

SOCIAL SIMILARITY, THE AMERICAN MILIEU
AND FOREIGN STUDENT SOCIAL INTERACTION

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ABSTRACT

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by R. Satyanarayana

The general hypothesis to be tested is that similarity of background of foreign students with their American Milieu will make for greater interaction of these students with Americans than dissimilar backgrounds. Situational factors in the United States such as dormitory versus off-campus living, length of stay, degree of favorable attitudes, age, marital status, and the major field of study, are also manipulated and run against degrees of interaction. The total sample consisted of all the Indian students enrolled at Michigan State University in the spring quarter of 1966. (N. = 92). In all cases of testing the influence of various background and situational factors on the degree of interaction, the hypothesis was substantiated.

SOCIAL SIMILARITY, THE AMERICAN MILIEU
AND FOREIGN STUDENT SOCIAL INTERACTION

By

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INTRODUCTION

The study of a foreign person's encounter with a cultural environment different from his own has a distinct and valuable place in sociological research. How a person (stranger) interacts when he encounters a different culture has been an issue which has held the curiosity and interest of sociologists ever since Georg Simmel.¹

A glance at the research done on foreign students in America shows that there is no well-established body of theory on the cross-cultural interaction of foreign students in a host society. Scientific understanding of cross-cultural interaction necessitates the development of such a theory. Yet, very little is known about the factors which have direct effect on foreign students' interaction in a host society. Among the various questions which have emerged in the realm of cross-cultural interaction, the present research is limited to the study of several questions relevant to the interaction of Indian students within the American society.

Specifically, this study is primarily concerned with the relationship between the socio-economic and urban backgrounds of Indian students at home and their interaction within American society. A limited study such as this, however, cannot undertake the task of developing an elaborate theory of cross-cultural interaction. Instead, I am concerned with testing certain hypotheses. Nevertheless, the results could give impetus for further research and this might contribute to the formulation of such a theory.

¹Cf. Georg Simmel, "The Stranger" in The Sociology of George Simmel. Edited and translated by Kurt Wolf, Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press.

In addition to social-scientific concerns, much of the importance of such a study lies in its pragmatic value. For instance, effective interaction between foreign students and Americans is crucial in appraising the success or failure of the exchange experience.

RELATED EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Previous studies which have dealt with questions similar to those considered in the present research have been inadequate in so far as they have not focused on specific and relevant behavioral factors. In most of these studies the main concerns were generally of three kinds: (a) concentration on changes occurring in foreign students over a period of time as a result of their sojourn experience, (b) issues related to the problems and difficulties of foreign students while they are in America, and (c) attitudinal and environmental factors affecting foreign students' adjustments in American society.¹ In the last instance, most studies have focused only in a minor way on environmental and time factors found to influence the interaction of foreign students with Americans.

Morris' study of foreign students at the University of California at Los Angeles found that foreign students develop increasingly intense social relations with Americans over the period of their stay in America.² Selitiz's research states that foreign students' interaction with Americans increases with the length of American residence.³ Goldsen, in research

¹Robert H. Sheffer and Leo R. Dowling, Foreign Students and Their American Student Friends (unpublished research, Indiana University, 1966), p. 22.

²Richard T. Morris, National Status in Foreign Students' Adjustment (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960), p. 215.

³Cited in Claire Selitiz, et al., Attitude and Social Relations of Foreign Students in the United States (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), pp. 65-66.

done on foreign students at Cornell University, lends additional support to the foregoing hypothesis.¹ In contrast to these findings, in a study conducted by Lambert and Bressler on Indian students,² it was observed that the Indian students were more eager to meet Americans during their first year of stay. Moreover, after their first year, their social relations with Americans decreased as their length of stay increased. Clearly, Lambert and Bressler's findings do not conform to the findings of Sellitz and Morris, and therefore, pose a problem in arriving at an empirical generalization in this regard.

Besides the foregoing variable, "length of stay," the research has also investigated the behavioral effects of varying environmental conditions. Sellitz found that type of living arrangements have a bearing on interaction as they provide opportunities which facilitate to varying degrees social relations between foreign students and Americans. Specifically, she found that foreign students have more social relations with Americans when they live in a house or residence where Americans also live.³ Goldsen⁴ states that the foreign students who stay in university dormitories have more social relations with Americans than do the students who live in off-campus housing.

¹Ibid.

²Richard Lambert and Marvin Bressler, Indian Students on an American Campus (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

³Sellitz, et al., op. cit., p. 103.

⁴Ibid., pp. 103-105.

