THE SIKH DIASPORA IN AUSTRALIA: MIGRATION, MULTICULTURALISM AND THE IMAGINING OF HOME

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When studying a diasporic population, understanding the relationship between dispersed peoples and their cultural homelands can be instructive. Scholars of diaspora have long understood that a relationship exists between a diaspora, and its place of origin. This dissertation approaches the question of connections between population and homeland from a perspective of emotion and nostalgia, asking how differing generations of Sikhs living in Australia think, talk and feel about their cultural homeland of Punjab. These connections to Punjab are filtered through shifting discourse on immigration and ideas of belonging that exist in Australia. Ethnographic research was conducted in Woolgoolga, New South Wales, Australia, over a period of nine months. Family migration narratives were collected from Sikhs living there, who were divided into two age groups- those 35 years of age and under, and those between the ages of 36 and 55. The purpose of this division is to replicate approximate generations of Sikhs, for the comparison of attitudes and experiences with Punjab. Informal and semi-structured interviews were conducted, and participant observation was done at Woolgoolga's two Sikh gurdwaras, at meetings held during the organizational phase of a major Indian cultural festival, and at various activities and events held in town throughout the course of the field stay. Data collected shows that there is generational variation in the degree of emotional attachment to Punjab as a perceived cultural homeland. At the same time, there is generational difference in the understanding of recent political history in Punjab, and Sikh struggles for an independent state of

Khalistan. Where older generations of Sikhs hold a much stronger connection to Punjab at the level of emotion and nostalgia, they tend to be more critical of the idea of an independent Sikh state. Conversely, younger generations of Sikhs demonstrate much less emotional connection to Punjab, and have little knowledge about the independence movement for Khalistan. Those who are familiar with the Khalistani movement have romanticized notions about the struggle, and are more likely to support claims that Sikhs are mistreated in India, and require their own state.

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PREFACE

This research project is the culmination of more than simply a doctoral dissertation project. Rather, it is the culmination of 15 years of ongoing interest in Sikhism and in the politics of being Sikh. It is also the culmination of 20 years of academic interest in the relationship between religion and politics, and a lifetime of puzzling over religion and religious differences as they play out in various contexts. Like any research project, there are many people and institutions I am deeply indebted to for assistance, support and encouragement throughout the process.

This research project would not have been possible without the support of the National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant Program. Preliminary research was supported by the Center for South Asian Studies, University of California Berkeley and their Amrit Kaur Ahluwalia Memorial Summer Research Grant. Additional thanks go to the Ahluwalia family for their generous and ongoing support of Sikh Studies.

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I would like to thank my family and friends. Without their support, nothing would be possible. Specifically I would like to thank my mother, Eileen McCarthy, who has never wavered in encouraging me to find my own path, and to pursue it. I would like to thank Gina McCarthy, Daniel Hammer, Megan Hamm, Cassandra Workman, and countless others for listening to me talk about my research and for giving sincere and honest advice at all stages of this project. And I would like to thank Lauren Herckis, whose constant encouragement and positivity helped me stay focused throughout the entire writing process. I am eternally grateful. Finally, I would like thank my son, Riley, for being patient and understanding of all that I had to do in order to see this project through to fruition. His steadfast support has been inspirational.

Throughout this dissertation, I have italicized Punjabi words, and defined them after the first use. Additional uses are not italicized and no additional definitions are provided. I have use pseudonyms for all individuals mentioned in the text, unless otherwise instructed. I have changed place names when I felt it necessary. As mentioned above, any research project is the

culmination of work that includes the efforts and contributions of many people. However, the writing here, and any inconsistencies or inaccuracies contained within, are entirely my own.

1.0   CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My first visit to the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in Woolgoolga, New South Wales, Australia was met initially with what could only be called a chilly reception. I had made arrangements with a local Sikh, Jorahvar Singh, a community leader and a somewhat controversial figure in town, to meet at the temple in the afternoon, shortly after the Sunday services would have ended. We both agreed it made more sense to chat about my project before I started attending the services with any sort of regularity.

I walked up the hill from the beach, traversing the majority of the town of Woolgoolga, a small and quaint seaside village in the northern beaches region of New South Wales, positioned about midway between Sydney to the south and Brisbane to the north on Australia's east coast. This walk was a distance of about a kilometer, and it was uphill all of the way. The gurdwara, known locally as the "Temple on the Hill"- a name well earned, sits on the corner of River Street, the road that leads into town, and the Pacific Highway, the major interstate road in this part of Australia. A white building constructed in an Indian architectural style, the gurdwara's large white domes were the first part of Woolgoolga seen by anyone travelling north along the highway. When approaching from the town's Central Business District (CBD) nearer to the beach, the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara is an imposing sight, seeming to stand right in the middle of River Street as you climb the hill. There is no doubt this structure is closely associated with the town, and its image as a tourist stop along the highway.

As I entered the front gate, I saw a group of young men, mostly in their early 20's, sitting on a bench, in the shade of a small group of trees to the right of the massive temple. Little kids ran to and fro, playing games, while people milled about in front of the gurdwara. Some were putting on shoes, and getting ready to go home, others were standing and socializing with what were presumably friends and family. A group of older men sat in a circle of chairs, enjoying the warm afternoon sun, drinking chai tea, and chatting in Punjabi and laughing. I approached the young men, and asked where I might find Jorahvar. One of the boys, indicated over his shoulder, toward the circle of older men. "He's right over there," he said.

I looked past him to see a middle aged man, head wrapped in a blue turban, a long flowing beard of mostly grey, looking back at me. It was Jorahvar. We had met five years earlier, under similar circumstances, but he clearly did not remember me. Five years ago, I had come to Woolgoolga, known locally as "Woopi," on a summer research grant to do field site evaluation. Jorahvar and I had coffee at a local café, and discussed my research project. He had been very enthusiastic about it then, and said he would help me in any way he could. Here he was, five years later, fulfilling that promise without even realizing it.

Jorahvar met me halfway, and we shook hands, as I re-introduced myself to him. We had been playing phone tag for about two weeks, so it was nice to finally stand in front of him. But it was hard not to feel the eyes of everyone in the circle behind him watching us, and more specifically, watching me. He motioned me toward an empty chair in the circle, and sat down across the circle from where I was seated. He introduced me to the group in Punjabi, and there was a pronounced silence. He explained to me that he had told them that I was from the States, and was here to study the Sikhs. I said how nice it was to meet everyone. Silence.

Finally, one of the men in the circle asked, "Why aren't you studying Sikhs in America?" It was more of a challenge than an honest curiosity. I began to give my version of why Australia, a talk that was well rehearsed. I talked about the limited amount of anthropological research being done on Australian Sikhs, or on rural Sikh diasporic communities, about how I thought this was a prime spot to do research on the Sikh Diaspora.

I had not even finished my well rehearsed speech when then same man stated, "There are rural Sikhs in California." He is right. There is quite a large community of Sikhs living in California's Central Valley, most concentrated in Yuba City. Why are you not there, studying them? This was the question he asked, without asking, and there was a long pause following his line of questioning. No one, including myself, said a word. The granthi, the keeper of the temple, excused himself, and left circle. Thankfully, Jorahvar took this time to stand up, and invite me inside the Gurdwara to chat. Leaving that circle was the most relieving thing I had done since I had landed in Australia. Jorahvar later described the moment as "inviting me into the den," and in a lot of ways he was right. But so was the man with the questions. Why was I here, in rural (or regional, as it is known locally) New South Wales, living with a small group of Sikh farmers? What does this place have to offer that places in the Unites States or Canada cannot provide?

Throughout the rest of this chapter, and this dissertation, I aim to explain why I had decided, years earlier, that to go to a small town in Australia to study Sikhs living in a diaspora was an important thing to do. I am going to answer that man's questions, in a way I was too taken aback to do on that warm spring afternoon. I argue that thinking about "diaspora" as a category without taking into account its potential for extreme internal variability is problematic. There is little question that there is a global Sikh Diaspora, and that there may be certain characteristics associated with it that are found in many corners of the globe. However, there are

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also regional and local factors that shape the ways in which the Sikh Diaspora is formulated, and how it can be understood, both by those on the outside looking in, and by those who constitute its makeup. Local histories and attitudes, regional politics, nation policies and labor needs, economic conditions and political climates in "home" countries, and many other things contribute to the constitution and construction of a diasporic body. And if diaspora is a source for identity construction, all of these factors must be considered in understanding the way that identity manifests itself on the ground.

At the same time, there is regional variance within the diaspora in a specific nation. In Australia, there are differences in the ways in which diaspora is experienced between the suburbs of Sydney and the rural farming villages of Woolgoolga or Richmond. Within these communities, there are a variety of diasporic experiences and attitudes, as well. One defining marker of difference in a given community is that of generational difference. This generational difference can be found in the ways in which people interact with the wider community in which they live, the degrees of difference in understanding the cultures and practices of the "host" society in which they live, and how to navigate those differences, attitudes and ideas about tradition and about the importance of maintaining said traditions while living in a new milieu. These generational differences are found in debates about the importance of maintaining a "mother tongue," cultural practices surrounding food and dress, roles open to men and women, and to decisions about college and career for children. And these differences are found in the meanings attached to the place of origin, or the cultural "homeland" as it is often called.

If "homeland" is a location from which culture, tradition, and identity flow, then diaspora on a global scale should be relatively monolithic. However, diasporas are not. "Homeland" is constructed, in the diaspora, at the intersection of several competing forces, not the least

important of which is conflicting attitudes about the meaning of origins between consecutive generations of people living in a diasporic setting. This is a point I will return to at the end of this chapter.

Woolgoolga provides insight into transnationalism, and its multiple manifestations in the lives of Australian Sikhs. In particular, the lives of Sikhs living in Woolgoolga are marked by ambivalence. There is an ongoing tension between their feelings of connection to Australia on the one hand, and to Punjab on the other. At times, there is a deep sense of connection and belonging to Woolgoolga, and to Australia. This can be heard in the stories they tell about their grandfathers' migration narratives, and in the way claims of belonging are linked to what are seen as significant events in the Sikh community's past relationship with this seaside village. It can heard in the way some members of the Sikh community point to places on the landscape, and claim, "My father planted that avocado tree" or "My uncle cleared that land for banana planting." At other times, both in word and deed, there is a sense of separation from Australian life, and from the larger community of Woolgoolga.

Similarly, there are varying degrees of connection expressed toward Punjab. There is a desire to hold on to ancestral lands, plan return trips, and arrange marriages with Punjabi spouses. When talking about Punjab, there is at times a deep sense of longing and nostalgia. Simultaneously, some members of Woolgoolga's Sikh community are selling their land in Punjab to further invest in properties in Australia, while others bemoan having to travel to Punjab to visit relatives. So while there is a feeling of connection to both places, there is tension. That tension is noticeable in some of the dialogue about Punjab itself, but is more evident in local activities, in particular the annual Indian food and cultural festival known as Woolgoolga CurryFest. Here, Punjabi culture is put on display for tourists, in the form of food, dance and

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dress, a form of essentialization not uncommon in ethnic tourism (Wood, 1997; Stronza, 2001). The Sikh community's lack of involvement in the festival, and their mixed feelings about its goals speak to this tension.

One reason for this ambivalence is the positioning of Sikhs in Woolgoolga, at once inside and outside of village life. Woolgoolga is a farming community and a tourist destination for Australians on holiday. Sikhs pride themselves on being farmers, something that has become wound up tightly with a Sikh identity on a global scale. Mooney (2011) argues that land ownership and farming are part of a rural nostalgia for urban Sikhs in India, and for transnational Sikhs in Canada. Owning and visiting land in rural Punjab is fraught with emotional tension for these Sikhs, an experience defined by both an extreme sense of pride and of extreme longing for a simpler past. In Woolgoolga, Sikhs are still farmers, and many families own land in Punjab and in Woolgoolga. Even families who earn their money through professional activities like medicine, social work, or small business ownership still maintain a farm in town, while simultaneously owning and managing properties in their ancestral village in India.

As the owners of much of the agricultural land in Woolgoolga, the Sikhs literally spend much of their time outside of the village proper, on the slopes of the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, where bananas and blueberries are grown. The connection of bananas, historically a significant cash crop, to the Coffs Coast region and the Sikhs to the growing of bananas acts to tie these Sikhs very closely to the region. The historic and cultural significance of farming as an honorable living, and of landownership as a means of social status in Punjab both act to reinforce the ambivalence that Sikhs feel, connecting them at once to past and present, Punjab and Australia. Thus, the confluence of farming and tourism act to essentialize Sikh identity in conflicting ways.

At the same time, the historical and political context of being an immigrant population in Australia is fraught with different kinds of tension. From a period of overt exclusion to one defined by the promise of inclusion, ethnic communities in Australia have struggled with a changing landscape of belonging. Sikhs in Woolgoolga are no different. While shifting policy has acted to be more welcoming, and assist migrant communities with settling into life in Australia, attitudes about diversity and its place in the fabric of Australian nationhood have been more conservative.. Woolgoolga's Sikhs have been straddling this line of differentiation, wedded to the land and the region as producers of agricultural products that in essence define the Coffs Coast. At the same time, as non-White, non-Christian, and at times non-English speakers, they do not fit neatly into the definition of 'Australian.' So while farming and tourism provide competing notions of what it means to be Sikh, farming and multiculturalism create competing notions of what it means to be Australian for this same population. Thus, it is this ambivalence on the part of Woolgoolga's Sikhs, and the competing frameworks of inclusion and exclusion that sustain it, that will be the focus of this dissertation.

1.1   SIKHISM AND ITS DIASPORA

Sikhs have a long history of migration and seeking out economic opportunity, and in recent decades it has become a source of pride. Anywhere there is opportunity, there are Sikhs. This notion is best reflected in a popular Sikh joke, of which several versions exist, each carrying approximately the same meaning. One version goes like this: "It is said that when Neil Armstrong first set foot on the moon, a *sardar* (Sikh man) was already there, plowing his fields."

