and kachha (a special type of undershorts). This form of orthodoxy is not related to caste distinctions, at least not in Bahrain. It is not a very useful means of differentiating status either: there are some Moonas in Bahrain--that is, followers of Guru Nanak who do not observe all the "five K's"--but most Sikhs are Singhs. The stipulation that high officers maintain the outward signs of devotion is probably more closely related to the moral problematic mentioned above than to competition for leadership.

As noted, leadership is much more closely correlated to occupational status and local influence, and group processes reflect these bases of differentiation. Temple leaders were

businessmen and well-placed technicians and professionals. For example, the president was the sole independent Sikh businessman, who was selected for his influence and connections in Bahrain. The general secretary, who ran the association on a day-to-day basis, was from a military family, but he had a less-than-ideal occupational background--he was a machinist who later worked in stores and eventually became a maintenance supervisor and contract inspector. Significantly, he had important employers, first the British Navy and later the American school. Other officers included two businessmen, an architect, and several clerks and mechanics.

Group processes in the Temple were not completely formalized. The association was funded through voluntary donations, rather than membership subscription, which increased the importance of patronage. Even the membership was informal: there was no list of members, though leaders were trying to put one together. This was evidently not normal operating procedure, but was due in part to demographic instability and in part to other difficulties, which will be discussed below. Other processes were formal and, in some respects, egalitarian, in conformity with Sikh ideology. The religious services in the temple were explicitly egalitarian, reinforced by the langar, in which all Sikhs (and their guests) sit on the floor and take cooked food together. Leaders were elected, rather than appointed by a council or some higher authority.

The selection of leaders did nonetheless recognize status and influence--beyond the meaningless requirement that the

highest officers be Singhs--which led to an interesting compromise with religious principles of equality. While no occupational or categorical criteria were used in defining the electorate, another factor, a quite unusual one, was employed: any Sikh in Bahrain could vote for officers in the Temple, if he had resided there for five years. The Sikh Temple seems to be the only organization in Bahrain with this sort of requirement. Voluntary associations registered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs are not allowed to practice such restrictions. Since most Sikhs are recently-arrived migrants, the residence requirement has the effect of limiting active participation in the community to a relatively small group of established individuals. The requirement might act against members of particular ascriptive categories, like the Jat agricultural workers, who might claim higher rank and compete for leadership. However, recent migrants come from various groups, and the agricultural workers in particular did not seem inclined to interfere in the affairs of the Sikh Temple.

The important challenge was not from ascriptive categories, but simply from numbers. The electoral rule in the Sikh Temple sought to integrate new migrants in a way that would maintain the form, and to a certain extent the substance, of democratic and religious sensibilities--by having elections--while avoiding the effects that mass migration had had in other groups and in the community as a whole--and, one might add, the effects that electoral processes generally have had in India--the undermining of established elites. Of course, the limitation of authority to

a small group of knowledgeable and influential individuals was functional in the context of a society where decision-making operates informally, a fact explicitly recognized by group leaders. The rule should not be seen merely as a maneuver to defend the status of a threatened clique, but as a means of effectively negotiating group interests in Bahraini society. The Sikhs had good reason to be especially sensitive to this issue.

The affairs of the Sikh Temple were thrown into disarray by the loss of the group's premises, the gurdwara itself, and difficulties encountered in finding a new one. The course of events is perhaps more illustrative of relationships between different groups in the Indian population and between Sikhs and Bahrainis than it is of processes within the Sikh community. The general facts are as follows: In the mid-1930's, a Sikh rented a room in a small building located on the property of the Hindu temple. His home became a place for the small Sikh community in Bahrain at that time to congregate and worship. Over the years, the Sikhs expanded and decorated the structure, apparently with the assent of the Bhatia community, their landlord; it became the Sikh temple.

On October 30, 1979, the structure burned to the ground. A Sikh leader was quoted in the local press as having said that the fire appeared to be of "mysterious" origin. The implication, and the common rumor, was that the Bhatias had started the fire in order to evict the Sikhs from the property so that they, the Bhatias, could develop their new temple and shop complex, which was then in the initial stages of planning. Indeed, only a few

months before the fire the Thattai Hindu Mahajan had given the Sikh Temple notice of its intention to raze the structure. However, the Bhatias argued that eviction notices had also been given to the residents of a nearby apartment building, many of them Bhatias, because it, too, was to be razed in the property development. More important, they argued, not only were the temple and the apartment building nearby and thus endangered by the fire, but goods belonging to a Bhatia merchant had been stored in the cellar of the Sikh temple. (The merchandise suffered minimal damage, but, in order to demonstrate good faith, the merchant who owned them refused to make an insurance claim.) The Bhatias angrily denied the accusations.

Sikh leaders first sought to remedy the situation by contesting Bhatia ownership of the structure. Sikhs argued that though the Bhatias had registered the temple in their name in 1959 (during the regularization of land titles), originally the temple property had been granted to the Bhatias for all non-Muslim Indians and that their community therefore had a right to part of the property for a gurdwara. (The Sikhs were not the only group to claim that the Bhatias had usurped ownership of the temple; many Gujeratis made similar assertions.) They also claimed that the temple had, in effect, been ceded to them through years of use, irregardless of the original purposes of the property. The Sikhs took the matter up directly with the Bhatias, who unfortunately spoke with different voices. This created nearly as much bad feeling within the Bhatia community as between the two groups. The Bhatia "religious leader" (who, it

will be recalled, proposed or favored the Mahajan development plan, which would not have utilized the site of the gurdwara) allegedly told Sikh leaders that if they apologized for their allegations and provided the funds themselves, they might be allowed to rebuild their temple. The merchant faction, who planned to use the temple site in their development plan, and whose outrage at Sikh allegations was now compounded by having their bargaining position undercut, retracted the offer.

The Sikhs then took the matter up with the Municipality and the registry of deeds. This was an obvious breach of procedure and insulted both the Bhatias and other leaders in the Indian community, primarily the ambassador. The issue of control and ownership of the property was clearly resolved in favor of the Bhatias. Since they held an incontestable deed and had received rent from the Sikhs, the latter would have no case in court, which, at heated moments, they threatened to bring. This would have been an even graver breach of informal procedure, showing disarray in the Indian community and threatening to bring in the authorities, who might, in turn, limit the sphere of self-regulation that was allowed under the plural order. It eventually became clear that the Sikhs would have to give up any hope of regaining the temple site. The ambassador mediated the dispute and, in time, passions abated somewhat. On a few occasions, the Sikhs were allowed to use the Bhatia temple ground for meetings, for a nominal fee.

However, this was not yet the end of the affair. Using the Hindu temple as a precedent (and perhaps encouraged by the

example of the Sikh agricultural workers, who arrived at about this point), Sikh leaders petitioned the government for land on which to build a temple. In an unprecedented display of naive procedural attitudes, they went so far as to write a formal letter to the amir, without the mediation of the ambassador or an informal broker. The request was politely denied. The Sikhs never received a direct reply from the amir, but were informed, through the embassy, that in agreement with other states in the region (i.e., out of pressure from Saudi Arabia), the Bahraini government was maintaining a policy of not encouraging non-Muslim faiths. Since the Sikhs had used formal, if diplomatically incorrect, means to present their case, the government followed formal and diplomatically correct channels in its response.

One cannot help but wonder whether, under the British or even during the early years of Bahraini independence, the request might not have been honored, however it had been articulated. More to the point here, the formal approach taken by the Sikhs illustrates the inadequacy of the informal means at their disposal. This stands in sharp contrast to the style and political connections of the Bhatia community.

In the months after the temple burned, the Sikhs in Manama lacked a permanent place of worship. The holy book was moved from house to house--in Sikh tradition, the gurdwara is wherever the scriptures may be--anywhere that was large enough to accommodate the members of the community who wanted to worship. The contrast between this instability and the ease with which the Sikhs in Budayya established their temple was evidently a source of

frustration. When it became clear that the old site was not going to be regained and that the Bahraini government was not going to help, they began searching seriously for a new site. Leaders noted that it was difficult to find a landlord willing to rent to them. Eventually, they leased a large flat in a residential area of Manama, just south of the city center. It was in need of work, but was available well below market rates. Of course, the Sikhs themselves could readily handle any necessary repairs. As I left the field, the renovation of the premises was still underway. Though there appeared to be no opposition from neighbors, members were still unsure and were slowly adjusting to the new site: it was in steady use for worship and community meetings on Fridays, but the elaborate decorations which characterize Sikh temples were not yet in evidence.

The Sikh Temple had begun to reconstitute itself as a formal organization. Elections were held, and it was at this point that the drive to formalize membership began. It was not clear how vital an organization it would be in the new location, or how the emergence of a second temple during its hiatus would affect the organization of the Sikh community as a whole. Interestingly, while leaders certainly hoped to retain a position of influence among Sikhs and rebuild the temple as a religious institution, they had also been infected by the virus of regionalism so prevalent in the rest of the Indian population: one Temple officer noted that there was no association for Punjabis, and expressed hope that, in addition to serving the Sikh community, the Temple could organize activities for this category.

THE GUJERATI COMMUNITY

"Gujeratis" have only recently become formally organized in Bahrain, in the sense of forming a voluntary association based, or ostensibly based, on the regional category and undergoing the process of registration through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. However, there has long been a large core group from Gujerat maintaining a communal structure in Bahrain without a registered organization. A quasi-formal organization based on caste was also formed at one point. The emergence of the new regional association, Sri Gujerati Samaj, has entailed not only formalization, and thus the creation of new kinds of boundaries, but the sorting out of cultural categories differentiating sub-regions within Gujerat, religious groups, and castes. The principal issue, then, in the analysis of the Gujerati population is the nature of the pre-existing "community" and its relation to the emerging formal organization.

The Gujerati community is one of the oldest in Bahrain. This simple fact is important in understanding its organization. Gujeratis began to migrate in the late nineteenth century, and many came during the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's. The population has long contained a large proportion of families and dependents. Many Gujerati children attend the Indian School and the Sacred Heart School. The relatively normal sex and age distribution has allowed and encouraged diverse communal relations. There is a lower incidence of multiplex social relationships than among the Bhatias and Bohras, but, over decades--and in some cases, generations--of life together in Bahrain, many close ties have

been built. The Gujerati population also includes a substantial, but unfortunately indeterminate, number of laborers and other workers with low incomes and little education or status. Most of them are recent migrants and many are housed in camps at some distance from Manama, the residential center of the community. They do not participate in communal life or in the new formal organization. Geographical distance may be the primary factor in social distance, since many individuals in very humble occupations who live in Manama do participate in some community activities.

Ascriptive category seems to be a more important factor than occupation, income or prestige in determining incorporation or exclusion from the community. Some categories of Gujeratis are included and some are not. These boundaries seem to be maintained in the Sri Gujerati Samaj. The main boundary is religion; the Gujerati community is overwhelmingly Hindu. The Bohras, who are Gujeratis, maintain their own community, of course, and other non-Hindu Gujeratis have their own networks, though no voluntary associations. A broad range of Hindu castes is included in the community, for some purposes, but the lowest caste elements seem to be excluded. For example, a prosperous family of Hindu cobblers did not seem to participate in community activities at all. It is likely that other low-caste Hindus face similar restrictions.

Lengthy residence in the neighborhoods of central Manama has brought together individuals and groups from a range of middle and upper castes and from an even broader range of occupations

and economic circumstances. Because of the "natural" way in which the community grew--i.e., slowly and without undue influence from the authorities--and the conservative cultural orientations of many of its members, cleavages and distinctions within the community, like the boundaries around it, have a markedly "traditional" quality. It is hardly a system of continuously ranked castes, much less a jajmani system, but there are in effect separate spheres and levels of participation in community life. In the smaller sphere of family and friendship networks, caste and personal ties are important. In the sphere of the community as a whole, an elite with a qualitatively different level of participation in community affairs may be distinguished from the other members. The latter may, in turn, be distinguished from the categories and groups described above, which do not participate at all.

Many members of what has been characterized here as "the elite" are merchants and many are drawn from one caste. In Bahrain, as in many Indian local systems, a group of only middling Brahmanic status has superordinate numbers, wealth and power, and may therefore be characterized as the "dominant" caste. In addition, the leaders of this caste and a few other Gujeratis constitute a mercantile segment in the community, which might then be opposed to a "serving" sector, as in the Bhatia community. However, the community is not a caste system, in which caste groups compete with one another, nor are merchants a cohesive group, as among the Bhatias. The solidarities of caste and occupational group do not themselves provide the only or even

the primary basis of power in community affairs. A particular individual is a leader not, or not only, because of caste affiliation or occupation.

The prominence of caste leaders and merchants is based largely on individual factors, the affluence and influence they derive from their roles in Bahraini society. These attributes are also possessed by a number of professionals and other well-placed individuals. As a result, the situation is more like that among the Bohras. That is, a diverse elite composed of the dominant members of the dominant caste, other merchants, professionals, and a few other influential individuals is opposed to a large number of workers with varying, but generally lower, income and status and little access to positions of leadership. In effect, then, even in a community where traditional categories have great importance, the role of sub-group solidarities is limited; the local context provides opportunities which define, in great part, the effective bases of the most significant distinctions within the community.

However, these distinctions are maintained by traditional means--patronage and precedent--not unlike those that might operate in an Indian context. As among the Bhatias, patronage requires wealth; the elite provides funding when necessary. More generally, the selection of leaders has been based simply on their established and recognized position in the community, rather than on open election by a defined membership, as in most formally organized and registered associations--with or without the procedural restrictions used in the Sikh Temple. The lengthy

presence of the Gujerati community as an informally organized--and, in effect, unregulated--group may perhaps account for this arrangement. The formal establishment of Sri Gujerati Samaj could complicate matters by providing other elements with a new and legitimate means of challenging the established elite.

In sum, the Gujerati community appears to rely on exclusion and categorical status to define the community and on both category and local influence to define the level of participation in its activities. Distinctions may be made among various categories, of course, but also between participating and non-participating, passive, active and elite elements, based on such diverse criteria as caste ranking, wealth, education and tenure and influence in Bahrain. Having drawn considerable attention to the elite, it is important to emphasize the fact that, though they are excluded from positions of leadership, a very broad range of people participates in many activities of the community, such as the celebration of holidays. I will return to these issues below.

The total size of the Gujerati population may be estimated at 3000 or more. As indicated, it is largely Hindu--perhaps 75%--and this segment includes individuals from a wide range of caste backgrounds. In general, Gujerati Hindus are conservative, especially about such issues as diet and the use of alcohol. However, as implied above, the significant dividing line in caste relations is that between "upper" and "lower"; in most situations, rank was not marked continuously or among members of the middle and upper castes (at least not in Bahrain). While many

members of the community are religiously and culturally conservative, other attitudes and orientations are also represented. There is a substantial number of professionals in the community--physicians, executives and managers--mostly Hindus of acceptable caste background. There is also a sprinkling of merchants and businessmen from various parts of Gujerat--a Saurashtran Brahmin dealing in dry goods and general merchandise, a Patel tea merchant, etc.[4] Some of these individuals have influence and status in the Indian comunity as a whole. For example, one Gujerati physician was a past president of the BSC.

The oldest, largest, wealthiest and most influential segment of the Gujerati community--its dominant caste--are the sonis, or goldsmiths. Altogether, they may number 1500 persons, including fifty to sixty shop proprietors, about 450 workers, and about 1000 dependents. In fact, two separate jatis are represented, one called banya or vanya sonis and the other called parajiya sonis. The former recognize descent and status within the Vaisya varna, while the latter are recognized as Kshatriya. These castes have migrated throughout Gujerat, all over India and to various overseas destinations, but they originate and are concentrated in the districts of Kutch and Saurashtra (old Kathiawar), repectively.[5] Some families, both Banya and Parajiya, have businesses in both Bahrain and Dubai. The two main families, the ancestral founders of their caste enclaves, which are still prominent in Bahrain, came within months of each other in 1890.[6] Most--perhaps two thirds--of the Sonis in Bahrain and in the Gulf generally are Parajiyas from Saurashtra.

When the Sonis began to migrate to Bahrain, the pearl trade was in its heyday. Yet, despite a growing market, no gold jewelry was being made there. Local artisans made gold thread to be used in the manufacture of robes, but ornaments were imported from Iran and sold by either Persian or Arab traders. In addition to manufacturing gold ornaments to local tastes, at which they could compete effectively with Persian exporters, the Sonis exploited the market in yet another way. At that time there was already a differential between the price of gold in India and the world market. By manufacturing ornaments in Bahrain from locally purchased stocks, goldsmiths could operate more cheaply than if they exported from India. In addition, by buying up local jewelry in circulation and shipping it back to India to be melted down and re-manufactured there (there were controls on bullion entering India, but not on finished goods, new or used), they found a cheaper source of raw material. In fact, until recent changes in manufacturing technology and world gold prices--which undercut small-scale production and reduced the existing price differential--some of the jewelry manufactured in Bahrain was exported to India.

The Sonis discovered a golden opportunity, if you will, which they proceeded to exploit very profitably. There were incentives to maintain operations for manufacturing and distribution both abroad and at home. Since the businesses were based on extended families, the human capital was available and already organized for this purpose. To this day, many goldsmith families circulate workers and dependents between India and

Bahrain. Through kinship and caste linkages, family firms served as the basis for further migration. Numbers remained small until partition, when many Sonis migrated--more because of the growing market than dislocation in India, as in the Bhatia case. Both the original Soni families had branches in Karachi, which was the main port of debarkation to the Gulf in the 1890's, and migrated from there rather than from ports in their home districts. Most later migrants came direct from Kutch or Saurashtra.

As their numbers grew, the Sonis carved out an enduring niche in Bahrain's economic structure. Among Bahrainis, there is still a strong "traditional" association between Indians and gold. Family firms of Indian goldsmiths still dominate the market in gold ornaments, though that market is changing and they face a growing threat from several directions. In the late 1970's, there was a steep rise in gold prices, leading to a contraction in the market. This forced firms to cut back and made it harder to place sons and grandsons within the business. As migration has increased, family labor has been further undercut. Some Indian goldsmiths still make their goods on the premises. However, it is increasingly rare for them to be made by family members. Sometimes, businesses employ non-family members--but still caste associates--to do the manufacturing work in the firm even as younger sons take more remunerative employment outside.[7]

It is now common for goods to be made outside the premises. In recent years, free-lance goldsmiths and workshops--or, more properly, "sweatshops," according to some accounts--have appeared. They employ large numbers of Gujerati and even

Pakistani goldsmiths. Many of the workers involved are alleged to be on free visas, though in this case the beneficiaries of the arrangement may be established proprietors rather than Bahrainis. The exploitation of goldsmiths by their better-situated caste-fellows is said to be much worse in Dubai than in Bahrain. In any case, the combination of open migration and the recent market contraction are having the effects of changing the structure of family firms and of the social relations of production in general.

There are other threats, too, perhaps even more ominous. Changing tastes, the influx of cheap Italian eighteen carat merchandise (Indian goldsmiths in Bahrain usually use a 22 carat alloy made of eleven parts gold and one part copper), and increasing regulation have all undercut the position of the Indian goldsmiths. Arab jewelers control the remaining market for pearls and the growing markets for stone jewelry and European designs. They have inceasingly moved into gold jewelry as well, importing Italian goods, hiring Indian goldsmiths, or serving as sponsors of Indian proprietors. Other Indians are even getting into the business: one Bhatia, a highly respected nonagenarian when I spoke with him, retired into a gold jewelry shop, though he bought much of his merchandise from Gujerati free-lancers and workshops. While many Gujerati firms are still doing well, they are very concerned about the future. Given traditions of family and caste business, and, at a practical level, the susceptability of their trade to pilferage and plunder, the Sonis are sensitive about security risks and are reluctant to take partners. They

were the first to leave Bahrain when World War II broke out and, more recently, were prominent in the delegation which petitioned the amir for exemption from the new commercial laws. For good reasons, they fear that the market and their position within it will decline even further.

These facts notwithstanding, the Sonis remain the most influential segment of the Gujerati community. Before examining their role in the recent organizing activities, it may be instructive to describe in more concrete terms the nature of communal relations among Gujeratis.

The principal arenas of social life are visiting networks among relatives and friends. The family remains extremely important, especially among the Sonis, many of whom maintain extended family households. Of course, such households and networks are related to the maintenance of religious standards, etc. The requirements of a vegetarian diet are important. A corps of females serves this function for family households, while there are two Gujerati messes for the "bachelors." As the preceding discussion might lead one to expect, the rules of commensality and of social interaction are somewhat more generalized than they might be in India, or, at least, than they were in the past. Thus, though the two Soni castes do not intermarry, they share food despite Brahmanic distinctions. Gujeratis stated that commensality was the rule among all castes today, though they probably did not intend to include untouchables (and, on one occasion, I observed a Brahmin decline to drink from a common water vessel). Nonetheless, it is clear

that in many contexts caste distinctions "within the pale," so to speak, are not the bases of social separation for most Gujeratis.

In fact, there are occasional organized outings, involving picnics, which include large segments of the community. Substantial numbers of people from an even wider range of cultural categories come together for celebrations of holidays, such as Holi and, in particular, the Nawratri, or "Nine Nights," festivities preceding the national holiday of Dussehra. Such occasions are limited to the Gujerati Hindu community, but they nonetheless considerably enlarge the scope and arena of social interaction. A brief discussion of the Nawratri festivities observed in 1979 will illustrate the vibrancy of communal involvement in Gujerati cultural events in Bahrain, the significance of existing divisions in the community, and the nature of relations between Gujeratis, other Indians, and Bahraini society.

Nawratri is a major regional festival in Gujerat. It falls at harvest time, in September, and has been celebrated in Bahrain for many years. Activities may involve large numbers of people dancing and singing through most of the night. In the past, the celebration was freely held in Bahrain. (There is a genre of "Golden Age" stories recalling the freedom with which Indian holidays used to be celebrated in Bahrain. Frequent comparisons are made between this freedom and the guardedness and restraint that are necessary today. The relative modesty of the celebrations in Bahrain, even in the best of times, is contrasted to the splendor of those in India.) Bahraini independence has

made a difference in the celebrations, of course. In addition, the principal Kutchi Soni family, who formerly sponsored the event at their compound, had moved out of the suq, which made it necessary to find another site for the festivities. Most important, however, were political issues. Aside from Saudi pressure not to support non-Muslim religions, in 1979 Bahrain was undergoing a series of civil disturbances pursuant to the revolution in Iran and the local regime's overreaction to what it perceived to be dangerous Baharnah sympathies.

Gujerati notables, principally Kutchi Sonis I believe, had negotiated with the Bhatias to hold the event in the courtyard of the temple. (Nawratri fell in late September, shortly before the Sikh temple burned. Like the Sikhs, some Gujeratis maintain that the temple had originally been for all Hindus, or had even been their own, but had been usurped by the Bhatias. Some also asserted that the Bhatias were originally Bhattas, a caste considerably lower than the Bhatis.) As noted previously, the temple is situated in the suq area, adjacent to the Baharnah quarter of Mukharqa, which had been the site of a number of recent demonstrations. In this context, the government, i.e., the Ministry of Interior, and community leaders feared that the usual, jubilant celebration of the holiday by Hindus could focus anti-government and anti-foreign sentiment and lead to hostility and violence in the neighborhood. It was agreed that very limited services would be held--mainly the reading of Vedic texts by a community Brahmin (a shopkeeper by occupation) and communal offerings and chanting of prayers--and would finish early in the

evening.

The first days proceeded without incident, and it was decided to include dancing beginning on the fourth night, though the festivities would still end early (about the time they would be beginning in India). In return for allowing freer celebrations, the police insisted that someone in the community take responsibility for maintaining order. This also involved responsibility for any problems that might arise, whether or not they could possibly be under the control of the sponsor. (This is a provision of Bahrain's security laws. It is perhaps based on Islamic law, in which effect, more than intent, is the basis of legal action. More generally, it is an element of a plural system in which the representative is held responsible to the center for his constituency.)

Apparently, the community elite balked at taking this responsibility, fearing the implications any trouble might have on future business licensing, etc. Finally, another individual, a technician with Bahraini contacts, took responsibility. He was from a low caste background, with the distasteful taste for alcohol stereotypically associated with his caste.[8] This man described himself as an "outsider"--the "native" gloss for the elite/non-elite distinction made above. Though he could participate in the celebration, he was hardly one of its organizers. His action was perceived as a challenge by the principal Kutchi Soni family.

In any event, the ensuing nights of the celebration became progressively more crowded and active. The means of

communication, word of mouth and a notice on the temple bulletin board, were surprisingly effective. The seventh and eighth nights, which are the height of the festival, ran considerably later. Women also danced on these occasions, and alternated periods on the floor with the more enthusiastic and numerous young men. The ninth night finished early again and no celebration was held on Dussehra. Though the festivities were still restrained in comparison to previous years, there were no incidents and they were considered a success.

The most impressive qualities of the celebration were the degree of popular participation and the extent to which culture and traditions remain part of everday life. This contrasts sharply with the regional festival of another group, to be discussed in a later section of this chapter. The celebration emphasized cultural elements common to all Gujeratis. Regionally popular deities, such as Ganesh (the elephant-headed son of Shiva) and Vagdeshvari (a manifestation of the goddess Durga Matari, seen riding a tiger) were prominently displayed (though most community members are also Vaishnavites). Variation, attributed to local styles, was evident in the chanting of prayers, in songs, and, especially, in dancing; it took some effort to coordinate texts and movements. However, though the Banya Sonis were prominent in the organization of the celebration at the temple, it was not a caste festival by any means. A wide variety of caste backgrounds was represented. Informants noted that in India each caste maintains its own temples and dance circles, but this was clearly not the case in Bahrain. If there

was a bias in the celebration, it was based on the district of the organizers and many of the participants, Kutch, rather than their caste. The celebration involved the marking of the organizers' status in the Gujerati Hindu community at large--a function less effectively served because of their reluctance to take responsibility for the police--but it was for the entire community.

The presence of sub-regional differences among Gujeratis and of status competition within the elite are evident in the fact that the prominent Parajiya Soni family held its own Nawratri festival. This celebration was held at their residence in Muharraq. (Though most Sonis had moved their shops to Manama when the gold suq was established there, this family had stayed in Muharraq, close to their Arab tribal patrons and customers.) Like the Banya Soni family of Manama, this family had been holding such celebrations for many years. Perhaps due to the different neighborhood environment and the facts that the celebration was held indoors and was considerably smaller, the Muharraq festivities continued much later in the evening and lasted through Dussehra. Like the celebration in Manama, the one in Muharraq was not a caste festival. There was considerable intervisiting between the two celebrations, i.e., neither was closed, and, indeed, I saw a few Bhatia friends at both. In scheduling, they were nearly complementary, and after the festivities in Manama ended, many participants went to Muharraq to dance or visit there.

To a certain extent, the festival in Muharraq was sub-

regional, that is, it reflected Saurashtran traditions. For example, in addition to Ganesh and Vagdeshvari, another manifestation of Durga Matari--Amba, the goddess riding a lion--was in evidence. She is especially popular in Saurashtra. There were other interesting differences, which probably reflected a closer adherence to "tradition" rather than sub-regional cultural variation. Attendance at the Parajiya celebration was exclusively male, the dancing was somewhat more fervent, and the participants were apparently somewhat more devout. For example, it is traditional for men to maintain dietary restrictions and forego shaving between the beginning of Nawratri and Dussehra; no one was observed doing so at Manama, but a number in Muharraq did. Among these was the sponsor, whose wife was ill at the time. The celebration was in part an offering for her health.

The festival in Muharraq may then be contrasted with that in Manama in three ways. It reflected a different sub-regional culture--Saurashtran as opposed to Kutchi. It was more "traditional" in some respects. In fact, many of the late-night visitors from Manama came precisely to enjoy a milieu that was perhaps a bit more "Indian." Finally, the celebration was organized by a different family and reflected its status claims. Though these did involve caste distinctions, caste was more a contingent basis for organization than an imperative for categorical separation or the assertion and marking of rank. Said differently, beyond the issue of personal piety, the Sonis in Muharraq held the festival as a family, rather than a caste, to mark their position in the Gujerati community, not that of their

caste.