Other variables have also been investigated. For example, Sowell and Davidson¹ studied 40 Scandinavian students and found that the Scandinavians who have more contact with Americans scored high on an index comprising the following items: (a) less foreign looking, (b) higher English speaking ability, (c) higher socio-economic status at home, (d) more urban residential background, (e) more prior contact with Americans, and (f) more likely to be in liberal arts than in the physical and biological sciences. Also in other research, previous foreign experience, willingness to become acquainted with Americans, English speaking ability, and world area from which the student came, have been considered as influences on foreign student interaction with Americans. Most findings, however, have been social psychological. They have been generally concerned with the relationship between attitudinal characteristics of foreign students toward America and the foreign experiences and attitudes of Americans interacting with foreign students as they both affect intensity of interaction. This research, however, differs from most prior studies in that it focuses primarily on the social background of the foreign students rather than of Americans, looking at the behavioral outcome of this.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The fundamental proposition of this research is that in so far as two or more social milieus are similar, an individual moving from one milieu to another will tend to interact within the other more frequently

¹William H. Sowell and Olof M. Davidsen, "The Adjustment of Scandinavian Students," Journal of Social Issues, vol. 12, #1, 1956, pp. 9-19.

than if the milieux in question were dissimilar. The problem of concern here will involve the testing of this hypothesis with a sample Indian students studying at Michigan State University. It will determine the extent to which their interaction with Americans increases as a function of the similarity of their Indian background with that of their American situation.

To determine the similarity of the social background of Indian students to that of American "society," the following American model, constructed for the purpose of comparison, will be postulated. The American situation is viewed as a highly urbanized culture in which most occupations are of an urban rather than rural type. Most of the families in this culture belong to middle income groups, and the majority of people are relatively well educated. Thus, if an Indian student comes from a large city, if his father has a relatively substantial education, a good income, and an urban rather than rural occupation, the student is considered as having a background similar to the American counterpart.

The sample of Indians will be divided into two groups: those who (in their backgrounds) are most like and those who are least like Americans.¹ On the basis of this, the hypothesis will be tested as to whether there is higher interaction of Indian students as a function of degree of similarity of background with that of Americans. Each one of the four background factors (parents' occupation, parents' income, parents' education, and the size of the town from which the respondent came) is also

¹American is defined with reference to the general background of native students attending Michigan State University.

tested independently in order to determine how much influence each factor relatively has on Indian students' interaction with Americans.

Based on the review of those studies which have investigated environmental factors and their impact on foreign students' interaction, certain hypotheses have been developed to be tested. These are: (1) foreign students who have a more favorable attitude toward Americans will tend to interact more with them, (2) foreign students who live in dormitories interact more with Americans than the students who live in off-campus residences, (3) the extent of foreign students' interaction with Americans increases with the length of stay in America, and (4) social science students interact more with Americans than natural science students. Aside from previous research findings, it would also appear that age and marital status might have some influence on interaction within an alien society. Consequently, (5) unmarried Indians will spend more of their free time with Americans than would the married students, and (6) the younger in age, the greater the interaction.

DESIGN

The subjects of this study consisted of all the Indian students enrolled in Michigan State University in the Spring Quarter, 1966. Those Indians at M.S.U. who were in residence as faculty research scholars were excluded. The final sample thus consisted of a total of 110 Indian students. The names and addresses of the subjects of the study were obtained from the office of the foreign student advisor. All of them lived in East Lansing, either in university residences, university married housing, or off-campus rooms and apartments.

The questionnaires were administered to each individual directly, in my presence. After the questionnaire had been answered, I verified that every item was properly completed. Help was limited to clarifying the wording and meaning of various questions.

About 18 students did not answer the questionnaire. Among the 18, eight of them did not wish to answer it, two of them had gone back to India for a short visit, one of them was in England, four of them could not otherwise be reached, in spite of every effort, and the addresses of the remaining three students could not be traced as they were living in other cities.

Information on both socio-economic background at home, and interaction with Americans was elicited as responses to closed-ended questions (See questionnaire in Appendix). In questions referring to participation or interaction with Americans, the students were asked how often they engaged in each activity with Americans. In order to get specific estimates to frequency of interaction with Americans, the student was asked to answer for each activity whether he had taken part in it every day, more than once a week, once a week, once a month, or never. For certain questions, the respondent was asked whether he had participated very often, often, sometimes, rarely, or never. An index of interaction was compiled from several items of participation in American life. Scores were given on every item (question) ranging from 0 upwards. By computing the mean of all scores, the total number of students was divided into two groups, those having high and those having low interaction.