This joke brings together many characteristics important in today's notion of what it means to be Sikh. First, Sikhs are industrious, and innovative. How else could they make it to the moon! And Sikhs are farmers, or at least they were. They have strong ties with the agricultural region of India known as the Punjab. And finally Sikhs are most notable for their outward signs of faith, and those sign are most closely associated with males. It is the turban and the beard, closely associated with orthodox, *amritdhari[1]* Sikh males that make a Sikh man a sardar. But this image of the Sikh man and its close relationship with a global Sikh identity is not without controversy. A brief history of Sikhism is warranted here.

Sikhism was founded in the late 15th century, in northwestern India, by Guru Nanak, a "twice-born" son of Kshatrya parents from Punjab. The climate of the region at the time was one of diverse cultural and religious practice, and there are many suggestions about why Sikhism arose when and where it did. Nanak argued against empty ritual, and against caste. He stressed the importance of living in the world, not renouncing it, and charged his followers to make an honest living through hard work, while continuously mediating on the name of the divine. It is this aspect of Sikhism that is reflected in the joke about the sardar on the moon.

Nanak was critical of Muslim and Hindu practices, and argued for a simpler approach to divine. Grewel (1990) talks about the familiarity that Nanak would have had with socio-political and religious life in North India at the time, and of his likely familiarity with both the Sant tradition, and the writing of the Sufi, Kabir, both of which were also critical of existing religious practice. Others argue that Nanak created what is essentially a syncretism, blending Hinduism and Islam in a region where the two religions existed side by side, sometimes peacefully, and

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[1] Amritdhari means 'one who has taken amrit,' an act central to the initiation to the Khalsa, or 'Brotherhood of the Pure.' While not all Sikhs who wear the outward symbols are amritdhari, all amritdhari Sikhs wear the symbols. Sardar, is a more generix term for a Sikh male who wears the outward symbols of faith.

other times in conflict (Singh, 2011). Hew McLeod, who is probably the foremost scholar of Sikh history, has written on many subjects regarding Sikhism, Nanak, and the sacred texts, and does not support the idea of syncretism. He writes (2000:4) that arguments for syncretism are often "based upon misleading English translations of Sikh scripture, particularly the works of Guru Nanak, and to some extent upon an understanding of Persian rather than Punjabi Sufism."[2] Having said that, McLeod has called into question the legitimacy of claims that Nanak performed miracles or that he received scripture through divine intervention (1968, 2000). These arguments have made McLeod very unpopular in the minds of many Sikhs and have led to a backlash against McLeod, his work, and the work of many of his students (Ballantyne, 2006, Singh, 2011).

Nanak was the first in a succession of ten living gurus, leaders of the Sikh *Panth*, or "path" or "community," over the course of the next two centuries. Angelo (1997) identifies this period, the "Age of the Gurus, "as one of three major eras in pre-Indian independence Punjab. This was a period of growth and development of the young faith under the guidance of the ten leaders. It was also a period of increased politicization of the Guru-ship, which also became heritable during this time (Grewel, 1990).

Angelo (1997) calls the second era of Sikh history the Age of the Heroes, and this time begins in 1708, with the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the living gurus, and ends in 1849, with the annexation of the Sikh Empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh by the British East India Company. This was a period of struggle for the Sikhs, an age marked by the martyrdom of key historical figures, and an age of many battles won and lost as power was consolidated, first in the

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[2] For a more lengthy treatment of the relationships between Sikhism, Hinduism, and Islam, see McLeod (2000).

Sikh Panth, and then later in Punjab as a whole. It is during this time that Ballantyne (2006) argues that the earliest stages of a Sikh Diaspora emerged.

The final age, which could be called the age of British Rule, lasted about a century, from 1849 through 1947 (Angelo, 1997). It was during this time that the wheels of colonialism provided Sikhs with a disproportionate number of opportunities to travel abroad, and seek out fortunes in faraway lands. It is also during this time that the modern form of Sikh religious identity emerged in Punjab, at the intersection of colonialism, religious reform movements, and the emergence of the Akali Dal, a Sikh political party that has enjoyed varying degrees of control in Punjabi political life since the first quarter of the 20th century (Ballantyne, 2006; Barrier, 1967, 1968; Fox, 1985; Jones, 1968, 1973; Oberoi, 1994).

If colonialism opened the gates for migration out of Punjab, there is little doubt that Sikhs took disproportionate advantage of the opportunities, as they were over represented in both the colonial army and in colonial police forces in other parts of the empire (Jacobsh, 2003, Tatla, 1999). Word spread through the villages of opportunities abroad, and Sikhs again took full advantage. Sikhs moved out of Punjab, and into all corners of the British Empire, including Hong Kong, Singapore, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, and various parts of Africa, and North America (Tatla, 1999). But by the early 20th century, they were meeting with difficulty in many of these places, in the form of migration restriction and on-the- ground racism (Bhatti, 2001; Jurgensmeyer, 1979; Leonard, 1989; Tatla, 1999).

While colonialism set the stage for a global Sikh diaspora, the collapse of colonialism in South Asia, the resultant need for labor in places like North America, Australia, and Europe, and the eventual relaxation of immigration restrictions in those countries has allowed for exponential growth of such a diaspora. Small numbers of Sikhs who lived in places like the US, Canada,

Britain and Australia were soon joined by many others, as violence, land shortage, and economic pressures drove more and more Sikhs to seek their fortunes abroad. In Australia, there were roughly 3000 Sikhs living in the country in 1901 (Jupp, 2001). By 2001, that number had grown to roughly 20,000 (Dusenbery, 2001). And while the rest of the South Asian immigrant population in Australia is growing at a much faster rate now, the total Australian Sikh population is still growing, passing 25,000 by 2006 (http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au).

1.2   WOOLGOOLGA…A SNAP SHOT

Research for this project was conducted in Woolgoolga, New South Wales, Australia, from September until October in 2006, and from October 2011 until July of 2012. Research was ethnographic in nature, and was a mixture of participant observation, informal and semi formal interviews, and volunteering to participate in activities leading up to a large Indian Cultural festival in town, the Woolgoolga CurryFest.

Woolgoolga is a small agricultural community in the northern part of New South Wales, known as much for its Sikh community as it is for its sandy beaches and its headland lookout. In fact, the town is referred to as a "Surf and Sikh" community in the popular tourist guide Lonely Planet (2011). The village is 625 kilometers north of Sydney on the Pacific Highway (Singh, 2001), the major transport route on Australia's east coast, and a highway that was undergoing massive reconstruction while I was in the field. Woolgoolga is 25 kilometers north of Coffs Harbour, the nearest metropolitan area, with the closest airport, hospital, and shopping areas.

Woolgoolga is described as sitting at the point at which the foothills of the Great Dividing Range meets the ocean. This could not be more apt a description. The town literally

slopes downward, from the banana farms sitting on the hillsides on the west side of the Pacific Highway, to the beaches that line the Tasman Sea on the east side of the highway. Banana and more recently blueberry farms overlook the whole town, and from the higher points of these farms, the ocean is visible. Likewise, from several points in town, you can see the banana trees lining the hill sides. And every night, as the sun sets, a large colony of flying foxes set off from their roost near Woolgoolga Lake, right next to the beach, and fly west, over the town, and toward the farms, where they seek out a night's meal.

If tourism is one of the town's major industries, the other is undoubtedly agriculture. In 2001, the region was producing nearly 25 percent of all Australian bananas, and Sikhs owned and operated 90 percent of the farmland in the area (Singh, 2001). While the land has remained in the hands of Woolgoolga' Sikh community, many of the family run farms have converted to blueberry production, as the cost of banana farming on such a small scale could no longer compete with the large industrial plantations in Northern Queensland. Those who do continue to grow bananas struggle much of the time. However, the year I was in Woolgoolga, a cyclone destroyed most of the Queensland crop, driving the price of bananas up from $1.99 a kilo up as much as $19.99 per kilo, making banana growing in Woolgoolga a very lucrative endeavor.

Woolgoolga is the largest of a collection of coastal villages that make up the Northern Beaches region of the Coffs Coast. According to the 2011 Australian census, Woolgoolga's total population is just over 5,000 people (http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au). Of this total population, 481 claim Indian ancestry. However, 409 of those identify India as their country of birth. This means that most likely a large number of Sikhs are identifying Australia as their country of birth, and the country of ancestry. Either that or the Indian community is not participating fully in the census process. Singh (2001) estimated that to total number of Punjabis in the region was

somewhere around 2,000, but admitted this might be a "significant over-estimation of the local Sikh population" (ibid: 231, fn3). To add to the confusion, in the 2011 census, 661 people self identify as Sikh, and 653 people identify Punjabi as the language they speak at home (http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au). This does not take into consideration the possible number of people of Punjabi origin who do not see themselves as practicing Sikhs, or who no longer identify Punjabi as their mother tongue. My own counting of the list of active members of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara was roughly 450, though that was a count of only active adult members. It did not count children, nor did it count people active in the town's other gurdwara, or those not active in either. Regardless, based on census data alone, over 13 percent of Woolgoolga's population is Sikh, and 12.9 percent speak Punjabi. This is a significant amount, especially when compared to the same data for New South Wales and Australia (0.3 percent respectively for both demographic categories).

Woolgoolga is home to two gurdwaras. The First Sikh Gurdwara of Australia is just that- it is the first gurdwara to open anywhere in the country, opening its doors in June of 1968. It is a small, unassuming brick structure that blends in with the rest of town. The other gurdwara, which I described earlier, is quite the opposite. The Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara is decidedly more obvious, in its Indian style of architecture, and it position on the top of the hill, right there as you enter or exit town. While the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara is the newer of the two, it also enjoys the largest patronage, both by Sikhs in town, and by people visiting from outside of town. They regularly host travelling religious leaders and musicians, as well as people travelling through town, and needing a place to sleep for the night. During the two weeks that I slept at the gurdwara, in one of the guest bedrooms, the other guest room was filled with a revolving door of

travelers, no one staying for more than two or three nights. Some nights, there were also people laying down mattresses in the hall, and in the room directly under the main temple building.

While the Sikh community had been established in the mid-1930s, and had seen as many as four generations of some families living there, there was still a noticeable divide between the "Indian" community, and the "Aussies," which signifies white Australians. Relations have been further strained in recent years, as large numbers of international students, and their spouses have arrived in the area. Referred to collectively as "Students," most of these young Punjabi males are working as agricultural laborers for many of the Sikh farm families, especially in the blueberries. Their own lack of experience with, and cultural understanding for Australian life has put them at odds with both the Indian families living in the area, and the larger Australia community. Finally, to complicate the racial and ethnic landscape of this very regional Australian town, 63 Sudanese refugees have been settled in Woolgoolga, part of a national program of refugee placement. Woolgoolga is truly a multicultural locality, in terms of its racial and ethnic make-up. But how deep an impact has multicultural policy made in terms of changing people's attitudes about who is, and who should not be considered Australian?

1.3 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While studies of migration and movement have long been part of anthropological inquiry, recent focus on transnationalism as a framework for understanding these phenomena have proved instructive. In attempting to move beyond simple dichotomies of migration- home and host, here and there, migration and assimilation- scholars have re-approached the cross-border movement of people from a more encompassing framework, one that takes into account a much larger social

field. In their groundbreaking book on transnationalism, Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994:8) define the term as, "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of settlement and origin." The importance here is to move the locus of analysis beyond a community of immigrants in a specific location, to include various aspects of social life that continue to have salience while transcending neatly defined spatial boundaries. Two aspects of this definition are important. First, there is recognition that transnationalism is a process, as well as a product of migration. It is constantly changing, in flux, and reactive to changing conditions at both ends of the networks established by and through movement. Some of these shifting conditions are the byproduct of changing economic and political contexts at the global level, while others are the result of changes at the regional and local levels (Glick Shiller, 2005; Levitt, DeWind and Vertocvec, 2003; Vertovec, 2007). As Levett, et al. (2003:567-78) write, "it is not that simply global forces influence local actors, but that the local economic, political and religious practices of individuals act back-interrelationships that are mediated differently with respect to different social spheres, the distinct levels at which they are enacted, and the linkages between them."

Second, this definition of transnationalism recognizes that these social relations that transcend borders play out along multiple strands within a given social field, which itself spans borders to include multiple localities at once. While individuals maintain relations along existent lines of kinship and familial obligation, they also maintain relations that are economic, religious, political, and ethnic in nature. There are transnational spaces, transnational movements, transnational marriage practices, and transnational identities (Vertovec, 1999). Each are worthy of consideration, and most exist with a simultaneity that requires a more nuanced analysis than traditional migration studies have afforded.

Recognition that there needs to be a wider analytical view, and that social connections between migrant and home do not cease with movement does not, however, mean that there is agreement on what transnationalism means, or how important it is to the understand in contemporary migratory practices (Levitt, et al., 2003). Glick Schiller (2005) cautions that a study of the transnational that does not take into consideration the ways in which relations of power are built into transnational movement will always be incomplete. Drawing on research among fundamentalist Christian groups in the US, and among Haitian "long distant nationalists," Glick Schiller argues that these transnationalist movements, rooted in religious and political ideologies of democracy and justice, actually work to extend imperialist agendas of the United States. Thus, by examining the wider social field of transnationalism, with an eye to uneven relations of power between nation-states and their citizens, we can better understand the underlying products of that power, and its distribution.