The details of the preceding account suggest several significant dimensions of differentiation in the Gujerati community. Aside from the exclusion of non-Hindus, those of extremely low caste or status, and those isolated by distance, there are distinctions in the community between Kutchis and those with other regional origins, between Sonis and other castes, and between the two groups of Sonis. There is also a distinction between prominent and active community members and those who only participate but might aspire to a greater role in community affairs. These sub-groups were referred to as "insiders" and "outsiders," respectively. Caste distinctions are particularly relevant in marriage and family life, of course. Sub-regional distinctions entail differences of dialect as well as shared cultural background and, perhaps, a common hometown and pre-existing ties. They are important in networks and personal relationships.

Caste is also the basis of some organized behavior, among the Sonis in particular, who have an advantage because of their numbers and affluence. Caste distinctions between Sonis may have prevented a shared organization in the past, but this was not the case by the late 1970's. Aside from the fact that these castes share food and participate with other castes in general community activities, they have participated together--that is, as an undifferentiated category of Sonis--in informally organized activities, such as picnics, and in a quasi-formal caste/occupational organization. The Sonis "formed"--a term I use

hesitantly--a voluntary association during the 1970's. It was named, as Sri Gujerati Soni Samaj, and officers were elected. However, the process of formalization was never completed, the group was never registered, and it had been defunct for some time by 1979. It is unclear whether the Sonis actually had hoped to form a caste association, or how much disagreement there may have been about the matter. The government was evidently not willing to allow such an association, which would not only have been a potentially divisive group in the Indian population and a bad precedent, but a potential trade organization. (Of course, lobbying for exempt status was done through personal and informal relationships with the ruler and other shaikhs, and not through this association.) The Gujerati Soni Samaj may have been intended originally as a special-purpose association. It may be said to still exist in this form; a sizable donation was made to the new Indian School in its name. However, it is not a continuously functioning group. As in the past, the effective organization among Sonis is based in networks and informal relationships.

If the government would not allow a caste association, it would allow a regional association. That a Gujerati association was not formed sooner is perhaps a measure of the strength of caste ties among the Sonis and the perceived adequacy of informal organization among Gujeratis generally. The organizational trend--in both a normative and a statistical sense--of Indian expatriate society and the preference of the government for dealing with established and registered groups in managing the (non-political and non-economic) affairs of foreigners eventually

had their effect. At an immediate and practical level, it seems to have become clear to Gujerati notables that negotiating the arrangements for the Nawratri festival would have been much easier with an institutional base.

The formation of the new association began only weeks after Dussehra, at a communal gathering called to celebrate Diwali. This represented a departure from past practice; it was customary to visit from house to house rather than hold a collective meeting. At the meeting, the idea of forming a Gujerati association was presented by Kutchi Sonis and other notables. After some discussion, it was accepted. A committee of fifteen "prominent" community members was selected (nominated and approved by acclamation) to draw up the constitution and conduct negotiations with the government to form the association. Not surprisingly, it was composed entirely of professionals, executives and Sonis. All were Hindu. Of the seven goldsmiths on the committee, four were Kutchis and three were Saurashtrans. The tea merchant and physician mentioned earlier were the president and vice-president. The other non-Soni members came from various regional backgrounds.

The "outsiders" were not represented. The man who had taken responsibility for the Nawratri celebration in Manama complained that he had not even been informed of the meeting, despite the service he had performed for the community. Using arguments of democratic process, such as the necessity of a quorum to hold a valid meeting, he assailed the attempts of the "insiders" to dominate the group. It is not clear how widespread this sentiment

might have been, but the elite did not encounter any organized opposition.

The committee hoped the association would be approved quickly. They noted that they had good relations with the government, who appreciated the facts that they were quiet and did not drink--or, one quipped, at least the government thought they did not. However, the formation of the association proved to be a complicated process. The constitution had to be written and translated into Arabic. The Ministry took issue with some provisions the committee sought to formally impose, in particular, the limitation of the group to Hindus. The name chosen by the committee at first was Sri Gujerati Hindu Samaj. This was not accepted and the overt exclusion of non-Hindus was not allowed.

Approval took about one year, and the association was finally registered in late 1980 as Sri Gujerati Samaj. It grew quickly, to about 450 members by mid-1981. They still had no premises, but were looking and amassing the necessary funds. It had been decided that the club would have no bar, the primary means of support for other Indian clubs, so the funds would have to be raised entirely from membership subscriptions and donations. An appraisal of the membership was not possible. Though the association was prevented from formally barring non-Hindus, it seemed likely that few if any had been admitted. (Boundaries can easily be maintained through intimidation and control of admissions, as they are in other expatriate organizations. In fact, it is surprising, and a mark of their

conservatism and naive acceptance of categorical distinctions, that the organizing committee sought to formally incorporate these provisions at all.) In 1981, the "insiders" were clearly in control of the offices in the association. The position of "outsiders" in the membership was unclear.

The fact that Sri Gujerati Samaj was organized at all represents a triumph of regional sentiment--and contextual pressures--over caste and tradition. However, this sentiment is unlikely to extend to all aspects of the management and membership of the association. Given existing status distinctions and the will to maintain them, it seems unlikely that the new association will simply formally organize the community that already exists. First, the association is formally open to all Gujeratis, and the managing committee might be compelled to admit individuals who have been excluded from the community. Secondly, association membership constitutes a different sort of boundary than that between "insiders" and "outsiders"; while many could belong, in a limited sense, to the "community" without undermining the leadership, they all probably cannot be members of the formal organization, and they certainly cannot do so without endangering the status quo. This is the case because, finally, the association may be compelled to maintain democratic processes. Of course, the effect these might have on the leadership of the community/association would depend on their ability to regulate membership.

The formation of the association may sharpen competition for participation and leadership by presenting a set of boundaries--

officer, member, non-member—and a formally defined arena. It may perhaps lead to a clearer differentiation of elite and non-elite, or active and non-active, segments of the community. The new Gujerati club may become a center for the social life of the elite and other elements of the population with high status. If so, this may undercut the strong solidarity among Gujeratis generally that has been built up over a long period of co-residence in Bahrain. On the other hand, the leadership which has thus far functioned informally may do so formally without limiting participation in club or community activities to formal members. One might ask, will the next Nawratri be for Sri Gujerati Samaj or for the Gujerati community as a whole?

TAMILS

The Tamils are the smallest of the South Indian groups. The size of the population is difficult to estimate, but is probably about 2000. Though some are employed in good positions, the great majority of Tamils appear to be of modest income and status. There are evidently few laborers. Most Tamils in Bahrain seem to be Hindu, but, probably because they are Shaivites, they do not frequent the temple. Vaishnavite Tamils do visit the temple, and some of them belong to the Chinmaya Family, but the membership of that institution is drawn from a narrow intellectual elite with high status in the Indian community.

The Tamils are also the least organized of the South Indian groups. In fact, they are the least organized of the sizable Indian categories present in Bahrain. Tamils tend to be recruited

through "rational" channels and on an individual rather than group basis. There is also a relatively small proportion of laborers in the population. These characteristics are in large part a product of the recency of Tamil migration and distance from the centers of recruitment. Recruiters are unlikely to cast their nets in the direction of Madras unless they need skilled individuals. These means of recruitment may also have produced a population so diverse in its origins that the kinds of sub-groups, pre-existing relationships and extensive networks that one finds in other groups do not exist. It is evident, though, that personal disagreements and factionalism have played a major role in disrupting the organization of the population.

The single Tamil association, the Tamil Sangam, was defunct at the time of fieldwork. When it was functioning, the Tamil Sangam was not really a social club, according to informants. In the tradition which the term "sangam" implies, the association was oriented toward discussion and literary, intellectual and artistic activities. The two main interests seem to have been staging dramas and arguing. The problems in the Sangam were threefold. First, there was little support from general members. Lacking wealthy and influential leaders, the Sangam was dependent on the contributions and participation of large numbers of people. Unfortunately, they either could not afford to contribute in sufficient numbers or were passive and uninterested for other reasons. (Informants mentioned both factors.) Second, there was considerable disagreement within the leadership and membership. Tamil cultural identity was the basis, if not the

cause, of these problems. For example, one informant described a heated argument about the inclusion of a non-Tamil sound ("f") in the transliteration of a non-Tamil term ("Gulf") on a sign.

Much of the disagreement was aimed at the leadership, which was the third problem in the Sangam. The main reason for opposition was incompetence. It was noted that leaders ignored such opportunities to collect revenue and enlist participation as did exist. They succeeded in bringing the club to the point of bankruptcy. Shortly before it ceased active functioning, and before the disastrous state of its finances became known, the leadership was transferred to new (allegedly naive and even more incompetent) people, at the behest and with the blessing of the previous leadership. In addition to being left holding the bag in the affairs of the Sangam, the new president found himself in considerable trouble with his employer because of accounting irregularities (apparently due to both incompetence and misappropriation of funds). He lost what little effectiveness he may otherwise have had.

Because of these organizational problems, the association lost its premises and had not been properly registered with the government. A few Tamils occasionally organized activities--in one case, a drama staged at the Indian School--but they had not succeeded in reviving the Sangam. It is possible that informal relations were perceived as adequate means for the expression of social and cultural life, signifying traditional attitudes little affected by the context of expatriate life in Bahrain. However, as indicated, fragmentation and the absence of leadership, rather

than inertia, seem to have been the main problems.

For the time being, the Tamils were at a difficult point in the organizational cycle: in order to get premises and build a viable organization, they needed revenue; in order to get revenue, they needed to hold functions; in order to hold functions, they needed to be registered; and, in order to register, they needed a coherent organizing committee. Unfortunately, responsible individuals had not yet "come forward," as the Indian idiom has it. This was an unusual situation in the Indian population, especially among South Indians. In other groups, despite competition and sub-categorical differentiation, there has been no ambivalence about these issues, and one finds major efforts to develop social institutions.

GOANS AND KARNATAKESE

Most of South India is divided into states which are relatively homogeneous linguistically, if not culturally: the Telugu state of Andhra Pradesh, the Tamil state of Tamil Nadu, the Malayalam state of Kerala, and the Konkani Union Territory of Goa. However, Karnataka, which subsumes most of the old state of Mysore, is linguistically diverse. Most Karnatakese are native speakers of Kannada, or of the related language of Tulu, but there is also a substantial population of Konkani speakers. This population not only speaks Konkani, but is culturally and historically Goan in origin. That is, notwithstanding current permanent residence in India (which may be Bombay, of course)

they allege that their forbears migrated out of Goa into the areas which later became the state of Karnataka, especially the district of South Kanara. They have Portuguese names, follow the Roman Catholic faith, and acknowledge the same lineage of religious conversion and cultural traditions as the genuine Goans, that is, those whose permanent residences are in Goa proper, or who can otherwise establish an acceptable claim to Goan status. In effect, then, in Bahrain, the categories of regional and linguistic/cultural differentiation crosscut one another. It is for this reason that, despite distinct administrative and legal categories, these groups are combined in the analysis of group formation.

Some groups in the Indian population have begun their organizing activities with fairly clearly defined categories, and then effectively stratified them through membership in or exclusion from voluntary associations. This is the case among the Keralites, to be discussed below, and it appears to be the direction in which the Gujerati community is evolving. Rather than follow this pattern, the Goans and Karnatakese have formed enough clubs to provide membership opportunities for many workers with less status. This has involved the negotiation of acceptable organizational categories with the government, which has not always been easy. It also seems to imply that Goans and Karnatakese are less sensitive to occupational or prestige differentiation and to caste than other groups. Evidence for these claims will be discussed below. However, this should not be taken to imply that there is no status competition or

differentiation. Perhaps because of traditions encouraging social organization, leadership competition is pronounced, especially among the Konkani speaking Karnatakese. Though occupational distinctions and the categorical boundaries of caste and sect seem less contentious issues than in other groups, the ambiguous categorical boundaries of language and region have been marked. With prestige and leadership competition providing incentive and reinforcement, these complex dimensions of cultural differentiation are expressed in separate formal organizations.

The number of Goans and Karnatakese in Bahrain today is difficult to estimate, but is probably 2000 to 3000 in each category. There seem to be more Goans, and they arrived in substantial numbers before the Karnatakese. In general, Goans had found niches for themselves in the British Empire as cooks, servants and clerks, and these were their first occupations in Bahrain. The British employed Goan clerks in the Agency at the turn of the century. Larger numbers were recruited in the 1930's and 1940's to work at BAPCO as clerks and technicians at the refinery. The British also hired Goan cooks. When the Arab elite began to serve European foods, they recruited Goan cooks as well, and the first generation of Indian household servants working for Bahrainis were Goan. As with the Bhatias and Gujeratis, the number of Goans in Bahrain grew steadily during the 1950's and 1960's. A sizable community was already present by the early 1970's. Today, the number of servants and cooks is proportionately smaller, and clerical and technical occupations predominate in the community.

A few Mysoreans migrated early, but significant numbers of Karnatakese did not arrive until much later, in the 1960's and, especially, during the boom of the 1970's. Though they are a minority in Karnataka, most of the Karnatakese in Bahrain are Konkani speakers. They are commonly referred to as "Mangaloreans," because of their concentration in and around this port city in South Kanara. I have used this term interchangeably with "Konkani speaking Karnatakese." Kannada speakers are relatively few in number, are mostly Hindus or Christians, and maintain a social life separate from the Konkani speakers.

Goans and Mangaloreans share a distinctive culture and identity which sets them apart from other Indians, including the Kannada speaking Karnatakese. This appears to have facilitated the formation of relationships and groups in Bahrain across the administrative boundary. However, lengthy residence has produced a higher degree of mutual acquaintance and social interaction within the Goan category than among Konkani speakers generally. That is, "Goan" solidarity is stronger than "Konkani" solidarity. Though they lack the multiplex pre-existing relationships of the Bhatias and the traditional community of the Gujeratis, the Goans have nonetheless been able to form a fairly extensive and exclusive organization. The Konkani Karnatakese are less well-organized and the Kannada Karnatakese even less still.

Goans and Karnatakese share a similar demographic and economic profile in Bahrain. A significant proportion—perhaps a third--of workers in both categories have their families with them. The number of dependents in the Goan population might be

slightly higher because more of them have resided in Bahrain longer, and are therefore more securely established. The full range of occupations and incomes is represented in the work force, from laborers to professionals. There are many white collar workers, from secretaries to executives, and there is an especially large concentration of skilled blue-collar workers, from welders and electricians to highly skilled engineering technicians. Some Goans are engaged as servants, but usually for the Arab elites or for Europeans. (Many cooks and waiters at the BAPCO club are still Goan, for example.) There are probably some Karnatakese servants as well, but few of the unskilled construction laborers and domestics earning 30 dinars per month, certainly among the most disadvantaged workers in Bahrain, are Goans or Karnatakese. Though they are employed in similar fields, the groups have different proportions of higher status workers. Goans are more often in good positions than Mangaloreans, who are likely to have better jobs than Kannada speakers. Like the variation in numbers of dependents, these differences are minor and seem to be related to length of residence.

Many Goan and Mangalorean women work. In fact, of the Indian women working in Bahrain, most are probably from these groups, and most of them are secretaries. Though skills in English are important, more liberal orientations are also involved, and these may in turn be attributed to religious and cultural traditions. By way of contrast, it would be unthinkable for the wife of a Gujerati goldsmith to work in an office or anywhere outside the home.

As noted earlier, stratification in terms of occupation, income, and similar criteria is less marked among Goans and Karnatakese than in other groups, but there is some status differentiation. Membership in voluntary associations represents a boundary in a minimal sense: servants and workers with the lowest status are excluded when practicable. Also, blue collar workers are seldom officers in clubs. However, there is little exclusion of blue collar workers from voluntary associations because of their occupation alone. This is in part due to the facts that, as just discussed, there are so many of them and the economic and occupational extremes are not present in the working population; that is, there is neither an established mercantile and professional elite nor a large, unskilled bottom.

Cultural factors and pre-existing social patterns are also significant. Among the Catholic Konkani speakers, in particular, who constitute the great majority of the population, religion does not require the proscriptions of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh ideology and practice. The use of alcohol is not cause for ostracism; if anything, it is encouraged. More generally, there is a dedication to socializing in the Goan and Mangalorean clubs that is not found in many other groups. Though they must be attributed to popular Latin-Indian culture and identity, more than to some abstract egalitarian Christian ideology, these practices allow and encourage a high degree of social interaction among individuals with varying social statuses. As a result, a substantial segment of the population, including workers with relatively modest occupations and backgrounds, participates in

formal social organizations.

Thus far, I have argued that prestige factors--especially occupation, which is usually correlated with eduction, income and influence--are significant for leadership within formal groups, but less so in defining membership. There are also minor distinctions of prestige across groups and general social categories. Because more of them have been in Bahrain for longer periods of time working in better jobs, the Goans have a more active social life and a bit more status. The Mangaloreans are also very active, with somewhat less status, while the Kannada speakers are just becoming organized.

Having established the nature of prestige distinctions, I now turn to the issue of categorical distinctions. As stated earlier in this section, lower-level distinctions, like caste and sect, are relatively unimportant both within and across groups, while the broader categories of language and region are important bases of group formation. Before examining the categorical boundaries which do seem to be problematical, a few comments are in order about the categories that are not expressed in group organization.

"Castes" are known to exist and remain relevant among Goans and other South Indian Christians (Caplan, 1984, 1980; Fuller, 1976; D'Costa, 1977). I have put the term in parentheses to indicate that these collectivites are somewhat different from Hindu castes. Among some Christians, caste is more or less synonymous with sectarian distinctions. For the Goans and most of the Karnatakese, the situation is made somewhat simpler by the

fact that all are Roman Catholic. However, among many Indian Christians, including these groups, original (or claimed) Hindu castes are important bases of differentiation, especially for the purposes of marriage. For example, caste origin is commonly noted in Christian matrimonial advertisements and solicitations in Indian newspapers. Nelson (1973) has argued that caste was the primary basis of social differentiation in the Goan community in Nairobi. Caste-based voluntary associations were the organizational forms in which categorical differentiation was expressed.

The situation in Bahrain is somewhat different. Caste is probably important in marriage, which it was not my purpose to analyze. In informal relationships among Goans in Bahrain, village origin and the ritual traditions associated with it—eg., saints and feasts--appear to be a more salient basis for the formation of relationships than caste. As in the Nairobi case, the primary formal marker of internal differentiation in the Goan community is club membership. However, in Bahrain, there is only one Goan club, the Young Goans' Sports Club, and the basis of exclusion is not caste, but prestige. The broad range of occupations represented in the club would seem to imply that even this is of limited importance, or, to be more precise, that it is defined less in terms of occupational status than in terms of influence, ability, and other personal qualities. Informants noted that in the past the Goan community was divided between white and blue collar workers, defined in effect by employment status at BAPCO: white collar workers were housed in apartments

in Manama and were salaried, while blue collar workers were housed in barracks and were paid on an hourly basis. It was claimed that this distinction was no longer important, which was supported by the diversity of the club membership. Caste, whether defined in terms of traditional categories or occupational statuses, appeared to be of limited importance within the Goan population. The same was evidently true among Karnatakese.

If boundaries within the Goan community were of limited importance, the boundary around it was salient, primarily for distinguishing between Goans and Mangaloreans. The difference between these categories was consistently articulated in terms of administrative divisions. (Though, in fact, prestige--in terms other than those of caste and occupation--was useful in negotiating Goan status in marginal cases.) This distinction is not associated with caste. There is no ideology of conversion from different castes, as among other South Indian Christians (Caplan, 1980; Fuller, 1976). On the contrary, aside from sharing the Roman Catholic faith, members of the two groups did in fact worship together. They also associated with one another in other social contexts, such as sports and social clubs other than the Young Goans' Sports Club. The distinction between Goan and Mangalorean does appear to reflect a kind of hierarchy, defined in terms of closeness to the center of conversion and Catholic Christianity in India, which is marked geographically by the tomb of St. Francis in Goa. This subtle cultural dimension may reinforce social differentiation, but it is hardly caste, in "ideology," "essence," "feeling" or "substance." A factor of more

observable salience is the nature of competition for admission into higher status social clubs. This occurs in a social arena unlike any to be found in India (except, perhaps, in Bombay), that is, an arena shared by both Goans and Konkani speaking Karnatakese. This factor, not material in an economic or political sense, but nonetheless instrumental and practical, does affect the salience of Goan boundary maintenance in Bahrain, a practice which in turn clearly segments a population which shares many other cultural elements.

It appears that, despite similarities of language and culture, a political boundary in India is used to define a group boundary in Bahrain between Goans and Konkani-speaking Karnatakese. Within the Karnatakese population, on the other hand, language and culture are the bases of social differentiation between Konkani and Kannada speakers. Leadership competition has also played an important role in group formation. Among the Karnatakese, categorical differentiation by language and the dominance of a particular set of Konkani speaking leaders were at first maintained surreptitiously. However, in reaction to this state of affairs, new associations were formed, and linguistic differentiation and leadership competition have been made explicit. A brief discussion of the Goan and Karnatakese formal organizations will illustrate these developments and the preceding arguments.

There are four associations or social clubs specifically for Goans and Karnatakese in Bahrain, and, in addition, another is dominated by them in fact. The institutions are the Young Goans'

Sports Club (the Young Goans), the Karnataka Sports Club (KSC), the Konkan Singers, the Kannada Sangha, and finally, St. Bartholomew's Sports Club (St. Bart's). Two of these, the Young Goans and the KSC, are based on regional categories; two others, the Konkan Singers and the Kannada Sangha, are based on linguistic categories; and the last, St. Bart's, is actually the social arm of the Sacred Heart Church. Though it is open to all Catholics in Bahrain, the membership of Saint Bart's is about 80-90% Indian, and most of them are Goans and Mangaloreans. Because it is under church sponsorship, St. Bart's is managed by the priests. They appoint other officers, thereby limiting leadership competition. The club sponsors a number of sporting teams and frequent social events, but it is neither as active nor as selective as other clubs. Members of St. Bart's may belong to these organizations, and vice versa, so long as they are Catholic. The maintenance of boundaries among the other institutions is somewhat more complex.

The Young Goans' Sports Club, the Karnataka Sports Club and St. Bartholomew's are all active in competition through various leagues on the island. The Young Goans and St. Bart's, in particular, have been successful at sports. The Young Goans and the KSC actively recruit players, and occasionally compromise the ostensible categorical bases of the organization in order to get good players for their teams. Such individuals are given "associate" membership in most cases. As their names imply, the Konkan Singers and the Kannada Sangha are more oriented toward cultural activities, such as drama and music. Despite their

raisons d'etre, the Young Goans', the KSC and the Konkan Singers are first and foremost social clubs, venues for drinking, socializing, Western music, dancing, videos, games, hawzi, raffles, balls and beauty contests.[9] For example, the crowning of the May Queen is the major event on the Young Goans' social calendar. The activities of St. Bart's are similar, but a bit more subdued, mainly because it has no bar. The Kannada Sangha had no premises, and thus met only occasionally.

The Young Goans, the KSC and the Konkan Singers are run like businesses. They are all located in or around central Manama, convenient to the Indian residents of the city. They all rent premises, usually at something below market rates. Their operating revenue is derived from subscriptions and sales of alcohol. The enjoyment and active participation of members, including increased alcohol consumption, is encouraged by activities and contests. Sometimes, contest prizes are purchased, but more often they are solicited as donations by club officers. Liquor agents, in particular, are happy to sponsor events at the various clubs, and may demand that only their products be served on these occasions.[10] Bahraini businessmen may also be approached to sponsor events or provide prizes, usually indirectly, through managers or accountants in their employ. These are usually Indians and acquaintances of club officers, if not the officers themselves.

The competitive attitude and proprietary interest taken by leaders in these clubs mark a style very different from that found in the North Indian groups. Among the latter, there is more

modesty among leaders and, in general, more reliance on traditional elites. A traditionally legitimated Gujerati leader has a great deal to lose by misjudging his constituency, and, therefore, might look for a base of support and subtly seek a form of consensus around his authority. In a situation where office can confer status, rather than merely confirm it, a Goan or a Keralite campaigns for election. The fact that the South Indian communities lack established elites is certainly a relevant factor. However, the southern groups display more "modern," "democratic" and "rational" attitudes, which must be attributed in part to contemporary South Indian society and culture and to the educated and upwardly-mobile characteristics of most migrants to Bahrain. Why this spirit should lead to the successful formation of organizations among Goans, Karnatakese and Keralites but not among Tamils is difficult to explain.

The personal contacts of club officers and their ability to exploit relationships with wealthy or influential Bahrainis, Europeans or Indians constitute a major requirement for office. The contrast between these kinds of personal relationships and those available to the Bhatias and Bohras is instructive. The influential individuals approached by officers in these social clubs are less likely to be shaikhs and more likely to be merchants and businessmen. They exploit different networks of power and influence in Bahraini society, partly because they are different types of leaders, but mostly because they lack informal relationships with individuals at the center of power and could not form them if they sought to do so. The Bhatias and Bohras who

manipulate personal relationships are acting for their communities or, in some cases, for their own material interests. Club leaders seek the more limited goals of consolidating leadership and advancing the status of their associations, ends which have few practical implications. Of course, the groups served differ markedly.

As noted above, the Young Goans' Sports Club is socially the most active of the institutions considered here and the one with the highest status. It is also the oldest--founded in 1953--and the largest. The club grew rapidly in the 1960's and early 1970's, indicating that many Goans migrated before the boom. In 1975, the membership stood at 700. By 1981, it had increased by only 100, to 800, plus dependents. Growth was limited by a ceiling on further expansion, and there was a waiting list of 150 in 1981. According to club officers, the occupations of club members were about half office workers and half technical. Various levels were included here, but few if any were cooks or servants, and a higher proportion were in supervisory or other high status jobs than in other clubs. All the officers in the club were elected. Though the president was a technician, he was a long-standing employee at BAPCO and a long-standing member of the club. It was acknowledged that influence was necessary for this office. The general secretary managed the property of a Bahraini. Other officers were professionals and managers in both technical and white-collar fields.

As the name suggests, the club is for Goans, though not necessarily young ones. Most members were citizens or permanent

residents of Goa, but the definition was somewhat negotiable. Among the older generation, there were individuals who had never been to Goa and who spoke Konkani as a third language, after Portuguese and English. (For this and other reasons, club business was transacted in English.) One informant had spent most of his life in Portugal but was selected by his family to return and protect their property when Goa entered the Indian union. Many members of the club had served with the British in Africa and carried British passports (though they were less likely to have "Right of Residence"). The paths by which these people arrived in Bahrain varied, but, once there, they were recognized as Goan for the purpose of club membership. It was also acknowledged that 10% of the members (or, according to another source, 50 individuals) were non-Goan. These individuals were the associate members who had been admitted for athletic ability without voting rights. They were all said to be Mangaloreans.

In differentiating between their organization, the Karnataka Sports Club and the Konkan Singers, officers at the Young Goans stated that their club was for Goans, while the others were for Mangaloreans, who spoke the same language, but a different dialect. It was pointed out that the Mangalorean associate members were culturally close and that Young Goans who were interested in cultural activities might also belong to the Konkan Singers. While cultural and linguistic similarities were thus recognized and given some importance--they were in fact the effective boundaries in <u>overall</u> membership--the fact that club business was transacted in English seems to indicate that

language itself had little importance. Goan citizenship was clearly the major factor, insofar as it gave the full member greater rights to participate in club activities. The membership of British-Goans would seem to indicate that status--derived, in this case, from association with a prestige category--could override weak categorical credentials. The exclusion of one quarter or more of the Goan population from membership indicates the recognition of prestige within the category, but also its limited importance (and, to a degree, real limitations of space). Finally, while the granting of associate memberships to Mangaloreans for athletic abilities recognizes linguistic and cultural categories, it also indicates the significance of the society-wide sports arena for the status of the club. Clubs competed for trophies and, therefore, for good sportsmen. This in turn gave achievement--as an ordering criterion for the membership pool--some importance in recruitment.

