

Asian Indians figure prominently among the educated, middle class subset of contemporary immigrants. They move quickly into residences, jobs, and lifestyles that provide little opportunity with fellow migrants, yet they continue to see themselves as a distinctive community within contemporary American society. In *Life Lines* Bacon chronicles the creation of a community--Indian-born parents and their children living in the Chicago metropolitan area--bound by neither geographic proximity, nor institutional ties, and explores the processes through which ethnic identity is transmitted to the next generation. Bacon's study centers upon the engrossing portraits of five immigrant families, each one a complex tapestry woven from the distinctive voices of its family members. Both extensive field work among community organizations and analyses of ethnic media help Bacon expose the complicated interplay between the private social interactions of family life and the stylized rhetoric of Indianness that permeates public life. This inventive analysis suggests that the process of assimilation which these families undergo parallels the assimilation process experienced by anyone who conceives of him or herself as a member of a distinctive community in search of a place in American society.

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Life Lines: Community, Family, and Assimilation among Asian Indian Immigrants. By Jean Bacon. Oxford University Press, pp. Cloth.

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