Steven Vertovec (1999) argues that while there is agreement regarding the importance of approaching migration from a transnational analytic framework, there are a multitude of ways that this is being done. He identifies six basic conceptual premises on which transnational research is grounded, which he identifies as 1) social morphology, 2) type of consciousness, 3) mode of cultural reproduction, 4) avenue of capital, 5) site of political engagement, and 6) (re)construction of 'place' or locality (ibid). Some of these categories or premises overlap with his own assessment of diaspora as a concept, a point I will return to in the next chapter. Here, what is important is to recognize that transnationalism as a framework can, and does include multiple aspects of social life simultaneously. It can refer to a form of consciousness, grown out of existing in multiple social worlds simultaneously, or it can refer to understandings of place, and the cultural and emotional meanings attributed to them. It can refer to both. This requires a

rich investigation of the ways in which transnational migration is experienced on the ground. Vertovec (1999:456) writes,

> There is an immediate need for more in-depth and comparative empirical studies of transnational human mobility, communication, social ties, channels and flows of money, commodities, information, and images- as well as how these phenomena are made use of.

In doing so, we will better understand the nature of contemporary transnationalism as a process, and also why transnationalism is felt or experienced unevenly.

It is important to keep in mind that discussions of the transnational do not imply the demise of the national, a point made by several scholars of contemporary migration (Levitt, et al., 2003; Szanton Blanc, Basch and Glick Schiller, 1995; Westwood, 2001; Westwood and Phizacklea, 2000). In fact, transnational processes are often filtered through processes of nation building or nation maintenance, creating situations that act to integrate or exclude those living transnationally. This can result in a politics of recognition (Westwood, 2001) and a politics of belonging (Westwood and Phizacklea, 2000) that play out along transnational lines. A politics of recognition refers to the manner in which political subjects are made within the context of nation building, and the contests inherent in those processes. Westwood (2001:247) refers to it as "complex choreography," one that finds expression and debate in the sites of the nation, citizenship and democracy. The politics of belonging, by association, refers to how people, as individuals and members of groups jockeying for recognition, come to feel part of the nation. Westwood and Phizacklea (2000:11) write, "the sense of being a part of the nation is contingent upon specific moments which tie the individual biography and national histories together." To understand these politics of recognition and belonging, it is necessary to investigate the

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interaction of transnational migration and national immigration policy, both in their historical trajectories, and in their contemporary expressions.

Woolgoolga, NSW is one place that can be described as transnational, and due to its rural locality, its close and continued relations with specific villages in Punjab, and its increasing involvement with growing networks of other transnational Sikhs, it presents a unique opportunity to study transnationalism as it unfolds. The Sikh community in Woolgoolga has deep temporal roots in Australia, so dating back to the end of the 19th century, but has definitely felt the effects of increased migration due to relaxed immigration policy in Australia. This increase in population is also attributable to internal migration of existing Sikh populations in New South Wales and Queensland. Cross cutting these characteristics of the Sikh community in Woolgoolga are several other transnational processes, each which impacts daily life, as well as larger aspects of religious and cultural identity. One of these processes is that of marriage, which has been historically a transnational one. Spouses for Woolgoolga-born Sikhs, both men and women, have been sought in the natal villages in Punjab, utilizing existing networks of kin and affinal relationships to find suitable mates. The result has been a constant arrival of individuals from Punjab, tied into pre-existing networks of family, who act to reaffirm connections with Punjab as a cultural homeland. At the same time, the Sikh gurdwaras in town are tied into larger national and international networks of religion, networks that link individuals and their religious practices to other Sikhs in Australia, as well as to Sikhs in Malaysia, New Zealand, and India.

Two avenues of investigation that are complimentary for understanding the politics of recognition within the transnational experiences of Sikhs living in Woolgoolga are diaspora and multiculturalism. According to Vertovec (1999), social morphology is one aspect of transnationalism that requires further investigation. He identifies diaspora as one way to

approach the social morphology of transnational movement. He (1999:449) writes, "Ethnic diasporas- what Kachig Tololyan (1991:5) has called 'the exemplary communities of the transnational moment'- have become the paradigm in this understanding of transnationalism." He goes on to argue that "the dispersed diasporas of old have become today's 'transnational communities' sustained by a range of modes of social organization, mobility and communication." Sikhs is Woolgoolga represent a diaspora that is defined and understood both in terms of religion and ethnicity. It represents both historic and recent movement between nations and between continents. And it represents a community embedded in multiple transnational networks based on economics, kinship, religion and labor needs, as well as cultural linkages that continue to have meaning on the ground. How these links continue to shape Sikh identity in Woolgoolga are shifting, but remain important.

In order to best understand the nature of transnational processes on the ground in Woolgoolga, it is also necessary to explore the relationship between Indian migration to Australia, and Australian immigration policy as it pertains to Indians. An examination of the shift from Australia's exclusionary policies, known collectively as "White Australia," to the more inclusive policies of multiculturalism can be instructive in understanding how individual Sikhs, living in Woolgoolga negotiate their own politics of belonging.

Central to my argument is understanding how the emotional and nostalgic connections between a community and their cultural homeland are created and sustained. I argue that this is an imaginative process, and one that is rooted as much in processes of remembering as it is in processes of experience. Borrowing from Appadurai's (1996) notion of nostalgia without memory, and Axel's (2005) notion of the diasporic sublime, I argue that Punjab, and its meaning to individuals on the ground, are filtered through a host of sources of information, including, but

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not limited to personal experience. Stories that exist within families, and within communities, as well as histories learned at home, at the gurdwara, and from various media formats, including books, newspapers, movies, and the internet all combine to shape one's perceptions of, and emotional attachment to Punjab as a "homeland."

Appadurai (1996) argues that nostalgia is used, particularly in media and advertising, to evoke a time when life was simpler, and to sell products that promise to make life simple like that again. The target audience of this advertising is often too young to remember the time when life was simpler, but feel a sense of longing for it nonetheless. This notion of having nostalgia for things not experienced is not limited only to media outlets and advertising campaigns, I would argue. Rather, these ways of evoking a longing for things never experienced, or nostalgia without memory, can be found in many other sources of information, and may have a great deal to do with how diasporic populations conceptualize their relationships with their cultural homelands. Several Sikhs I talked to in Woolgoolga told me about their first experiences with Punjab, saying they felt "home" when they first encountered their family village.

Similarly, Axel (2005) argues that identity does not only emerge from the imagined, but also from the unimaginable, and the inexperiencable. Here, Axel is discussing the role of the internet as a site for diasporic subject formation, and is focusing specifically on the way in which violence and trauma become experienced through internet consumption in ways that become meaningful constitutive for the viewer. I would argue that violence and trauma are not the only aspects of Sikh history that are experienced, and internalized in this fashion, nor is the internet the only site of identity formation where the unimaginable become imagined. Again, stories passed on within the family, or at the gurdwara, artwork, Kirtan, local histories, and actual experiences with Punjab can act to make the unimaginable imaginable, and things that are

unimaginable can be much more mundane than violence and trauma. It can be as simple as how

life is lived in another time, or in another place.

Thus, diasporic Sikhs in Woolgoolga constitute their connections with Punjab in ways

that run a continuum between feelings of deep nostalgia and feelings of the unimaginable. I will

argue that generational differences often impact where on the continuum these feelings will fall.

Individuals who are older have a tendency to feel much more closely linked to Punjab, in ways

that reflect Appadurai's (1996) idea of nostalgia without memory, although they clearly have

memories of visiting Punjab. They have never lived there, yet feel at home when they are there,

and feeling an emotional connection to a place that they have experienced in what can only be

described as a limited basis. Conversely, younger Sikhs, who too have experienced Punjab in

limited ways, often find it unimaginable, but also in ways that are important to them.

1.4   CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

Now that I have laid out the basis for my argument, let me lay out the argument itself. The

chapters in this dissertation are organized in a fashion that both build upon my main argument in

a logical fashion, while simultaneously moving through time chronologically. So, while chapters

3 and 4 tell the story of changing attitudes toward immigration in Australia, they also chronicle

the history of Sikh immigration to Australia, and more specifically to Woolgoolga. The goal is

for an integrated and nuanced argument that draws on many sources, both intellectual and

temporal.

Chapter Two is a survey of the literature on *Diaspora* as an intellectual concept, and on

the Sikh diaspora as a specific example of how scholars approach the subject. Diaspora as a

concept is a very old one, with its roots in the ancient Greek notion of political expansion. Meaning "to sow over," the term was first applied to Greeks living in occupied territories (think of Alexander's troops in India, or the Ptolemys in Egypt). However, the term soon became closely associated with the forced exile of the Hebrews to Babylon, and eventually to the global displacement of Jewish peoples from the Promised Land. This association has shaped the way people think about diaspora, but it has also been a point of departure for scholars who see early definitions of the term that focus on forced dispersal and a constant longing for return to be problematic.

I posit that diasporic identity is not so dependent on the longing to return to a homeland as it is a negotiation between several factors and forces, operating simultaneously in the present while drawing unevenly on various interpretations of the past. For Sikhs living in Australia, this diasporic identity emerges at the intersection of their own history as a population living in Australia, and the shifting history of Australia's immigration policy, as well as the more conservative changes in attitude on the ground in regional Australia. This identity also emerges from intersections of the history of Sikhs in India, and from the strained relations between Indian Sikhs and the government of India over the past 30 years. Also, this identity is the product of intersecting, and at times conflicting notions of belonging both in Australia and in Punjab. These notions of belonging, particularly those surrounding the construction of meaning for a "cultural homeland" of Punjab in Australia, vary within a diasporic community. These ideas of home vary between generations, and these differences have implications for how the relationship between Australian Sikhs and Punjab may shift over time. Finally, this identity is filtered through ideas and attitudes of non-Indian neighbors, and they way these two communities, Indian and non-Indian, interact with one another.

Chapter Two will also provide a history of the Khalistani movement, and the politics behind the push for an independent Sikh homeland in Punjab during the 1980s. This history is important for understanding the consolidation of Sikh identity in India, and throughout the diaspora, one that promoted the strict adherence to the *amritdhari*, or Khalsa, identity. The connection of the need for an independent state with the need to adhere to an 'orthodox' expression of religious identity can be seen as the final stages of a debate that began in Punjab in the late 19th century, one influenced by various religious reformist movements in Punjab, as well as the effects of direct intervention by the Colonial state. However, it was during the Khalistani era that this identity experienced renewed popularity in India, and in the diaspora.

Chapter Three focuses on the history of the infamous White Australia immigration policies, and the way in which they shaped the racial and ethnic makeup of the new nation over the first 6 decades of the 20th century. At the same time, I am telling the early narrative of Indian migration from the subcontinent to the continent of Australia, using this story of White Australia as a backdrop. Some of the earliest Sikh settlers have their roots in these earliest days of Indian migration to Australia, with some of the "grandfathers" coming out as early as the 1890's. My reasons for presenting these two stories side-by-side is two-fold. First, I want to demonstrate the gap between policy at the level of government, and the reality of labor needs. This is something that is important to keep in mind, even in the present day context. In the early days of federation, Australia was very concerned about maintaining a racially pure, British society, and made every attempt to limit the entry of non-British into Australian society. At the same time, labor needs outpaced migration rates from Europe, and non-British and even non-Whites were allowed entry to fill the void (Jupp, 2004). So while government policy said one thing, the reality of things was something different. The other reason I want to position these two tales, one of immigration

restriction, and one of immigration in the face of restriction, is to demonstrate the liminal place that Indians in general, and Sikhs in particular, held in the larger context of Australia as part of the Empire, and later the Commonwealth. As British passport holders, Sikhs were able to move back and forth freely between India and Australia. As non-whites, they were never truly welcome. That they originated from Asia made them dangerously similar to the feared Chinese, and later Japanese, but as Indians, they were clearly not the same as either of those other two populations (Jupp, 2001). The result of this liminality was that early Sikhs were allowed to stay on in Australia, and also travel back to India, following the passage of the restrictive White Australia policies, a fact that has implications for the growth of Sikh communities like the one in Woolgoolga.

Chapter Four focuses on the rise of, and adoption of Multicultural policies at the level of national government in Australia, as well as at the level of some of Australia's states. First, multiculturalism as a political concept is introduced, and analyzed, specifically in the Australian context. Then, the history of Australian Multiculturalism is laid out, and discussed. Important to this discussion are three main points. One, multiculturalism is not a unilateral policy adopted equally everywhere. It is manifest differently in different contexts, and usually for different reasons (Fleras, 2009; Jupp, 1995). Multiculturalism in Australia is not the same as Multiculturalism in Canada. It is also fair to say that Multiculturalism in Australia in 1973 is not the same thing as Multiculturalism in Australia in 2011. One of the reasons that this is true is the second important point of the discussion, that multiculturalism has always and only been a policy at the level of government, and never has it been ratified into law (Fleras, 2009). What this means is that multiculturalism is malleable in Australia, and is at the mercy of public opinion and political climate. And interestingly, while most Australians have become increasing

uncomfortable with the idea of Multiculturalism, they in fact do not notice the degree to which Multicultural policies have become ingrained at both the state and federal level in Australia. Thirdly, Multiculturalism is a concept that exists more at the level of policy debate, and less at the level of on-the ground interaction. While people become more and more concerned politically about the meaning of the word "multiculturalism," they are unaware of how much the policies of local, regional, and national governments are aware of, and supportive of it. At the same time, it is at the level of on the ground attitudes and actions that multiculturalism has been the least successful in Australia. As Hage (2003) points out, multiculturalism as national character has not taken hold, especially in regional Australia.

Chapter Four also traces the developments of the Sikh community during the age of multiculturalism, charting the opening of two gurdwaras, the growth of a community, the development of a Punjabi Language program in the public school, and the transition of farming bananas as small, family owned farms to the production of blueberries through a larger cooperative, and the need for and subsequent arrival of large numbers of international "students" for agricultural labor. All of these things were the result of, directly or indirectly, multicultural policies and changes in immigration at the level of the state and national governments.