The Karnataka Sports Club was founded on an informal basis in 1957, but did not get premises until 1971. It was a small club then, but it grew considerably during the 1970's. In 1981, membership was closed at 400 members, with forty to fifty on a waiting list. The Karnataka Sports Club was not quite as choosy as the Young Goans, with regard to either category or prestige. I will return to the former issue momentarily. As to the latter: officers were primarily white collar workers in good companies, but they included secretaries and clerks as well as the usual accountants. Prestige differences were more notable among the membership. Though proportions of bachelors and workers with

families were said to be about the same as in the Young Goans, officers estimated that only 30% of members were office workers and 40% technicians. About 25% of the members were said to be (i.e., admitted to be) workers in lower status occupations, such as drivers, tailors, laborers and even domestics.

The characterization of the KSC as a club for Mangaloreans--that is, Catholic, Konkani-speaking Karnatakese--was generally accurate. The bulk of its membership and all of the managing committee whom I met were Mangaloreans. However, there were many Mangaloreans who did not belong to the club and, in fact, many members were not even Karnatakese. As in the Young Goans, a few individuals were given non-voting associate memberships only because of their athletic ability. Officers said they also evaluated "status," "behavior," and length of time on the waiting list--the usual criteria. The criterion which was not mentioned was being Karnatakese. Despite the ostensible categorical basis of the association, according to club officers, only 60% of the members were in fact Karnatakese. It was acknowledged that nearly 40% of the members were drawn from all over India, with the largest group (10-15% of the membership) coming from Kerala. Some Young Goans were also members, despite the acknowledged fact that their overlapping memberships kept others from joining.

When pressed about these proportions, club officers noted that there was no provision in the constitution requiring a given proportion of Karnatakese and that sportsmen were given first preference and Karnatakese second. Yet it seemed unlikely that all the non-Karnatakese in the club were sportsmen. (At any rate,

they were not very successful on the field.) It was claimed that membership had been closed because of limited space, yet facilities did not appear to be crowded. It was impossible to determine why all of the non-Karnatakese were admitted. On the other hand, it became evident that numbers of Karnatakese either were excluded or quit. Allegations of mismanagement from several sources indicate that factors other than those mentioned by club officers may have been involved in the composition and closure of the membership and that the managing committee may have manipulated admissions in its favor.

Given the relatively small number of Karnatakese in the KSC, it is not suprising that there might be some interest in forming real Karnatakese clubs. The membership policies and management problems of the KSC led to just this eventuality. However, since the Karnataka club had a monopoly on the regional category, other bases had to be found to legitimate the formation of associations and negotiate them through the registration process. One of these bases was the general purpose of the clubs, cultural activities rather than sports, and the other was language.

The Konkan Singers was the first of two new groups to form. Categorically, it bridges the Goans and Mangaloreans, and it draws members from both groups. However, all the officers, save one, were Mangaloreans (and about half of them had permanently settled in Bombay). The president was a bank officer. The general secretary, the organizer and driving force of the club, was an accountant, as were several of the other officers. Membership stood at 180 in 1981 and was still open. The club did not

maintain sports teams and did occasionally sponsor cultural events, such as music and drama. However, the core of its activities were the same as those in other social clubs. For example, one social evening highlighted a Best-Dressed Couple event, which I was, quite unexpectedly, asked to judge. This appointment was evidently honorary (or perhaps cautionary, in case I turned out to be something other than an anthropologist). The status of some of the other judges reflected more pragmatic factors: one was the agent for the liquor company sponsoring some of the prizes and another was the administrator of social clubs at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The contest was followed by a raffle.

Despite the modest membership, the club was well-run and its accounts were in the black. This was a source of pride to the general secretary, whose organizing ambitions had been frustrated in other clubs, the Karnataka Sports Club in particular. It was his desire to compete for leadership in the KSC which had led to the formation of the Konkan Singers. He contrasted the success of his management with the shortcomings of the management of the KSC. (His judgments, on both counts, were verified by third parties.) The relationship between the two clubs had become one of competition for status and members. It seems likely that the Konkan Singers had absorbed a number of people who were dissatisfied with the KSC or were unable to get membership there or in the Young Goans. (Apparently, many people also joined St. Bart's because membership was more open. St. Bart's members I met included an Anglo-Indian, who evidently had little chance of

being admitted into other institutions.) By providing activities and opportunity for participation, the Konkan Singers was growing and effectively competing with older and larger clubs.

Though he was a good manager, the general secretary had fought a long battle to get the club approved. The process took about three and one-half years (compared to the year it took Sri Gujerati Samaj) and required many visits to the Ministry to convince officials that there was an adequate membership base and a valid reason for establishing the club. They eventually succumbed to his sustained lobbying, and in so doing set the precedent for yet another Karnatakese club.

The Kannada Sangha received Ministerial approval only in 1981. As with the Konkan Singers, registration was a lengthy and difficult process. (The fact that the club emblem pictures a Karnatakese shaking hands with an Arab might indicate just how difficult the process was.) The association had about 150 members, but had not yet rented premises. Small groups met in members' homes, but the association as a whole came together only occasionally, eg., for a picnic or an entertainment program at one of the larger restaurants (Pakistani, in the case described to me, and thus non-vegetarian).

All the members were Karnatakese, and about two-thirds were from South Kanara. All spoke Kannada, of course, but a few were native speakers of Tulu. A few were Muslims, but most were Hindu and Christian (mostly Catholic). Officers emphasized that there were no occupational restrictions for membership, which was still open. The backgrounds of the officers themselves supported this

claim; a few were accountants, administrators or other office workers (and the president was a Brahmin engineer), but others were in more humble jobs, eg., male nurses and a tailor.

The association was not in a position to discriminate in terms of either sub-categorical status or prestige. The officers understood that the population they might draw from was small. Of all the Karnatakese in Bahrain, they estimated that only 400 workers, plus some families, were Kannada speakers. They explained that, in Karnataka, Kannada speakers tend to be less educated and more conservative than the Konkani speakers, and had started to migrate only recently. As a result, the Sangha was the least exclusive in its admissions policy, though the members were often more conservative than those of other clubs. It seemed likely that, given the limited size and resources of the population, the Kannada Sangha faced an uphill struggle to achieve the critical mass necessary for success, that is, acquiring a sufficient number of paying members to secure premises, which might then be used to hold regular functions and attract more members.

Exclusion from the KSC on the basis of language was evidently the primary factor motivating the formation of the Kannada Sangha. Despite the fact that they were eligible to participate in the KSC in theory, it was stated that this was "really a Konkani club"--while, interestingly, the Young Goans had called it a "Mangalorean" club. Officers noted that cultural activities had been among the original purposes of the KSC, but then the Konkanis came to predominate and the club turned to

other activities. They asserted that all the founders and many of the members had left and that some of them had then formed the Konkan Singers. None of the officers in the Kannada Sangha I met had belonged to the KSC. It was not established whether they had ever applied for membership, but it was clear that they did not feel welcome.

The Goans and Karnatakese have been able to form an unusual number of associations. Group formation has depended on, and followed, existing complex categorical boundaries, of course. The process has also depended on the acceptance by the Bahraini government of the use of some of these categories for organizational purposes. However, the determination of the Goans and Karnatakese themselves to form voluntary associations has been a remarkable and essential element in the outcome. They have exploited the organizational potential available to them more effectively than have some other groups, such as the Tamils and Punjabis. The options available to the last group discussed in this chapter, the Keralites, are different. They have been exploited somewhat differently, but, it seems, with the same determination.

KERALITES

Migration from what is now the state of Kerala to Bahrain is not new, but, until recently, the resident population was small. A few shopkeepers, mostly Mopillas (Keralite Muslims), have lived in Bahrain for decades. A number of Keralite clerks, mostly Hindus, were hired as early as the 1930's. There were a

sufficient number present to form the Keraleeya Samajam in 1947, making it the first regional association in Bahrain.[11] The population grew steadily through the 1950's and 1960's, but since the boom it has increased enormously.

Great numbers of Keralites are now present throughout the Gulf. They are especially numerous in the United Arab Emirates. One informant compared the suq in Dubai to a market in Kerala itself, with signboards in Malayalam, popular music blaring and the majority of the people in the street wearing lungis, as if the Arab environment did not exist. The situation in Bahrain is not quite as extreme, but, as noted previously, 40-50% of the Indian population there is now Keralite.

A combination of factors has led to this extraordinary migration. Though Kerala lacks the old ties of Sindh and Bombay to the Empire and the Gulf, modern methods of transportation have made it one of the most accessible areas of India to the demand for labor. The Keralite population itself has long been ripe for labor migration. For several reasons--geographical isolation from Hindic India, Dravidian linguistic and cultural traditions, a highly stratified social system, and, later, the encouragement of a Communist regional government--many Keralites eschewed (or were denied) traditional channels of advancement. They instead acquired high skills in English and technical fields, and sought opportunity through the British and the modern economy. However, the economy of Kerala itself has always been underdeveloped--owing in great part to the emphasis of local elites on landholding rather than industrialization--leading to high rates

of unemployment. In short, there is a very large number of Keralites with skills and aspirations for mobility who find economic and social opportunities limited in Kerala itself. Their skills gave Keralites considerable mobility within India and a strong position in the Civil Service. But, in recent years, as categorical representation in prestige occupations has become a more sensitive issue in the regions and cities of India itself, Keralites have become more inclined to look abroad for opportunities.

In fact, migration to the Gulf has become a mania in Kerala, and now involves all strata of the population, not just those with high skills. The economic boom in the Gulf increased the demand for both skilled and unskilled labor, which, in turn, set in motion an economic and cultural cycle that transformed the labor market in Kerala. The cities of the Gulf are described as "paved with gold." Communication and remittances have made migration a viable option for more people, in effect increasing the labor supply. While the boom has provided opportunities for workers, it has also provided opportunities for unscrupulous operators. There has been considerable abuse in the Gulf--the "free visa," kickbacks, refusal to provide the wages and benefits agreed in contracts, etc.--and Keralite workers suffer more than others. However, to be fair, there is also a great deal of exploitation in India: a Malayalee official in the Indian embassy described how an enterprising Indian, a modern-day faqir, dressed up as an Arab shaikh and travelled through villages in Kerala selling fraudulent visas for thousands of rupees, duping many

ignorant people.

The Indian government has had considerable difficulty policing the overseas employment agency business. On the one hand, its attempts to register and license agents were hampered by legal decisions finding that existing regulations were discriminatory in effect; until the legislation was rewritten, anyone could be an agent. On the other hand, officials are unwilling to severely restrict migration because remittances provide an important source of foreign exchange. Many people undertake considerable sacrifices and indebtedness to get to the Gulf. When the situation is not as claimed or expected, they suffer financial loss and humiliation. They are reluctant to admit their problems to family and friends in India, who funded their migration in most cases and rely on their remittances. As a result, reports of the actual state of affairs have no chance of countering the El Dorado syndrome.

For many, though, working in the Gulf provides an extraordinary financial opportunity. A laborer in the Gulf is said to earn as much as a professor in India. All but the most humble or unfortunate can usually send back enough money to support a family and still save. Remittances have already had a powerful economic impact in Kerala. Some invest their Gulf earnings or start businesses, but most plough them into traditional forms of expenditure--land, houses, and consumption of durable goods. As a result, real estate and construction costs in Kerala have skyrocketed. The long-term implications of this inflation are unclear, as are the effects on existing social

patterns of increasing wealth in the hands of non-traditional elites and the absence of substantial numbers of males in many families and localities.

Though the full impact of migration on Kerala and India is uncertain at this point, the effect it has had on the Keralite population in Bahrain is quite clear. It is by far the largest group in the Indian population. It also has the highest proportion of laborers and other low income workers. As a result, the sex and age ratios in the population are the most skewed and it is the most highly differentiated in terms of income, status and prestige. For laborers and, especially, those who come on "free visas" or have been cheated, life is a scramble. They often seek second or third jobs, usually doing housework, to pay their debts. There is little money for socializing and leisure activities. They depend on one another. Social and domestic life revolves around networks of friends and co-workers, perhaps from the same locality in Kerala. Limited education and language skills prevent these workers from associating with other groups. They lack the financial and cultural wherewithal to participate in organized social activities and in most cases would be excluded if they tried. As a result, they are isolated from the institutions of Keralite and Indian society in Bahrain.

The well-educated and well-paid Keralites, on the other hand, who are also quite numerous, maintain a lively social and cultural life. Associations and organizations have proliferated. The types of groups formed differ somewhat from those discussed in previous sections. In some institutions, there is surprising

cooperation among people of differing backgrounds, while in others the existing diversity of the population in terms of traditional categories is clearly expressed. As among the Goans and Karnatakese, there is a lively democratic spirit and a strong desire for participation, which seem to produce the energy necessary for organization. Aspirations for upward mobility and the expression of status in modern terms are even stronger. As among the Mangaloreans, segmentation may occur through leadership competition as well as imported categorical differences.

Despite the size of the Keralite population, there is only one real social club, the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam. This represents a clear contrast with the Karnatakese case. Of course, Kerala is not divided linguistically like Karnataka; nearly all Keralites speak Malayalam. However, there are significant religious differences. Aside from Hindus and Muslims, the state of Kerala has the largest concentration of Christians in the Indian union. Religious distinctions are expressed in Bahrain, though not in the form of social clubs. In the Keraleeya Samajam itself, prominent members of all three groups cooperate, and their ability to do so may in large part explain the absence of alternative social clubs. On the other hand, there were signs of tension based on leadership competition, perhaps compounded by religious differences.

Though the club was formed in 1947, it did not get premises until the late 1960's. By then the membership had grown to over 200. It was up to 300 by 1975 and to 400 by 1978. A ceiling was placed on the size of the club at that time. The explanation

given was limited space, which in this case seemed reasonable. The premises were small and were located in the city center, where expansion was impossible and the presence of large foreign congregations a more sensitive matter than in other areas. The managing committee was looking for a new location, but, in the meantime, there was a lengthy waiting list, 200 or more in 1981. Of course, given the size of the population, there may well have been a waiting list even if the club enlarged considerably.

The demographic and occupational profiles of the membership indicate that the club was selective. According to club officers, about two thirds of the members had families, which brought the number of club users up to about 1000. About two thirds of the members were managers, professionals or white collar workers, the rest being in "small categories," such as trades, sales clerks in shops, etc. While it was asserted that "status" was not a criterion for membership, it was admitted that "behavior" was very important. (In fact, one member was disciplined—expelled, but reinstated on appeal--for slamming a door in anger while drunk.) Of course, the two go together.[12] There were few blue collar workers and no laborers, domestics, etc., in the Keraleeya Samajam. Artistic ability and other skills which might be assets to the club were also important in granting membership. In general, the members were an elite segment of the total Keralite population.

The relevance of ascriptive categories to membership is a complex issue. First of all, the category "Keralite" was closely adhered to; there were only three non-Keralites in the club, two

long-standing full members and one associate member. As noted above, club members were of mixed religious affiliation. However, most were Hindu and Christian. This had evidently always been the case; all the founding members who could be named were either Hindu or Christian. Muslims were not entirely excluded, and, in fact, in 1981 a Muslim was elected general secretary. However, he was an engineer working for the Bahrain Defense Force and had served in other offices before. The relatively small number of Muslims is probably due to the fact that most are either conservative or are recent migrants with low status. Despite lively competition for offices and leadership, the major religious groups got along in the Samajam. This contrasts sharply with the factionalism evident in Keralite Christian groups, which will be discussed below.

Of course, the presence of religious variation in the club does not necessarily mean that other ascriptive categories were not important in membership. Once again, we must deal with the issue of caste, which is relevant among both Hindus and Christians. The caste hierarchy in Kerala was a particularly rigid one in terms of caste separation, purity and pollution boundaries, and the disabilities forced on lower castes. Since the castes with the highest rank, such as the Nambudiri Brahmins, were also the landed elite, they did not seek education and modern economic opportunities until recently. Nor did they migrate in significant numbers. Migrants tend to be from the middling castes, especially the Nayars, who are the dominant caste of Kerala.

There were many Nayars in the Keraleeya Samajam, most notably from higher sub-castes like the Menons. Lewandowski (1980) notes a similar concentration of Nayars in the Keralite community in Madras. During one period, in fact, they dominated the ostensibly "Keralite" clubs there to such an extent that these groups were in fact Nayar caste associations. This is not the case in Bahrain. Aside from the presence of other religious categories, there are other Hindu castes represented, both in the membership and on the managing committee. However, no individuals of low caste background were encountered. In terms of caste, the club seemed to draw its members from the middle and upper middle sectors of Keralite society. The uppermost groups remained in Kerala, and, to the extent that the lowermost groups migrated, they were excluded, but probably as much on the basis of prestige as category.

The Christian membership in the club was drawn primarily from the upper ranks of Christians, who are in the middle and upper middle range of Keralite society as a whole. Caste is relevant among Keralite Christians in two ways. Some groups, particularly those which converted en masse, maintain endogamy and other practices in accordance with caste distinctions and rank before conversion (Caplan, 1980). However, among those whose forbears converted individually, and among South Indian Christians generally, sect--or, actually, sect grouping--constitutes a boundary very similar to caste (Fuller, 1976).

Keralites distinguish three waves of conversion, each of which is alleged to have come from successively lower castes and

is ranked accordingly. It is claimed that the first wave was initiated by the apostle Thomas. Today, the descendants of the earliest converts belong to a number of sects and are collectively referred to as "Syrian Christians." In terms of dogma, most of the sects are derived from the Syrian Orthodox Church, which is related to the Nestorian and Maronite churches in the Middle East. The second wave of conversion was that initiated by Portuguese and Spanish missionaries in the sixteenth century. Conversion was often en masse. The descendants are Roman Catholics, of course, and are referred to as "Latin Christians." Finally, the British missionaries in India initiated a third wave of conversion, mainly from the lower castes. Their descendants belong to a number of denominations, mostly Protestant, and are referred to as "New Christians" (Fuller, 1976: 54) or "CMS Christians," after the Church Mission Society, the main British missionary group. An individual might attend any church--or nearly any church, since some Syrian congregations exclude non-Syrians. However, for marriage and other purposes, it is descent--that is, membership in the three "castes" of Syrian, Latin or New Christians--rather than confessional affiliation, which is important (Fuller, 56-7). To return to the point: most of the Christians in the Keraleeya Samajam were Syrian and a number of them were or had been officers.

In sum, though the members of the Keraleeya Samajam were not from the elite of Kerala, they were drawn largely from elements of the population with relatively high categorical status or rank. It is important to note that categorical rank and prestige

status appear to be highly correlated; exclusion on the basis of "status" and "behavior" often entails exclusion on the basis of category. This combination of preferences operated against lower Hindu and Christian castes and Muslims. At the same time, these criteria were complemented, and could be counterbalanced, by personal qualities, such as leadership experience and, in this club in particular, artistic ability. Like the emphasis on sport in other clubs, the emphasis on art in the Samajam transcended, or at least minimized, potentially divisive ascriptive distinctions. Other qualifications were those favored by expatriate status in Bahrain--connections and lengthy residence. Most officers had worked in Bahrain for some time and were well placed as accountants or executives. The case of the Muslim general secretary has already been noted. The man who served as president in 1981 was more typical: he was a Syrian Christian who had worked for several years as an engineer and project manager for a major Bahraini contractor, and who had eventually gone into business with another Bahraini.

It seems that, given acceptable categorical status, leadership was based largely on personal qualities and achievement. However, the same ambitions which got leaders into office also produced competition and conflict. At a general body meeting in 1979, a dispute erupted between the current and former presidents over formal procedure--who should read the minutes of the last meeting--leading to a call for the former president to apologise. In response, he threatened to split the Samajam and walked out. Because he had "misbehaved on the floor

by challenging the decision taken by the General Body against his attitude," the membership unanimously voted to expel him. Perceiving the affair as a personal insult, he resigned.[13] He did not split the organization, but it seems possible that a leader might at some point accomplish this--by, for example, attempting to form a new Keralite sports club (a reversal of events in the Karnatakese situation). Competing leaders might even seek to exploit religious differences. Since the fragments, particularly the Hindu one, might not be viable in the political climate, there would appear to be considerable incentive to suppress religious differences. Interestingly, the motto of the club (in Malayalam) translates as "Unity is Strength." The club remained unified, but not without tension.

In some ways, the Keraleeya Samajam is a social club like those discussed previously--it is the scene for socializing, drinking, games, reading, hawzi, crafts (for women), etc. However, its formal purposes are cultural and it is in fact the most active cultural association in the Indian community. It stages plays and dance and music programs and sponsors contests in prose, poetry and the arts to encourage literary and artistic skills, especially among the children. Though there is a sincere interest in traditional regional culture in the Samajam, the manner in which this interest is expressed is not at all traditional. A comparison of the Gujerati Nawratri celebration, discussed earlier, and the Keralite Onam celebration will serve as an example.

Like Nawratri, Onam is a harvest festival, falling in

September. The celebration at the Keraleeya Samajam was held over a two day period. On the first night, the program began with a series of performances on stage of traditional music and dance, some associated with Onam and some with other occasions. The second half was a contemporary drama. On the second night, the first half of the program consisted of dance performances, mostly by children, and a Kathakulli performance--on the theme of women's liberation! The second half consisted of a few dance performances and a comedy skit about a Keralite returning home after working in Dubai.

Several aspects of the celebration may be noted. First, "tradition" was transferred from the arena of everyday life to the stage. Second, elements were selected from the traditional Onam panoply and combined with others, some traditionally found in other contexts and some not traditional at all. This suggests a generalization of the traditional heritage and little concern for syntagmatic or metonymical relationships among cultural elements. Finally, while the learning of traditional dance and music was encouraged among the children, it was encouraged in a particularly "modern" way. Most of them took lessons to acquire their skills. Then, beautifully dressed and self-consciously precocious, they performed to the warm applause of the assembly and received prizes for their efforts; no one was neglected. How similar to a dance or music recital one might attend in any American suburb, and how different from the Gujerati Nawratri. In the latter, hundreds of adults participated in a celebration which remained coherent in its traditional content and form, and

which was obviously immediately relevant to the belief systems and everyday lives of the participants. Among the Keralites, tradition had become socially and culturally compartmentalized; its performance was to a much greater degree the expression of modern, rational, "disenchanted," urban middle-class India.

The other main Keralite association, the Bahrain Kerala Muslim Jama'ath, is a very different kind of group. It is not a communal organization like the Bohra Association. The Mopillas in Bahrain lack the authority structure, cohesive organization, multiplex ties and cultural uniqueness of the Bohras. In fact, the Jama'ath is not a religious organization at all, in the normal sense of the term. It was emphasized that the premises of the Jama'ath were not used for worship. Religious activities were evidently proscribed at government insistence, and religion was defined as a personal matter. Most Mopillas are Sunni and may pray in local mosques. They lack the economic resources to build mosques even if they were inclined and allowed to do so.

The Jama'ath is not a social club in the usual sense, either. A reading room is kept open and the group meets twice a month, but there is no everyday schedule of games, drinking and socializing. Such activities were described as not in keeping with the group's religious nature and purposes. Occasional cultural programs are held--dramas, entertainers from India, Muslim holidays--but they are not held at the Jama'ath's premises. (The Pakistan Club has a large hall, which is often rented out to the Jama'ath and other clubs for functions.) A major focus of the club is charity work. The revenue from

cultural programs is not used for the group itself but to provide scholarships, emergency relief, and other forms of aid to India. The association also works with the Red Crescent in Bahrain. In terms of purposes and functions, then, the Jama'ath is a social and cultural organization more than a religious one, but religion--as belief and as the legitimation of the group's existence--limits the sphere of social and cultural activities, such that it is not really a "club" either.

The Jama'ath was organized in 1972 by a small group of well-placed Mopillas. It is possible that exclusion from the Keraleeya Samajam played some role in the formation of the Jama'ath. However, given the marked differences in the activities of the two groups, it seems likely that a perceived need to form a specifically Muslim group was more important than status and leadership competition. The three religions may have been perceived (or presented) as simply "Keralites" in the Samajam, but they were perceived as distinct groups by the members of the Jama'ath. There appeared to be little overlap in the two organizations. The Muslims in the Samajam were highly secularized, while those in the Jama'ath were more conservative.

In 1979, the membership stood at about 300 and was still open. Its president was a businessman who had been in Bahrain for many years. The membership included a number of professionals and white collar workers, but also laborers. It was acknowledged that the dues of many members were in arrears. These facts indicate that status was not as important for membership as in the Samajam. This may be attributed in part to a lower degree of

status consciousness among members. Aside from statements to this effect, made with evident sincerity, the activities of the association did not emphasize status and competition as did those of the Samajam. This indicates less concern with status marking, but also the fact that the Jama'ath represents a qualitatively different sort of social arena, that is, one in which status that might be marked in other arenas is less salient and is therefore less likely to be expressed. Whether or not status was important to the members of the Muslim Jama'ath in other situations, it was not important to them in the Muslim Jama'ath itself.

Yet, since there are thousands of Mopillas in Bahrain, the small size of the Jama'ath would seem to indicate that segmentation of some kind occurs within the Keralite Muslim category. In Kerala, some Muslims have long been traders and have now moved into middle class occupations. Most members of the Jama'ath are from this stratum. Most Mopillas in Kerala, though, are uneducated, rural agricultural workers widely regarded as "backward." Large numbers of them have migrated recently. Though the Jama'ath has not attempted to recruit these laborers, they have been admitted when they applied. The fact that most are not members should be seen more as a product of contingent economic and social barriers than as the effect of a status boundary actively marked by formal organization. Given the fragmentation, ignorance and poverty of many Mopillas in Bahrain, it is not surprising that few would seek membership. The Jama'ath did serve some welfare functions for these workers, but it could do so only on a case-by-case basis. The constraints on the

formation of organizations that might incorporate disadvantaged Indian workers or systematically look after their interests will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Despite its name, the categorical affilation of its members, and their common cultural orientations, the Jama'ath is not really a religious body. Because the government wants to encourage Islam, or at least wants to appear to be doing so, it allows the formation of ostensibly religious groups--perhaps, given the legitimacy of the categorical base, it must allow them. Yet, it also recognizes the potential political implications of Islam, and, therefore, strictly limits religious functions. (Indeed, any voluntary association whose existence can be legitimated can have political implications, especially among Bahrainis, and must be carefully regulated.) Political sensitivities and government regulation have a somewhat different effect on Hindu and Christian Keralites. Briefly, they discourage the former and encourage the latter. I will take each case in turn.

Some Keralite Hindus visit the sole institution in Bahrain for open Hindu worship, the Bhatia temple, but most do not. Though they are quite numerous, Keralite Hindus have no formal organizations, for religious or other purposes. Similarly, despite indeterminate but substantial numbers in several castes, such as the Nayars, there are no caste associations. This may in part be a matter of inclination; many of them have evidently lost or privatized their religious beliefs and, in the absence of practical interests structured around them, caste distinctions

may be relegated to the private or informal sphere. It could also be argued that migration is so recent that there has simply not been sufficient time for organizations to emerge. However, given the large numbers involved, it is reasonable to assume that these are not the only reasons, or even the most important ones. Gujerati Hindus have been in Bahrain much longer, and they do not have a separate temple either, or any formal caste associations. (The presence of a Vaishnavite temple does allow the expression of at least one dimension of their religiosity. However, like the Tamils, many Keralites are Shaivites.) When asked about this, one Keralite Hindu (a Pillai) replied, "We stick with the Samajam." It would appear that there was little choice. Political barriers are insuperable. Keralite Hindus lack the influence of the Bhatias. Perhaps more significantly, as the affair of the new Sikh temple seems to show, the government is no longer in a position to allow the formation of temples or caste associations.