Questions which required preferential ordering and ranking of items given were asked to examine the Indians' desire for participating in

various activities either with Americans, non-Americans, Indians from own state, Indians in general, or other foreign students. Degree of preference for interaction with Americans was indicated by scoring from one to seven, seven being the greatest preference. Various activities such as preference to study with, to spend free time, to date, to discuss problems, and preferences for a roommate, were asked of the students. One point was given for each time an American was the first choice. On the basis of total scores for each person on all the questions of preference, every respondent was placed either as having a high, moderate, or low preference.

With regard to socio-economic background of subjects to separate cases similar and dissimilar to that of American milieu, scores were given on each of four background factors (father's income, father's education, father's occupation and the size of the town of subject's youth). The scoring progressed on each item from one point upwards for each degree of similarity of Indian background to that of the American milieu. The higher the score, the more similar their background is to that imputed for Americans with whom they are likely to interact. When considering these categories in combination, those who scored high on this unit are treated as highly similar to Americans; the remainder comprise the least similar group.

The data emerging from the tabulation of the questionnaire responses were analyzed only with respect to consistency in the direction of and relationship between the variables concerned. Hence, when findings are said to be significant, a statistical meaning is not intended but rather uniform consistency. The general hypothesis is rejected if greater consistency is not found between similarity of socio-economic background of

Indian students with imputed typical American background and higher interaction. The same is the case with all the subordinate hypotheses involved.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The following seven tables describe pertinent background characteristics of the subjects of this study, all of whom are graduate students with the exception of two undergraduates. A detailed examination of the direct relevance of some of these characteristics to the main thesis (or interaction) is presented in the section on findings.

The tables presented below describe the distribution of respondents according to socio-economic background of parents, the size of the place where respondent spent his youth, the major fields of study, age, and the place of residence at Michigan State University.

TABLE 1 - Number and Per Cent by Income Levels of the Fathers of Indian Students at M.S.U.

Income	Number	Percentage
1. Under 4000 Rupees	(22)	23.9
2. 4000-8000 Rupees	(24)	26.1
3. 8000-10,000 Rupees	(12)	13.0
4. 10,000-12,000 Rupees	(8)	8.7
5. 12,000-14,000 Rupees	(8)	8.7
6. Over 14,000 Rupees	(18)	19.6
Total	(92)	100.0

In this sample half of the families are within some portion of the group whose fathers' income falls somewhere between 4000 to 8000 Rupees.

The remainder falls in middle income group (8000-12,000) and upper income group (12,000 and over).

TABLE 2 - Number and Per Cent of Indian Students at M.S.U. by Occupational Levels of the Fathers

Type of Occupation	Number	Percentage
1. Professional	(28)	30.4
2. Management (executive, business owner)	(24)	26.1
3. Clerical or Office Worker (government)	(17)	18.5
4. Sales	(3)	3.3
5. Services	(2)	2.2
6. Farming	(18)	19.6
Total	(92)	100.0

The majority of fathers of the Indians at Michigan State University are professionals. Second, third, and fourth in rank are managerial, farming, clerical, and government office workers, respectively. As Table 2 shows, percentages are very small in either sales or service occupational categories.

The largest number of students come from the largest cities, that is, of over 500,000 population (see Table 3). However, there are nearly one-third who come from small towns, called villages, in India. The smallest number of students come from towns having a population of 10,000 to 20,000. On the whole, the majority of the students can be said to have come from urban areas.

Regarding socio-economic background (father's income), the results disclose that all the students can be said to have come from middle-class families. According to standards of living in India those who earn from

3000 to 14,000 Rupees would fall within some portion of the middle-class (lower-middle, middle-middle, upper-middle). In this study no fathers of Indian students were making less than 3000 rupees. With respect to the education and occupation of parents, the data shows that the majority of fathers have relatively good educations and also are mostly engaged in some kind of urban occupation.

TABLE 3 - Number and Per Cent of the Indian Students at M.S.U. by Size of Town in Which They Spent Their Youth

Size of the Town (Population)	Number	Percentage
1. Under 5000	(15)	16.3
2. 5000 to 10,000	(10)	10.9
3. 10,000 to 20,000	(3)	3.3
4. 20,000 to 50,000	(8)	8.7
5. 50,000 to 100,000	(11)	12.0
6. 100,000 to 500,000	(15)	16.3
7. Over 500,000	(30)	32.6
Total	(92)	100.0

As Table 4 indicates, about four out of ten of the fathers of the subjects of this sample are college or university graduates. About one-third have had some high school education or have a high school certificate. Only about 11 per cent of the fathers have not gone beyond elementary school.