Chapter Five is the first of two heavily ethnographic chapters. In this first chapter, interviews and anecdotes are used to demonstrate the widening gulf between two generations of Australian Sikhs. Using discussions of Punjab, and of Punjabi politics as the basis for these interviews, I argue that older Sikhs, between the ages of 35 and 55, have a much stronger connection with Punjab as a place, and as a cultural homeland. This connection is often based on having been there, and having heard tales of natal villages as children. The connection is one that is emotional, even nostalgic. The next generation of Sikhs, defined as people under the age of 35,

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has very different attitudes about Punjab. While many of them acknowledge the importance of Punjab to Sikhism, they tend to see time spent there as obligatory, and by and large do not enjoy trips to India.

Conversely, it is the older generation, more informed about, and having lived through the Khalistani era, who feel most strongly that Sikhs do not need an independent homeland. Some actually argue that not only is it not necessary, but that a Khalistan would be a bad idea. On the other hand, the younger generation of Sikhs I talked to were much less informed about the politics of that era, but much more sympathetic to the notion that Sikhs were treated unfairly in India, and needed their own state. In many ways, it is here that the younger generations of Sikhs in Woolgoolga are nostalgic, and even romantic about a past they know little about, and may not have even experienced in their life time. It is through these interchanges, and the dichotomous way that they seem to map out on to different generations of Sikhs, that the multivalent, and constructed of nature of Punjab as a "homeland" become visible.

In the Sixth, and final chapter, I return to the problem of multiculturalism, only this time with a very ethnographic focus. Using an annual Indian food and cultural festival, called CurryFest, held in Woolgoolga every April as a launch point, I argue that the event, which features music, food, and dance, can be seen as a touchstone for many of the issues that linger in Woolgoolga regarding difference, acceptance, and belonging. Using Ghasson Hage's (2002; 2003) concept of "White Paranoia," I argue that the position of Sikhs within the larger context of Woolgoolga is a tenuous one, and one that demonstrates the degree to which attitudes in Australia regarding immigration and immigrants fluctuates with the nation's fortunes. Hage traces the roots of such attitudes in Australia to the colonial period, and argues that still today

Australians, when feeling threatened look both externally at other nations, and internally at other nationals, to safeguard against these perceived threats.

I argue that Sikhs, who represent nearly a fourth of the population of Woolgoolga, tend to shun civic life for the most part, and this is most evident in the organizational phases of the CurryFest. The festival, which draws a significant crowd from up and down the Coffs Coast, is organized and run exclusively by white business owners from town. This fact is a bone of contention for those organizers, who feel like they are helping the Indian community with positive press and exposure, but are getting nothing in return. Meanwhile, Indians feel like their role in the event is to show up and cook. Others feel like they are merely on display for the mostly white audience, and do not feel like the festival does either Punjabi culture or Sikhism any justice.

Through an analysis of how Indians talk about CurryFest, how local Australians talk about CurryFest and about Sikhs in general, and about how Woolgoolga has been portrayed in the local and national media, I argue that even after nearly 80 years of living in Woolgoolga, the Sikh community there remains far from integrated, and continue to experience precarious positioning vis a vis the rest of the village. In some ways, this can be seen as reflection of the positioning that immigrants of all kinds feel in relation to belonging in Australia.

1.5   CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, the goal of this dissertation is to understand Sikh identity formation in the diaspora, with a particular focus on the role played by imagining homeland in that process. By investigating the history of immigration policy in Australia, and juxtaposing it against the history

of a specific community, in this case the Sikhs, I hope to demonstrate that these two processes are not separable, and there is a great deal of interrelatedness. Immigration policy is shaped by many things, including ideas of racial purity, and a vision of what the country "should" look like, but also by internal labor needs, and by international political events. These shifting policies, and the loopholes available within them in turn shape who migrates to Australia, as does economic needs, and again, international political events. This interaction between immigrant community and immigration policy not only shapes who moves where, but also shapes the sense of belonging that the immigrants experience.

In Australia, and more specifically in Woolgoolga, the Sikh community has a long history, and one that they are quite proud of. But as a group, they remain relatively unintegrated into the fabric of the village, Multiculturalism, as it exists in Australia, has developed programs aimed at helping provide certain services for the Sikh community, but has yet to translate to a "culture" of multiculturalism on the ground for people living in this seaside village, Aussie and Sikh alike. This contributes to the imagining of a relationship with Punjab that is heavily emotional and nostalgic for some, to the point that they think of Punjab as "home." However, this is not true cross generationally, with younger generations of Sikhs, born and raised in Woolgoolga, feeling very different than do their parents' generation. These younger Sikhs feel very uncomfortable with the time they do spend in India, and particularly in their family's natal village in Punjab. These generational differences in thinking and feeling about Punjab, and its importance as a point of origin demonstrate the shifting notions of "homeland" within a single population, and have implications for the relationship between Punjab, and its Sikh diaspora moving forward.

2.0   CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The term "Diaspora" has become quite popular in academics in the past few decades, and has been in use outside of academia for much longer. It is a term whose meaning has shifted over time. It is a term that has at times been closely associated with one group or another, and at other times it has been adopted by different social groups in order to explain or lend meaning to their situation. And it is a term that has been widely used in recent social science investigation of phenomena associated with globalization and international migration.

Inherent in the term diaspora are two equally important concepts. First, diaspora refers to the dispersion of people, often across wide geographical space. Second, diaspora refers to the ways in which these dispersed people remain intimately connected to a place of origin, or a homeland. While many scholars have approached the concept of diaspora from a multitude of angles, these two characteristics seem to remain central to the concept, and its uses.

In this chapter, I will review literature specific to anthropology, and the social sciences more broadly defined to make sense of the ways that thinking of diaspora have changed over time. An all inclusive review of diaspora literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, but I will draw on anthropology, political science, cultural studies, and more specifically Sikh Studies, which has a rich history of engaging with the concept of diaspora. Within this literature, I will pay careful attention to the varying ways in which the concept of "homeland" is attended to. As mentioned above, a relationship with a homeland is a unifying characteristic in much of the

literature. Economic links to homeland are one central focus to studies of diaspora as a social phenomenon. Others investigate the ways in which homelands influence the expression of cultural identity in the host country, not in a direct intervention, but rather in the form of trying to maintain traditions and practices akin to what was once done in a place of origin. I will argue that homeland is not a monolithic idea within any diasporic population. Its meaning is constructed by populations living abroad, often in very different ways. Local, national, and international histories all help shape how homeland is constructed, as do contemporary politics at all of those same three levels. Also important in the process of construction are generational differences in positioning vis-à-vis the homeland, and the way in which different generations relate to this place of origin- how they experience it, and how they remember those experiences. I will argue that nostalgia plays a powerful role in the cultural construction of homeland, but it does not do so evenly across a diasporic community. Some feel deeply nostalgic for a homeland, while others may feel largely ambivalent. In the case of Sikhs living in Woolgoolga, these differences play out along generational lines, pointing to the way that homeland can be experienced in diverse ways within one single community.

2.1   DIASPORA

Migration is a part of being human, and it always has been. For as long as humans have walked the Earth, they have migrated; the extent to which they have done so has varied over time and from place to place. And while migration is not unique to humans in the animal kingdom, there are certainly some unique qualities that go along with human migrations. According to Nayaram (2004:16),

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In human migration two unique factors need to be recognized: migration does not mean the mere physical movement of people. Migrants carry with them a socio-cultural baggage which among other things consists of (a) a predefined social identity, (b) a set of religious beliefs and practices, (c) a framework of norms and values governing family and kinship organization, and (d) language. More important, the migrants are not inevitably irrevocably cut off completely from the land of their breed. They themselves may retain physical and/or mental contact with their homeland, often characterized by what is called 'the myth of return.'"

Using this definition of human migration, Nayaram (2004) argues that the concept of diaspora allows for a better understanding of the cultural dimensions of human movement. But are disaporas always marked by a myth of return, or what James Clifford (1994) calls "a renewed, painful yearning"? Are they only marked by this longing to go home, or is there more to it? And is this concept the most useful for understanding the state of transnational Sikh migration out of Punjab, both past and present? In order to best answer these questions, let us look at some of the literature that tackles the concept of diaspora.

In the foreword to Jayaram's (2004) edited volume, *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration*, Sharma (2004:11) argues correctly that to talk about an Indian diaspora is to talk about a great many things at one time. He goes on to point out that within the larger context of the Indian diaspora, there are smaller, "structural" foci which add to the richness of the study of an Indian diaspora more generally. Identifying issues of gender, caste, and regional identity within the global diaspora, Sharma identifies the interrogations of these foci as one of three phases of studying the Indian Diaspora. Oddly, he leaves out religion as one of these foci, and it

is religion which this study uses as a focus for diasporic linkage. There is literature to support the utility of focusing one's attention on religion as unifying characteristic of diasporic populations, but that does not mean the other foci that Sharma identifies do not co-exist, and often overlap with religion. The result in the Sikh Diaspora is a tendency to oscillate between religion and regional identities and practices as explanatory reasons for why things are done. Cultural practices that are common in Sikh communities, but which appear contradictory to Sikh doctrine are often explained as "cultural" or "Punjabi" in origin.

In his book, The Hindu Diaspora (2000), Steven Vertovec dedicates an entire chapter to what he calls the "Three Meanings of Diaspora." He identifies these meanings as follows: first, diaspora is a social form, second, diaspora is a type of consciousness, and third, diaspora is a form of cultural production. Each of these meanings is useful for understanding the state of contemporary migrant populations. And none are mutually exclusive to the other two. A brief review of the three meaning is helpful.

The first meaning Vertovec (2000) provides for diaspora, and one that potentially mirrors the term's earliest scholarly uses, is that of a social form. By this, he is referring to diaspora as way of categorizing people, living in multiple localities, while maintaining some connection to a shared homeland. One early application of this meaning can be found in Saffran's (1991) listing of the characteristics of a 'diaspora'. Some of these characteristics attributed to diasporic populations include a dispersal from a common place of origin to two or more nation-states, a sense of forced displacement, a continuing allegiance to or support for the homeland of origination, a sense of alienation from membership in the host society, a sense of collective identity, and a longing for return, at some point in the future, to that homeland of origin. Saffran goes on to identify the Jewish diaspora as an ideal type, a point which Clifford (1994) finds

contention with, which I will return to shortly. Robin Cohen (1997) has contributed additional criteria, and recognized the potential for different kinds of diasporas, including labor diasporas (the Chinese), economic diasporas (South Asians) and diasporas based on ethno-nationalist aspirations for sovereignty (Sikhs). By acknowledging the variety of motivations for dispersal, and the various kinds of longing for return, Cohen moves away from an ideal type, and more toward a neutral use of the term. Tatla (1999) takes up Cohen's categorization of the Sikh diaspora as a "search for statehood," analyzing transnational Sikhs in North America and Europe in terms of their political mobilization around the issue of Khalistan, a distinctly Sikh homeland as imagined in present day Punjab. While both Cohen and Tatla seem to link the Sikh diaspora explicitly with the movement for an independent Sikh state, this link is a little short sited, and reflects more the politics of the time in which they were writing. While there is little doubt that the Khalistani movement impacted Sikhs globally, and helped shape their collective identity during the years of the militancy, it is also true, as this research shows, that the push for Khalistan continues to shape the relationships between diasporic Sikhs and India, Punjab, and with each other. However, to say that the Sikh diaspora is only an entho-nationalist diaspora is to gloss over a great deal of the historical depth of the diaspora itself, and to limit the discussion to a very specific political context. Khalistan is immensely important to understanding the Sikh diaspora, but it is not the only dimension worthy of investigation.

James Clifford (1994) attempts to move the conversation away from this definition of diaspora as a social form, criticizing the use of typology in defining this kind of global dispersion. While recognizing the utility in trying to develop a working definition of the term, and acknowledging the reality of some of the characteristics developed by Saffran, Clifford rightly points out that laundry lists of criteria lead to a comparative approach that leaves some

case studies as being "more diasporic" than others, based on the presence or absence of any number of these traits. Clifford points out that over time many groups shift in and out these conditions of diaspora, be they longing for return, or a sense of alienation. Degrees to which certain criteria shape how a population sees itself in relation to "host" societies, "homelands," and their sense of belonging to either shift over time, and fluctuate in importance. These things are not static, but rather highly dynamic. To talk about them like they are static does disservice to analysis. Thus, even the ideal type, the Jewish diaspora, has at times not presented all of the characteristics available in Saffran's definition. So, the list of criteria, while useful in certain circumstances, is also problematic.

The identification of an ideal type is also a sticking point for Clifford, who argues that by linking "diaspora" too closely with the Jewish experience, limits are automatically being placed on the utility of the concept and its definition. By associating diaspora too closely with one case, and a very politically contentious one at that, Saffran limits the kinds of associations available for the term. In fact, Clifford points out that even Jewish scholars are not in agreement on the importance of diaspora in the development of Jewish consciousness.

Many of the scholars who approach diaspora as a social form do so with certain assumptions in mind. First, there seems to be a fair amount of emphasis on the relationship between dispersed populations and their cultural homelands. Whether it is an acknowledgement of the importance of the cultural influences, or of the physical presence resulting from tacking back and forth between two or more places over a life time, there is very little time spent looking at the ways in which a cultural homeland is understood by diasporic populations. Homeland exists in a monolithic form, this vast and powerful force that shapes the lives of diasporic populations. Yet, it remains largely un-interrogated from the standpoint of what it actually means

to people on the ground. This research aims to correct that, looking at intergenerational differences in ideas and attitudes about homeland as a conceptual reality.

The second aspect of diaspora as social form that seems to permeate much of the literature has to do with the notion of the "myth of return." In the typologies of Saffran (1991) and Cohen (1997), and in the writings of Clifford (1994), Jayaram (2004) and others all suggest that diaspora by its very nature is defined by a longing to go home again. Part of what this research does is call that assumption in to question, again by analyzing the ways the different generations of Sikh in Woolgoolga think about Punjab.