If the government can <u>not</u> be seen to be encouraging Hindu groups, and can only be <u>seen</u> to be encouraging Muslim groups, and will allow social clubs only for limited purposes, only when they serve large groups, only when a case is persistently argued, and even then only with considerable delay, none of these restrictions apply to Christian groups. Aside from the fact that Christians are People of the Book, the important British and American presence would make it impolitic to prevent them from organizing, even in the face of Sa'udi pressure to do so. Other contextual conditions also make for a fertile environment. Since scale is not an important factor in organization, these groups

can be very small. The resources required for organization are minimal. Unlike clubs, which must rent premises, buy furnishings, etc., most nascent religious congregations simply arrange to conduct services in existing structures.

The National Evangelical Church (formerly the Dutch Reformed Church, established by American missionaries around the turn of the century) conducts Evangelical services in several languages. The building itself is now an ecumenical center in which other groups conduct their own services as well. Some groups use the facilities of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, established by the British in the 1940's. Even Sacred Heart has become an umbrella of organizations; it conducts services in numerous languages to groups which are, in effect, separate congregations.

For all these reasons, given existing denominational differentiation, Christian groups have proliferated, especially among the Keralites. Though the variety of caste categories present in the population cannot be given formal expression, the variety of Christian sects can. In 1980, there were fourteen separate Keralite Christian congregations: one Syrian Orthodox, one Jacobite (a Syrian sect), one Mar Thoma (another Syrian sect), one Roman Catholic, one Anglican, one Church of South India, three Pentecostal, two Brethren, one Evangelical, the old Malayalee Christian Congregation, and one called the Bhakt Singh Assembly House of Prayer.

These groups vary in size and some are more independent than others. While some of the congregations are quite large—the Mar Thomas numbered over 1000 and the Syrian Orthodox about 600--

others are very small, such as the Brethren and Pentecostal assemblies. The National Evangelical church provides premises for the Keralite Evangelical congregation and for some other groups. Some of the congregations, especially the more affluent ones, have rented or built structures to hold services. Most notable are St. Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church and St. Peter's Jacobite Church. The Syrian churches are regularly visited by prelates from India and contribute generously to their denominational communities at home. Clergy for these groups are appointed from India. The Roman Catholic and Anglican congregations were under the authority of the established churches, Sacred Heart and St. Christopher's, and held services there under their clergy, who were also appointed from abroad. Among the smaller groups, such as the Brethren, local leaders have more authority. This seems to have contributed to organizational instability.

Two distinct patterns of schism were evident in the formation of these congregations. At first, several denominations might worship together in Bahrain. As more and more Keralites migrated, more adherents of particular sects arrived. Eventually, a threshold point was reached; each denomination would seek to form its own congregation and would be allowed to do so. However, in some cases, congregations split over leadership, particularly where local leaders had formed congregations and continued to lead them, as among the Brethren and Pentecostals. A split was even developing in the Mar Thoma parish in Bahrain. In this case, size may have been the destabilizing factor.

These Christian congregations represent an arena in which imported distinctions can be expressed relatively freely, and where the organizational exuberance present in Keralite society has been recreated in Bahrain to an unusual degree. In fact, given the affluence of the migrants and, in some cases, the absence of Indian elites, differentiation may have been encouraged in Bahrain more than it would be in India. This, at least, was the opinion of one American missionary with decades of experience in India and in the Gulf. Unfortunately, it was impossible to observe processes of status differentiation, exclusion and boundary maintenance in detail. However, the mere co-existence of these fragmented and diverse groups, on the one hand, and the Samajam, with its categorical and organizational solidarity, on the other, illustrates the multi-potentiality for cultural expression and organization present among the Keralites. The formation of different groups of different kinds, often by the same individuals, demonstrates their malleability in adapting this cultural repertoire to the requirements and potential of the environment.

CONCLUSION

All the general regional, linguistic and religious categories used to describe group formation in this chapter would be referred to as "communities" by Indians themselves; the folk definition embraces both formal and informal organization and any solidarity that is recognized and salient in some situations.

However, it is apparent that most of these groups are communities, in the sociological sense and in the sense that the Bhatias and Bohras are communities, to a very limited extent. For example, though Parsis are extensively and formally organized, their organization serves few functions and there is little social interaction; they are not really a community at all. Among Sikhs, there is a small core community, but the entire population was neither integrated into this community nor formally organized. The definition and organization of the group had been disturbed by migration and the loss of the temple. The so-called Gujerati community is, to a much greater degree, a real community that does, in fact, extend throughout the linguistic or regional category. However, it does so only in one dimension: it is a Hindu Gujerati community. Until recently, its form was nearly the reverse of the Parsi group: it was a community with no formal organization. Like the Sikh "community," the Gujerati community was in transition, but it was this formalization, rather than increased migration, which seemed to be the primary cause of structural change.

Among Sikhs and Gujerati Hindus, formal organization has been based on pre-existing communities, and the problematic has been boundary adjustment. Among South Indians, such informally developed solidarities are less in evidence. Formal associations have been much more significant social arenas than among North Indians. In fact, community--such as it is--seems to emerge out of the social interaction occurring in these formal groups, more than the reverse. However, none of these organizations actually

extend throughout the respective categories. The Goans come closest to being an extensively organized group, the Mangaloreans less so, the Kannada speakers even less, the Keralites much less still, and the Tamils hardly at all. In all these cases, save the last, the differences between the boundaries of organization and the boundaries of category are defined primarily in terms of income, education, prestige, etc.

Of course, within most of these regional and linguistic "communities" there are other kinds of "communities" embedded, those of sub-categorical affiliation, such as religion, sect and caste. Each of these groups has a unique pattern of internal cultural differentiation, and not all dimensions of differentiation are present in each group. Moreover, only a few of these distinctions are recognized as salient in Bahrain. Thus, there are caste differences among both Gujerati and Keralite Hindus, but while there is a Soni "community," there is not a Nayar "community"; there is a Keralite Muslim "community," but not a Karnatakese Muslim "community," and there are evidently no Goan Muslims at all. The "communities" which do exist are solidarities recognized in informal relations, with a dynamic of formalization similar to that noted above: the Sonis remain an informally organized "community," while the Syrian Orthodox "community" is based, or exists, primarily as a special-purpose formal organization with a weak informal communal structure.

While many categories at this level of differentiation might be elicited as elements of identity, most of them lack organization beyond networks and occasional interaction; they are

expressed only minimally in Bahrain and are not recognized and named as "communities." It bears repeating that even those sub-categories which might be thought of as "communities" differ markedly from the Bhatias and Bohras. Their groups are limited in purpose, and the populations lack the numbers, demographic distribution, migratory networks or personal inclination to form closely-knit, formally organized communities. All of them also lack the necessary political influence.

This brings us to the second major issue of group formation, the effects of the context of Bahraini society, and, especially, of regulation by its government. The various groups present in the Indian population must, in one sense, be understood in relation to given patterns of differentiation, occasionally referred to here as "imported"; the Gujeratis are mostly conservative Hindus, the Karnatakese are split by language, the Malayalees by religion, etc. These patterns were not created by the context of Bahraini society. Recalling Crawford Young, we see that a plural structure is always in flux, that "modes of incorporation" affect (rather than effect) given structures at a given point in time, and, therefore, that an understanding of the background of the groups and of the history of their presence in Bahrain are necessary for understanding their form. However, the context has quite obviously shaped the outcome by encouraging some groups and discouraging others, in effect selecting among various potentialities for group formation and cultural expression. In fact, it is for contextual reasons that many of the existing identities or solidarities in the population are not

"communities" or formal groups.

While limiting the expression of solidarities of caste, Hinduism, and, to a lesser extent, Sikhism and Islam, the government has allowed the formation of groups along regional and linguistic lines and among Christian sects. The established presence of such organizations as the Young Goans and the Keraleeya Samajam was probably important, both in defining Indian society to Bahraini officials and as a precedent for group form. Policy-makers have allowed the emergence of a limited number of groups of moderate size, while preventing the proliferation of small groups and of those which might be divisive, politically troublesome or otherwise difficult to control. As a result, some Indians have suppressed internal distinctions to form groups at a broader level of categorical solidarity. The Keraleeya Samajam is a good example. This phenomenon is also found in other foreign populations: the Pakistanis suppressed regional differences to form one club, while the Sri Lankans suppressed religious and "ethnic" differences. In some Indian cases, irrepressible prejudice and factionalism have been expressed surreptitiously, as among the Gujeratis and Karnatakese. But even in these cases, the political environment has defined the form and the ostensible base of group formation.

Generally, the permitted types of groups have utilized and reinforced the linguistic and regional elements of Indian identity and culture, that is, those which are non-traditional or, at least, are of limited salience for differentiation within most local social systems in India. Regional and linguistic

associations have become the mark of maturity in a particular group, in terms of size, demographic parameters, wealth, sophistication and cultural orientations. Of course, this process may be complicated by internal categorical differentiation, prestige and status distinctions and competition for leadership. Nonetheless, it is significant that a Gujerati organization was finally formed and that even some of the Sikhs were thinking in regional terms (though perhaps by now the region they are thinking of is Khalistan rather than the Punjab!). To the extent that the expatriate community in Bahrain has become a prestige arena independent of India, which is increasingly the case as more migrant workers stay longer, these elements of identity and cultural expression are developed to a much greater degree than they might be in India.

The plural environment of Bahrain may thus reinforce processes of change occurring in India--westernization, industrialization, urbanization, internal migration and political change, including the formation of linguistic states. The transformation and devaluation of caste and other lower-level solidarities is most evident in the South Indian population, but it is present in other groups, as well. In some ways, the trends in Bahrain are similar to those occurring among urban and migratory populations in India (Lewandowski, 1980).

The primary Bahraini institutions shaping group formation have been those of government, of course, but it is important to recall the nature of the political system, with its informal processes and social and economic linkages and implications.

These dimensions of Bahraini society affect the kinds of influence group leaders can acquire, which in turn affect the kinds of authority they have within groups. Though leaders maintain contacts with government officials and, in some cases, shaikhs, much of their power--if this is an appropriate term--comes from connections with employers and other Bahraini or foreign patrons. These leaders are in a very different position than Bhatia and Bohra leaders and, as noted earlier, they act on behalf of formal groups of limited scope with limited interests. The actual basis of power in the society is tacitly acknowledged in the contradiction between elected and appointed authority in formal organizations and the relegation of democratic process to a restricted sphere. Finally, in considering "contextual" factors, the financial and logistical constraints on organization and the increasingly uncomfortable position of Indians in Bahraini society must be considered. Like other factors, these allow group formation while channelling it in specific directions, which have been discussed in the case studies.

Though the Indian community in Bahrain is quite old, its present size is new and radically alters its position in the society. The structure of the community may change significantly--in fact, it must be assumed to be in the process of change--and the type and direction of change will in large measure be defined by processes of development in Bahrain, the policies of the Bahraini government and its flexibility in implementing them. Thus far, group formation has been shaped in definable ways, but not without some flexibility. One thinks here

of the persistent, but successful, lobbying of the founders of the Konkan Singers and Kannada Sangha--and of the long-term effects of such persistent lobbying in East Africa (Morris, 1956, 1968).

It is unclear how flexible the society, and the government in particular, can or will be. However, it was clear at the time of research that a great deal of cultural variation in the population was not yet organized. In comparison to situations in urban India and some other overseas communities, there were few clubs. Some of the regional and linguistic categories had not been exploited for all the acceptable purposes. Though some of the Indian regional and linguistic organizations had been in existence for some time, growth in them was recent and could continue with unforeseeable implications. Many other groups had only just been established, sometimes on precarious bases. So far, none of them had become de facto caste associations. In fact, caste appeared to be a relatively unimportant dimension of cultural differentiation in most groups. But, it was <u>there</u>, and could insert itself into clubs and associations, as could religion.

Whether or not, or how, this potential is realized would seem to depend on political factors. If migration, especially of families, is allowed to increase and populations become more numerous and stable--and this <u>is</u> a political factor--it is likely that the pressure will build for more groups of various kinds, and that traditional distinctions will begin to have greater salience. The ability and willingness of the government to

withstand this pressure will depend on its political position and the sensitivity of the foreign presence. Recent developments--a number of projects requiring more workers in the context of a deteriorating political situation--would seem to be the worst possible combination. As more Indians and other foreigners arrive, or stay longer, their social life and cultural expression may come under increasing scrutiny and regulation.

Before returning to these issues in the conclusion, it is necessary to discuss one final dimension of Indian social organization in Bahrain. Though the groups discussed in this and the preceding chapter are quite diverse, they do not exhaust the cultural repertoire of the population or their organizing energy. The broadest dimension of Indian identity, Indian nationality itself, is expressed in a number of "All-India" institutions and organizations. Like other types of solidarity, the expression of nationality has been shaped by complex contextual factors, perhaps even more constraining in their effect.

NOTES

1. Dumont (1970) has argued that despite an "ideology" of equality in Western societies, there is an "apperception" of hierarchy. It would seem that despite an "ideology" of hierarchy in Indian society, there are both a counter-ideology of equality and its "apperception," or, more precisely, "substantiation," in social relations.

2. See Enthoven, III: 177-221 and Appendix A, for a detailed account of the history of the Parsis and a discussion of their traditional customs and beliefs.

3. Unfortunately, it seems likely that Shaikh Muhammad's motives were less kindness than spite. His relationship with his brothers is not good. He is the youngest of the brothers and, because he was his father's favorite, also the wealthiest. He has been excluded from power in the government and over the years has become somewhat eccentric. He defies and annoys his brothers whenever possible; encouraging non-Muslims seems to have represented a good opportunity for doing so.

4. There are few Patels in Bahrain, though, according to informants, many migrated to East Africa, where they are shopkeepers and merchants. Patels are reputed to be one of the most numerous groups in the United States, as well.

5. A variety of names are used for these castes in India. There are also many jatis of Sonis which are not represented in Bahrain. See Enthoven, III: 344-348.

6. Varying accounts were given: that the Parajiyas migrated in 1885 and the Banyas in 1890, that both migrated in 1890, and that both migrated in 1895. I have used the one most frequently offered.

7. Family members have usually achieved a comfortable standard of living. Open migration has allowed an influx of workers who are available at wages below those family members will accept. So, far from the "self-exploitation" common in family firms, some goldsmith families place members in better-paying jobs outside the firm and, within the firm, exploit others.

8. The man was evidently a Gola. Enthoven (II: 6-9) notes that the Golas were the highest caste on the lower side of the boundary between high and low caste Hindus. They were held in contempt because of their lowly occupation (rice-pounding), poverty and use of alcohol.

9. The general secetary of the Konkan Singers also managed a band, in which his son played. From the name of the group, Kenny and His Rebels, it may be surmised that they did not play Karnatic music.

10. Expressing his group's reflexive identity as the "Irish of the East," the president of the Young Goans claimed that his club had the highest liquor consumption of any expatriate club in Bahrain. In fact, according to one of the liquor agents, that dubious honor goes to the British Club, whose members remain the swillingest of all. Nonetheless, the Goans and Karnatakese consume a great deal of alcohol, and this consumption explains the willingness of liquor agents to subsidize their social events.

11. Interestingly, the Keraleeya Samajam was formed before the State of Kerala. It would seem that agitation for a separate language-based state during the 1930's and 1940's, which Lewandowski (1980) describes in Kerala itself and in the community in Madras, was also stirring Malayalee consciousness in Bahrain.

12. Owens and Nandy have mentioned the importance of manners in voluntary associations in Howrah, West Bengal. An upwardly mobile caste, the Mahisyas, saw club participation and mixing with members of other castes, especially higher ones, as means of learning the "good behaviour," manners and interpersonal skills useful in business and politics (1975:42). Owens and Nandy also note that, unlike caste associations, multi-caste voluntary associations served cultural interests more than material ones (Ibid.,24,26); that membership tended to confirm, rather than confer, prestige and status (Ibid.,47); and that "working class individuals who would serve to gain the most from associational membership very rarely belong to such associations" (Ibid.).

Voluntary associations in Bahrain are comparable on most points. However, while the problematic of manners and prestige is the same, participation may be somewhat more open in Bahrain than in many Indian contexts, Kerala in particular. Since they find adequate opportunity in India itself, members of the Indian elite rarely migrate. In India, according to informants, they tend to suppress the presumptions of their status inferiors by restricting membership in voluntary associations, which they tend to dominate. These boundaries would probably be more rigidly enforced in highly stratified social systems, like Kerala. The absence of the elite from oversea communities was said to lower barriers to participation in groups marking or confering prestige.

The acquisition of manners is not simply the imitation of one's social betters, of course. It is the cultivation of sophistication and subtlety in taste and of self-control (or repression?) in behavior. Though what is involved in the Indian case is hardly the domestication of a warrior class, the development of manners and prestige among middle-class Indians is similar in other respects to the evolution of manners in Western civilization, described by Elias (1978). Though manners, as we know them, originated in the nobility (or, in the Indian case, with the British), they were appropriated by the grand bourgeoisie (the educated Brahmins, Parsis and Muslims), from whom they were distributed to other members of society. Of course, since they were, and are, used to mark status boundaries,

they are constantly refined and the distribution is never completed.

13. On another occasion, dissatisfaction with the managing committee was expressed in a more devious and malicious manner. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs maintains a general welfare fund. As a contribution to this fund, it is entitled to collect ten percent of the proceeds from any event for which foreign clubs sell tickets. In a letter to the Ministry, some members of the Samajam reported that the club had charged admission at a recent drama competition, but had not printed tickets in order to avoid paying the commission. They hoped the information would help the government--which "has been very helpful to us for the past 32 years"--collect its proper dues and prevent events being held without permission in the future. It may be assumed that they also hoped the managing committee would be disciplined.

Chapter Eight

ALL-INDIA AND COMMUNITY-WIDE INSTITUTIONS

The presence of the great variety of sub-communal solidarities and associations discussed in the preceding chapters might lead one to conclude that the Indian "community" in Bahrain is highly fragmented, and, thus, not much of a community at all. An appraisal of those institutions which ostensibly include or represent the entire national population will, I believe, tend to support such a conclusion. Though there are several institutions that draw members from all, or nearly all, the various regional, linguistic, religious, caste and sectarian groups discussed thus far, there are none which incorporate the entire population or even represent it effectively. Indian national solidarity is relevant in many contexts--in the terms of the preceding discussion, there is a "community"--but, in fact, not much is made organizationally of the social category "Indian" in Bahrain, either informally or formally. The reasons for this are to be found both within the population--in the cultural traditions and relational propensities the migrants bring with them--and in the influences the context exerts on this cultural and social fabric. Of course, as always, the "internal" and "external" do not operate independently, but dialectically.

Seven institutions will be discussed in this chapter. Six of them are voluntary associations, and, of these, three may be called cultural associations: the Chinmaya Family, the Indian Fine Arts Society, and the Indian Ladies' Association. These

groups are very selective in terms of status, and, as a result, they are very small. There is also an All-India social club, the Bahrain Sports Club, which has been mentioned before. The BSC is much larger than the three cultural associations, but it is still quite selective, also in terms of status. Another formal organization, the Indian Association, was ostensibly for all Indians in Bahrain. However, at the same time that the population increased and regional clubs grew, it declined; by the late 1970's, it was defunct. The last voluntary association, the Indian School Association, underwent a structural transformation prior to the building of the new school. Group processes in this association, in particular, reflect changes in patterns of migration occurring in the late 1960's and early 1970's, which led, in turn, to changes in community leadership.

Finally, I include the Indian Embassy as an All-India institution. It symbolically represents Indian nationality in Bahrain, and, thus, contributes to the solidarity of the category and the maintenance of a boundary in a minimal sense. It seeks to organize the population only for special purposes, and even then not extensively. It also seeks to represent the interests of all Indians in Bahrain. Its very limited success in doing so clearly indicates the contextual pressures constraining the emergence of Indian national identity in Bahrain.

The nature of membership and leadership, the activities and the success--or failure--of these institutions illustrate processes of differentiation and group formation operating within the Indian population as well as between Indians and Bahraini

society. The small associations are more simply and directly the products of internal differentiation, and are discussed first.

THE CHINMAYA FAMILY

The Chinmaya Family in Bahrain is a branch of the world-wide organization of His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda. Chinmaya himself is a Keralite, but his organization is now centered near Bombay. Though the institution is universal in participation and scope--there are thriving chapters in the United States--nearly all members in Bahrain were Indians. The teachings of Chinmayananda are a reinterpretation of gnana yoga, that is, the intellectual and mystical traditions or "paths" in Hinduism. His approach is ecumenical and modern. The issues of sect, caste, karma and rebirth are generally left aside. Much of Hindu theology, and especially eschatology, is dismissed as parables for the troubled novice. Because most members of the Chinmaya Family were Indian and because it was neither formally nor informally an institution for Hindu worship in the normal sense, it is included here, rather than in the preceding chapter.

Despite his revisionist perspective, Chinmayananda retains some of the usual assumptions of Hinduism, such as the notion of Brahman, the underlying unity of all forms of existence, and distinct planes of consciousness. The teaching presumes the possibility of "salvation," in some sense, in this world irrespective of rebirth and eventual merging with Brahman. This is defined as the realization, in both intellectual and experiential terms, of the presence of God within the individual,

rather than outside, above or beyond. Its goals are a purification of the spirit, the attainment of gnosis and the experience of unity with Brahman through self-understanding, self-control and meditation.

In concrete terms, this means the study and group discussion of texts written by Chinmayananda, principally commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita. These texts encourage devotion and, in general, seek to redefine Hindu religiosity for the modern world. (The texts are written in English, which the Swami acknowledges to be his best language for philosophical expression.) Since its principal theme is the conflict between the sanguine duty of the warrior Arjuna and the apparent necessity of rejecting this duty in order to attain salvation--that is, the problem of living "in the world, but not of it"--the Bhagavad Gita is, in a sense, pre-adapted for this purpose. The teachings are not oriented toward renunciation or asceticism, but toward the rational identification, understanding and control of vasanas, the desires which agitate the spirit and attach one to the material world. In a more practical vein, it is commonly understood that when the proper order of things--that all things, good or bad, pleasurable or painful, come not from the self, but from God--is kept constantly in mind, the passions are controlled, and ego is eliminated, then one will also become more efficient and productive in everyday life.

Knowledgeable members of the group provide guidance in a more or less Socratic fashion, in the context of discussion of verses from the sacred text and the Swami's exegesis. The "work"

of the study is the operationalization of text and exegesis in terms of the everyday lives of students, as Indian migrants living in Bahrain and, more generally, as educated Hindus trying to reconcile their religious identities to the extremely agitating world around them. The further goals of the teaching, the use of meditation to both attain the control of the spirit and to seek (if such an egocentric verb may be used to describe the process of detachment that is involved) the experience of Brahman, are not well-developed in the group, at least not in Bahrain. In effect, then, the group functions more for therapy than mystical enlightenment.

As this description implies, the main group activities are informal. There are no formal stages of practice and no initiation. Study sessions are held in several Indian languages--Hindi, Gujerati and Marathi--but the most intellectually sophisticated one is in English. In addition, there are weekly services for the membership as a whole. The main activity in these meetings is the group performance of bhajans, or devotional songs. Bhajans are very popular in many parts of India and, in fact, are a common basis of group organization there. Interestingly, they are associated with bhakta yoga, that is, the devotional path to salvation, rather than gnana yoga. Their inclusion in Chinmaya Family services further illustrates the non-ascetic character of the group and marks the constituency it draws upon: they are not the scholarly elite of India, but the educated middle class, who retain a taste for various religious activities. Weekly meetings also include prayer, arthi, or

sacrifice cum offering, the discussion of group affairs, and prasad, or blessing. Usually this is just tea, but on special occasions a patron may provide food as well.

The group was established in Bahrain in 1971 as the Chinmaya Mission. When they sought to register with the government in 1974, it was "suggested" that the name be changed, and the current one was adopted. It seems likely that without powerful supporters, who will be discussed shortly, the group might not have been allowed to register at all. The membership fluctuates between a low of around 150 and a high of over 200. It rises after the occasional yagnas, or retreats, conducted in Bahrain by Chinmayananda himself, and falls off again afterwards as interest wanes. The active membership in the group is considerably smaller. About 50 or so attend the weekly meetings. Most are men. In categorical terms, the range of membership is broad: many of the most active members are South Indians, principally Tamils and Keralites, but Bhatias, Gujeratis and even Sikhs and Muslims participate. The few non-Indian members included a Swiss couple and a curious American anthropologist. In terms of its Indian membership it is an "All-India" association. Participation is ostensibly limited only by personal interest and the ability to pay modest dues.

Even modest dues constitute a major barrier for many Indians in Bahrain, of course. Personal interest is closely linked with religion, and is also a significant limiting factor. However, the principal boundaries defining membership appear to be those of prestige and status. The regular membership of the association

is drawn from the highest stratum of the community, those who are educated enough to accept an intellectual interpretation of Hinduism, sufficiently "modernized" to accept a non-traditional reinterpretation, yet not so modernized that religion has been eliminated from their lives. Though they might not be the intellectual elite of India itself, they are very much that in Bahrain. The expectations in terms of "behavior," especially in the study groups, and particularly in the English language group, include not merely manners, but articulate verbal self-expression. All but the best educated and most self-assured are intimidated, though not intentionally. Aside from limitations of expense and personal interest, then, many Indians are kept from participating because of the social environment. The reexamination and redefinition of Hindu identity cannot take place in a group in which status consciousness and differentiation are maintained. Unfortunately, it seems likely that living in Bahrain motivates just such a social psychological process. That is, while the larger context stimulates an interest in the teachings of Chinmayananda, this interest cannot be developed within the narrow context of the Chinmaya Family. Most of the active participants in the group are well-educated Hindus of high caste.

The long-standing president is a Sindhi Amil. He will appear elsewhere in this chapter, and might well be introduced here. His father became established as a general merchant in Bahrain in the 1930's. The son now owns one of the two "department stores" in Bahrain, which has branches throughout the Gulf. Wealth and

connections have given him influence among both Indians and Bahrainis. In the mid-1970's, he was granted Bahraini nationality, the only Hindu ever to have received it. As noted earlier, nationality confers important economic privileges, but not full acceptance in the local society. This man remains Indian in a sense, and his dual identity has enabled him to serve as a patron and spokesman for the Indian community on occasion. It is important to note that his influence is quite different from that of other club officers. Though he is very "modern" in some of his orientations, his position and connections in Bahraini society are more like those of the Bhatias than those of the presidents of the Young Goans and Keraleeya Samajam.

For the Chinmaya Family, he secured the patronage of several prominent Bahrainis who were interested in mysticism and sympathetic to Indian intellectual traditions. Their combined influence and support have been helpful in gaining permission for the group to continue its activities and in getting visas for Chinmaya to visit. (Though his teachings are non-sectarian in many respects, Chinmayananda is identified by Arab religious leaders as a Hindu religious figure. As the legitimacy of Islam grows, the presence of Chinmayananda becomes increasingly sensitive.) Though this merchant has sought to retire from the presidency of the Chinmaya family, he is invariably re-elected. As one member noted, he is the only one with the influence necessary to deal with Bahrainis and get government cooperation.

THE INDIAN FINE ARTS SOCIETY

The Indian Fine Arts Society is a small association dedicated to furthering the arts, especially dance and music. Its interests include both North and South Indian classical traditions and some regional or folk dance and music as well. It sponsors monthly programs using local amateurs and, occasionally, professionals from India. The latter are rarely brought to Bahrain for special performances, but may be intercepted as they pass through Bahrain on their way to other destinations. (Excellent communications networks are vital in taking advantage of such opportunities. In the past, these networks were centered around the Customs; today, they are at the airport. Indeed, the president in 1981 was an executive at Gulf Air.) The Fine Arts Society is not a social club. In fact, it had no premises, and events were held at the British Council. Proceeds from programs were donated to the Indian School.