There are more engineering students in the sample (see Table 5) than students in any other field of study. India's urgent need for specialists of this kind is reflected in the predominance of applied science students over the number of Indians studying non-applied subjects.

TABLE 4 - Number and Per Cent of Indian Students at M.S.U. by Educational Levels of Fathers

Level of Education	Number	Percentage
1. Elementary school	(10)	10.9
2. Some high school	(15)	16.3
3. High school graduate	(15)	16.3
4. Some college	(13)	14.1
5. College or University graduate	(39)	42.4
Total	(92)	100.0

TABLE 5 - Number and Per Cent of Indian Students at M.S.U. by Major Field of Study

Field of Study	Number	Percentage
1. Social Sciences	(9)	9.8
2. Business Administration	(21)	22.8
3. Education	(3)	3.3
4. Languages	(1)	1.1
5. Mathematics; Physical, Natural or Veterinary Sciences	(26)	28.3
6. Engineering	(23)	25.0
7. Agriculture	(6)	6.5
8. Food Science	(3)	3.3
Total	(92)	100.0

Nearly half of the students are between the ages of 25-29. The second largest age group is comprised of those 20-24 years of age. Only two students are above the age of 40. Table 6 also shows that 90 per cent of the sample are above the age of 24 years. Almost two-thirds of the students are below the age of 29. Twenty-nine students are above the age of 29.

TABLE 6 - Number and Per Cent of Indian Students at M.S.U. According to Age

Age	Number	Percentage
1. 20-24 years	(20)	21.7
2. 25-29 years	(43)	46.7
3. 30-34 years	(16)	17.4
4. 35-39 years	(11)	12.0
5. 40 years or more	(2)	2.2
Total	(92)	100.0

The majority of the students reside either in apartments in town or in the graduate residence hall (see Table 7). Rooms in private homes and university married housing are also large categories. As would be expected among students predominantly of graduate status, only three students live in an undergraduate dormitory. There is almost an equal distribution of cases of on-campus and off-campus housing - 43 and 47, respectively.

TABLE 7 - Number and Per Cent of Indian Students at M.S.U. by Various Types of Residence

Residence	Number	Percentage
1. Graduate residence hall	(26)	28.3
2. Undergraduate dormitory	(3)	3.3
3. Apartment in town	(26)	28.3
4. Room in private home	(19)	20.7
5. University married housing	(18)	19.6
Total	(92)	100.0

Having the distribution of the subjects with respect to particular background variables, it is now possible to examine the relationship of these variables to degree of interaction.

In Table 8 the students who scored high on an index made on four background factors (father's income, father's occupational status, father's education, and the size of the town of subject's youth) are considered as having a background highly similar to the American milieu and the reverse is true of students who scored low.¹

TABLE 8 - Interaction with Americans by Similarity of Background

Similarity	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
High	(31)	63	(18)	37	(49)	100
Low	(15)	35	(28)	65	(43)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

In this table (Table 8) nearly twice as many Indian students with backgrounds highly similar to the imputed American background had higher interaction as did those students who were less similar. This would indicate that there is a strong relationship between similarity of background

¹In order to determine the socio-economic background of subjects, scores were given on each of the four background factors (father's education, father's income, father's occupation, and the size of the town of respondent's youth). The scoring increases as the level of father's education, level of father's income, urban character of father's occupation, and the size of the town of respondent's youth increases. The higher the composite score, the more similar they are said to be to American life.

of Indian students to that of their American social milieu and their interactions with Americans. Thus the major hypothesis that the extent of foreign students' interaction with Americans increases as a function of the similarity of their background with that of their American situation, is substantiated here.

Having presented evidence which shows a strong relationship between background factors in total, and interaction within the host society (American), let us now examine to what extent each one of these four components (factors) of background independently affects interaction of Indian students with Americans. Then we can determine which factors have the greater effect on interaction.

Each of these following four factors (father's education, father's income, father's occupation and the size of the town of subject's youth) is considered in a minor or sub-proposition tested to find out the degree of relationship to interaction within American society. These minor propositions are: (1) the extent of foreign student's interaction with Americans increases as the father's level of education increases, (2) the degree of foreign students' interaction increases as a function of increasing income of his father, (3) the interaction of Indian students increases if they come from larger cities in India, and (4) foreign students' interaction with Americans increases if their fathers are engaged in urban rather than rural occupation.