The second definition proposed by Vertovec (2000) is one of diaspora as a form of consciousness. This definition has grown out of the work of British cultural studies, and is most famously associated with Stuart Hall. Hall, in trying to understand "Black" identity within the context of British social life, has argued extensively about the various social and historical processes that construct a "politics of representation." Black, as a racial category in Britain, is not monolithic, but includes a diverse group of peoples of color, from various parts of the former Empire. Afro-Caribbeans, South Asians, Africans, and others are clustered together, in opposition with the unmarked category of white, British subject. In essence, what Hall is arguing is that Black subjectivity is not a singular expression of identity, but one that is at its core a hybrid identity. Hybridity here refers to the recognition that identity for minority groups does not come from one place or another, from homeland or host country, but rather is the result of drawing on various aspects of both. Representation of those identities is a process, not a social fact. Homi Bhabha (1996) also argues for an understanding of identities as hybrid, saying that to better understand identity formation, one must look at the "Culture's in between." Contending that identity formation emerges out of a "third space" of interaction between cultures, rather than

simply as a result merger or fusion, Bhabha allows for hybridity to be something actively engaged in, a creative as well as a constitutive process.

The notion of "Double Consciousness," borrowed from W.E.B. Dubois (1903), enters the conversation of diaspora through the work of Paul Gilroy (1993), and others. Gilroy's work, also concerned with Black identity in Britain, attempts to draw on global, historical interaction as a part of the formation of a Black British subject. Gilroy maps out a zone of interaction, which he calls the "Black Atlantic," and historicizes the ongoing interaction between Africa, the Americas and Europe. He then places this history (or "counterhistory", as Clifford (1994) calls it) at the center of identity formation for Blacks throughout the zone of interaction. Double consciousness, for Gilroy, grows from a recognition by blacks in Britain that they are at once part of two identity groups, identities that while not mutually exclusive, can at times be at odds. Dayal (1996), extending the idea of double consciousness further to a specifically diasporic form, argues that subjects who experience diasporic double consciousness are not only aware of their multiple identities, but may in fact be ambivalent about fitting into either category. According to Dayal, this form of double consciousness, this being at once from "here" and from "there," but not fitting neatly into either category can undermine some of the more misleading undertones found in discourses of multiculturalism. Thus diasporic double consciousness enables subjects to either choose or resist categorization based a dichotomy of "host" and "home," but may make feeling a part of either identity group problematic.

Clifford (1994) enthusiastically support's Gilroy's attempt to create a "history/map" of a diaspora, while simultaneously recognizing diaspora to be form of consciousness rather than a state of being. Clifford does point out, however, that while the Black Atlantic is indeed a historic zone of interaction, one that continues to inform identity formation from all sides, and one that

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facilitates the flow of cultural ideas and products (Black music that fuses traditional African rhythms with more localized expression of "Blackness" is one such product that Gilroy mentions), there are aspects of Black identity that can only be accounted for regionally. Citing the history of race relations in the US, a history of South-North migration, emancipation, and urbanization as uniquely African-American experiences, Clifford argues that the Black Atlantic cannot account for how these historical forces shaped Black identity in the United States. This is a valid critique when talking about any global diaspora. While attempts are made to understand diaspora as a global phenomenon, attention must be paid to regional and local influences on the populations of study.

Finally, the work of Aihwa Ong (1999) speaks to the way the transnational migration can lead to dual identity and cultural hybridity in complex and interesting ways. Focusing her attention on Chinese businessmen, and what she calls "flexible citizenship," Ong argues that some individuals acquire the ability to move smoothly between social contexts, due in part to their constant movement and travel, and in part to their privileged class position. This idea of moving smoothly between the cultural and social milieu of very different places is useful when thinking about hybridity, double consciousness, and diasporic identity. It demonstrates that having multiple cultural influences is not all trial and tribulation, but there is at times a positive upside to having the ability to move between forms of cultural consciousness. Thus, Sikhs in Woolgoolga who can and do move between Australian life and life in the village in Punjab at times are capable of, and do take advantage of this ability, and what it has to offer. And this can include the procuring of spouses for relatives, acquiring land in the village, having houses fixed and maintained in their absence, and the recruitment of labor for their farms back in Woolgoolga.

James Watson (1977) argues that while Hong Kong is indeed a cosmopolitan urban center, many of the Chinese who have immigrated at first to Britain, and then later to the rest of Europe, actually come from parts of the rural hinterland that surrounds the city. Drawn to Europe by a growth in British interest in ethnic foods, many Chinese immigrants opened restaurants, or sought employment in those owned by fellow Chinese immigrants, and largely kept to themselves. Money earned was sent home, and remittances help pay for the construction of new homes in the village. This is very similar to patterns found in Woolgoolga, among Australian Sikhs, where houses were, and continue to be built in natal villages in Punjab. However, while the Chinese studied by Watson were sojourners, with plans to retire to their home villages, and their new homes, many Sikhs living in Woolgoolga have no plans for resettlement in Punjab. They are building houses to have a place to stay when they visit, and to have a place for their children to stay so that they will continue to visit.

Other similarities between the Chinese immigrants in Britain and the Sikh immigrants in Woolgoolga include the fact that regional immigrant communities often have roots in specific rural localities in their home country. Watson (1977) writes about populations of Chinese immigrants living in Hawaii, the Philippines, and California that all have specific rural points of origin, with each having a specific rural district in Hong Kong as a starting point. Woolgoolga's Sikh community has a similar character, with many of the original families who settled there having come from one of two neighboring villages in the Punjab. One man explained to me that he could ride a pedal bike from his family's village to the other with ease, because they were that close.

Also, both Chinese and Sikh migrants took advantage of their status as British subjects to move within the Empire, though at different points in history (Watson, 1977; Bhatti, 2001).

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Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong were able to relocate to Britain due in part to the Colonial Protectorate status of Hong Kong, and they began their immigration in full following the Second World War. Prior to that, Hong Kong was itself a recipient of much immigration from Mainland China, as refugees fled the continent in the wake of the Communist Revolution. In Woolgoolga, a majority of the earliest arrivals, immigrating in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, utilized their status as subjects of the British as well. Though a majority of Woolgoolga's Sikh also came to Australia in the post-War period, it was their parents' generation, and the former relationship between India and the metropole that made this possible.

Thus, the notion of "flexible citizenship" is not limited to cosmopolitan types, like the Chinese transnational businessmen studied by Ong (1999). Rural populations who have relocated to both urban areas (the Chinese in Britain) and to rural regions (the Sikhs in Woolgoogla) demonstrate the ability to navigate the cultural differences that exist in the two different cultural milieus in which they operate. While Watson (1977) suggests that Chinese immigrants keep to themselves, and look like a relatively closed community, he also argues that they were fully integrated into a growing market of restauranteering and catering throughout Britain, and later much of Western Europe. Thus, they were quite capable of operating within the social and economic world in which they lived. Similarly, Sikhs in Woolgoolga maintain some social distance in town, keeping busy with agricultural work, family life, and activities at the town's two gurdwaras. But they also own a great deal of rental property and other small businesses, and seem to understand quite well how to operate in the context in which they live.

Kathleen Hall's (2002) work among British-born Sikhs provides another counter argument to Ong's notion of "flexible citizenship," and speaks more directly to intergenerational variation in understanding the complexity of identity negotiation in a diasporic context. Also

taking into consideration larger social and historical processes, and recognizing the existence of competing social and cultural projects in these processes, Hall argues that discourses within the British Sikh community exist alongside discourses of national identity construction in post-colonial Britain, creating competing, and at times interacting fields for identity formation. She specifically identifies second generation, British-born Sikhs as having to negotiate these competing discourses in ways that their parents do not, a process which she calls "translation." According to Hall (2002:14), "The complexity of the social and cultural worlds necessarily involves individuals in processes of cultural translation, everyday acts of interpretation, negotiation, and situational performance through which, over time and across social settings, they fashion identities, create lifestyles and pursue imagined futures."

The options available for second generation British-born Sikhs to draw on when formulating their sense of cultural identity may be dictated by discourses beyond their control, but Hall argues that they exercise a fair amount of creativity and variability in terms of how they draw on these various discourses. However, each decision has social consequences, and these considerations are always present. She writes (Hall, 2002:16), "Second generation British Sikhs live between the forces of these two social formations. As they negotiate the boundaries, social expectations, and constraints supported by the ideologies of British nationalism and family honor, they develop a sense of living between two worlds they frequently refer to as 'English' and 'Indian.'" She goes on to point out that things considered Indian are also closely associated with "traditional" while things more closely linked to English are also more closely linked with the "Modern." Through these negotiative processes of translation, second generation Sikhs in Britain draw on discourses of traditionalism and cosmopolitanism, as well as youth culture, Indian culture, and notions of Britishness to create a sense of belonging for themselves.

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Australia's younger generation of Sikhs are also confronted with changing processes of nation building, shifting ideas of ethnic and cultural pluralism, and a steady flow of "tradition" in what could be called competing discourses of national belonging. In this way, it can be argued that the lives of Australian born Sikhs, like their British counterparts, are in fact "lives in translation" (Hall, 2002). The context of Australian nation building, and the discourses that surround it might be different, but the process is still quite similar.

The third of Vertovec's (2000) meanings of diaspora was that of cultural production. Vertovec's own research speaks to this meaning, demonstrating the ways in which religious behavior is re-written in a diasporic context to establish or express new meaning, or how new behaviors are developed to express ideas of religious, and thus ethnic or national identity by diasporic groups. Cultural production, then, means simply that cultural practices and forms that come to represent traditional practices from a homeland may in fact be unique to the diasporic context and not part of a tradition at all. Vertovec's work among Indo-Trinidadians shows how markers of Hindu identity are in fact the outgrowth of indentured labor on plantations in Trinidad itself. At the same time, some of the practices, like ritual services on Sundays, are part and parcel of living and working in a Christian colony, for Christian landlords, colonial powers, and the like. Patrick Eisenlohr (2006), in writing about the centrality of pilgrimage sites in Mauritius, also demonstrates how the history of a diasporic population, in this case Indian Hindus, come to shape diasporic identity expression. By making a pilgrimage to Lake Ganges, in Mauritius, Mauritian Hindus are doing two things to reaffirm their Indian (read Hindu)-ness. First, the act of pilgrimage is an important Indian religious practice, and there is a long history of pilgrimage in India. However, the pilgrimage to this lake also serves as a reenactment of the lake's original discovery by the Hindu forefathers who originally moved to Mauritius in the 19th

century. So, here, pilgrimage serves to both link modern Hindus with India and with the past in Mauritius, expressing both an Indian, and an Indo-Mauritian identity. At the same time, Lake Ganges is not a traditional Hindu pilgrimage site, demonstrating the ways in which tradition and innovation can interact to connect the past with the present, and the present with the past.

While the historical depth and fixity of "tradition" has been called into question and scholars have pointed to its continuously fluid nature (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Handler, 1988), there is little doubt that ideas of "tradition" still resonate within most populations worldwide. Here, Vertovec (2000) and Eisenlohr (2006) are pointing to both of these aspects of tradition simultaneously. They demonstrate both the invented nature of tradition, and its ability to galvanize social relationships. Practices that are in fact very recent in their historical age are presented as old, or even timeless. In some cases, these practices link up neatly with existing practices in that context (Sunday services at the Hindu temples in Trinidad), while in others, they link up neatly with practices in the "homeland" (pilgrimage for Hindus in both Mauritius and India). Sikhs in Woolgoolga similarly hold weekly services on Sundays, something that is also regularly done throughout the diaspora. In Punjab, gurdwaras are open all day every day, and there is regularly Kirtan and Bani being performed. While the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in Woolgoolga is open every day, there is rarely anyone there, and there is no Kirtan being performed unless there is a special event. This practice of Sunday service could be discussed as "invented tradition," but it could just as easily be identified as the result of assimilation into a religious milieu that followed the rhythm of a Christian calendar. Either way, Sundays are days full of temple activity, both religious and social, in Woolgoolga. These activities are a central part of the process by which Sikhs express their collective, as well as their, individual identities.

2.2   SOUTH ASIAN OR SIKH DIASPORA

n trying to argue that diaspora is a useful analytic tool, the next relevant question to ask is how to define diasporas that have roots in South Asia, and how to best understand their origins. Koshy (2008:3) argues the South Asian diaspora, which she identifies as a "neo-diaspora," has origins that are embedded in three "major world-historical forces that have shaped global modernity: capitalism, colonialism, and nationalism." By examining the historical development of the South Asian diaspora, I will demonstrate the role played by each of these forces, and how they are in fact inter-related. At the same time, I will demonstrate why talking about a "South Asian" diaspora can at times be problematic, and why my focus on a more narrowly defined Sikh diaspora makes sense in this context.

To fully understand the South Asian diaspora, one must first recognize that movement of South Asians out of South Asia is a very old social phenomenon, one that predates colonialism and the modern era (van der Veer, 1995). In other words, India was not closed to the world prior to the arrival of the Portuguese or the British, and people were moving from the subcontinent to other parts the world for a very long time. However, the degree of this movement has expanded exponentially in the past 150 years, and this movement can be directly attributed to capitalism and colonialism. For South Asia, capitalism and capitalist expansion is what brought the British to the door in the first place. The arrival of the British East India Company in India in the 17th century and the "company's" control of the sub-continent until the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 demonstrate the very capitalist nature of the colonial endeavor for its first two hundred years in India.