The group was established in 1974 and registered soon thereafter. In 1981, there were about 60 members. The president just mentioned was a "serving" Bhatia. Other officers and members included a sprinkling from several regions, but most were South Indians, especially Tamils. Most, but not all, were Hindus, and of the Hindus, most were of high caste. The ambassador was a patron of the Society, and had donated instruments for its musicians. There was a great deal of overlap in the membership of this association and the Chinmaya Family, indicating that both were particularly attractive to the educated elite.

While the membership of the Indian Fine Arts Society is

theoretically open to anyone who might be interested, it is clearly a very exclusive institution. As in the Chinmaya Family, the group boundary is based primarily on prestige, rather than category. However, in the Fine Arts Society, the boundary is maintained by conscious and intentional intimidation and exclusion more than is the case in the Chinmaya Family. The organization maintains very strict standards for the "behavior" of members. The concern is not with "status," in itself, but with a sense of decorum that is considered good manners and thought to indicate a serious attitude toward the arts. Club officers noted that they preferred a selective audience and often charged admission only to keep out lookers. Children are not permitted at performances, except for special children's programs. Members are expected to be punctual and quiet, and to stay seated throughout performances. These are not traditional forms of behavior. They are refinements of the norms in the Keraleeya Samajam and are very nearly the opposite of those evident in the Gujerati Nawratri. Though the Keraleeya Samajam compartmentalized tradition and put it on the stage, it did not eliminate the socializing and coming-and-going, the children and the noise, that characterize communal cultural performances, such as the Gujerati Nawratri. At the Fine Arts Society, patrons and members are expected to be spectators in the Western sense: knowledgeable and appreciative of classical culture, but respectful, quiet non-participants. Such an attitude is not likely to be maintained by any but the educated elite.

In the Fine Arts Society, "behavior" did not seem to be

simply a surreptitious rationalization of "status" boundaries, as was evidently the case in some of the social clubs. Rather, the definition of "status" itself was given more in aesthetic terms, i.e., in terms of manners and self-control, than in terms of occupation, education, caste, etc. There also seemed to be an emotional dimension in this aesthetic definition of status, making it an "internalization" as well as a refinement of other definitions. Interestingly, in this emotional dimension, there may be some continuity with older notions of rank and purity. Like color, physiognomy and other presumed entailments of caste, manners provide the basis for a strong emotional reaction made independent or irrespective of knowledge of status. The similarities and differences between revulsion at vulgar manners and revulsion at inferior birth will hopefully be appreciated: while the emotions may be similar, one is ascriptive and irrevocable while the other is not.

THE INDIAN LADIES' ASSOCIATION

The Indian Ladies' Association is a tiny group. It was founded in 1960 by the wife of the Bahraini/Indian department store owner mentioned above. She remains the principal organizing force, but now holds the office of vice-president. The wife of the ambassador is the honorary president. There are a few professional women in the association, but most members are the wives of other prominent Indians in Bahrain. The core of the association is a network of Sindhi Amils. There are several members from the other long-established groups in Bahrain, the

Gujeratis and Bhatias, and a sprinkling of members from many other regions--Punjab, Karnataka, and even Uttar Pradesh. Most are Hindu, but a few are from other religious categories and there are even a few Pakistanis and Bahrainis. The group sought to maintain categorical diversity both in the membership and on the managing committee, so as not to discourage potential members. However, it was obviously quite exclusive on the basis of status. In 1981, there were only about 50 members. In fact, the group was more a private club based on friendship networks than a voluntary association. It is included here because it did become a registered formal organization--due perhaps to the influence of its founders--and because it illustrates the general lack of organization among Indian women in Bahrain.

The group's activities illustrate the nature of its solidarity. They hold a monthly tea and meet weekly to sew, make handicrafts, and socialize. They participate as a group in the celebration of Indian holidays and organize fairs to sell their crafts. Some of the proceeds are donated to charities in both India and Bahrain, and some are used to maintain the Association. Their main expense is rent, for a large flat in suburban Manama which they share with the Chinmaya Family. The Association used to run a nursery school, which provided revenue, but new government regulations made it impossible to continue. Before moving to new premises in 1980, they had let space for yoga and dance classes, given by professionals. These activities had not yet resumed. However, the ladies looked forward to starting them again and organizing other fund-raising activities. On the other

hand, they were also planning to travel together. This reflection of the personal networks underlying the group suggests that, though they would rationally organize for limited ends, the ladies were not going to significantly broaden the membership in their association or turn it into a business, like other social clubs, such as the following.

THE BAHRAIN SPORTS CLUB

In contrast to the three small groups just discussed, the Bahrain Sports Club is the largest of all the Indian associations. As noted earlier, it was founded in 1915 and is the oldest expatriate organization in Bahrain. It has always been the main social club for Indians, even after regional clubs were established. In 1948, the club moved into premises just to the south of the city center. The club does not own the property, but leases it from the government, rather than a private party, at a nominal rent (indeed, less than nominal, BD30 in 1981). These facts reflect the club's influence and even quasi-official status. The BSC grew steadily over the years, and membership stood at about 750 in 1970. In 1981, it was up to 1250, with a waiting list of about 1000. About 900-950 were general members. Most of them were Indian, but they included about 50 Bahrainis as well. There were also about 300 associate members, admitted for sports or status. Most of these were Bahrainis, but there were a few Pakistanis and Britons, and even one Filipino.

Though the founders were mainly Muslims and Goan Christians, over the years the club has become predominantly Hindu and

Keralite. In 1981, club officers estimated that 60% of the Indian membership was Hindu, 20% Christian, and about 10% each, Muslim and Sikh. In regional terms, 50-60% were estimated to be South Indians, two-thirds of them Keralites. The Bhatias were the next largest group, about 10-15% of the membership; most of them were from the "serving side" of that community. There were substantial numbers of Punjabis, many of them Sikhs, and many Gujeratis, including several younger Sonis and even a few Bohras. The older and more conservative members of the Bhatia, Bohra and Gujerati communities rarely participated in the BSC.

Like the Chinmaya Family, the Indian Fine Arts Society, and the Indian Ladies' Association, the BSC is an elite organization, though its constituency is somewhat broader than the tiny social and intellectual elite that forms these other groups. The demographic and occupational profiles of the membership illustrate their positions in the upper stratum of the Indian population, while the activities of the club indicate that this is a generally "modern" elite. It was estimated that about 80% of club members have families with them in Bahrain. Officers emphasized that a major attraction of the BSC was the fact that it was safe to bring families there, where they would not face the leers or harassment of bachelors and unruly elements. About 80% of club members were said to be white-collar workers, including professionals, managers, accountants, and some clericals. About 10% of the membership were "technicians," but these were mostly engineers and other highly trained workers. The other 10% of the membership was composed of merchants, who are

not found in significant numbers in any other club.

The BSC has better sports facilities than any other Indian club in Bahrain, including an air-conditioned badminton court and tennis courts on the premises. Only the European clubs (the British Club, the Delmon Club, and the BAPCO Club) offer better facilities. The BSC fields a number of teams and offers equipment for indoor games as well. Like other so-called "sports clubs," it is also a social club. There is a bar, of course, and a number of organized weekly activities, including cards, hawzi, a raffle and video movies. The club also holds monthly disco dances and several larger social functions, including Christmas, New Year, and Autumn Balls. The major social event of the year is the May Queen Ball. Attendance at these functions can exceed 2000. (Bahraini members come to drink and play cards, and do not participate in these events.) Such activities--and, it may be recalled, the fact that the club's motto is in Latin--indicate British influence in the formation of the organization and the generally modern orientation of its members.

The BSC is very concerned with its image and with the "status" and "behavior" of its members. Applicants for membership are explicitly evaluated for prestige, occupation, and influence, as well as for the athletic abilities, talents, and leadership skills they might bring to the club. Officers report that members are frequently expelled for "misbehavior." Because of these selection procedures, though the membership is extremely varied in categorical terms, it is fairly homogeneous in terms of "social class"; it is educated, affluent, modern and concentrated

in high status occupations. As noted previously, many Indians who can afford to do so belong to several clubs and attend functions at different ones on successive nights. There is a high degree of overlapping membership between the BSC and other clubs, such as the Young Goans and the Keraleeya Samajam. This is usually confined to the higher status members in the regional clubs. In effect, then, membership in the BSC marks prestige both within these clubs and within the Indian community as a whole.

The BSC has unusually good government connections for an Indian club. It is also a large organization. The political and financial health of the club thus require influence and excellent managerial skills. As in other clubs, the general secretary of the BSC is the chief executive officer. Candidates for office are evaluated for their administrative ability, organizational experience, and contacts, which are useful in getting the cooperation of other groups and local parties. The general secretary in 1980 was an accountant for a major local firm. He had worked in Bahrain for many years, and his job gave him the skills and contacts he needed as an officer. He was a Hindu (Menon) from Kerala, who had been president of the student body at his college. In Bahrain, he had previously served as the general secretary of the Keraleeya Samajam.

The president of the BSC is appointed by the elected managing committee. He is not involved in the day-to-day running of the club, but is present for ceremonial occasions and, more importantly, is involved in any negotiations that may arise between the club and the government or important Bahrainis. Even

the BSC is not immune to problems with local notables. For example, in the late 1970's, soon after it started showing video movies for its members, the BSC was taken to court by the local merchant who had been given the cinema monopoly in Bahrain. The incident reveals a great deal about the nature of the economic system and its links to local politics. This merchant claimed that trade which justly belonged to him was being taken away by the BSC, and therefore demanded restitution and a halt to the practice. Though the case was brought against the club through the general secretary, it was the president (a Bohra surgeon who had been given Bahraini nationality) who negotiated with the Ministry of Information. The issue was resolved in favor of the club: they were allowed to continue showing videos for members, but could not charge admission. The plaintiff was sharply rebuked by the Ministry. (He was one of the few Jewish merchants left in Bahrain. Had he been a Sunni merchant, the outcome might have been different.) Obviously, influence is critical for this office, and presidents of the BSC are usually prominent businessmen or professionals. The Bahraini/Indian merchant mentioned above as the president of the Chinmaya Family had been the president of the BSC several times in the past (before he became a Bahraini and also before he got religion, so to speak). As noted in the preceding chapter, the Gujerati physician who helped organize Sri Gujerati Samaj had been a president of the BSC. In 1980, the president was a serving Bhatia. He was the manager of several branches of the holding company owned by the same Bahraini who employed the general secretary.

In explaining the practice of appointing the president, club officers stated that anyone prominent enough to be a good one would be too dignified to run for office. On the one hand, this seems to indicate that democratic processes may have only limited acceptance in Indian political culture. Of course, this attitude also acknowledges the nature of Bahraini society and the limitations most Indians face in dealing with it. Though it is the dominant ideology, demos is still considered a bit vulgar and, especially in this case, more than a bit impractical. For this office, sentiments of egalitarian competition are set aside, and democratic process is confined to a sphere of action that is politically irrelevant in the wider society.

However, within that circumscribed sphere, the same organizational enthusiasm and participatory spirit observed in the South Indian clubs was evident--not surprisingly, perhaps, since it is often the same individuals who were involved. There was active competition and campaigning for club offices. The officers were a diverse lot--Hindus, Christians (Latin and Syrian), a Sikh, a Bhatia, a Parsi--but appeared to remain unified and cohesive. At the same time, the BSC was susceptible to the same contentious factionalism found in other clubs, such as the Keraleeya Samajam. In 1979, when the general secretary was on leave, a case of "misbehavior" was brought before the managing committee. The case seemed routine, so they expelled the offenders. However, alleging that the committee had exceded its authority, some members circulated a petition calling an extraordinary general meeting, which culminated in a vote of no-

confidence against the managing committee. Eventually, the general secretary vindicated himself by successfully running for re-election.

Though the BSC is the largest and foremost association in the Indian community, it has not played a leading role in community affairs. For the most part, it merely tends to its own interests--providing an environment in which the upper stratum of the Indian community can enjoy itself in Bahrain. It could not become an association for all Indians without undercutting its prestige functions. The relationship with the embassy has not been a close one. The ambassador is not a patron of the BSC, either because the club does not present the image of India he wishes to emphasize, or because he was not seen as useful or necessary to the club and was not requested to serve in this capacity. The Pakistani and British ambassadors both serve as patrons in the comparable institutions in their communities, the Pakistan Club and the British Club. In both cases, cooperation is close, and, in both cases, the ambassadors are politically powerful. Recently, the BSC has attempted to serve the entire Indian community in limited ways, without enlarging participation in the club itself. The club cooperated with the embassy in the celebration of holidays. It helped raise money for the new Indian School and participated in the opening celebration. This may mark a more active role.

However, thus far there has been little coordination and cooperation among the various groups in the Indian community. This organizational vacuum may be attributed in part to a

struggle for community leadership that has been developing since the 1960's. The ambassador and the leaders of some groups, such as the BSC and the Indian School, seemed to be forging an alliance, but had not yet been effective in ordering goals, coordinating activities and representing all Indians. This may be due in part to a lack of ability and unified will. However, more significant limiting factors were the weak position of the Indian ambassador and the fact that attempts at leadership have been opposed by the other Indian elite in Bahrain, the Bhatia merchants. Bhatia merchants disparage both the style and the activities of the ambassador, the BSC and other modern elements. They define themselves as "Bhatias" more than as "Indians," and, accurately, see their interests as best represented through informal ties rather than formal organization. They also remain the wealthiest and most powerful group in the community.

The presence of two elites in the community has involved cultural and social contradictions between the new and the old, the modern and the traditional, the formal and the informal, demos and oligos. These forces did not meet in the BSC, but they did clash in two other community organizations, the Indian Association and the Indian School Association. These events illustrate clearly some of the social processes evolving in the community as a whole and in Indian society generally.

THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION

The Indian Association was formed in the late 1940's, soon after Indian independence. It's original purpose was to coordinate the various groups in Bahrain for the celebration of Indian holidays, such as Diwali, Id, and, of course, Independence Day and Republic Day. Though it did sponsor occasional cultural programs, it was not intended to be a social club. Nor was it expected to serve political purposes, to represent Indians in Bahrain or take up their grievances; the British government insisted that it still had jurisdiction over all residents who were not "Bahrain subjects." For a few years in the 1950's, the Indian Association distributed pulses to Indians living in Bahrain. The Government of India had banned the export of pulses because of shortages, but arrangements were made to distribute them to Indians living overseas. Since many of the Indians in Bahrain were vegetarian, the pulses were important in their diet. The Indian Association handled the allotment for the community during those years.

In the early 1960's, the Indian Association acquired a third function. When Kuwait became independent in 1961, the Indian government established an embassy there and again petitioned the British to open a consulate in Bahrain. This was not permitted, but, as a compromise, the Indian Association was allowed to assist with consular functions by distributing forms, collecting fees and passports, and sending the materials on to Kuwait. Occasionally, a consular officer from Kuwait would come to the Indian Association to expedite passport and visa procedures and

deal with special problems. The Association continued to perform these functions until the late 1960's, when an Indian trade mission was established in Bahrain. Finally, an Indian embassy was opened in 1971, when Bahrain became independent. The embassy now handles all consular functions.

Quite aside from changes in its official functions, the nature of the Indian Association changed radically during the 1960's. At that time, the composition of the Indian community itself was changing; the established groups, the Bhatias and Gujeratis, were supplemented by larger numbers of Goans, Keralites, and workers in more humble occupations. Because the Indian Association was understood to be the organization for all citizens of the newly independent and democratic state of India, there were no barriers to membership. This led to the admission of many Indians with low status, alternatively described as "dhobis and barbers," with reference to caste, or as "uneducated," with reference to non-ascriptive prestige criteria. They sought to turn what was a "cultural association" into a "social club," that is, to turn an institution which did not serve alcohol into one which did. This was resisted by the old membership--and especially by the Bhatias, who had run the organization since its beginning--for obvious religious and social reasons. The new members won, and the Association started serving alcohol. Accounts of the events which followed vary. Conservative Hindus, mainly Gujeratis and Bhatia merchants, say that because of the drinking and "misbehavior" of the lower elements, people were afraid to bring their families and resigned

their memberships. Then, everybody turned to the regional clubs and, under weak management and without the support of the merchants, the Association went into a decline from which it never recovered.

Other parties presented a somewhat different account. At first, there were problems with misbehavior, and many members did indeed resign. However, the problems were soon solved and, though the club was dominated by lower status Indians, it was quite active. By the late 1960's, many higher status Indians began to return. Conservatives in the community, principally Bhatia merchants, were still strongly opposed to its policies, though, and they acquired an ally in the new ambassador. Perhaps at the instigation of the conservatives, he argued that since the Indian Association represented all Indians, it should not serve alcohol. The Association resisted, but eventually gave in. Soon thereafter, a new managing committee, headed by Bhatia merchants, was elected.

It was expected that they would revitalize the institution as a "cultural association," and they did, at first. However, their efforts soon stopped. The new president was wealthy, influential and extremely capable; he could have used his abilities to build the Association further, but did not. At the same time, social clubs oriented toward the various regional consitituencies were growing--and providing the services members wanted. The embassy, the Indian School Association, and, to a lesser extent, the BSC took over the organization of cultural activities for the community as a whole, to the extent that they

were organized at all. By 1980, the Association's premises had become so badly deteriorated that they were condemned, and the group was, for all practical purposes, defunct. The official membership was still large, but most belonged only because they thought they should. Their energies were diverted toward the regional clubs or the BSC. It was not alcohol or the presence of "dhobis and barbers" (of whom there were actually very few) that destroyed the Association, but the inattentiveness of the very parties with the influence and power to build it into a strong institution. The Indian organization which potentially had the largest constituency had no functions.

The Indian Association had apparently lost an opportunity to grow. To a certain extent this was probably inevitable. There were demands or "needs" in the community which simply could not be met in the Indian Association--not only for alcohol, but, as the community grew, for regional affiliation and contact. However, leadership also played a role in the decline of the association. To understand how and why, it is instructive to contrast the possible and proper functions of the Association as seen by two prominent Bhatias, one serving and the other the merchant who was its president. Neither wanted to see a "social club," but the serving Bhatia contrasted the restricted role of the Indian Association in Bahrain with the active role played by the Indian Association in Dubai. The latter institution organizes community activities and coordinates the participation of other groups. It built the Indian School in Dubai. It still helps the embassy with consular functions and assists in relations with the

government. In effect, it occupies the middle ground between the community, the embassy and the government.

There is no reason, the serving Bhatia argued, that the Indian Association could not serve some of these functions in Bahrain. He noted that the Association did not help with the construction of the new Indian School because the president opposed the school plan. He explained the merchants' neglect of the Association's premises as due to lack of interest and concentration on business. With more attentive and determined management, he thought the Indian Association could organize other clubs for cultural activities, it could help the embassy with consular functions, and it could educate unskilled workers. He recognized that the last was a sensitive issue, but thought that if all community leaders and the ambassador were involved, they could advise and guide workers without becoming involved in the mediation of disputes with employers.

There is reason to believe that the decline of the Association was due more to the active neglect of the merchants than to mere inattentiveness. Aside from the factional and personal animosities involved in the Indian School dispute, which will be discussed shortly, the president of the Association had a rather different picture of the political environment in which the institution operated. He did intend to secure new premises and rebuild the Association, but only for limited purposes. He hoped to help the embassy with consular affairs, which had become a great burden after the boom. However, he favored separate celebrations for most holidays as being less likely to cause

problems with locals (and, it may be added, as not involving social interaction with other groups).

While he felt that the Association could offer a series of talks by informed individuals, from India or from the community in Bahrain, and serve as a forum for certain types of education--about investments, for example--it was necessary to be very careful with labor issues. They might talk about problems and working conditions, but they could not advertise or let it be known that they offered services. (The serving Bhatia had suggested sending around a circular to all community notables, so that they could get together, and then distribute information to their constituencies.) They could not systematically help people avoid problems, but could only deal with them on a case-by-case basis as they arose. And, even then, they could not serve all the people. He pointed out that this took intimate contacts, which might be used for Bhatias, but not for everyone. Nor could such delicate problems be solved through an association. It was evident that this man was personally oriented more toward business and the interests of his caste community than the Indian population in general. More importantly, these orientations and his position as an influential merchant gave him a somewhat different understanding of the nature of the political system and of the sensitivity of labor issues and the Indian presence in Bahrain. As we shall see, it was a very clear and accurate understanding.

The changes in the Indian Association reflect two related political processes occurring in both India and Bahrain: the

undermining of established elites by broadened political participation, and the opposition of "traditional" and "modern" political leaders. In India, democratic, or at least electoral, politics have altered the relative power of castes and reinforced their transformation from local, interdependent groups into broader, competing groups (see Weiner, 1968; Kothari, ed., 1970). Numbers and group organization, in the form of parties rather than panchayats, have given previously dominated groups political power. In the absence of legitimate status barriers, the migration of increasing numbers of Indians to Bahrain had a similar effect in the Indian Association: the democratization of participation and the undermining of an established caste elite. It is important to note that these changes occurred in the 1960's, long before the boom.

Of course, competition is severely restricted in Bahrain, and the formation of organized caste groups is not allowed. The alignment more clearly reflects economic and political positions and distinctions between "traditional" and "modern" orientations. The great majority of laborers must be left aside, of course, insofar as they have no voice in the leadership of the community and little participation in its organized social life. Of the active parties, on the one hand, there is a small group of conservative, wealthy, politically influential merchants. On the other hand, there is a much larger and more diverse group of employees--professionals, white-collar and skilled blue-collar workers--with more education, but less wealth and political influence. While the former seek to maintain a low profile for

the Indian community as a whole in Bahrain, in order to protect caste and business interests, the latter seek a more active social and cultural life, and, often, ways to organize and assist the less fortunate elements of the population. These differences of position and background entail different kinds of leadership: the merchants are "traditional," informal, and personal leaders, while the others, including the serving Bhatias, are "modern," formal and rational leaders. Competition between these groups of leaders was played out most forcefully not in the Indian Association, but in the debate over the new Indian School, to which I now turn.

THE INDIAN SCHOOL

In both cases, the Indian Association and the Indian School, the community suffered because leaders were unable to resolve their differences in the interests of all Indians in Bahrain. Though the decline of the Indian Association may be seen as lost potential, at least some of the "needs" it might have served--consociation, recreation, cultural expression--can be met in other clubs and associations. The Association is not vital to the community. Not so with the Indian School: not only are there few alternatives, but, for most Indians with families in Bahrain, the education of their children is an interest much more important than participation in social clubs. Significantly, while the dispute over the management and activities of the Indian Association was eventually settled in favor of the Bhatia merchants, they lost the battle in the Indian School Association.

As noted in Chapter Three, technically, all foreign residents of Bahrain may send their children to the local schools. Since instruction is in Arabic and the schools are not of good quality, this means little to most Indians. (The situation in Kuwait is the reverse: many expatriates are Arabs, but admission to public schools is restricted by inadequate quotas.) Many Indians send their children to Sacred Heart and a few to St. Christopher's, Awali or the Bahrain School. They are all felt to maintain a high educational standard, especially in English. Competition to get into these schools is very keen, though, among both expatriates and Bahrainis, and many Indians who would like to use them are unable to do so. Some of these schools are also quite expensive: tuition fees at the Bahrain School were about $5000 per year in 1981. Only Europeans and Americans have adequate educational benefits in their contracts to cover such expenses.

Most Indians in Bahrain have two alternatives: they may send their children to school in India, or they may send them to the Indian School in Bahrain. It is still cheaper, in many cases, to send the children back to India to stay with relatives or attend boarding schools after primary school in Bahrain. As the Indian community has grown, it has acquired more members affluent enough to bring their families to Bahrain, and fewer of these parents are willing to accept the hardships experienced by earlier migrants. They prefer to keep their children in Bahrain all the way through secondary school, rather than break up the family as the children get older. In effect, then, the same migration which

changed the composition of the Indian Association in the 1960's changed the educational needs of the Indian community. The adoption of English as the language of instruction and other improvements at the Indian School may be seen as effects of these demographic changes. While the Indian School did respond to increased demand, its response was piecemeal and inadequate. This eventually precipitated a crisis.

As noted in Chapter Four, the Indian School began on an informal basis after World War II. The teaching was done by a few of the Bhatia bachelors in their spare time. Instruction was in Sindhi. As the number of children increased, the task of educating them outgrew the capabilities of these part-time instructors. In 1953, a flat in the suq was rented and the Indian School was formally established. Professionally trained teachers were hired. Most of them were the wives of Indian men working in Bahrain. They had been teachers in India and were pleased to be able to continue their work in Bahrain. The medium of instruction was changed to Hindi. In its early years, the school moved from flat to flat in central Manama, eventually taking several flats in one building. Instruction was extended from primary through the secondary level.

In 1969, it became necessary to rent a second building to accommodate all the students. Two other important changes were made in that year: the school was recognized by the Central Board of Education in Delhi, and a progressive change to English as the medium of instruction was begun. Both these developments reflect the changing nature of the school's constituency--increasingly

mobile, educated, and South Indian. Certificates from a Central Board-affiliated school and a higher standard of English improved students' chances of gaining admission to better higher-secondary schools, colleges and universities. The Indian government provided no financial assistance to the school, other than a small fund for the purchase of books (in rupees, to be used in India). Funding was provided by Bhatia merchants and other community leaders. The Bhatia merchant introduced above as the president of the Indian Association had been one of the first part-time teachers at the Indian School. He became its president, and served in that capacity during the late 1960's and early 1970's.

Despite the changes that had been made, there was still dissatisfaction with his leadership. Parents found fault with the facilities, the staff, and the merchants who were running the school. Facilities were divided, overcrowded and poorly maintained. Administrators and teachers were said to be unqualified and unprofessional. The Bhatias were criticized for paying too much attention to business and neglecting the school. Some claimed that because they were rich and could send their children to the best private schools in India, the merchants did not care about the quality of education provided by the Indian School in Bahrain. It should be noted that Bhatia children have always represented a large proportion of the student body at the school, and, therefore, Bhatia leaders do have cause to be concerned about the education it provides. Nonetheless, they had indeed been inattentive. Decay had been allowed to progress too

far. According to some observers, the Bhatias had passed up opportunities to lease better facilities to house the school.

The new ambassador became involved, but this time he opposed the merchants. With his active encouragement, the president of the school board was replaced in 1973. The new president was a Bhatia merchant who had not been involved in school affairs previously. His mandate was not to run the school, but to oversee its reorganization. Under his leadership, a new board and committee were elected and charged with rewriting the school constitution and recommending administrative changes. The committee was finally able to dismiss several incompetent and unprofessional employees, including the old principal, and hire new ones. The new constitution changed the balance of power in the school, reducing the authority of the principal and increasing that of the board itself. It also required all parents to join the association, thus democratizing it and increasing participation.

Throughout this period nothing had been done to improve the facilities. The school was still growing: it started its own higher secondary program, and the first class sat for exams in 1976; that same year, a third building had to be rented to hold all the students. At about this time, two developments brought a sense of urgency to the situation. First, as part of a larger plan to move many of the foreign schools out of the city center, the amir of Bahrain offered the community a site near Isa Town to build a new school. The land was not to be given to the school, but leased on a long-term basis at a low rent (BD1500 per

annum). There was political pressure to move the school out of its location in the suq. The offer of land made building a more attractive means of doing this than finding an existing structure and adapting it for educational purposes.