Table 9 indicates that the higher the father's educational level, the larger is the percentage of Indian students who have greater interaction with Americans. Only 28 per cent of those students whose fathers had elementary or some high school education interacted highly, while

50 per cent of those students whose fathers had a high school certificate or some college education, and 64 per cent of those students whose fathers had a college degree, interacted highly. This supports the minor proposition that the extent of interaction increases as father's level of education advances.

TABLE 9 - Interaction with Americans by Father's Education

Educational Background	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
Elementary school or some high school	(7)	28	(18)	72	(25)	100
High school and some college	(14)	50	(14)	50	(28)	100
College graduate	(25)	64	(14)	35	(39)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

The direct bearing which the degree of education has upon the degree of interaction offers reinforcement to the validity of the general hypothesis. Also compatible with our hypothesis are the results of the investigation (in Table 10) concerning the relationship between interaction and father's income. As Table 10 reveals, more Indian students whose fathers had a relatively high income (above 8,000 Rupees) interacted more highly than did those students whose fathers' incomes were lower than 8,000 Rupees. Sixty-seven per cent of those students whose fathers belong to middle and upper income categories, as compared to 33 per cent of those students whose fathers belong to the lower income

category, interacted highly. Thus it is seen that there is a relationship between father's economic background and Indian students' interaction with Americans.

TABLE 10 - Interaction with Americans by Father's Income

Income	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
Less than 8,000 Rupees	(15)	33	(31)	67	(46)	100
8,000 - 12,000	(15)	75	(5)	25	(20)	100
12,000 - 14,000 and over	(16)	61	(10)	38	(26)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

The impact of the size of home town (Table 11) is in a similar direction with a significant degree of relationship.

TABLE 11 - Interaction with American Students by Population of Home Town

Population	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
50,000 or less	(25)	40	(37)	60	(62)	100
Over 50,000	(21)	70	(9)	30	(30)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

Indian students from cities of over 50,000 population interacted with Americans to a considerably higher degree than those students who

came from towns of 50,000 or less. Seventy per cent of those students who came from towns of over 50,000, as opposed to 40 per cent of those students who came from the towns of 50,000 or less population, interacted highly. The results in Table 11 suggest a strong relationship between the size of the home town of Indian students and degree of their interaction with Americans.

A similar outcome is seen in Table 12; here a strong relationship between types of occupations of fathers of Indian students and their interaction with Americans is revealed. The Indian students whose fathers belonged to clerical, sales and service professions had greater interaction to professional and management jobs and those whose fathers belong to farming occupations. The students whose fathers are farmers had the least interaction.

TABLE 12 - Interaction by Fathers' Occupational Status

Occupational Status	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
Professional and Management	(25)	48	(27)	51	(52)	100
Clerical, Sales and Service	(14)	64	(8)	37	(22)	100
Farming	(7)	39	(11)	61	(18)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

The clerical and sales category (highly urban in India) and the farming category evidenced opposite degrees of interaction with Americans, farmers' sons having considerably low interaction. The professional and

management category falls between these two categories in degree of interaction. Sixty-one per cent of those students whose fathers belonged to either clerical, sales and service or professional, and management professions, as compared to 39 per cent of those students whose fathers belonged to farming professions, interacted high; consequently, this proposition has proved to be independently influential on interaction.

Concluding from the above evidence, it appears that there is a definite relationship between the Indian students' social background (how similar to that of the American) and their interaction in a host society (American). This pattern emerged from the responses given in total as well as in each individual component factor of the background of Indian students.

Thus, having tested the validity of the general hypothesis, we will now turn to the hypotheses which concern several situational and other factors such as the relationships between Indian students desired interaction and their actual interaction.

As we assumed, the hypothesis which deals with the extent of Indian students' preference for American life and their degree of interaction has been supported. Table 13 indicates a positive relationship between Indian students' degree of preference for American life and the degree of stated interaction. Seventy-eight per cent of the students of high preference as opposed to 37 per cent of the low preference group, interacted highly.

In previous studies the effect of the interaction potential of living arrangements on the development of social relations between foreign students and Americans was investigated. The result of this research with

regard to type of residence and its effects on interaction is in the same direction as previous studies. Selltitz, et al.¹ found that the dormitory is one of the most conducive places for creating social relations between foreign and American students. The dormitory situation had either high or medium interaction-potential. Goldsen² (1955) in her study of foreign students at Cornell, reported that those who live in dormitories had higher interaction with Americans than those students who live off campus. The Indian students (Table 14) who live in dormitories have greater interaction with Americans than those students who live in off-campus housing and university married housing. Seventy-two per cent of the Indian students who live in dormitories, as opposed to 40 per cent of the Indian students living in off-campus or university married housing, interacted highly. Among those who live in off-campus housing and university married student housing, the former interacted more than the students who lived in married housing.