Richard Fox (1985) argues that the capitalist formulations of colonialism in India led directly to the formation of a distinctly Sikh identity in the Punjab, and that these policies also

led directly to migration out of Punjab by those very same Sikhs. Fox demonstrates how competing notions of colonialism in India changed the political economy of the Punjab in several ways. First, colonialism was supposed to be profitable, so the idea of "colonialism on the cheap," or colonialism with little internal investment and a great deal of productive output was desired. However, the idea of colonies being self-sufficient required some degree of infrastructural investment. The result of these competing ideologies in Punjab, according to Fox, was the controlling of land distribution in east Punjab, the development of the canal colonies in central Punjab, and the favoritism by the British of Sikhs for military and police recruitment. This last factor resulted from the Sikhs having been seen loyal during the Sepoy Mutiny. They were classified as a "martial race" after the British had difficulty defeating them to annex the Punjab in 1848, and this classification positioned them to be highly recruited for military purposes. The result was a deployment of those Sikh soldiers throughout the Empire, exposing them to opportunities around the globe. Thus, those Sikhs who could acquire land from the British migrated internally, and those who could not migrated internationally.

Similarly, labor needs created by expanding capitalist markets led to the importation of Indian indentured labor into the sugar plantations of Mauritius (Eisenlohr, 2004; 2006) and Trinidad (Kahn, 2004; Mushisinghe, 2002; Vertovec, 2000), and to work on the railways and as civil servants in East Africa (Dusenbury, 1997; van der Veer, 2002). Thus, it is quite evident in the South Asian context that colonialism, in collusion with capitalism, created the early roots of the South Asian diaspora. As a result of labor dispersal, and military service, South Asians found themselves in almost every corner of the British Empire, including Hong Kong, Singapore, Fiji, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius, Trinidad, Suriname, Australia, New Zealand and even Canada by the beginning of the 20th century. Equally noteworthy is that there is regional

difference in the avenues utilized for migration by South Asians. Thus, while Sikhs used the military and the police as mechanisms for migration, or at the very least as a means for discovering opportunity abroad, they were not heavily recruited as indentured labor in places like Mauritius and Trinidad. At the same time, Sikhs did pursue work on the railways in Uganda, and in the lumber industry in North America. So while capitalism presented migratory opportunity, different populations explored different avenues with that world system.

Nationalism played a role in South Asia's diaspora for a number of reasons. First, as van der Veer (1995, 2001) rightly points out, colonialism is by its very nature a nationalist project. The expansion of colonial powers can be seen as economic, and for obvious reasons, but those reasons cannot be separated from nationalist aspirations of global dominance. Another important point made by van der Veer (2001) is that colonialism was not uni-dimensional, and colonial presence was not only about domination. Nationalism in India developed as both a reaction to, and a result of, the presence of the British on Indian soil. van der Veer identifies Gandhi's own transformation into a nationalist leader as the direct result of his own transnational experiences in London and in South Africa. Similarly, Jurgensmeyer (1979) identifies racism against Indians in Canada and the United States, and Britain's refusal to act in support of British subjects because they were Indian, as critical factors in the rise of the Ghadar movement, an early form of Indian Nationalism that developed first in the Pacific Northwest of North America. Verne Dusenbury (1995) uses the Ghadar case to support his own claims that Sikh nationalism, in the form of the Khalsitani movement, is just another form of nationalism growing out of political marginalization, this time the marginalization of Sikhs in Canada at the end of the 20th century. Finally, the expulsion of all Asians from Uganda in the 1970s can be seen as an expression of Ugandan Nationalism that linked the land with Africans, and not imported colonial agents from

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South Asia. The fact that the displaced Indians moved largely to England, rather than returning to India, speaks to another aspect of diaspora altogether (Oonk, 2007).

Finally, post-World War II immigration to the west from South Asia can again been analyzed through a lens of capitalism and colonialism. Following the collapse of colonialism in India, and the withdrawal of the British from the sub-continent in 1947, South Asian migration continued to link Britain and India, as well as India and other parts of the former Empire. The partition of the sub-continent led to a massive displacement of nearly 12 million people, some of whom eventually left India in search of economic livelihood (Butalia, 2000). British labor needs following World War II also drew in South Asian immigrants in large numbers (Helweg, 1986; Hall, 2002).   Similarly, migration to Canada and Australia was made imaginable by their own historic links to the British Empire. America's own changes in immigration policies have been largely attributed to labor needs, especially in the form of college educated professionals (Tatla, 1999).

Axel (2001) argues that the partition of Punjab, and the creation of India and Pakistan allowed for the imagining of a Sikh homeland, one that later was attempted through force during the Khalistani movement on the 1980s and 1990s. Axel states that partitioning the Punjab, when first suggested, was met with a demand by Sikh political and religious leaders for a Sikh buffer state, between India and Pakistan. Though it was rejected, India and Pakistan were created, opening the imaginative space for an eventual Sikh state. The name 'Khalistan' can actually be traced to this period. I will return to issues surrounding the Khalistani movement in a later section of this chapter.

What makes looking at the Sikh diaspora as something separable and separate from a larger South Asian diaspora possible is the role that a unique identity and a unique history play in

the constitution of this diasporic form. While British Colonialism in India opened many doors for Indians to migrate outward from the subcontinent, the factors that encourage such mobility were different for different segments of the Indian population, and for different regions of British India. The reasons and motivations for Indian migration to Mauritius or Trinidad as indentured labor are different from the factors that motivated Sikhs to migrate out of Punjab (Eisenlohr, 2006; Fox, 1985, Kahn, 2004; Tatla, 1999). British involvement in the political economy of Punjab created opportunities for Sikhs that were not available to others, especially the disproportionate recruitment for military service. There have been some scholars who have raised the question about how much migration out of Punjab during the latter half of the 19th century can be called Sikh migration, arguing that religious identity was much more fluid during this period that it was in periods that followed (Leonard, 1989; McLeod, 1989; Oberoi, 1994). But if religious identity did become consolidated in Punjab in the early part of the 20th century, due to religious reform and British intervention (Barrier, 1967, 1968; Jones, 1968; 1973), it also became consolidated in the diaspora, and contemporary Sikh populations see those early Punjabi migrants as part of their own diaspora "origin" story.

2.3   MASCULINTY, VICTIMHOOD OR ORIGINS?

Brian Keith Axel's (2001) book, *A Nation's Tortured Body*, is one of the most comprehensive attempts to make sense of a contemporary Sikh identity as filtered through the politics of identity as it relates to history, movement, and the Khalistani militancy, paying particular attention to the role of the internet as a site for subject formulation. Particular attention is paid in this analysis to the role played by images of victimhood which Axel sites as an

important constitutive element of contemporary Sikh identity. Axel sites the surrender of Maharaja Duleep Singh to the British, and his ensuing exile in Britain as member of Queen Victoria's court, as a point of origin for Sikh victimhood. He argues that a portrait of the Maharaja, commissioned by the Queen, and painted by Franz Winterhalter, in 1854, and the subsequent surrendering of the Koh-i-noor diamond to Victoria are the final symbolic acts of "absolute humiliation" that accompanied the loss of the Sikh Empire to the British Empire (Axel, 2001:41). This portrait, of the young Maharaja at the age of 16, shows the former king in full regalia, complete with turban and sword, and wearing a broach that houses a portrait of Queen Victoria herself.

According to Axel, this portrait does two things at once. First, it demonstrates the transformation of the Maharaja from sovereign to subject, a transformation to subjecthood felt by all Sikhs in the Punjab. At the same time, he argues that the Maharaja's body becomes as symbolic site for this loss of autonomy, and positions the turban and the beard as now emblematic of this loss. Sikh subjects now become male Sikh subjects, and they become victims as they lose the ability to rule themselves. Instead, they have become incorporated into the British Empire, and their former king becomes a oriental curiosity in the court of Victoria (Axel, 2001).

Axel continues to argue that this Sikh subjectivity can also be found on the internet, in the form of martyrdom photos that became common during and after the Khalistani movement. He argues that formal portraits, and photos of bodies riddled with bullets both act to evoke this notion as Sikhs as victims, while simultaneously positioning the meaning of "Sikh" firmly on the masculine side of the gender line. Turbans and beards signify suffering and victimhood. He positions the Maharaja's "glorious body" in juxtaposition to the Khalistani's "tortured body,"

stating that between the two kinds of images, and collective loss they act to represent, is a space where Sikh diasporic identity is produced.

Tony Ballantyne (2006), in his work on the Sikh diaspora, *Between Colonialism and Diaspora*, presents a compelling counterargument to Axel's analysis of the position of the Maharaja Duleep Singh in the larger imagination of diasporic Sikhs. Ballantyne argues that rather than being a symbol of loss, the Maharaja fills two other significant roles in the diasporic imagination, especially for British Sikhs of today. The first was that of anti-colonial political and military leader, based on his attempts to regain his throne later in life. Ballantyne cited the publication of several revisionist histories, written by Sikh scholars, that downplayed some aspects of the Maharaja's life (conversion to Christianity, his adaptation to a life of a rural British elite) and accentuated others (his resurrection of the Elven estate in Britain to glory, his attempts to raise an army to drive the British out of Punjab) to recast him as true hero of the Khalsa past. The other role was that of a point of origin for the British Sikh community. The Maharaja was the first Sikh to settle in Britain, something that became much more common in the post-Colonial era (Ballantyne, 2006). This point of origin then becomes a point of pride for British Sikhs, and also a source of validation for their own presence there. However, Ballantyne argues that the Maharaja's popularity does not translate to other parts of the diaspora, such as North America, where Duleep Singh does not enjoy much popularity. That being said, local understandings of the diaspora, and local claims of legitimacy remain very important locally. In Woolgoolga, many families have a "grandfather' story that positions a relative of theirs in Australia prior to federation, and the enactment of the White Australia immigration policy, a story that validates their continued presence in the country.

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My own research among Sikhs in Woolgoolga raises some questions about the extent that Khalistan, and the violent imagery surrounding it on the internet continue to shape the Sikh diasporic identity. It is clear that for some Australian Sikhs the events that led to the florescence of the Khalistani movement in the 1980s were also felt in regional New South Wales. Sikhs in Woolgoolga felt anger and outrage, and some turned to "baptism" and the *amritdhari*[3] identity as a way of expressing that emotion. Axel (2001) is right in arguing that the imagery surrounding the Sikh struggle for independence in Punjab focused very closely on the male body, and Mahmood (1996) points out the number of Sikhs who turned to the Khalsa identity during this time period did increase significantly. However, I found little to suggest that these themes continue to resonate in the area. Most Australian Sikhs old enough to remember the Khalistani era do not tend to support the argument that Sikhs need a sovereign state, and those too young to remember seem to lack a clear sense of what the Khalistanis were fighting for, or who they were fighting against.

Ballantyne (2006) also makes a significant contribution to how diaspora should be understood, arguing that too much of the literature on the Sikh diaspora focuses rather exclusively on either the history of colonialism in Punjab, or on the history of mobility out of Punjab, without out considering the two histories simultaneously. By considering these multiple histories, and recognizing that colony and metropole are intimately linked by these histories, Ballantyne argues that the relationship between Britain and Punjab not be thought of as one of encounter and control. He uses the metaphor of "webs of empire" to suggest that Punjab was "drawn into the institutions, markets, communication systems, and cultural networks that made

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[3] This identity is linked closely to the wearing of the 5 'K's, or the five outward signs of the faith. These include most prominently the unshorn hair, which is often accompanied by a turban by men, and the wearing of a ceremonial dagger.

up the empire" (Ballantyne, 2006:30). These webs of empire not only connect Punjab to Britain, and Britain to Punjab in complex and interesting ways, but it also connects Punjab to a host of other localities within the web, localities such as Australia. And Punjab's connections to Australia, facilitated by, and at times mitigated by the larger colonial system, in turn shaped the formation of a local Sikh diaspora that now exists in Woolgoolga, NSW.

2.4   NOSTALGIA, MEMORY AND THE DIASPORIC SUBLIME

John Campbell and Alan Rew (1999), in the edited volume *Identity and Affect*, argue for a more nuanced approach to identity and its significance in the lives of people on the ground. Stating that identity impacts social realities in a number of important ways, Campbell and Rew see the importance of issues such as emotion and affect being absent from much of the theorizing being done in the social sciences. In other words, identity is experienced by the individual at the conscious level of political and social action, but is also experienced at a more deep-seated emotional level, often as fear, anxiety, outrage, and guilt that may spawn from interaction with members of other groups. This charge has been taken up in the last decade, with affect moving to the center of some theoretical approaches to understanding identity and culture.

How does the anthropologist examine and explore the role of emotion and affect in the construction of cultural identities, particularly in a diasporic context? Appadurai's (1996) concept of *nostalgia* provides one way of addressing such concerns. Through an analysis of the interrelatedness of history, its representations in the present, and consumptive practices, Appadurai places nostalgia, real or imagined, at the center of these processes. Building on what Jameson (1989) has termed *nostalgia for the present*, Appadurai argues that nostalgia is

deliberately evoked through advertisements and media forms which glamorize products that are reflective of a time gone by, a time when life was better, simpler, kinder, etc. Appadurai points out that the target audiences of these ad campaigns have often never experienced that by-gone era, yet feel nostalgic about it nonetheless. He writes (1996:77):

> Such nostalgia, as far as mass marketing is concerned, does not principally involve the evocation of a sentiment to which consumers who really have lost something can respond. Rather, these forms of mass advertising teach consumers to miss things they have never lost (Halbwachs, 1980). That is they create experiences of duration, passage and loss that rewrite the lived histories of individuals, families, ethnic groups and classes.

He refers to this phenomenon as "imagined nostalgia," and while his application is specific to practices of material consumption, I would argue that this form of nostalgia is also applicable to the consumption of ideas and memories, and the emotional responses they elicit, all of which combine to help shape identity. These memories can be individual and experiential, like a childhood vacation (and here I am thinking of a Sikh travelling to Punjab), or can be memories at the level of the community, such as local histories and local lore.

However, nostalgia mustn't be narrowly defined as only a sense of loss in the present for the positive aspects of days gone by. Rather, nostalgia can also develop around past trauma, whereby individuals relate personally to experiences that they may never have actually had. Traumatic historical events, and their presentation in the present can act to draw emotional links between the past and the present, and between the individual and the group. Through this nostalgia for trauma, these past events become more than collective memories, but rather are incorporated emotionally into the experience of group identity in the present.