Second, the Central Board of Education threatened to cancel the school's accreditation if improvements in facilities and staff were not made immediately. The teaching staff at the school needed to be expanded and upgraded, which would require bringing special teachers from India on contract. The housewife/teachers were dedicated, but their commitment was undependable: if their husbands were transferred or terminated, as occasionally happened, the women left their jobs, often in mid-term. In addition, while the women were well-qualified to teach primary school, few of them had the postgraduate training demanded by the Central Board to teach special subjects in the higher secondary program the school had just begun. The facilities were a bigger problem; they had become more overcrowded and dilapidated, even dangerous in some cases. The ultimatum of the Central Board precipitated action.

At the urging of the ambassador, the department store owner and president of the Chinmaya Family, who had just become a Bahraini national, was recruited to assume responsibility. He was appointed president of the school board in 1976. (Like other groups, and for the same reasons, the school board appoints its president.) The school board decided to build, rather than look for existing facilities. They discussed their requirements with architects--tenders were evidently not let for the design phase--

and a plan was ready by mid-1977. The new school would meet the educational needs of the community for some time and, not incidentally, improve its image. It would be a large structure of reinforced concrete, rather than pre-fabricated components, with central air-conditioning. There were to be two phases in the construction. The first phase would include new classrooms and an administration building with a large auditorium. The second phase was to include another classroom wing, sports facilities, a larger auditorium and a library. The next steps were to invite bids for construction and secure financing. The latter was the main problem, of course. No help could be expected from the Indian government, and the Bahraini government could provide only the land. The school association had not prepared for building, and its existing funds were not adequate even for beginning the project. It was hoped that the Bhatia merchants would be willing to provide most of the funding necessary for construction. After all, it was the merchants in the Indian Association in Dubai who had paid for the new school there.

The school board delegation was given a cool reception by the Bhatia merchants. Aside from personal animosities and problems of communication, to be discussed below, they criticized the school board plan on substantive grounds as being grandiose, poorly designed, and unnecessarily expensive. The Bhatias drew up an alternative plan, which they then presented to the school association. They made it clear that financing depended on their ability to control at least the design of the building, to ensure that their money was well spent. The merchant's design was

criticized as too small and unnecessarily cheap. Some accused the merchants of not even wanting to air-condition the school, a charge they vehemently denied. They were also accused of trying to dominate the community, which they also denied.

The differing points-of-view of the Bhatia merchants and other leaders reflect differing interests and orientations. It may be recalled that simplicity is bound up with Bhatia social and economic relations; it is central to the Bhatia ethos, and is in fact a trait they live by to a great extent (except when it comes to their wives' jewelry). The maintenance of traditional family ties is also important. As one merchant explained, it is the quality of education that matters, not the facilities. If a student's school is better than his home, he loses respect for his family, which in turn contributes to the breakdown of institutions and ideas central to community life. The strength of family and community ties affects identity, allowing the Bhatias to maintain their modesty without being concerned about appearances and the opinions of other expatriates and Bahrainis. Wealth contributes to this self-assuredness. It also makes the future of their children more secure and less dependent on (but not independent of, as critics alleged) formal education.

The contrast with professionals, skilled workers and modern leaders could not be clearer. They are urban and educated people for whom the institutions of caste and family are less important. Their identity and self-respect are to a greater extent invested in their status position in Bahrain, rather than intimate ties. The image of the expatriate community defines this status, in

part, and the school is an important element of that image. Of course, having a school of high quality is much more important for them than it may be for the merchants; as one teacher noted, lacking wealth, education is all they can give their children to help them make their way in the world.

These different positions, orientations and "needs" were accompanied by different styles of interpersonal relations, which themselves aggravated the conflict between the Bhatia merchants and the new school board. The style of the Bhatias was "traditional," in the sense that it involved personal negotiations and an attitude of respect and politeness, without the formal articulation of non-negotiable demands for control by either side. The merchants did expect a kind of deference, explicitly linked to the funds being sought, but they were not attempting to take over the management of the school again (or, at least, they said they were not). Having been shamed by their neglect of the school in the first place, it seems that, for the most part, they sought an honorable way to reinstate themselves with the community at large. They expected to be consulted, that their advice be asked for if not necessarily followed, and that their contribution be recognized and appreciated. Some of the school leaders perceived the merchants expectations of personal treatment as a demand for domination, symbolic or actual, or both.

The school board and its president were more "modern," open, and technocratic in style. Their negotiations were straightforward, they acted by committee, and they delegated

responsibility through rational channels. For example, the board president would sometimes communicate with the Bhatias through the board vice-president, secretary or treasurer, depending on availability and what was to be communicated. He even asked merchants to come to meetings by letter. Though the school board president did request assistance from the merchants personally, he did so with an attitude that emphasized their obligation without seeking their collaboration, and that communicated his determination without showing his appreciation. This style, described as "bureaucratic" and "stubborn" by one observer, may have represented an attempt to assert his parity with the Bhatias and to treat all parties equally, but it was perceived as an insult by the merchants. In fact, they were not equal--they had the money--and they resented having information relayed by mere "clerks." (In this regard, one should recall the fate of the family who mailed wedding invitations. See Chapter Six, Note 12.) Whether or not it was his intention, the school board president succeeded only in further alienating the merchants. Differences of style hindered communication and made it impossible to overcome the differences of attitude and interest which might otherwise have been resolved.

The school committee accepted neither the merchants' plan nor their conditions; the merchants, in turn, left the committee with the formidable task of funding the school through community donations. The firm that was eventually given the contract had not presented the lowest bid, nor had it worked in Bahrain before, which entailed high start-up costs for the purchase of

equipment, the recruitment of workers, etc. Bhatia merchants criticized the committee for not opening up the bidding, and noted that, had they been approached in the right manner, their connections and personal guarantees of payment could have been used to get the construction and furnishings at cost. There were also allegations of favoritism, or worse.

However, at this point, the main factor in granting the contract was the firm's willingness to wait until the end of construction for the bulk of its payment. Even with this consideration, financing was a scramble. Facing a total cost of BD700,000, the school board had only BD16,000 in the bank at the beginning of construction. Large sums had to be borrowed, and the board president took considerable risks by personally guaranteeing loans and overdrafts. The unpopular measure of demanding a sizable one-time enrollment fee (BD100) and a refundable construction deposit (also BD100) was adopted. Measures were taken to limit the costs for parents with several children, but the burden was still heavy for many. School fees were raised significantly and some operating costs were trimmed. The community held a number of benefit events, and donations were solicited from corporations, banks, groups and individuals. The Bhatias donated only one classroom to the building fund. Other classroom donors included the two deparment stores (including the one owned by the Sulaymani Bohra, who had become Pakistani and was later granted Bahraini nationality, giving him three national identities), the Gujerati tea merchant, the Sikh Temple, and the Gujerati Soni Samaj.

The construction of the first phase of the new school began in July, 1978, and the students transferred in the fall of 1979. By mid-1981, according to the board treasurer, the debt had been reduced considerably; all loans had been repaid except for a relatively small sum maintained in the form of an overdraft, and this was readily guaranteed by the school's new equity. The resources, and the patience, of the community had been exhausted by years of fundraising. It was decided to set aside the second phase of construction for the time being, and concentrate on minor improvements, such as landscaping and maintenance, while the community caught its breath. In fact, development plans were being reassessed; the student population had grown so quickly in the intervening years that more classrooms seemed a higher priority than other facilities.

Finally, through an extraordinary and unprecedented effort, the community had its new school. The course of the dispute and the building of the facilities through popular participation and subscription illustrate the social and political evolution of the community itself from a small one dominated by a traditional, mercantile elite into a larger and more diverse one under the more democratic leadership of a modern, professional elite. While the old school had been an expression of the disarray and weakness of the community, the new one became a means of organizing it. The school was a rallying point for Indian associations. In addition to the school association itself, the Bahrain Sports Club, the Fine Arts Society, the Young Goans, the Keraleeya Samajam, and even the Kerala Muslim Jama'ath held

special functions for the school and donated the proceeds from raffles and other events to the building fund. They all cooperated in the school's formal opening, and, later, the new school facilities were used for associations' functions.

The coordination of these efforts contributed greatly to the emergence of a unified leadership in the community as a whole. Significantly, that leadership was "modern." Given the demographic changes that had taken place, perhaps it could not have been otherwise. Still, whatever implications modern, formal leadership may have in Indian society and in the Indian community, it has limited the power and influence of leaders in the wider arena of Bahraini society. Again, perhaps it could not be otherwise. This fact is illustrated by the position of the exemplary and superordinate formal leader, the ambassador.

THE INDIAN EMBASSY

The Indian embassy serves several functions in Bahrain. It actively promotes Indian business and trade, especially exports and such industries as banking and construction. It facilitates the recruitment of professionals for private companies and the Bahraini government through a special agency of the Indian government. Occasionally, the embassy sponsors delegations from private and government agencies to solicit investment from Bahrainis and Indian expatriates. In addition to improving diplomatic and economic ties, the embassy also tries to look after the welfare of Indians in Bahrain. In practice, this goal is often at cross-purposes with that of facilitating labor

migration. More generally, the ability of the embassy to organize and represent the Indian community is limited by Indian law, by the political and economic system of Bahraini society, and by limited support within the community itself.

As we have seen in the preceding sections, the ambassador did have some authority in the community. The first ambassador was instrumental in setting policy in the Indian Association and in getting the new Indian School started. The ambassador on station between 1979 and 1981, the third to be appointed, was a sponsor of some Indian organizations and a frequent guest at functions. However, his activities reflect certain biases. For both personal and professional reasons, the ambassador attempted to improve the image of India and Indians in Bahraini society. He associated himself primarily with those groups presenting a dignified profile, such as the Indian Fine Arts Society. He decried regionalism and sought to encourage collaboration among the various clubs and associations. Like the president of the Indian School Association and the professionals in the community, he was a "modern" leader. By virtue of his office, he was the foremost articulator of the All-India national ideology.

This in itself limited his ability to lead and organize the community. Most Indians are preoccupied with work and personal or sub-communal affairs, and thus have only a limited interest in the ideology and aspirations of the ambassador. His dreams of bringing cultural and sports associations together into larger organizations fell on deaf ears. Only on issues of widespread importance, like the Indian School, was he able to play a major

role in facilitating cooperation and coherent action. The leadership of the ambassador was also limited by the fact that the embassy itself had a very limited role to play in mediating relations between Indians and Bahrainis or the Bahraini government; the inability of the ambassador to address many of the everyday, practical concerns of Indians undercut his authority.

The principal Indian antagonists of the ambassador, as of other modern leaders in the community, were the Bhatia merchants. To a great extent, the disorganization in the community, which the ambassador sought to overcome, was perpetuated by these merchants--and the Bahraini government, of course. The conflict between the Indian ambassadors and the Bhatia merchants involved the same differences of position, interest, orientation and style--mercantile and bureaucratic, caste and nation, traditional and modern, personal and formal--that underlay the Indian School dispute.

The Bhatias had little respect for their ambassadors. They saw them as clowns who knew little about the Gulf or how to deal with its people, and who lacked the good sense to consult those who did, that is, the merchants themselves. The Bhatias criticized the ambassadors for some colossal bumbling over politically sensitive issues, to be discussed shortly, for trying to improve relations with Bahrainis without even knowing who to invite to meetings or receptions, and for not having the influence to get the right people to come anyway. The merchants, who have the inclination and experience to work well in an

informal political system based on personal ties, saw the rational, bureaucratic approach of the ambassador as ridiculous and hopelessly naive. Merchants also criticized the financial ineptitude of embassy officials. For example, they asserted that a delegation from India, which came to Bahrain under embassy auspices seeking investments from expatriates, was offering poor returns to investors, if not actually cheating them. Here the Bhatias contrasted their proven financial ability to the limited horizons of the "clerks" who constitute the modern elite of the community.

The merchants undoubtedly resented their loss of leadership in the community, but they resented even more the facts that their knowledge and skills were not recognized and that they were not consulted as respected advisors. Most (but not all) Bhatias would have been pleased to be of service to the community, if relations were handled in the proper way and would not cause political problems for them or the community in general. However, as in the case of the Indian School, their insistence on respect and personal relationships were interpreted as demands for control or deference by embassy officials and others, and thus rejected. Bhatia merchants were criticized by the ambassador as being unable to lead, or, at least, as being unwilling to do the entertaining, socializing and mixing which, in his opinion, were required for leadership in the community at large. Aside from the fact that the merchants' personal interests were centered on family and caste, they saw this kind of leadership as contrary to their economic and political interests. In fact, in Bahrain,

their kind of leadership could be more effective than the formal leadership of the ambassador.

This was brought home to the first and second ambassadors in the course of their attempts to deal with labor issues and carry out other directives of the Indian government. Before discussing these problems, it may be helpful to lay out the background of the Indian government's position on labor affairs. The embassy and the Indian government have attempted to play a role in labor issues to protect the status of Indians and the Indian government and to protect the welfare of workers. In the eyes of the ambassador, and of professionals and skilled workers as well, many of the problems faced by Indians in Bahrain--such as discrimination and low status--resulted from the recent migration of great numbers of servants and laborers. While this betrays a characteristically Indian concern with prestige, it is only partly true. It is the skilled Indians, both blue collar and white collar, who are in direct competition with Bahrainis and who provoke the most resentment. The laborers and servants are disliked and ridiculed, of course, but the abuse aimed at them arises in other contexts. They become the basis of stereotypes which are then applied to the community as a whole.

The concerns of the Indian embassy were not limited to status, of course. As Indian migration to the Gulf increased in the 1960's and early 1970's, so did exploitation and abuse, both in India and in the Gulf. The greatest emotion was aroused over cases of female household servants who had been abused sexually by their Arab masters. In 1976, in order to deal with

exploitation and the declining status of Indian workers, the Indian government passed a set of laws regulating migration. Certain classes of workers--unskilled laborers in general, and, especially, female servants and "undignified" or "menial" workers, such as sweepers and garbage collectors--could not be recruited. Because of abuse and fraud in India, the government also passed laws allowing it to police the recruiting business. All recruiting agents were required to register with the government and the number of approved agents was limited. Labor importers could use only registered and approved agents.

These statutes were soon tested in court, and most provisions were overturned. The court decreed that the government could not regulate the number of agents or require them to register. These provisions restricted the equal rights of all Indians to engage in business activity; in effect, anyone could become an agent. The provisions regulating the recruitment of certain types of workers were also overturned as interfering with general rights of travel and employment. In response to the court decisions, restrictions on the migration of some categories of unskilled labor, such as construction workers, were relaxed. However, there was consensus about the need to maintain control over other categories.

In both Bahrain and India, this was accomplished by procedural means. Since employers were required to obtain the embassy's endorsement of contracts before they were sent on to prospective employees, the labor attache could screen occupations, to some extent, until new legislation was enacted.

He could also warn the Protector of Emigrants about employers known to be abusive. The Protector of Emigrants could also screen workers from the Indian side. These controls could not eliminate fraud in Bahrain, of course, and were ineffective in dealing with cases in which workers collaborated with employers, but they were usually sufficient to keep out ayahs and sweepers. However, in the face of powerful forces operating in India and in the Gulf, the embassy's ability to maintain even these restrictions was eroding.

Within India, both agents and aspiring workers demanded to participate in the economic boom in the Gulf. Given democratic legal processes, the government could not prevent this, even though it was likely to result in some exploitation and lower the prestige of all Indians working in the Gulf. Evidently, the Government of India also understood that, given conditions of oversupply in world labor markets, their controls would not force other governments to police migration to the Gulf, but merely lead to the replacement of Indian workers by others. This would lead, in turn, to a decline in the remittance revenue crucial to maintaining foreign exchange reserves. Indeed, this is precisely what happened: Gulf employers responded to restrictions in India by looking to other quarters for workers, for example, to Pakistan for laborers and to Sri Lanka for housemaids. Public pressure to restrict, as much as possible, the migration of maids and "undignified labor" was likely to continue. However, given the realities of supply and demand, the Indian government seemed likely to back down on other restrictions.

In concert with its attempts to regulate migration from India, the embassy also tried to influence conditions in Bahrain. It was again forced to back down, and its failures illustrate well the weak position of the Indian government and some basic principles of political economy (or economic politics) in Bahrain. In the mid-1970's, after the first wave of boom migration, the second ambassador started an educational campaign to inform laborers and other workers of their rights under Bahraini law. In particular, he circulated a pamphlet listing the proper wages for various occupations. The reaction of the Bahraini government was predictable, swift and firm: they banned the granting and renewal of residence permits for Indians. This attempt to educate workers was viewed as political by the Bahraini government; it was a bad example for Bahraini workers and it threatened the government's principal supporters. It seems unlikely that this action would have been taken against British residents had their embassy initiated such a campaign, but, then, the British embassy would have little reason to do so; all of which illustrates well the position of Indians in the labor market and of their government in Bahrain's foreign and domestic policy. Eventually, the impasse was resolved, but not before many Indians were forced to leave the country when their residence permits expired. The ambassador was replaced soon thereafter.

The political sensitivity of the ambassador's plan was understood by Bhatia merchants. As noted above, while they favored helping exploited workers when possible, they recognized that it could be done only on a case-by-case basis; general

efforts would undoubtedly be seen as threatening and have negative implications for Indians in Bahrain, perhaps even for those doing business there. Bhatia leaders tried to convince the ambassador of his error, but could not get an appointment to see him. Significantly, they were able to circumvent the ban on new residence permits for their community. They approached important shaikhs and were told that the maneuver was just to teach the ambassador a lesson; anyone under Bhatia patronage who was hurt would be taken care of. Evidently, other influential groups were accorded the same courtesies.

Conscious of its vulnerability and weak negotiating position, the Indian embassy has been careful in dealing with labor issues. Unlike other embassies, that of Pakistan for example, it avoids taking up labor complaints with employers or the Bahraini government, except in serious cases or as a last resort. It merely counsels people who bring in problems or complaints as to the points of the law and refers them to arbitration channels at the Ministry of Labour. It does not advertise its services. When the embassy does involve itself, it does so through diplomatic channels and with the knowledge that, though it will probably achieve a fair judgment in the case, the individual involved may be terminated and forced to leave the country. This is generally understood among workers, and most complaints that come to the embassy are made shortly before an employee ends a contract. Workers who intend to stay in Bahrain use informal channels to find a patron to solve their problems. Despite its desire to protect Indians working in Bahrain, the

Indian embassy is kept conscious of the relative ease with which the Government of Bahrain can counter any actions it considers unacceptable, which would lead to both injury to individual Indians and a loss of remittance revenue to India.

Another problem illustrates even more clearly the limited power of the Indian embassy. In the early 1970's, during the tenure of the first ambassador, the embassy sought to cancel the passports of a few Indian nationals in Bahrain in order to precipitate their repatriation to India. The identities of the individuals and the nature of their alleged offenses were communicated off the record, and will not be revealed. More important here are the means used by these individuals to protect themselves--personal relationships with influential Bahrainis--and the fact that these means were used successfully. When their passports expired, they were given special documents allowing them to remain in Bahrain. Eventually, the Indian government yielded and allowed them to renew their passports. The ambassador was put securely in his place.

This incident illustrates a use of influence different from those already discussed. This was not influence used for a "class," as with the delegation of merchants who sought and received exempt status; or even for a business, as in the use of personal relationships to form partnerships and sponsorship agreements; or for an association to continue its activities, as with the various clubs, churches and schools; or for a caste or communal group, as in the use of influence to protect the Bhatias and others from the ban on residence permit renewals. Influence

was not used against Bahraini parties or other Indians. In this case, influence was used to protect individuals from their own government. Of course, it could only occur when the individuals had good connections at the right ministry and when the foreign government itself was relatively weak.

The same political and economic processes which allow some Indian nationals to outmaneuver their own embassy also prevent the Indian Government from protecting other migrants. The relative ease with which the Bahraini government has been able to frustrate the Indian ambassador's ability to control and represent his constituency has significantly undercut his influence. His lack of influence, in turn, limits his ability to unite and organize the community and, thus, reinforces the fragmentation that is encouraged by other policies of the Bahraini government.

The position of the Bhatias in all this is notable. The merchants and the ambassador exemplify the conflict of traditional and modern authority, a conflict which traditional leaders seem to be losing in Indian society. However, their contrasting fortunes in Bahrain indicate the continued importance of personal, informal, "traditional" relationships there. Until the nature of the political system changes or their privileges become too sensitive, the Bhatias will continue to have a special position in Bahraini society, and, as long as some of them remain merchants, they and modern leaders will always have different interests and orientations. Just as solidarity between the Bohras and Bahraini Shi'is was limited by the Bohras' relationship with

the Bahraini government, so does the Bhatias' special position separate them from the rest of the Indian population.

At the same time that the Bhatias remain a separate and privileged minority, two other developments are occurring. First, the position of other Indians in Bahrain seems to be deteriorating. Second, overt mercantile leadership in the community continues to decline; the new migrants simply will not accept the old style of authority. It is possible that a future ambassador might seek to bridge the gap separating the embassy and these merchants, and use their experience for the good of the entire community. Unfortunately, and ironically, if he is able to overcome the objections of other modern leaders in the community, the same conditions that make Bhatia skills useful may prevent the merchants from offering them. That is, if the Indian presence were to become more sensitive, they would be less responsive to the appeal of national solidarity and feel more strongly the need to protect the particular interests of their caste. When their leadership is most needed, it is most unacceptable; when it might be sought, it might not be given.

CONCLUSION

The category "Indian" is marked in Bahraini society in several ways. It is the basis of linguistic distinctions made by Bahrainis themselves, eg., hindi and banyan. Also, since Indians are not Bahraini nationals, "Indian," as a sub-category of "Non-Bahrainis," is the formal basis of their incorporation into Bahraini society--through the residence permit stamped in their

Indian passports. The fact that there is little interaction between Bahrainis and Indians would seem to indicate that they are a segmented social category. In Chapter Five, it was argued they they are a recognized and clearly bounded category among Non-Bahrainis as well. The example of so-called "universal" organizations was discussed. These are mainly "class-based" groups, drawing from a multi-national elite. However, patterns of participation indicate that the vast majority of Indians is excluded, and Indian nationality seems to be a significant factor in limiting their prestige and acceptability. In sum, externally-defined social boundaries differentiate Bahrainis and Indians, on the one hand, and Indians and other expatriates, on the other.

The material presented in the preceding chapters would seem to indicate that this boundary is marked internally as well as externally. Like those organizations based on region, language, religion, caste and sect, the All-India groups are, in fact, mostly for Indians. Aside from this recognition in formal institutions, the category "Indian" is also recognized informally and in discourse. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, nationality is a salient basis of solidarity to the extent that, in native terms, there is an "Indian community."

However, as was the case in some of the Indian sub-categories, the "Indian community" is neither a community in the sociological sense nor an extensively and formally organized group. All-India group formation is limited, in part, by many of the same characteristics and processes present in, for example, the Keralite population: few pre-existing ties, brief

coresidence, internal differentiation, stratification and leadership competition.

Though most All-India organizations do not mark internal boundaries of category, except coincidentally, they do mark boundaries of prestige and "social class." The smaller groups are actually "highbrow" cultural associations or social cliques. The large ones, the BSC and the Indian School Association, mark a broader economic and social elite in the community, Indians with affluence and prestige or with children in Bahrain. The institution which ostensibly represents all Indians, the Indian Association, is defunct, largely because of factionalism and leadership competition. This factionalism was evident in the Indian School Association as well, and even limited the effectiveness of the ambassador. There are in effect two elites in the Indian community in Bahrain, the old and the new. The Pakistani and British communities have undergone similar processes of political evolution. However, in these cases, the ambassadors and other leaders have gained the support of influential businessmen. These comparisons will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

In one sense, these characteristics reflect pre-existing, or "imported," differences in the Indian community--differences of status, of education, of occupation, and of cultural background. Demographic changes resulting from increased migration may be seen as the basis of stratification, leadership competition and other disputes. The fact that none of the existing institutions serves the community as a whole may be seen as an illustration of

the limited extent to which the social and cultural life of the community can be shared by such a diverse population. Indeed, the religious, regional and caste conflicts within India itself might suggest that the potential appeal of national solidarity would be limited anywhere.

However "Indian" they may be, these processes have also been shaped by the environment of Bahraini society. The migration that led to demographic change and stratification was not spontaneous, but the result of economic growth in Bahrain and the recruitment of Indians during the 1960's and early 1970's. This was compounded by the massive migration of the mid- and late-1970's, also demand-induced. The distinctions between old and new elites are defined by processes in Indian society, but the influence of particular individuals and groups is determined by the political and economic system in which they live. In the preceding chapter, it was argued that the potential for fragmentation in the Indian community is in fact encouraged by the Bahraini environment. This occurs both intentionally, through government policies allowing sub-communal groups, and by force of circumstance, because narrow solidarities are called upon in response to the exigencies of expatriate life in a distant and often hostile land. In this chapter, it has been argued that any potential for unity is simultaneously stifled. Not only is nothing done to minimize internal differences, but, in fact, they are encouraged by the processes which incorporate Indians into Bahraini society and by the regulations and incentives surrounding the expression of Indian nationality itself.

As argued in Chapter Three, despite the formal recognition of the national category, the political and economic incorporation of Indian migrants into Bahraini society is institutionally mediated on an individual basis, in great part informally (and even illegally), through sponsorship and political regulation. Indian nationality is recognized, but not employed as a means of organizing the Indian population. Moreover, there is little incentive in Bahraini society generally for the self-organization of Indians around this categorical solidarity. Like voluntary associations in general, All-India groups operate in a circumscribed sphere. They have a limited political role in mediating relations between Indians and Bahraini society, and most do not deal with the practical concerns of substantial numbers of community members. Social action is based on other categories, such as caste and language, or on personal relationships of sponsorship and patronage, rather than national institutions, because it must be.

The effects of context on the formation of All-India groups have been to encourage internal differentiation directly, by allowing upper-class organizations and banning those for the total category, and indirectly, by providing incentives for particular interests, leading to fragmentation and disarray. Like sub-communal organizations, those All-India groups which express internal status boundaries are encouraged by the government, openly or through the political connections of the organizers. On the other hand, the existence of large-scale organizations or of coordinated action with political functions is discouraged by the

government. The government appears to exercise as much control over the Indian government as it does over voluntary associations. Significantly, all these institutions are formal.

The second ambassador felt government pressure directly. It may also be exerted indirectly, through the political influence of those whose interests are defined by their close relationship to the Bahraini government. The attempts of the embassy to organize and represent the population are undercut by the ability of merchants, sub-communities and even particular individuals to protect their interests irrespective of embassy leadership, and even in opposition to it. The same factors which encourage these parties to ignore or oppose the embassy also encouraged Bhatia merchants to neglect the Indian Association. Aside from an aversion for lower castes, alcohol and the style of modern leaders, the interests of Bhatia merchants are contrary to those of other groups, and these interests are defined not just by their occupation, but by the structural position of that occupation and of their group in Bahraini society.

The organization of the community as a whole is limited, on the one hand, by government, and, on the other, by the interests the people themselves have in maintaining social relations within the various sub-communities. This sentiment is reinforced by policies which encourage these groups, limit the role of All-India institutions, and constrain the self-determination of the expatriate population in general. As a result, All-India groups are few in number and are politically irrelevant. Though much of the cultural diversity within the Indian population is expressed,

as illustrated in Chapters Six and Seven, Indian nationality itself is given only limited expression.

In this regard, the Indian community in Bahrain differs markedly from other migrant Indian populations, such as those in Guyana, Trinidad, Fiji, and South Africa. The salience of the Indian category in these cases and the attempts of some elements to articulate nationality more forcefully in Bahrain remind us that, despite the difficult situation today in India itself, Indians are not necessarily fragmented by primordial ascriptive distinctions. It has been my concern to show why they are in Bahrain. Comparisons with other cases will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

In closing, it is important to recall the caveat mentioned in the preceding chapter. Most Indian migration to Bahrain is recent. If residence stabilizes, demands for All-India groups may be articulated more persistently. Indian leaders will negotiate among themselves and with Bahrainis. However, it seems likely that the position of Indians will decline further, making the organized expression of Indian nationality even more difficult. I will return to this issue in the conclusion.