TABLE 13 - Interaction by Degree of Preference

Degree of Preference	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
High	(15)	79	(4)	21	(19)	100
Moderate	(12)	57	(9)	43	(21)	100
Low	(19)	37	(33)	63	(52)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

¹Selltitz, et al., op. cit., p. 103.

²Ibid., p. 103.

TABLE 14 - Interaction with Americans by the Type of Residence

Residence	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
Dormitory	(21)	72	(8)	28	(29)	100
Off-campus	(19)	42	(26)	58	(45)	100
University married housing	(6)	33	(12)	67	(18)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

Probably the reason for this is that the Indian students who live in married student housing spend most of their free time with their families. Off-campus students do not have the dormitory conditions of "mixed" and "forced" student interaction which would have a tendency to further interaction.

Table 15 shows that those students who stayed in America one year or more interacted more highly than those students who have been in the U.S. less than a year. Morris¹ and Selltitz, et al.² also found, in their studies of foreign students in America, that the longer the foreign student stays in America, the more he interacts with Americans. These findings are consistent with our results.

In order to discover the relationship between academic major and interaction, all academic majors were classified into two groups. The group of social science included social science, business administration,

¹ Ibid., pp. 64-67.

² Ibid.

education and language majors. The group of natural science included mathematics, statistics, physical science, natural sciences, veterinary science, engineering, agriculture, and food science.

TABLE 15 - Interaction with Americans by Duration of Stay

Duration of Stay	Interaction				Total	
	High		Low			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than year	(10)	25	(30)	75	(40)	100
One year or more	(36)	69	(16)	31	(52)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

More social science majors interacted highly than did natural science majors. Sixty-two per cent (Table 16) as compared to 43 per cent of social science students interacted highly, while 57 per cent of the natural science students, as opposed to 38 per cent of social science students interacted low. Morris¹ also found that his research on foreign students at U.C.L.A. that foreign students who are in social sciences made more friends than the students who are in natural sciences. This difference in the degree of interaction between these two categories of students might be due to the differences in the nature of their fields of specialization or to other variables which cannot be controlled in this study such as length of stay.

¹Morris, op. cit., p. 118.

TABLE 16 - Interaction with Americans by Major Field of Study

Major Field of Study	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
Social Science	(21)	62	(13)	38	(34)	100
Natural Science	(25)	43	(33)	57	(58)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

As might be expected, more unmarried students interacted highly than did the married students. This is probably due to the fact that married students generally have less free time to spend with others outside of the family.

Table 17 shows that 59 per cent of those who were single had high interaction, and only 39 per cent of those who were married interacted highly, substantiating the hypothesis that the single students interact more than the married ones.

TABLE 17 - Interaction with Americans by Marital Status

Marital Status	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
Married	(16)	39	(25)	61	(41)	100
Single	(30)	59	(21)	41	(51)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

With regard to age and interaction, our guess would be that younger Indian students have higher interaction than those who are older. Fifty-six per cent (Table 18) of those who were 29 years or age or less as compared to 38 per cent of those who were 30 years or less interacted highly. This would indicate that the lower the age of an Indian student, the more he tends to interact with Americans. However, age, in most cases, is related to other variables which indirectly have contributed to the results of Table 18. For instance, younger students are more likely to not be married and thus, in a sense, are forced to interact more (see Table 17). Moreover, unmarried students have a greater likelihood of living in a dormitory, a factor which has already been indicated as making for greater interaction.

TABLE 18 - Interaction with Americans by Age of Respondent

Age	Interaction				Total	
	High No.	%	Low No.	%	No.	%
29 years or less	(35)	56	(28)	44	(63)	100
30 years or more	(11)	38	(18)	62	(29)	100
Total	(46)	50	(46)	50	(92)	100

IMPLICATIONS

As previously stated, the general hypothesis relating to social similarity and interaction was tested in its totality (of social similarity) as well as in its individual components (father's income, father's occupational status, father's education, and the size of the home town).

The division into such components, i.e. substructuring of the general hypothesis into subordinate propositions, made feasible the possibility of testing the general hypothesis in more specific terms.

The approach used to test the overall validity of our general hypothesis involved a reverse procedure, a working backward from the results through each of the minor propositions. This more or less additive process leads to positive conclusions about the general hypothesis. Consequently, the proposition of social similarity enhancing interaction, as it relates to findings stated in the above section, is upheld.