In order to bridge the distance between two seemingly divergent concepts, nostalgia and trauma, let us now turn to Axel's notion of the *diasporic sublime*. According to Axel, the diasporic sublime is a process whereby diasporic subjects are constituted by "an eruption of what has not been lived into a moment that comes to be lived" (2005:128). By focusing on the intersection of a tradition of martyrdom in Sikhism with the new and emergent technologies of the Internet, Axel argues that much of the literature on diaspora places too much emphasis on the imagination, and on experience, at the expense of those aspects of diasporic identity formation that he describes as *inexperiencable* and *unimaginable* (ibid). In exploring the work of Walter Benjamin and Immanuel Kant, Axel attempts to place the Internet within the process of diasporic subject formation, while positioning it to the realm of *information* technology. Citing Benjamin's claim that information and experience stand in opposition to one another, he writes of a paralysis of the imagination resulting from information consumption. Thus, newspapers, and by extension the Internet, "constitute the domain of non-experience as a transcendental category" (Axel, 2005:142). Put differently, the Internet is a domain where the "not-lived" can intrude, or at least impinge upon the "lived." For Axel, it is in this domain that martyrdom, past and present, contemporary ethnic conflict in Punjab, and Sikh identity politics become interwoven and experienced as the diasporic sublime.

The diasporic mediascape, typified by the Internet, opens a door through which nostalgia for past trauma, and the emotional responses it evoked in the present can be explored. Mediascapes refer to not only media representations, as found in television, film, print, and more recently on the Internet, but also to the range of possible interpretations available to the viewer of these media forms. As Appadurai says (1996: 35), "What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide…large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and

ethnoscapes to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed." Again, I would add that diasporic sublime is not limited only to internet consumption, or to the consumption of traumatic histories. Sikhs are exposed to stories of martyrdom and suffering from a very young age, in the histories of the gurus, and the age of heroes that follows the death of Guru Gobind Singh. They receive these stories at home, at the gurdwara, at Summer Khalsa Camps, and at many special events that dot the annual religious calendar. They receive these stories in coloring books, in martyrdom art hung in homes and in temples, and in songs sung by visiting *jathis*, travelling singing groups who retell Sikh history through dramatic song. And they receive these stories in the *gurbani* (prayer) and the *kirtan* (hymns) that is projected on the screen every Sunday morning at Gurdwara services.

However, the diasporic sublime should not be limited to only experiencing the inexperiencable that is trauma. Other aspects of a community's history can also fit in to the category of unimaginable, including stories of grandfathers living in packing sheds, and roaming the countryside on foot in search of work, or travelling to and from India on boats, trips that could take a very long time. Even stories about life in the villages of Punjab can and do seem unimaginable to the average Australian born Sikh, and it is still these stories that shape their history, and their sense of belonging in the nation of their birth. It is how these (un)imaginable histories, histories of trauma and histories of the mundane are understood that shapes cross generational differences in understanding Punjab as a cultural homeland, and how those differences in turn shape a diasporic identity for Sikhs living in Australia, and elsewhere.

2.5 "KHALISTAN": TERRITORIAL, HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL ORIGINS

The idea of Khalistan ("land of the Khalsa") gained international prominence in the 1980s when Sikh militant groups took up arms, and attempted to establish an independent Sikh nation-state in Indian Punjab. To fully understand the reasons why Sikhs were fighting for such a state, you can look back to the time of partition, or you can look to the early 1970s, when a Sikh in Britain took out a full page news paper ad demanding an independant Khalistan (Axel, 2001; Mahmood, 1996). But whatever the starting point, the culmination of the movement was thoroughly in the 1980s and 1990s, when terrorism and State sponsored anti-insurgent tactics dominated life in Punjab. Prior to the explosion of violence, however, there was a conflation of Sikh religious identity, Akali Dal political interests, and nationalist aspirations in certain segments of Punjab's population that resulted in the rise of what Jurgensmeyer (1994) calls "religious nationalism." I will spend the remainder of this chapter outlining the historical roots of Khalistani ethno-nationalism, within a framework of Indian politics, and a theoretical framework that link nationalism to territory, in this case, to the Punjab.

There is a great deal of literature attempting to make sense of nationalism as a phenomenon, linking it to the rise of industrial capitalism (Gellner, 1983), print capitalism (Anderson, 1991), or the "objectification of culture" (Handler, 1988). However, there is a general agreement that nationalism is, at its base, an expression of some symbolic or emotional link between a group of people and a geographic territory, regardless of whether or not that group maintains autonomy over the territory in question (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983; Handler, 1998; Isaac, 1975). When it comes to understanding ethno-nationalism, things become a bit less clear. Varshney (1993) rightly points out that nationalism should not be assumed to be

uncontested, and that various nationalisms can be found vying for ideological control inside any one geographically bound nation-state. In India, for instance, Varshney identifies three competing nationalisms, including secular nationalism, separatist nationalisms, and Hindu nationalism. Khalistan can be understood in terms of separatist nationalism, but one that closely links territory to religion *and* ethnicity. While the relationship between religion and ethnicity in the Sikh context may seem tenuous, linkages exist in discourse surrounding ideas of the Sikh *quam*, or nation, and its relationship with the territory of Punjab (Gupta, 1996; Tatla, 1999). Speaking to the degree of overlap between nationalism and ethnicity, particularly regarding linkages to territory, Robin Jeffrey (1994:5) writes, "Where an 'ethnic group' ends and a 'nation' begins is one of the smouldering questions of the twentieth century, and in Punjab in the 1980s, it burns." However, it is important to keep in mind that this burning question is not as timeless as the discourse might indicate, and the interchangeability of the terms *quam* and *nation* might not be any older than the emergence of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Tulley and Jacob, 1986), nor might the translation from Persian to English be wholly accurate (McLeod, 2000).

In order to understand the roots of the Khalistani movement, and its violent manifestation in the 1980s, it is important to examine the relationship between territory and people, and the implications of that relationship for ethno-nationalist struggles. Liisa Malkki has offered the phrase "the national order of things" (1992, 1995) to emphasize the degree to which "nation-ness," and particularly the linkage between nation and territory have become naturalized in contemporary geo-political discourse. So widespread is the acceptance of nationhood and nationality, that Gellner (1983:6) writes, "Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but is has now come to appear as such."

Nowhere is the linkage between nation and territory made more explicit then in the map, the very existence of which fosters, and is fostered by, notions of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991). At the same time, the map comes to symbolize the nation, or the nation state (Radcliffe, 2001). Thus, there is a circular linkage, whereby the nation is imagined cartographically, and in turn symbolized through the cartographic image. However, not all claims to territory remain uncontested, and not all nations achieve control of the territories to which they lay claim (Gellner, 1983; Handler, 1988). In the case of Punjab, the Sikh community has strong historical and emotional ties to the land. Punjab is the birthplace of the religion's founder, Guru Nanak, and is considered to be the birthplace of Sikhism itself. Yet, the territorial definition of Punjab has undergone vast changes over the past few centuries, and a contemporary map of present day Punjab would show very little similarity to one drawn even sixty years ago. Recent truncation of territory in Punjab was the result of a series of maneuvers aimed at establishing a stable political position for Sikhs in the newly formed Indian union, while increasing the degree of autonomy of Sikhs in Punjab (Chadda, 1997; Doel, 2000; Gupta, 1996; Tan and Kudaisya, 2000). In the end, many of these attempts at maintaining territorial unity, or political autonomy, in the shifting landscape that is Punjab, had direct impact on the flowering of tensions, militancy, and ultimately widespread violence.

2.5.1   Origins of Territorial Linkage

Sikhism's link to Punjab can be traced back to the birth of the religion's founder, Guru Nanak. Born near Lahore in the late 15th century, in what is now Pakistan, Nanak traveled extensively through the region, spreading his teachings. Temples, or *gurdwaras*, were built commemorating important places and events that marked his travels (Mahmood, 1996). Similarly, the other

living gurus lived and traveled the Punjabi countryside, attracting followers, and establishing significant shrines, and even cities, that have become the focal points of the Sikh world[4]. Some of these sites, most particularly Amritsar and its "Golden Temple," and Anandpur Sahib, have become highly symbolic of both Sikh history, and more contemporary Sikh struggles. In a sense, the landscape acts as a living religious history for the Sikhs, a three dimensional architectural reminder of the link between the history of the faith and the land itself.

The century following the death of Guru Gobind Singh was one marked by conflict, ongoing battles to fill the power void in Punjab, left behind by the collapse of the Mughal Empire, and also marked by the emergence of a tradition of Martyrdom in Sikhism. That same century marked the emergence of a Sikh Empire. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the "Lion of Punjab," managed late in the 18th century to accomplish what no Sikh before or after him could do; he unified Punjab under Sikh rule. Much of Punjab was already controlled by various Sikh leaders prior to Ranjit Singh's ascension to power. Still, it was under the military and political leadership of the Maharaja that power in the region was consolidated, Afghan strongholds were overrun, and territorial expansion of the Sikhs reached beyond Punjab (Grewel, 1998[5]), creating a "Sikh Empire" representing a 'Golden Age' of Sikh autonomy in the region (Axel, 2001; Grewel, 1998; Mahmood, 1996). The Sikh Empire, however, was held together largely by the political shrewdness and charismatic personality of its founder, and it took exactly ten years following the death of Ranjit Singh for the empire to collapse, resulting in the annexation of Punjab by the British (Grewel, 1998, Mahmood, 1996). Maharaja Duleep Singh, at the age of 10 or 11, accepted defeat to the British in 1849. The degree to which he ever controlled the region is

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[4] For an extensive discussion of Sikh history, see Grewel 1998 and Singh, 1999.
[5] For a thorough discussion of the rise of Ranjit Singh, see Grewel 1998, chapter 6.

questionable, as there were internal struggles within the Empire's military leadership for control of the polity from the time of Ranjit Singh's death (Grewel, 1998).

2.5.2   Political Influences: From Azad Punjab to Punjabi Suba

As it became clear that the British were leaving India, and that Muslims were likely to receive the concession for Pakistan, Sikh political leadership found themselves in a precarious position. Sikhs were a minority in Punjab, and a relatively dispersed one at that. Recognizing that they would have little political sway in either an India or a Pakistan, the Akali Dal[6] leadership, engaged in a series of maneuvers to improve their position when the British did pull out of India.[7] The first significant solution offered by the Akali leadership was Azad Punjab, or "Free Punjab" (Axel, 2001; Grewel, 1998; Tan and Kudaisya, 2000). Originally suggested in 1931, it wasn't until 1943 that the Akali Dal began to actively support redrawing Punjab's borders and conceding some Muslim dominated regions in the west to Pakistan in order to create an independent state of Punjab, where no one group was an overwhelming majority. Rather than being a Sikh state, Azad Punjab would consist of significant Hindu and Muslim populations (40% each) with a Sikh swing vote of 20%, thereby forcing a balance of power that ultimately had to placate the Sikh community (Tan and Kudaisya, 2000:106-7). However, outside of Akali circles, nobody gave the proposal much consideration.

Next, the Akali Dal proposed a separate Sikh state, to be called Sikhistan, or Khalistan. The Sikh political leaders did not expect the proposal for the creation of a separate state, consisting of

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[6] The Shiromani Akali Dal is a Sikh based political party that emerged during the Gurdwara Reform movement of the 1920s, and remains fairly influential in Punjab today. The Akali Dal, however, is highly factionalized, and can not be thought of as a single unified political party.
[7] While I will only touch upon a few of the major propositions, a complete discussion of the political climate in the Punjab leading up to partition can be found in Tan and Kudaisya, 2000.

those parts of Punjab in which the Sikh population was dominant, to be taken seriously, and it was not (Axel, 2001; Gupta, 1996; Mahmood, 1996). Tan and Kudaisya (2000:112) write, "What the Sikh leaders really wanted was to impress upon the British their fear of being subjected to a 'Muslim Raj,' and to emphasize their need for sufficient representation in a post-independent government within the Punjab." Though the proposition for Khalistan showed little promise at the time of independence, and was largely ignored by the British, the Congress, and the Muslim League, the idea of a homeland for the Sikhs continued to resonate in the Sikh imagination, both in India, and abroad (Axel, 2001; Mahmood, 1996; Tatla, 1999). According to Axel (2001:88), "This unrealized territory may be understood as a locality that a history of colonial rule made possible to imagine, and even measure, but impossible to institute."

In the end, the partition of the sub-continent was agreed upon, and preparations were made to determine the dividing line. It was clear that Punjab was going to be split between India and Pakistan. Though Sikh political leadership had initially requested partition, they feared the results of such a division might prove to be unfavorable. A great deal of political posturing preceded the partition of Punjab, with Sikh leaders attempting to influence where the line would be drawn, what properties and shrines would remain in India, and ultimately how to deal with the potential transfer of populations (Brass, 1993; Tan and Kudaisya, 2000). Also, there is evidence to indicate that the Akalis were preparing to use violence to make room for incoming Sikhs populations from the Pakistani side of the Radcliffe Award (Tan and Kudaisya, 2000: 120[8]; Brass, 2000).

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[8] Tan and Kudaisya state that British intelligence collected in the summer of 1947 implicated Sikh leadership in organizing violence, blowing up trains and canals in Pakistan, and even plotting to assassinate Jinnah. Master Tara Singh, the head of the Akali Dal was implicated in some of these plots.