Chapter Nine

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapter has carried the discussion of the Indian community from the details of its sub-groups back to the general issues of group formation. In this chapter, I will continue this re-ascent to more general levels of analysis by returning to the structure of Bahraini society as a whole and the future of Indians and other expatriates in it. Before doing so, it may be helpful to further develop the general characterization of the Indian community through brief comparisons with other expatriate Indian communities. These comparisons highlight the special characteristics of the community in Bahrain and of the local society. More generally, they draw attention to some of the major parameters of group formation.

"OVERSEAS" INDIANS

The literature on "overseas" Indian communities, as they came to be known, is vast. There are a number of monographs, mostly community studies (eg., Jayawardena, 1963; Klass, 1961; Morris, 1968; Mayer, 1961, 1963; Kuper, 1960; Benedict, 1961), a number of comparative studies (eg., Schwartz, ed., 1967; Mayer, 1967a; Van den Berghe, 1970a, 1970b; Clark, 1981; Jayawardena, 1968, 1980), and even a few re-studies (eg., Nevadomsky, 1983). In addition to the works on Indian communities, there are numerous works dealing with the plural orders of which they are a part (eg., Despres, 1975; Deosaran, 1981; Premdas, 1981; Norton,

1973; M.G. Smith, 1965a, 1965b). It is impossible to present a detailed comparison of all these groups with the Indian population in Bahrain. I will address only their more general features, and will confine my remarks to the Indians of Guyana, Trinidad, South Africa, East Africa, and Fiji. Some of the information presented in the Introduction will be repeated, but in comparative perspective. Before beginning, it is important to note that these communities all resemble one another in many resepcts, with the exception of the East African group, and that the community in Bahrain is closest in structure and position to that in East Africa.

In general, the characteristics of overseas Indian communities have been determined more by the purposes and processes of migration than by the origins of the migrants themselves. Most migrants to the Caribbean, South Africa and Fiji were indentured laborers recruited in the nineteenth century to work on sugar plantations. In East Africa, on the other hand, most Indians were traders, shopkeepers, or clerks for the British administration--a classic middleman minority. A substantial number of traders also migrated to Fiji after the establishment of the population there. As we have seen, until recently, the community in Bahrain had a composition similar to that in East Africa. Like the traders in Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika, those in Bahrain had been migrating for centuries. Today, the community in Bahrain is more like those in the Caribbean and Fiji; contract labor in Bahrain is similar, in some ways, to indentured servitude, though it is not likely to lead to permanent

settlement. The demographic balance that was eventually achieved in other groups is not likely to develop in Bahrain.

Though all the groups considered here are fairly large, they vary considerably as a proportion of total population. The community in Bahrain falls somewhere in the middle of the range. In Fiji and Guyana, Indians now compose slightly over half the population (Jayawardena, 1980: 432). In Trinidad, they represent about one third of the total population (Deosaran, 1981: 19). In South Africa, they represent only about 3% of the population (Van den Berghe, 1970b: 277), though in Natal, where they are concentrated, the figure rises to about 12% (Van den Berghe, 1970a: 268). Finally, in East Africa they represent only about 1-2% of the total population (Van den Berghe, 1970b: 277). In 1981, Indians probably represented about 15-17% of the total population in Bahrain.

Whatever their relative size, in all cases Indians have been a socially significant and clearly bounded group. More importantly, they have been opposed to other groups in their respective societies. There was--and sometimes still is—a small European population at the top of the social hierarchy, but the most important oppositions have been between Indians and other subject peoples. In Guyana and Trinidad, these groups were the descendants of African slaves, for the most part. (There were few American "Indians" in these Caribbean areas, but their cultural presence was such that Asian Indians there were known as "East Indians.") In the other cases, they were the indigenous populations, the "natives": Polynesian Fijians, tribal groups in

East and South Africa, and, of course, Arabs and Persians in Bahrain. In all cases, independence has had a major impact on the social hierarchy, in ideological terms if not in fact.

The patterns of migration discussed above were associated with a number of other characteristics. Plantation laborers tended to remain in rural areas, either as agricultural laborers or cultivators. In Guyana, they lived alongside other groups; in Trinidad they tended to live in separate villages; and in Fiji they were rigidly segmented from the native population by barriers to land ownership. On the other hand, most Indian migrants to Africa, like those to Bahrain, live in urban areas. In South Africa, they entered the industrial working class or personal service. In East Africa, they owned stores or businesses in the sizable settlements or worked in government offices. With industrial development, the rural-based Indians in the Caribbean, and especially in Guyana, have also moved into urban areas and new economic sectors.

Migration and the plantation system had a decisive impact on traditional patterns of ascriptive differentiation in most overseas communities. In all situations, migration has produced a mixed population, that is, one drawn from various parts of India and from various parts of those parts. However, only in East Africa, and to a lesser extent in Fiji, were ties with India maintained to an extent approximating the situation in Bahrain. In these cases, contact with the mother country contributed to the maintenance of cultural and social institutions and, as in Bahrain, to internal differentiation. Though most migrants were

Hindu, only in Sri Lanka, where a different migration and plantation system operated, was a true caste system reconstructed (Jayawardena, 1968). The occupational basis of caste was almost completely destroyed by assignment to plantation work without regard to background. In some communities, there are a few ritual specialists, but, otherwise, occupations are chosen in accordance with individual, "achieved" criteria. In East Africa and Bahrain, a few groups have retained their traditional occupations. For many individuals in these areas, the links between caste and occupation were destroyed by social change in India, rather than the context of the host society.

The use of caste for other social purposes varies. In Guyana, Trinidad, Fiji and South Africa, migration and settlement have entailed the loss of reference communities. In open social situations, this, in turn, has allowed many people to drop or change caste affiliation, usually by changing their names. In East Africa and Bahrain, this has not been possible. In most communities, caste groups are still named categories, but they are important mainly in marriage--and then only to a limited extent--and as an element of prestige. (It is interesting to note that early discussions of caste in overseas communities minimized and, in some cases, virtually dismissed its presence, at a time when the expectations for political and economic modernization were still high. Later accounts seem to accept continuity more easily.) The primary bases of status, for both practical and honorific purposes, are other attributes, such as occupation, education, influence and affluence (Mayer, 1967: 9). Evidently,

there are no formal caste organizations in most communities. East Africa is again an exception. Not only is caste, and its Muslim counterpart, sect, more salient in social interaction, but caste and sectarian communities are well-organized for social, economic and political purposes. The reasons for this will be discussed shortly.

As we have seen, the situation is mixed in Bahrain. A few caste and sect groups are organized, but, for most individuals, caste is of limited social relevance, whatever its importance may be in India. There is reason to believe that it is quite important in India for some groups, such as the Gujeratis. While many implications of caste are gone permanently in Guyana, to a certain extent they are merely held in abeyance in Bahrain. This is probably the case with caste endogamy. Because most residents are temporary male migrants, most marriages are arranged in India, where caste is likely to be more important. However, it seems likely that modernization, urbanization and internal migration have undercut the importance of other elements of caste for many groups, in India as well as in Bahrain. Caste avoidance, purity, and rules of commensality were usually not observed, even when possible, and comments of informants suggest that this was also the case in India. The importance of modern, individual and achieved criteria in the definition of prestige may be attributed in part to the same factors.

Ascriptive differences of religion, language and regional culture are evident in all overseas communities, but with considerable variation. Most communities contained sizable

elements from both North and South India. In Guyana and Trinidad, these distinctions have largely disappeared. In South Africa, though language has been lost to a great extent, cultural distinctions remain important and operate at the supra-regional level. That is, there is interaction within the populations from the north and south, but cleavages between them (Van den Berghe, 1970a: 266; 1970b: 284). Elsewhere, regional distinctions are more important.

The most salient categorical distinctions in all communities are those of religion. In Guyana and Trinidad, the division is between a larger group of Hindus and a smaller number of Muslims. In addition to Hindus and Muslims, there is a sizable Sikh population in Fiji and East Africa, and, in the latter case, there are also Jains and Goans. Of course, for the Sikhs and Goans, differences of language and regional culture accompany those of religion. In Trinidad, Fiji and, especially, in Guyana, religion, and Hinduism in particular, has undergone a simplification of ritual and taken a more modernized form. Such groups as the Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharma and the Ahmadiyya Muslim movement are especially popular. In Guyana, Hindu sect, defined in these terms, marks distinctions of cultural modernism or conservatism within the population, generally along class lines. The Hindu-Muslim split is not political, except in Trinidad, where Muslims tend to support leaders of African descent rather than Indian leaders. In East Africa, religious practice is more traditional, and distinctions are defined in terms of Hindu caste and Muslim sect. In contrast to Bahrain, religious organizations

are openly formed in all the other communities. In fact, religion seems to have been the primary categorical basis for formal organization in voluntary associations, temples, schools, etc.

Correlatively, though differences of region and language are marked in social interaction, regional and linguistic associations, the norm in Bahrain, are apparently not found elsewhere. Only in East Africa and Bahrain were all dimensions of categorical differentiation operating simultaneously, and only in these cases was internal differentiation of overwhelming significance in identity and organization. Internal differences are less important in Fiji, South Africa, Trinidad, and Guyana, in that order.

Until recently, patterns of organization and leadership were confined to the locality, for the most part. It must be remembered that with the partial exception of South Africa, where Indians were concentrated in a few large urban areas, Indian populations have been spread over a territory that, in comparison to Bahrain, is vast. Even in smaller societies, like Trinidad and Fiji, physical isolation in rural areas contributed to the fragmentation of the population for organizational purposes.

Given this state of affairs, it is all the more surprising that organizations for the entire Indian population eventually emerged in most situations. The exceptions are those groups in which internal differentiation has had greater importance, that is, East Africa and Bahrain. In Guyana, Trinidad and Fiji, the Indian category became the basis of numerous voluntary associations and, eventually, of political parties. In South

Africa, Indians from all backgrounds participate together in associations and unions. These organizations are, for the most part, inclusive but not extensive; that is, there are different levels of participation, and some sectors of the population are merely represented. In order to understand why Indian populations were able to organize in these areas but not in East Africa and Bahrain, it is necessary to understand their respective positions in the various societies and their relationships with other groups, that is, how and why Indians became differentiated from and opposed to other social elements.

In all cases, Indians were differentiated from other groups, as ascriptively defined groups, immediately upon their arrival. Subsequent developments and emergent social processes simply reproduced or transformed existing distinctions. As noted, in Guyana and Trinidad, the "significant others" were ex-slaves of African descent. At manumission, they refused to remain on the plantations as wage laborers, because they wished to distance themselves from the sites of their oppression and, evidently, because the wages offered were unacceptable. This necessitated the importation of Indian indentured laborers. (Then, as now, the global economy offered a buyer's market for labor.) Indians were seen as keeping wages down, and the two groups were immediately opposed over economic issues.

They soon came to exploit separate sectors, though: Indians remained in rural areas as an uneducated, disadvantaged and disparaged minority, while Blacks moved into the towns and the modern economy. This economic segmentation minimized competition,

even where the groups lived alongside one another, as in Guyana. However, with modernization and population growth, Indians began to move into urban areas and seek new jobs, increasing competition with Blacks. In the context of electoral politics and, later, independence, these categories were mobilized for participation in political parties. Membership was not defined by ascriptive category alone; class factors and ideology played an important role, and, while category might have been the effective basis of recruitment, it was not the formal basis of organization.

In Guyana, despite long-standing communal antagonism, Blacks and Indians were at first able to work together against Europeans. (It is important to note that there were no divisive communal representatives or voting roles in the first steps toward electoral politics.) However, their movement was suppressed, and, with European manipulation, old wounds were re-opened. This was followed by categorical mobilization, which very nearly led to civil war in the early 1960's. After early electoral successes by the Indian party, the system was changed, and the Afro-Guyanese won the next election. Under Forbes Burnham, the government became increasingly authoritarian, leading eventually to opposition by other Blacks as well as by Indians (Premdas, 1981).

In both Guyana and Trinidad, and especially the latter, nationalism was often articulated in terms of "negritude," which alienated Indians. Nonetheless, Indian-based parties were less successful in Trinidad, partly because Indians organized late,

partly because they were less numerous, partly because of religious differences among Indians, and partly because of class splits crosscutting and, to a lesser extent, overlapping these religious differences. (Most Muslims and some Hindus were relatively prosperous, and thus opposed the liberal politics favored by most other Indians.) By the late 1970's, Indians had more or less abandoned electoral politics as an organized category (Deosaran, 1981: 23).

In Fiji, competition between Indians and Polynesians was minimized by economic and geographical separation. However, population growth, modernization and political change again brought the groups together, and, again, led to the formation of ascriptively-based political parties. In this case, it was the Indians who organized early and the Fijians who mobilized late. The assumptions and conditions of group relations were also different from the Caribbean cases. In Guyana, competition between the two groups was open, but in Fiji there was acceptance, largely tacit, of the prior rights of Fijians; thus, though the Indian party won the election of 1978, they sought a Fijian to head their government (Jayawardena, 1980: 447).

The different outcomes in the Caribbean and Fijian cases may be attributed in part to differences in the colonial constitutions under which relationships between constituent groups in the societies evolved. Formally, Blacks and Indians were equally Guyanese, though the Blacks attained a superior position and, later, kept it by force. The categories lacked separate rights, which, in effect, legitimized open combat. In

Fiji, the colonial order was designed to preserve indigenous authority and institutions. Indians had clearly defined rights, but they were somewhat less Fijian, if you will, than the Fijians. Significantly, the colonial system was one of indirect rule, in which there were no councils. Later, when moves toward representation were inaugurated, appointment and election were based on communal roles. Thus, the opposition of Indians to Fijians was politically institutionalized from the beginning, rather than a fact of economic specialization. However, this did not have the effects of legitimizing Indian claims and encouraging political conflict. The formalization of political particiption on a separate, communal basis and the limited legitimacy of Indian claims constrained competition. The latter factor also contributed to fears in the 1970's--a period of political mobilization among indigenous peoples throughout the world--that Indians might be asked to leave, as had just happened in East Africa (Jayawardena, 1980:447). In short, there are common norms of political cooperation and, for Indians, good reason to seek the participation of native Fijians.

The conflict between Indians and Fijians was not as pronounced or violent as that between the groups in Guyana. In the latter case, Indians sought both a better position in society and an improved image. They were a disparaged group--referred to as "coolies"--in constant contact with the socially superior Afro-Guyanese. Jayawardena argues that these factors were linked to the popularity of modernistic forms of religion as well as to the overwhelming salience of the category "East Indian" (1980:

446-448). In Fiji, Indians were not a disparaged group in society, nor was interaction with other groups so frequent. As a result, components of identity other than the "Indian" category itself retained greater importance, and political organization was oriented only toward protecting the position of Indians in accordance with their growing numbers.

In all these cases, competition in the political arena is relatively open. The situation is somewhat different in Africa. In East Africa under the colonial regime, and still in South Africa, a racial constitution has structured political and economic activity. Indians, referred to as "Asians," are treated formally as a single category. Like the colonial system of communal representation in Fiji, this tends to reinforce the social use of the Indian category through political institutions, though direct political activity itself is limited. In South Africa, effective patterns of access to and distribution of resources apparently follow sub-categorical lines (such as religion) within the Asian category to some extent (Van den Berghe, 1970b: 280). However, the racial constitution is followed much more rigidly than in East Africa, and, accordingly, political organization and expression follow "Asian" lines more closely. Though there are no political parties as such, all Indians do organize for political action in unions and other groups, "political bodies" Van den Berghe calls them (1970a: 271). These appear to be the primary political formations. In the society generally, identity as "Asians," in contradistinction to Whites, Blacks and Coloreds, is more important than internal

differentiation and other elements of identity.

In East Africa, the effective means of distribution and political action were sub-communal groups and not the Asian category as a whole, despite the existence of a racial constitution under the colonial government. The persistent lobbying of some leaders, Isma'ilis in particular, through advisory councils and informal relationships, led eventually to the distribution of resources on a sub-categorical basis. The effectiveness of this form of leadership compelled other groups to follow suit. This encouraged the extensive, formal organization of caste and sectarian communities. These became the most important groups in the Indian population (Morris, 1956, 1967, 1968; Nelson, 1973). While segregation could allow the maintenance of regional, religious and other sub-categorical identities and institutions, in Fiji for example, the colonial administration in East Africa stimulated their transformation into unique organizational forms.

By allowing the formation of regional and religious organizations of some kinds and limiting the formation and importance of caste and All-India organizations, the government of Bahrain has similarly channelled the processes of identity and group formation. However, in some ways, Bahrain is different from all the other cases. Elsewhere, even in South Africa, organization is relatively open. And, elsewhere, categorical identities of various kinds are the bases for the articulation of important practical interests and the distribution of significant resources, either explicitly or in practice. This was the case in

Bahrain under the old tribal regime, when alliances were made with caste and sect groups operating there. It has not been the case since, at least not for most Indians.

Colonial rule in Bahrain was indirect; there were no councils, no communal representation and no communal distribution. Economic competition was structured on the basis of nationality (i.e., Britons and Indians were favored), and was perceived as such. However, the structuring was neither overt, nor collective (i.e., employment was not mediated by collective institutions, but by individual agreement), nor directly political. The biases in the system inspired organization among Bahrainis, but not among Indians. Whether their status was that of "British subjects" or, later, that of Indian nationals under British protection, there was no mediation of interests through collective organizations. Today, though they are categorically differentiated as Non-Bahrainis, the articulation of interests remains an individual matter for most Indians. It is based on incorporation through sponsorship in an informal, tribal political and economic system. The primary purpose of communal organization, at various levels, is cultural expression.

In a way, though, cultural expression itself is a practical interest. This may be the case for all overseas groups, but it is especially the case where migrants are insecure in their residence or social position. In this respect, as well as others, Bahrain is more like East Africa than other cases. Despite relatively small numbers, under the colonial regime Indians came to dominate trade and the professions in East Africa, which made

them the target of upwardly mobile Africans. When East African nations became independent, the economic and political roles of Asians were limited. In Uganda, this culminated in their expulsion. These actions were in part based on class inequities and were inflected by tribal politics, but they were expressed in terms of the general racial categories inherited from the colonial constitution. It is likely that organizations among the Indians remaining in East Africa have come to serve more coping functions as political and economic pressure has increased. Though the position of Indians in South Africa is hardly admirable, they are at least more secure than those in East Africa; the system of apartheid that oppresses them also protects them.

These problems bring out a crucial point: though they have (or had) citizenship, Asians in Africa are in a sense seen as aliens, or, after Simmel, as "strangers" (Shack and Skinner, eds., 1979; Kuper, 1969). In this regard, Indians in Africa differ significantly from Indians in Guyana, Trinidad, and even Fiji, who are recognized as citizens. However, the status of Indians in Africa is similar to that of Indians in Bahrain and the rest of the Gulf, where they have few formal rights and lack even a legitimable claim to permanent residence, despite a long history in the region. They are more than "sojourners," collectively at least, but less than "immigrants." Once identified as aliens, their rights are subject to the vagaries of local politics, as in East Africa. Of course, to varying degrees, Bahrainis themselves (and, it may be added, some groups in East

African societies) suffer the same disabilities; they are "nationals" rather than "citizens." Nationality is a powerful legitimation for them, but their rights and benefits are often subject to the same system of preferences and personal politics as those of non-nationals. Though Indians are aliens in Bahrain, it is evident that their relationships to the local society, and political relationships generally, are quite complex. I will take up these issues after making a few more brief comparative points.

While the migrating populations in most overseas communities are not quite as diverse as in Bahrain, they are, or were, still quite varied; diversity itself cannot account for most of the differences discussed--the presence or absence of particular forms of organization, the elimination or limited importance of some categories, the greater importance of others, political efficacy or weakness. These differences must be seen largely as products of migration and the conditions of residence in the new society, that is, the context. In these Indian communities, it seems that groups are formed most coherently and extensively when practical interests can be articulated, as in Guyana and East Africa. In these two cases, social oppositions and competition were structured at different categorical levels. Only in Guyana has "Indian" become the primary basis of identity and of political organization. In East Africa, narrow categories of caste and sect became more organized even than those in India itself. In Bahrain, on the other hand, Indians are not organized as a general category, and, with few exceptions, their institutions do not serve practical functions. This fact, too,

must be seen in the context of the local plural system and, especially, of political institutions.

At the same time, it is evident that the incorporation of Indians into new societies has not been simply determined by local systems, but has involved conflicting legitimations of political and social action. The outcomes have been negotiated in the interaction of the various groups in the societies. This is especially evident in the case of colonial East Africa. Only in South Africa does a plural order seem to be prescriptively enforced, and even there it now appears that the negotiating position of the oppressed groups in the society is improving. Finally, as in the South African case, these plural structures are in flux, due to internal factors and external influences.

With some understanding of the similarities and differences among overseas Indian communities, I now turn to a brief recapitulation of the nature of pluralism in Bahrain, drawing some implications for pluralism generally.

PLURALISM IN BAHRAIN

Increasing migration to Bahrain, in response to economic development, has led to important changes in the foreign population. In the Indian community, for example, migration produced demographic change and increased internal differentiation. The role and position of foreigners in Bahraini society has also changed. The incorporation of Indians as marginals under tribal sponsorship, in the old regime, or as a protected group, under the British, has given way to new

processes. These processes and the relations through which Indians and other expatriates are both incorporated into and differentiated within Bahraini society are complex indeed. If these relations often seem at cross-purposes, it is because Bahraini society is at cross-purposes with itself.

In the Introduction to this thesis, several types of social environments for plural groups were discussed. These included the classic plural society, as described by Smith (1969a), in which "regulation," control by force, determines categorical boundaries, segments the population and, evidently, controls group formation. A second situation was that emphasized by Young, in which cultural pluralities are free to mobilize and compete in a more or less democratic, or at least open, political sphere. Two cases were discussed to illustrate other forms of context. In Guyana, segmentation emerged in accordance with economic differentiation, generally without direct control or institutionalization by the government. In East Africa, on the other hand, despite a formal constitution specifying one set of pluralities, "races," the delegation of authority and the distribution of resources followed, or also followed, another set, caste and sect. This led to the emergence of extensive and relatively complete formal group organization at this level.

There is no open competiton of organized groups in the political arena in Bahrain. However, some aspects of all of the other contextual situations are, or have been, present. Under the British, the formal categories in the society were "British subjects," others under British protection, and "Bahrain

subjects." At first, Indians were included in the first category; later, after Indian independence, they were included under the second. Despite this formal plural order, the British authorities did not directly or indirectly institutionalize organizational forms in accordance with these criteria. Rather, patterns of segmentation were developed in employment, that is, in the economic sphere, albeit with political support. In social relations generally, the protected environment encouraged the continuity of existing patterns of differentiation and separation. It was a plural society without the formal institutionalization of plural distinctions.

Bahrain's independence changed the balance of political forces by providing legitimations for more clearly institutionalized distinctions between Bahrainis and foreigners, and for less clearly segmented patterns among Bahrainis themselves. These legitimations were at odds with the requirements of the rulers, the Al-Khalifah and their allies. Plural processes under these conditions have involved both regulation, as in the classic plural society, and the negotiated recognition of other plural categories, as in East Africa. The result is a dual mode of incorporation for foreigners and, to a lesser extent, for Bahrainis themselves. Yet, each mode has internal contradictions, and does not necessarily lead to the active, prescriptive, unambiguous institutionalization of plural differences through political means.

Formally, or legally, Indians are incorporated as Non-Bahrainis and as Indian nationals. Their status as Non-Bahrainis

ostensibly leads to a specific set of institutional relations with Bahraini society, that is, sponsorship. However, formal prescriptions are contradicted for two reasons, both directly related to the nature of the local political system. First, because India is weak, Indians are less favorably treated than other nationalities; the category of nationality undercuts the incorporation of Indians as Non-Bahrainis. Secondly, some elements of the Indian population, long-resident merchants, are incorporated differently than other elements, professionals and skilled workers, who are, in turn, incorporated differently than laborers. These differences are related to types of sponsorship, which are, in turn, related to yet another negotiable dimension in pluralism, the balance of forces in Bahraini society.

As noted in Chapter Two, Bahraini society contains at least two plural systems, one of cultural segments--Asil, Huwalah, Baharnah, etc.--and one of political segments--the Al-Khalifah with their allies, and the balance of the population. The formal institutions incorporating foreigners are a response to the expectations of Bahraini parties that migration be profitable and controlled. The implicit relations of incorporation--recognizing nationality, influence and alliance--are directly related to the relative power and utility of foreign groups, and of groups within those groups, to the ruling elite. It is not simply the case that one type of incorporation is merely "legal," and that the other is "real," but that both are to varying degrees institutionalized in the negotiations among the parties in the society, Bahraini and foreign.

These principles entail both regulation and flexibility in the incorporation of foreigners. Regulation and control have defined the general parameters of the foreign population, but they have by no means prescriptively instituted patterns of cultural differences. Rather, through the control of organization, they have encouraged some cultural distinctions while discouraging others. By virtue of the control it is able to exercise over the scope, nature and activities of formal expatriate associations, the government has acted to encourage sub-communal groups both directly, by allowing them to proliferate, and indirectly, by providing little role for community-wide institutions.

While the bases of these sub-communal organizations vary considerably in the Indian population--caste for the Bhatias, religion for the Sikhs, regional identity for the Keralites--the same processes are at work: the offices of government responding to given patterns of cultural pluralism, and simultaneously shaping them. Because the resources of different groups vary, the level at which that demand is articulated varies. The guidelines of the government vary. For example, there are different standards for explicitly religious institutions than explicitly social and cultural ones. More generally, as illustrated in some detail, the control over varying forms of organization is always related to the general political imperatives of the government. Those groups which express internal status boundaries or cultural interests do not threaten those imperatives, while large-scale organizations and groups capable of coordinated action with

political functions do. As under the British, there is no communal representation, except for those groups having alliances with the ruling family, such as the Bhatias and Bohras. These processes of control, combined with the recency of migration and continuing links to India, have kept ascriptive distinctions and sub-cultural institutions and practices alive. At the same time, though the political, cultural and social incorporation of Indians as Non-Bahrainis and Indian nationals is sufficient to insure that they remain a segregated and distinct social category, the expression of collective cultural differences--"Indian-ness"--is actively prevented. That is, though they are a clearly definable element of the population, they are not an organized one.

In sum, the processes of pluralism--cultural expression and group formation--in Bahrain are negotiated among actors working from complex patterns of existing cultural difference and caught in a tangle of complex and often contradictory social forces. These processes are also in flux. Before assessing the apparent direction of change, I will briefly discuss some of the other foreign communities in Bahrain. These cases illustrate that, despite a diversity of expression, the same plural principles are at work.

OTHER NATIONAL GROUPS

The flexibility and negotiability of the processes through which foreigners are incorporated into Bahraini society are evident in the fact that the demographic, cultural, political and economic characteristics of other foreign groups are reflected in group organization. The continuity, or coherence, of the incorporating processes is also obvious. For example, in other groups the primary forms of organization are social and sports clubs, school associations and religious groups. Also, as in the Indian population, these organizations function primarily for cultural expression, or are allowed to articulate only limited practical interests. No national population organizes itself extensively for political representation or the articulation of collective economic interests. However, as noted earlier, the embassies of some other countries are more effective in protecting or representing their nationals in Bahrain, either actively or as a deterrent to exploitation. The economic position of some foreigners, as well as their political position, protects them and affects both their relationship to Bahraini society and the formation of groups. This combination of continuity and variation--or, more precisely, variation toward a single end--in the application of the plural principles of the society will be discussed with reference to the British, Pakistani, Filipino, Sri Lankan and Korean populations.