Also, the investigation regarding the situational and environmental factors (place of residence, marital status, degree of preference for American life, academic major, duration of stay, and age) consistently emerged as being consistent with the expected results.

Among the situational factors, duration of stay and place of residence had a considerable effect on foreign students' interaction in this study as well as previous studies. These two factors, occurring after the student has arrived in the U.S., may be operating to change the relationship between the independent variable (social background of Indian student) and the dependent variable (interaction), i.e., factors that between the arrival of the student and the administration of the questionnaire may have increased or decreased the process of interaction. These should have been used as controls when running the background variables against interaction. However, the number of cases in our sample was too small to make possible such an operation. Further research of this kind should take into consideration this problem of size of sample and the use of control variables.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Sociology

Spring, 1966

The following is a questionnaire designed to study some aspects of the behavior of foreign students--particularly those from India--with respect to important social characteristics of their background. The information collected will be kept in confidence and used solely for the purpose of research.

Part I: Please answer the following questions according to the response choices at the right.

1. How often would you estimate that you visited American homes in the last six months?

No. %

- a. (3) 3 More than once per week
- b. (11) 12 Once a week
- c. (25) 27 Once a month
- d. (41) 45 Rarely
- e. (12) 13 Never

2. How many times would you estimate that you normally visit American students' rooms or apartments per month?

- a. (7) 8 Over 20 times
- b. (6) 6 10-20 times
- c. (16) 17 5-10 times
- d. (42) 46 1-5 times
- e. (21) 23 Do not visit at all

3. In a usual week, how often would you estimate that American students visit your room or apartment?
- a. (9) 10 Over 10 times
 - b. (7) 8 5-10 times
 - c. (50) 54 1-5 times
 - d. (26) 28 None
4. How often would you estimate that you have had dinner or lunch with American students in the last month?
- a. (20) 22 Very often
 - b. (12) 13 Often
 - c. (34) 37 Sometimes
 - d. (12) 13 Rarely
 - e. (14) 15 Never
5. How often would you estimate that you have dated American girls?
- a. (5) 5 Very often
 - b. (9) 10 Often
 - c. (7) 8 Sometimes
 - d. (13) 14 Rarely
 - e. (54) 59 Never
6. How often do you go to dances with American friends?
- a. (3) 3 Very often
 - b. (4) 4 Often
 - c. (16) 17 Sometimes
 - d. (15) 16 Rarely
 - e. (52) 56 Never

7. How often do you normally go to movies with American friends?
- a. (2) 2 Very often
 - b. (10) 11 Often
 - c. (21) 23 Sometimes
 - d. (30) 33 Rarely
 - e. (27) 29 Never
8. In problems or questions involving your school work, whom do you usually consult?
- a. (24) 26 Americans
 - b. (10) 11 Indians
 - c. (1) 1 Other foreign students
 - d. (31) 34 Both Americans and Indians
 - e. (26) 28 Americans, Indians and other foreign students
9. How often do you estimate that you converse with American students in your classes?
- a. (45) 49 Very often
 - b. (30) 33 Often
 - c. (15) 16 Sometimes
 - d. (1) 1 Rarely
 - e. (1) 1 Never
10. What part of your free time (approximately) do you spend with Americans? (In dining hall, lounges, social events, in conversation after dances, on dates, talking about the problems in your school work, talking about politics, etc.)
- a. (16) 17 Most of the time
 - b. (13) 14 More than half
 - c. (20) 22 $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ time
 - d. (36) 39 Less than $\frac{1}{4}$ time
 - e. (7) 8 None

11. a) Do you sometimes go to bars to have a drink?

(53) 58 Yes (39) 42 No

b) If yes, do you generally go:

a. (16) 17 Mostly with Americans

b. (17) 18 Equally with Americans and Indians

c. (17) 18 Mostly with Indians

d. (3) 3 Mostly with other foreign students

12. a) While in the United States, have you been to church?

(61) 66 Yes (31) 34 No

b) If yes, how often have you gone to church?

a. (5) 5 Very often

b. (3) 3 Often

c. (19) 21 Sometimes

d. (34) 37 Rarely

Part II

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AT THE RIGHT

1. Rank the following from 1 to 3 according to which you would prefer doing. (1 being the most preferred)
 - a) Attending a foreign student party _____
 - b) American students social gathering _____
 - c) Indian students social gathering _____
2. If you had an opportunity to invite someone to visit your home in India, would you prefer to invite someone from:
 - a) United States _____
 - b) Your own country _____
 - c) Persons from another foreign country _____
3. If you were given an opportunity, would you choose to remain in the United States after your studies or return to India?
 - a) Remain in the U.S. _____
 - b) Return to India _____
4. In doing the following things, do you prefer to do them with fellow Indians from your own state in India, Indians in general, other foreign students, or Americans. Check your preference--number in order of preference from 1 to 4 (1 being the most preferred).
 - a) To study with:
 - a. Indian students from your own state _____
 - b. Indians in general _____
 - c. Other foreign students _____
 - d. American students _____
 - b) To spend your free time with:
 - a. Indian students from your own state _____
 - b. Indians in general _____
 - c. Other foreign students _____
 - d. American students _____

- c) To discuss your problems with:
- a. Indian students from your own state _____
 - b. Indians in general _____
 - c. Other foreign students _____
 - d. American students _____
- d) For roommates:
- a. Indian students from your own state _____
 - b. Indians in general _____
 - c. Other foreign students _____
 - d. American students _____
- e. Dating:
- a. Indian students from your own state _____
 - b. Indians in general _____
 - c. Other foreign students _____
 - d. American students _____

Part III

RESPONDENT'S PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1. Where do you live? (check one)
 - a. Graduate residence hall (Owen Hall) _____
 - b. Apartment in town _____
 - c. Undergraduate dormitory _____
 - d. Room in a private home _____
 - e. University married housing _____
2. a) Do you have a roommate? yes _____ no _____
 b) If you have a roommate, what is his nationality? _____
3. What is your age? _____
4. Sex: male _____ female _____
5. From which state in India did you come? _____
6. What is your mother tongue? _____
7. Other than your mother tongue, what other Indian languages can you speak?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
8. Previous to your present residence as recorded above, what other places have you lived in?
 - a. Graduate residence hall (Owen Hall) _____
 - b. Apartment in town _____
 - c. Undergraduate dormitory _____
 - d. Room in private home _____
 - e. University married housing _____
 - f. Other (specify) _____

9. Are you married? yes_____ no_____
- a. If you are married, are you married to an American_____, Indian_____, or other foreign student_____?
- b. If you are married, is your husband or wife in the U.S. with you? yes_____ no_____
10. What is your religion?
- a. Hindu _____
- b. Muslim _____
- c. Christian _____
- d. Sikh _____
- e. Jain _____
- f. Other (specify)_____
11. If you went to college in India, what degree did you obtain?_____
12. a) Did you work in India before you came to the United States?
yes_____ no_____
- b) If you worked, what kind of job was it?_____
- c) How long did you work on this job?_____
- d) Did you work at this job in a city_____, big town_____, small town_____, or village_____?
- e) If it is a big city, write the name of the city._____
13. Toward which degree are you working now?
- a. Bachelor's degree _____
- b. Master's degree _____
- c. Doctor's degree _____
- d. Non-degree program _____
- e. Other (specify) _____
14. What is your major field of study?_____

15. How long have you been in the United States? _____
16. Have you ever visited the United States before this visit?
yes _____ no _____
- a. If yes, how many previous visits? _____
- b. Previous to this visit, when was the last visit to the United States? _____
- c. How long did the last visit last? _____
17. a. Have you been in any other foreign countries for more than one month? yes _____ no _____
- b. If yes, what are those countries? _____

18. Do you have any difficulty in understanding or speaking English with Americans? yes _____ no _____
19. Do you find that Americans have difficulty in understanding your English? yes _____ no _____
20. Indicate the size of the village, town or city in India from which you came. (check one)
- a. Under 5,000 _____
- b. 5,000-10,000 _____
- c. 10,000-20,000 _____
- d. 20,000-50,000 _____
- e. 50,000-100,000 _____
- f. 100,000-500,000 _____
- g. Over 500,000 _____
21. What is your father's educational background?
- a. Elementary school _____
- b. Some high school _____
- c. High school certificate _____
- d. Some college _____
- e. College graduate _____
- f. University graduate _____

22. State the degrees obtained by your father. _____
23. What is your father's occupation? _____
24. How much money does your father make a year? (check one)
- a. Under 4,000 Rupees _____
 - b. 4,000-8,000 Rupees _____
 - c. 8,000-10,000 Rupees _____
 - d. 10,000-12,000 Rupees _____
 - e. 12,000-14,000 Rupees _____
 - f. Over 14,000 Rupees _____
25. a. Are you presently employed while attending Michigan State University? yes _____ no _____
- b. If yes, where do you work? _____
- c. If employed by the University, are you a:
- Teaching assistant _____
 - Research assistant _____
 - Working on an hourly basis _____
 - Other (specify) _____

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