Unlike Americans and other Europeans, who tend to work for multi-national corporations or parastatal companies, British workers are often employed by private Bahraini parties. Also,

while earlier generations of British workers were usually officials, merchants or executives, recent migrants are often white-collar service workers or even skilled blue-collar workers. The status of British workers has declined accordingly, though they rarely face the denial of contract benefits, etc., that are so common among Indian workers. There is some economic competition between British and Bahraini workers, but conflict has been minimized for two reasons. First, the British and other Europeans are generally more effectively separated residentially and socially from Bahrainis, and from the lower classes in particular, than are Asians. Secondly, European authority still has considerable legitimacy among Bahrainis, in economic and cultural spheres, if not in the political domain. Bahrainis are more inclined to work under a British or American supervisor, for example, than an Indian or Pakistani.

Exploitation is more common among Pakistani, Filipino and Sri Lankan workers, but in differing forms. The differences may be traced to their respective economic positions and national backgrounds. Filipinos tend to work for parastatal companies, the government or large companies. Though Filipino nursemaids are the latest fad, they are employed by the elite and are not exploited. These factors tend to protect Filipino workers in Bahrain. The source of their exploitation is the Philippines; the cronies of Marcos, who run the state-approved employment agencies and handle remittances, allegedly skim a percentage off the top. For Pakistani and Sri Lankan workers, on the other hand, the problems are in Bahrain. Both tend to be in vulnerable occupations and

sponsorship positions. Their governments have taken very different approaches to the problem, one active and the other inactive. I will take up the Pakistani case first.

Most Pakistani labor problems occur among construction workers. The solidarity many Pakistanis feel between themselves and Bahrainis as brother Muslims is not reciprocated. Bahrainis see them as fair game. However, the Pakistani embassy does not simply send workers with problems to the Ministry of Labour, as the Indian embassy does. It involves itself directly with employers in dealing with labor complaints. The Pakistani ambassador has not been openly sanctioned for doing this, as the Indian ambassador was for his efforts. The legitimating cloak of Islam, and the strong, charismatic personality of the ambassador, who was reputed to be a hero of independence and the formation of Pakistan, have certainly been important here. In addition, Bahrain has a close alliance with Pakistan: the Bahraini government recruites private guards and police in Pakistan, and shaikhs maintain estates there. This gives the ambassador some license.

Though his efforts are tolerated, it is not clear that they have been very successful. The Pakistani population has declined considerably since the mid-1970's (see Chapter Three), and labor problems continue. A great deal of the exploitation of Pakistani workers involves their collusion with employers or, at least, their acceptance of exploitative conditions. They often come to the embassy for help only at the end of their contracts. Generally, Pakistani workers are thought by employers to be more

obstinate than Indians, to complain more, and to be more likely to do so collectively. These characteristics have made them less popular, and in part account for the decline in the Pakistani working population. It is possible, too, that part of the decline in the Pakistani working population may have been due to the ambassador's attempts to act where possible; that is, he was rewarded not with an open ban on residence permits, which would be unseemly, but with more subtly erected obstacles to migration.

Sri Lankan labor problems center around what informants referred to as "the housemaid problem." When the Indian government banned the export of household labor, recruiters immediately turned to Sri Lanka. The migration of many domestics, often uneducated women from rural areas, has contributed to the low status of Sri Lankans. The vulnerable position of the maids has led to much abuse. As noted in Chapter Three, they are not covered under the labor law. They are often brought into the country without benefit of the usual immigration procedures, which is technically illegal. They may be held as virtual prisoners from the time of arrival until their placement. During this period, they may be subjected to extortion and physical or sexual abuse by agents or their employees. Conditions may be no better in a Bahraini household. Maids are, in effect, indentured laborers; it is almost impossible to break a contract regardless of conditions. And conditions may be bad: they may be abused physically or sexually, denied time off, and prohibited from leaving the home.

Unfortunately, there is no Sri Lankan embassy in Bahrain.

Moreover, the Sri Lankan consulate in the United Arab Emirates has been accused of failing to act in cases of exploitation for fear of political repercussions that would lead to a decline in migration and remittances, that is, of sacrificing young women for foreign exchange. The arrival in Sri Lanka of the bodies of some housemaids murdered in the Emirates led to a political scandal. Nonetheless, the government was unable or unwilling to significantly affect the situation. The vulnerable position of Sri Lankan workers and the weak position of their government have allowed widespread exploitation of a kind that is at least protested in other groups, if not prevented.

The Korean community in Bahrain is unique among expatriate groups. Because nearly all Koreans in Bahrain are employed by two Korean firms operating there--a construction company and a service company that handles freight at the port and airport--their migration and working conditions are protected by the Korean government, which closely monitors companies working overseas. They suffer little abuse in either Korea or Bahrain. There is a Korean embassy in Bahrain, but its primary concern is trade, not labor problems. Companies handle remittances and provide housing, recreational facilities, and food, down to the kimchi on the dinner table. The nature of Korean employment leads to an interesting convergence of economic and social institutions: in effect, the structure of the firm is the structure of the "community." Company officers are community leaders. The management negotiates with its sponsors and the government, but, internally, Korean norms are applied. Companies

organize committees with representatives from workers. These committees deal with employee problems, relations between labor and management, and some relations between the company and the host society. As in Korea, these communal organizations are potent articulators of public opinion and of pressure for conformity to communal norms; they minimize conflict within the group and help it present a united face to the outside.

The two firms cooperate in the celebration of holidays and other events and in relations with Bahrainis. They also work closely with the embassy. There is a community-wide Korean organization, but it is a friendship society, not a social club. The embassy, the two companies, and the society sponsor cultural events, charitable activities and even community work to improve the image of Koreans in Bahrain. (Because most Koreans do not speak English, do not mix easily, and do not spend money, they are not enthusiastically received by Bahrainis.) For example, unprompted by local suggestions, the Korean companies organized a force of volunteers to clean up some of the beach areas in Bahrain. It is not clear that these efforts had the desired effect, but, nonetheless, the Korean community has a clear perception of its common interests and a unified and cohesive organizational structure to articulate them.

For Filipinos and Sri Lankans, the main formal organizations are social clubs, the Filipino Sports Club and the Sri Lankan Sports Club. The different fortunes of these clubs reflect the varying positions of their constituents. Because substantial numbers of workers could afford to participate, the Filipino club

was successful. Though it was difficult to reach some workers--those at ALBA and ASRY and those servicing offshore oil rigs, for example--the club was growing fast. The Sri Lankan club had acquired premises, after a difficult search, but faced financial problems in developing facilities and attracting more members. The meager resources of the population as a whole presented dim prospects for organizational success.

Both these clubs encompassed ascriptive and occupational differentiation within the national populations. There are few Filipino laborers in the population, but blue-collar and white-collar workers alike participated in the club. A considerable range of regional variation was accommodated without difficulty. The ascriptive differentiation in the Sri Lankan community was mainly religious and ethnic. Though there were few Buddhists in the club, largely because few migrated, Sinhalese and Tamils, Muslims, Hindus and Christians all participated without conflict. Perhaps in other circumstances, these differences would have led to factionalism or schism. However, given the difficult straits of the organization and of the population in general, they were set aside. Though the Sri Lankan club included a broad range of occupations, from physicians to truck drivers, few housemaids were members. Aside from the fact that their masters seldom let them out of the house, they lacked the resources to participate. Club members did provide support and assistance for maids in trouble whenever possible. In both the Sri Lankan and Filipino clubs, there was no evidence of the exclusivity and the concern for "status" and "behavior" that were so important in many Indian

clubs. The reasons for this seemed to be both cultural and situational.

The British and Pakistani communities are much larger and older than these other Asian groups. They provide an interesting contrast to the Indian community. Both groups went through an evolution in patterns of leadership similar to that already seen in the Indian community, but with very different results. Though it may seem odd, there are more structural resemblances between the British and the Indian cases than between Pakistani and Indian.

Despite regional variation and pronounced economic and occupational differentiation, there is only one Pakistani social club, the Pakistan Club. As noted in Chapter Four, it began as the Bahrain Cricket Club in the 1930's, and became the Pakistan Club in 1948. Until the early 1970's, it was run by a group of Punjabi businessmen--the Pakistani equivalent of the Bhatia merchants--more or less as a private club. They manipulated membership, much as the Karnataka Sports Club seems to have done, and let in few new members. Eventually, pressure for expansion began to build within the club as well as among the hundreds of frustrated Pakistanis whose applications for membership had been denied. This happened before the boom, at about the same time the Indian Association began to grow. Slowly, new leaders gained control of the managing committee. When membership was opened up, the club grew rapidly. Like the new leaders in the Indian community, the new leaders in the Pakistan Club were professional and educated employees with more modern orientations. In 1981,

the president was a Sindhi, a long-time employee of the Ministry of Interior. Other officers were from varying backgrounds. Few laborers belonged, but otherwise the occupational range of the membership was broad. This was seen as consonant with Islam and with the facts that the club had semi-official status and was supposed to serve the entire community. To accommodate existing stratification, the club held special events by invitation only; of course, only the elite received invitations.

The club cooperated closely with the other institutions of the Pakistani community, the embassy and the two schools, the Pakistan School and the Urdu School. The latter had been started by the merchants and, ironically, was English medium. The former was an Urdu medium school started with Pakistani government assistance. In 1981, both schools were receiving some funding from the government of Pakistan. Community events, such as speeches by the ambassador or officials from Pakistan (including President Zia on one occasion), were held in the Pakistan Club hall. Students from the schools sat for graduating exams, administered by embassy staff and officials from Pakistan, in the club. The coordination among these institutions may in great part be attributed to the energy and managerial skill of the ambassador. The fact that the Pakistani government contributed to the schools probably increased his authority.

The British government does not support St. Christopher's School, but, otherwise, cooperation among the embassy and other British institutions is close. Associated with the embassy is the British Council, which maintains a library and holds cultural

events and educational activities. The British Club is not officially attached to the embassy, but the ambassador is a patron. This semi-official status reflects continuity with the arrangement prior to Bahraini independence. The club began as the Gymkhana Club. The Political Advisor, Charles Belgrave, ran it for many years. Other officers were usually military personnel or other officials. Both officials and merchants belonged to the club, which was not the case elsewhere in the empire (Allen, ed., 1975, 1979). It was Belgrave's judgment that, since Britain did not officially rule and the community was very small, it should make do with only one club.

Though the club was somewhat more open than British clubs elsewhere, the membership was still exclusive. As the British population grew in the 1950's, and democratic sensibilities came to dominate both in Britain and abroad, there was pressure to change this. Belgrave and other officials recognized the need to rename the club and expand its membership. There was no extended battle as in the Pakistan Club. The British Club in 1981 reflected the major changes that had taken place in British society and in the position and composition of the British community in Bahrain. The old official elite, many of whom stayed on as advisors to the Bahraini government, still belonged to the club, but most members and the management were from the new middle class. For example, the Chairman, as he is called, was a Welsh civil engineer from a lower middle class background. There were also a number of Bahraini members in the club, but, significantly, Indians were not admitted unless they had British

passports with Right of Residence in the United Kingdom.

The British Club includes a substantial proportion of the British residents in Bahrain, from a broad range of backgrounds, but it is not a fully extensive organization. The community has become too large to serve. Another social club, the Delmon Club, was organized by a number of British workers at ALBA to handle this overflow. Its unofficial status made it more vulnerable to local interests. It was sanctioned for allowing gambling on the premises—a Las Vegas Night function which was reported in the local press, evidently at the behest of a disgruntled Bahraini member. For a while, it faced a takeover bid by a local entrepreneur who sought to turn it into a profit-making private club. The British management kept control, but the club had to change premises and undertake a major membership drive to remain solvent. In 1981, it seemed to have rounded the corner. The membership was not limited to Britons, but, because fees were high, there were few non-European members.

Ascriptive differentiation within the British population--that is, "ethnicity," or regional differences--is also given organized expression in Bahrain. There is a branch of the Royal Society of St. George (English), a Welsh Society, an Irish Society, and two chapters of the Caledonian Society (Scottish). The presence of these societies indicates the salience of regional identity, of course. It also reflects the fact that the British are numerous enough to have reached the threshold point for the expression of cultural differences and are affluent and influential enough to organize them. The societies specialize in

the celebration of regional holidays and activities, such as the Queen's Birthday, Burns' Night, Highland games, etc. In many cases, members also belong to the British Club. Workers who expect to be in Bahrain for only a short period may simply join an ethnic society and not put themselves on the waiting list at the British Club. Of the various foreign groups, only the British resemble the Indians in forming voluntary associations expressing internal cultural differentiation.

In sum, group formation among non-Indian expatriates tends to follow nationality. Though sub-national groups may form, as in the British case, in general, sub-categorical identities are encompassed within more broadly-based groups. Except among the Sri Lankans, internal differences are less numerous than they are among Indians, but, even in this case, they are not organizationally significant in Bahrain. Organizations reflect the numbers, affluence, and political influence of groups more than patterns of internal ascriptive differentiation.

Varying patterns of migration and employment affect the incorporation of the population into Bahraini society. The two extremes here are the Korean community and the Sri Lankan community. Koreans avoid individual incorporation through sponsorship; economic institutions that are effectively based on nationality incorporate them, represent their interests, and segment them collectively from Bahraini society. Other groups are differentiated socially by national category, but, like Indians, they are incorporated economically as individuals. Among Sri Lankans, the effects of sponsorship and politico-economic

incorporation are so overwhelming that organization even for cultural expression has become difficult.

While the Asian and European populations are organized in some fashion, expatriates from elsewhere in the Middle East are not. There are Persian clubs, mosques, ma'tams and even a Persian school, but they are for the 'Ajam, not for Iranians. (Of course, by now there are very few Iranians left in Bahrain.) The relationship between Bahrainis and other Arabs is a more important issue. In Bahrain, there is no Egyptian club, or Palestinian club, or Omani club, despite substantial numbers in these categories. Some Arab expatriates interact closely with Bahrainis, especially those from elsewhere in the Gulf and those who are educated. However, the boundaries of nationality and, in some cases, cultural differences keep the groups apart for many purposes and in many situations. The absence of associations cannot be attributed to assimilation.

The organization of these groups is kept--by external control, self-regulation, or both--at the level of networks. Here, the true sensitivities and most elementary political principles of the Bahraini plural system are in evidence. The organization of these groups, for <u>any</u> purpose, would have political implications not present in other foreign groups. The simple fact that they are Arabs represents a legitimate argument for better treatment, more privileges, and sharing, in some way, in the benefits of affluence and development in Bahrain. Their Arabness is also associated with more participatory political traditions and with a more active stance on pan-Arab issues than

the Bahraini government is prepared to take. Few Non-Bahraini Arabs are allowed to enter Bahrain, and those who do are more extensively controlled than non-Arab foreigners. Despite the ideological articulation of Arab and Khaliji solidarity, differentiation between other Arabs and Bahrainis is encouraged by the government.

This brings us to the final issue to be considered here, attitudes toward foreigners in general. These attitudes, their institutional underpinnings, and, thus, the entire plural system, have been in flux for some time. Recent developments are not encouraging.

THE PROSPECTS FOR A PLURAL SOCIETY

It would appear that the tendency of the Indian population is to pursue group formation at any of several levels and dimensions of differentiation--caste, sect, religion, language, region, nationality, social class--or even at all levels simultaneously. Other groups have differing cultural backgrounds and needs, but a similar tendency to form groups. We have also seen that there are powerful forces in Bahraini society constraining, channelling and shaping group formation. The structure of the Indian community and other groups has been presented as negotiated in the interaction of these parties. It may be expected that, if the expatriate population is maintained at the current size, the pressure for group formation will continue and, in fact, will increase.

However, it is not at all clear that the government, and

Bahrainis in general, will be as flexible as they have been in allowing the expression of identities, cultural traditions and interests. In the discussion of interaction between Indians and Bahrainis in Chapter Three, the dynamics of identity and the effects of migration on Bahrainis were stated only briefly. In this section, I will analyze them in more detail. In combination with other processes of political, economic and social development, migration and the expatriate presence seem to be leading to a restructuring of the relations and ground rules of pluralism in Bahrain. The formal status of Indians and other groups will continue to be that of long-term alien residents, but their actual position in the society appears to be deteriorating.

In some ways, this trend has been evolving for decades. It is evident in restrictions on the economic rights of foreigners, for example. The process has accelerated in the last decade. Aside from the exploitation of laborers and numerous problems with the sponsorship system, even Indian merchants are insecure. They currently have "exempt" status, but they have already lost their agencies and they may be forced to take partners or sell out. In any case, it is unlikely that they will be able to pass their businesses on to their heirs. I have discussed other signs of tension between Bahrainis and foreigners: disputes over showing videos, gambling and other activities in clubs; difficulties in finding premises; uncertainties surrounding the celebration of holidays.

Though the government allowed the formation of more clubs in the late 1970's, it did so reluctantly. It may not be so flexible

in the future. In some ways, policy toward expatriates is already becoming more restrictive. There were plans to set up a separate clinic for foreign workers, in effect separating them from Bahrainis in the delivery of health care. More companies are building camps or barracks for workers, rather than housing them in apartments in the city, and more workers are coming on bachelor contracts. There was talk of legally restricting the migration of dependents, as has already occurred in other states in the Gulf.

The tone of relations between Bahrainis and foreigners is rising to a xenophobic pitch. Though Bahrainis have long been eager to modernize, and have adapted tradition freely, there are finally signs of concern about cultural loss. The factors stimulating this concern are not exclusion from modernization, leading to a traditionalistic backlash, as in Iran, but, for example, the fact that their children are learning English, or worse, Sinhalese, before they are learning Arabic. Bahrainis have begun to fear the long-term effects of the foreign presence and of their own dependence on foreign labor. The vast influx of uneducated, unskilled laborers and service workers has contributed to a loss of respect for Indians and expatriates generally, even the British. The treatment of Indians and other foreigners in weak positions at the hands of petty bureaucrats has become increasingly prejudicial, vicious and cruel. Recently, there have been reports of increasingly violence directed against foreigners, such as assaults and rapes. Photographs of "runaways"--workers who have left their employers without

permission, for one reason or another--are splashed across the pages of local newspapers as if they were dangerous criminals rather than exploited victims.

The deteriorating state of relations between Bahrainis and foreigners is evident in discourse and in expressions of identity. Categories of reference for Bahrainis are generalized to the term "locals." Foreigners are classified as either "expats," referring to Europeans and others of high status, or "Asians," usually meaning South Asians, and usually with negative connotations. As the categories "local," "expat" and "Asian" have gained greater currency in everyday discourse, those of "Bahraini" and "Non-Bahraini" have become dominant in official discourse, to the extent that the 1981 census does not differentiate individual foreign nationalities. Though self-attribution as "Bahrainis" or "locals" is relevant for Bahrainis in some situations, traditional categories--Shuyukh, Baharnah, Huwulah, ʿAjam, etc.--represent important elements of identity and remain relevant in many contexts. The same is true for foreigners: despite self-reference as "expats" and, less commonly, as "Asians" (Indians and other "Asians" tend to appropriate the higher status term for themselves), the fragmentation of the population into smaller organizations and networks keeps other elements of identity--nationality, language, religion, caste, etc.--alive and flourishing. Thus, in reference, each tends to generalize the other without at the same time consistently generalizing the self.

The generalization of the other is accompanied by negative

stereotyping on both sides. Though Bahrainis still target the British, the main focus of abuse is the "Asians," and Indians in particular, who are characterized as dirty, unscrupulous, and undignified. They want only to prolong their stay, keep Bahrainis down, and carry off the national wealth. As noted above, there is still some respect for British or European authority, but Asians in positions of authority are tolerated less and less. The rationalization for this was given in racial terms, with cultural implications: Indians are a "brown" people, that is, a subject race, like Bahrainis, and their pretensions to superiority are therefore intolerable. The civilization, skills and color of whites are still respected.

For their part, foreigners, and especially Indians and other South Asians, depict Bahrainis as stupid, lazy, barbaric, cruel and arrogant. They are incompetent businessmen and layabouts who only want to live off the labor of others. Discourse among foreigners, in clubs and casual conversation, turns to these stereotypes, stories of cases of abuse, rumors of new laws, etc. The means available for actually solving problems--networks, connections, or, as a last resort, the embassy--have been discussed in detail. This sort of discourse may be seen as an attempt to cope with insecurity, pressure and assaults on self-esteem through verbalization and mutual support, in a situation where constructive means of dealing with problems are not available. Other coping behavior is less "functional"; health officials report psychiatric problems--especially occasional violent outbursts--and alcoholism among Indian patients, for

example. Though no comparative data are available, officials felt that the incidence of illness was high.

Pervasive labor problems and a general sense of outrage were evident in the response to a write-in column, the "Action Line," that was started in the local English language newspaper. The column very quickly emerged as a forum for airing labor complaints, asking questions about labor issues, and relating tales of injustice. The vast majority of letters came from Indians and other South Asians. By providing anonymity, the newspaper presented a safe means of expression; authoritative sources of information, such as the Ministry of Labour or the embassy, were either dangerous or useless. The editors of the newspaper soon worked out a system of cooperation with officials at the Ministry of Labour--a negotiated solution in a situation in which the formal organization of labor matters was impossible. Their replies to queries became the means of articulating labor policy to the community at large, while rational institutions for doing so, the Ministry or representative expatriate organizations, had either been co-opted or were not allowed to form at all. Should political pressures increase, this voice of protest and means of communication might be silenced as well.

The deteriorating state of relations between Bahrainis and foreigners--especially those foreigners who are weak and readily victimized--is in part a product of competition and increased interaction, which have occurred as the foreign population has become a more substantial presence in Bahraini society. However, the problem leads ultimately to the ground rules of pluralism in

Bahrain and the political and economic contradictions of the society.

As Khuri has noted, the government of Bahrain faces a dilemma: if it uses oil money for long-term development, it will create or further develop political forces that will eventually lead to its fall; if it does not undertake such development, its society will "sink into oblivion" when the oil money has gone (1980: 246-247). Though regional planning may effect a change, to date the government has taken its chances and pursued the latter alternative. In order to maintain control and enhance its wealth, it has manipulated development policy so as to favor its allies and prevent the emergence of a stable, organized and politically troublesome local labor force. This has entailed limiting industrial growth, which might generate long-term employment and manpower development. Instead, it has allowed smaller-scale projects and encouraged construction and services, which use imported labor. This has been combined with a massive expansion of the welfare state. The wealth and exaggerated consumption of the elite, necessary to maintain its own coherence, has deepened alienation and disaffection. The compensation for this has been increased distribution to the people. The sublimation of political demands into "consumerism" has been encouraged by the government.

In the affluence of the middle and late 1970's, this was a viable policy. Affluence has widened the arena of comparison in the definition of status and identity. Wealth has given Bahrainis new pride vis-a-vis other Gulf nationals, a turnabout from the

1960's, when Bahrainis working in the oilfields of Saudi Arabia were known as the "Indians of the Gulf." However, the dependence of national identity and self-esteem on wealth has had unfortunate implications. The increasingly pervasive foreign presence, whether in economic competition with Bahrainis or in menial occupations, in the context of affluence, rising expectations, national pride and the welfare state, has encouraged a greater emphasis on the criterion of nationality in the processes through which identity--in both a practical and an ideological, or reflexive, sense--is created and maintained.

Given the unsatisfactory comparisons they might make with local elites, Bahrainis take satisfaction in material well-being and in comparing themselves to foreigners--and in making sure the comparison is a favorable one. At a simple level, then, Bahrainis scapegoat foreigners, especially the more vulnerable ones. However, the cultural dynamics of this response are quite complex. It is in this context that the practical and symbolic dimensions of Bahraini identity have become intertwined. The co-occurrence of independence, prosperity, distributive policies, and the growth of the foreign population--all related to the means through which the tribal elite has sought to maintain itself--has allowed a linkage to be made between the ideological and reflexive aspects of nationality--that is, categories and identity--and some of its more practical aspects--that is, the rights and benefits that do, or should, accrue to nationals. Distributions from the state or as a result of state policy represent material incentives for the heightened distinction

between Bahraini and Non-Bahraini that has been observed.

In general, a more arrogant attitude is emerging. Cultural differentiation from foreigners--through the assumption of traditional dress by Bahraini men who might never before have worn it, for example--is one effect of the general process. So is the legal structure limiting the economic and political rights of foreigners. These juridical formulas formally legitimate distinctions between nationals and foreigners and reinforce them. Institutionalized prejudice is increasingly unquestioned and, in fact, is expected. Aside from the cultural barriers and stereotypes, the prejudice and the violence, Bahrainis are more conscious of and sensitive about the life-styles of foreigners--their occupations, salaries, benefits, access to government services, etc. Efforts on the part of Bahrainis to make the continuous comparison of self and foreigner a favorable one represent pressure on the government to improve the position of Bahrainis and limit that of foreigners.

In short, the dynamic is toward a system of apartheid. However, since the government wishes to restrict the economic role of Bahrainis, and their numbers are limited anyway, it cannot be a genuine system of apartheid; it can only look like one. Instead of becoming simultaneously stratified and segmented, like the economy in South Africa, the Bahraini economy is becoming divided into sectors, with Bahrainis in government, parastatal companies and proprietary occupations, and with foreigners as employees in the private sector--and, with trusted tribal allies, in many sensitive positions involving social

control. The cosmetics of apartheid have already been noted--discrimination against foreigners, though they remain in important positions; and benefits and meaningless "Bahrainization" programs for locals, regardless of productivity.

These processes are both contradictory and self-reinforcing. Bahrainis want the benefits of development, but are increasingly disinclined to link their own efforts to these benefits, and want foreign workers to perform many necessary tasks. Yet, Bahrainis find the foreign presence increasingly distasteful and threatening. Though Bahrainis look down on foreigners as non-nationals, they rely on their labor and must often look up to their skills and authority. As Bahrainis have become more dependent on foreign labor and the government, they have become less tolerant of the former and more demanding of the latter.

The development policies of the last decade have served the interests of the ruling elite--and, not incidentally, the interests of its supporters in neighboring countries and in the West. In addition, they have undoubtedly strengthened and prolonged the regime in the short run. However, it is likely that this sort of development has substantially added to the list of problems the government must deal with eventually. The economy remains dependent on extraction and rents, it has become more dependent on imports, and it is increasingly dependent on foreign aid as well. This has heightened Saudi influence, which is threatening to the economy and to the relatively free Bahraini way of life. Outside capital hurts local interests, and religious and social restrictions would be unpopular and bad for business

in a country which serves as an international service center. Aside from all the strings which might be attached to it, outside aid is unreliable.

An opportunity for manpower development in Bahrain has been squandered and, in the process, a situation created in which any future attempts are likely to be much more difficult. Policies have encouraged consumption and the use of foreign labor, but have not met long-standing political and economic demands--participation, representation, unions, etc. The government to a great extent bought the marginal legitimacy it appeared to enjoy in the 1970's. The underlying disaffection did not disappear, but was only masked by prosperity. Should the proserity end, the disaffection could resurface, made stronger by the further isolation of the ruling elite from the rest of the society.

In this context, the effects of the oil glut and the revolution in Iran could have serious consequences. Further political repression of the Shi'a and others and a cutback in development and distribution will further increase alienation. This, in turn, is likely to involve increased anti-foreign feeling, directed both at the foreigners and at the government, which is held responsible for their presence and position. Processes already in motion--the segmentation of the labor force and the economy, the scapegoating of powerless foreigners, violence, exploitation, social restrictions--may be reinforced, leading to a further evolution of the ground rules of the society in the direction of apartheid. These developments may be encouraged by the government in order to draw attention away from

its own political problems. Given the cosmopolitan nature of Bahraini society and its tolerance of outsiders in the past, these changes may be viewed as unfortunate. For foreigners themselves, they entail further restrictions on group formation and the expression of cultural differences, at the same time that ascriptive or primordial identities become more important for coping. At a human level, these developments can be expected to exact a higher toll of suffering and misery. In short, the prospects for this plural society are not very good.

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