With the partition of the sub-continent, and the creation of India and Pakistan, the world witnessed an unprecedented level of displacement and violence, as Sikhs and Hindus fled for India, and Muslims ran for Pakistan. While over 12 million people were displaced by partition, more than 10 million of those people crossed the new border dividing the Punjab. Though estimates vary widely, a death toll of around one million people is generally accepted (Brass, 2003; Butalia, 2000:1).[9] In Delhi, the population nearly doubled in the ten years between 1941 and 1951, with a majority of that population arriving from West Punjab after Partition (Gupta, 1996). Important Sikh shrines, including the birthplace of Guru Nanak, fell on the Pakistani side of the border, and vast tracks of Sikh owned agricultural land were abandoned during the violence (Doel, 2000; Mahmood, 1996; Wallace, 1986). From the Sikh perspective, partition was a traumatic event, and one that remains poignant today.

Partition altered Punjab in its geographical shape and its demographic make-up. And the Akalis' worst fears were realized; they remained a minority in Punjab, but without the third party (the Muslims) to balance the power (Tan and Kudaisya, 2000). In 1951, at the time of India's first census, Sikhs were about 35% percent of Punjab's population, while Hindus were a substantial 62 % majority (Deol, 2000; Singh, 2000). It is important to note that most of the Sikhs in India (close to 80%) lived in Punjab, raising concerns among Sikhs about representation at both the state and national levels (Mahmood, 1996). These concerns were addressed by the Akali Dal in the form of a demand for *Punjabi Suba*, or a Punjabi-speaking state.

In 1953, the States Reorganization Committee was established to re-map India's states along linguistic lines (Chadda, 1997; Tan and Kudaisya, 2000). The Akali Dal was quick to approach the committee, demanding a state defined by the Punjabi language. They argued many

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[9] British estimates in 1947 were around 200,000 while India's government claimed 2 million dead. The actually number will likely never be known. For detailed accounts of the event of Partition, see Butalia, 2000.

of the Hindus in Punjab, feeling pressure from the Arya Samaj (a Hindu reform movement), had reported Hindi as their mother tongue, rather than Punjabi (Doel, 2000; Mahmood, 1996). The committee rejected the proposal for a Punjabi speaking state, citing a lack of popular support, while questioning the degree to which Punjabi is in fact a distinct language (Doel, 2000; Singh, 2000). According to Doel (2000:94), it was not so much the rejection of the Punjabi state, but the dismissal of the Punjabi language that angered and ultimately mobilized Sikhs. The result was a decade long agitation by the Akali leadership, demanding that their proposal for a Punjabi speaking state be taken seriously. This often put the Akali Dal at odds with the Congress Party, and created a divide between Hindus and Sikhs along both religious and linguistic lines. Throughout the years of agitation and protest, over 25,000 Sikhs were arrested, and in-fighting within the Akali Dal led to the deposing of Master Tara Singh from a position of leadership (Doel, 2000). However, a shift in India's approach to the Punjabi Suba demand followed the death of Nehru. On November 1st, 1966, Punjabi Suba was conceded when Indira Gandhi declared that the state's borders would be redrawn, and a new state of Punjab would include major concentrations of Punjabi speaking, and thus Sikh peoples (Axel, 2001; Singh, 2000).

Like partition before it, the Punjab State Reorganization Act divided the territory, this time into three parts (Deol, 2000; Mahmood, 1996). Hindu majority areas, under the category of 'Hindi speaking,' were separated off, with the southwestern regions forming the new state of Haryana, while parts of the northwest were transferred to Himachal Pradesh. The remainder formed the new state of Punjab, with a Sikh majority of about 60 percent, again described for official purposes as a "Punjabi speaking" majority (Mahmood, 1996; Singh, 2000). Gurharpal Singh (2000: 90-91) writes, "…a form of 'Sikh homeland' had eventually been realized. But the demarcation of boundaries between the new and old state left a bitter legacy that provided the

basis of future disputes between Punjab and Haryana and Punjab and the centre." In other words, the redrawing of Punjab in the 1960s created as many problems as it solved, and the Khalistani movement of the 1980s grew partially out these ongoing disputes. In particular, there has been continuous tension over the control of river waters, over pockets of Sikh populations not included in the new Punjab, and over the sharing of the state capital of Chandigarh (Chadda, 1997; Mahmood, 1996; Singh, 2000).

2.5.3   Political Influences: From Azad Punjab to Punjabi Suba

Religion and politics have long been interwoven for the Sikh community. When the fifth guru, Guru Arjun was martyred by Mughal rulers at the beginning of the 17th century, his son Hargobind assumed the guruship, donning two swords, which he named *miri* and *piri* (Chadda, 1997; Mahmood, 1996; McLeod, 2000). The first sword, miri, represented the temporal authority of the guru, while the second, piri, symbolized his spiritual authority. Today the two swords are represented in the *Khanda*, a symbol closely associated with Sikhism, and with Khalistan. One hundred years after the death of Guru Arjun, Guru Gobind Singh divided the twin authorities of the guruship, installing the scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib, as spiritual authority, while installing the entire Sikh community, or *Panth*, as worldly and political authority (Grewel, 1998; Mahmood, 1996). Thus, the two institutions of Guru Granth and Guru Panth represent a broadened vision of miri and piri, where spiritual and temporal power are separated, but remain closely linked.

I raise this here because there has been a tendency to discuss the Khalistani movement in terms of its religious dimensions, without equal attention being paid to other factors. For instance, Madan (1991) discusses Khalistan as fundamentalism, a term that might not translate

well into this context. Similarly, though Mark Juergensmeyer (1994) has offered the concept of *religious nationalism* as an alternative to concepts like fundamentalism, he continues to stress the role that religion plays in violent conflict around the globe, stating, "I look for explanations in the current forces of geopolitics and in the strain of violence that may be found at the deepest levels of religious imagination" (2003:6). Although he does concede that other factors can contribute to the rise of terrorist violence, he claims, "more often it has been religion…that has incited violence" (ibid). In the end, to single out any one factor as causal is to simplify the situation. While religion undoubtedly played an important role in the Khalistani movement, and the terrorism it inspired, to hold up religious antagonisms between Sikhs and Hindus as the primary catalyst behind a decade of violence is to overlook the interaction of other factors.

Still, religious symbolism and religious rhetoric did play a role in the rise of the Khalistani movement, and many of the fiery calls-to-arms by militant leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale were couched in religious terms. Madan (1991) points out that though Bhindranwale was a religious leader, a majority of his speeches focused not on scripture, but on issues regarding the uniqueness of Sikh religious identity. In addition, Bhindranwale regularly asserted that Sikhs in India were being made "slaves to Hindus," pointing to the central government's failure to adopt the Anandpur Sahib Resolution[10] passed by the Akali Dal in 1973 (Tully and Jacob, 1986). He called on all Sikhs to undergo initiation to the Khalsa, and demanded a 'return' to the wearing of the five Ks, or outward signs of faith, which are rooted in

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[10] The Anandpur Sahib Resolution, originally passed in 1973, but revised numerous times after that, mixes political demands with religious symbolism and language. Anandpur Sahib is the alleged location of Guru Gobind Singh's original call to the Khalsa in 1699, for instance. Also important is the decision of the Akalis to use language describing the Sikhs as a nation, and the Akali Dal's primary mission being for the betterment of that nation (Tatla, 1998). Thus, while the document is calling for more autonomy within India, the language implies something very different.

the symbolism of militarism and preparedness for battle[11] (Mahmood, 1996). At the same time, Bhindranwale began to use the term *quam*, to refer to the Sikh community, rather than *Panth*. While *panth* loosely translates to mean "way" or "path," and refers to a system of religious beliefs, in the Sikh context the term has been capitalized, and is used to refer to the community of believers. *Quam*, which means "nation," draws on an entirely different set of ideas, linking people to territory, and insinuating the right to sovereignty over the soil (Axel, 2001; Mahmood, 1996; McLeod, 2000).

In 1984, two major events occurred that seemed to play into the hands of those Sikhs favoring Khalistan. The first was Operation Blue Star[12], and the literal and symbolic destruction and violence that came with it. The Akal Takht, the temporal throne built by Guru Hargobind, was reduced to rubble by tank shelling during the military operation. Also, the Sikh Reference Library caught fire, and burned to the ground. Many Sikhs, militants and pilgrims alike, were killed in the three day operation (Mahmood, 1996; Tully and Jacob, 1986). The second major event was the anti-Sikh Riots throughout North India, though largely concentrated in New Delhi, following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi[13]. Though these events have not been thoroughly discussed here, it is worth noting that the loss of life associated with them, as well as the symbolism and humiliation that emerged in the absence of any real justice in the months and years that followed, forced many Sikhs throughout India, and the world, to rethink their position within the Indian nation-state (Mahmood, 1996). Kushwant Singh wrote in 1993:

> Things have never been the same again. Sikhs who had nothing to do with
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> Bhindranwale or politics felt deeply humiliated. Bhindranwale was killed

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[11] Later, these same symbols would be inverted by India's police and military personnel during routine torture sessions throughout Punjab.
[12] For a thorough discussion of the events of Operation Bluestar, see Tully and Jacobsh, (1986).
[13] For a thorough treatment of the riots in New Delhi, see (Tambiah , 1996).

which gave him a halo of martyrdom he did not deserve…Bhindranwale's

ghost still stalks the Punjab countryside disturbing the sleep the Punjabi Hindu

and the conscience of the Punjabi Sikh" (Quoted in Mahmood, 1996:95).

It is important to keep in mind that the events of 1984 did not occur in a vacuum, but were rather the culmination of a great deal of political posturing on all sides. Ultimately, much of the maneuvering by politicians in Punjab, particularly the Akali Dal, centered on imaginative linkages between territory and people, and defining a space where Sikhs felt their concerns would get adequate representation. But rather then remaining within the discourse of the Indian nation-state, and its ideas of secular unity, these linkages of people and territory fused with past struggles, present grievances, and future aspirations to create a lasting struggle, not for representation, but for sovereignty in Punjab.

Ten years of fighting in Punjab, between militants and government forces followed the events of 1984, and the violence this created was widespread. Axel (2001) states the police deployment in Punjab during the 1990s was one of the highest per capita deployments in the world at that time. Terrorism was widespread, as was counter-insurgency tactics such as forced disappearance and state sponsored torture (Mahmood, 1996). Whether Sikhs on the ground were in favor of a Khalistan or not, it is hard to imagine that these years of fighting were not impactful for Sikhs, and their sense of identity. And almost 20 years after the Khalistani movement was official defeated in Punjab, these events continue to resonate on some level in the diaspora. The question then becomes how important is the connection between Sikhism and the territory that is Punjab in today's diaspora?

It is worth noting that Khalistan was impactful in Australia in many ways, and the Sikhs in Woolgoolga were not immune. Community members mobilized, and became active in protests

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against the Indian government outside consulates in Canberra and elsewhere. Some Sikhs turned to religion, and took steps to better understand what "being a good Sikh" meant. Many took amrit, and became "baptized" Sikhs. But the degree that this independence movement continues to shape Sikh subjectivity in Australia is not as clear. Older Sikhs who lived through the era have opinions about Khalistan and its necessity that seem counter to Axel's (2001) notions of victimhood as a defining characteristic of being Sikh. At the same time, Sikhs in Australia have been victims, to some degree, of racist immigration policies, and attitudes on the ground about migrants in general. While policy has changed over time, attitudes of "everyday" Australians have been slower to adapt to the changing make-up of the Australian nation, and these attitudes are themselves changing unevenly, depending on location. And in regional New South Wales, the presence of a significant "migrant" population allows for some of these attitudes to be analyzed.

2.6   CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have outlined a theoretical approach to understanding diaspora, and diaspora's relationship to a cultural homeland that will demonstrate the variability that can exist in any given community, let alone in the global diaspora as a whole. I have argued that studies of diaspora that assume a relationship between people and their "homeland" are not considering the whole picture. But there are other ways to approach diaspora, including considering concurrent histories of colonialism and mobility, and taking into consideration some of the emotional underpinnings of diasporic identity.

In the next chapter, I will use Ballantyne's notion of "webs of empire" to analyze the relationship between Indian, and more specifically Sikh migration to Australia, while also considering Auatralia's own history of immigration policy and restriction. In later chapters, I will investigate the roles that emotion, nostalgia and the diasporic sublime play in the construction of religious and ethnic identity for one population of diasporic Sikhs, arguing that these factors lead to divergent understandings of Punjab, and it position within the Sikh diasporic imagination.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: MIGRATION TO *TELIA* - SIKHS IN "WHITE

AUSTRALIA"

January 26th is Australia Day. It commemorates the day that Britain's "First Fleet," a group of 11 ships loaded with convicts, first arrived in Sydney Harbor, and claimed the area for the Crown (MacLeod, 2006). Like the Fourth of July in America, this is a midsummer holiday celebrated with hitting the beach, having a barbeque, and drinking beer. There are Australian flags everywhere, and on everyone, with tee shirts, bathing suits and even temporary tattoos all displaying the Southern Cross. January 26th is also Republic Day in India; a day spent commemorating the day that the Indian Constitution went into effect in 1950. In Woolgoolga, NSW, both days are celebrated simultaneously- one by the wider Australian community, and the other by the Sikh community living in town. While Aussies gather at the beach, or at the Pub, the Sikhs gather in the Centennial Reserve, a large grassy field in the middle of town, the sight of the Rugby and Cricket fields, and common grazing area for a mob of local kangaroos. There, the younger Sikhs play cricket or Kabbadi, a traditional Punjabi wrestling game, while older Sikhs sit in lawn chairs in the shade of the trees that surround the reserve. The teams consist of local Sikh sports club on one side, and a similar club from Brisbane on the other.

The fact that these concurrent celebrations happen annually is both interesting and instructive. On the one hand, you have Australia, a nation which makes claims to be a multicultural society, celebrating its very specifically British origins. Australia Day does not

have anything to do with the federation of the colonies in to a single nation in 1901, but rather with the arrival of the first load of convicts under a British flag in 1788, and a ceremonious but hasty claiming of the land for Britain as a French scientific expedition neared Sydney Harbour (MacLeod, 2006: 17). Thus, you have a nation that seems to be celebrating an aspect of its past that is no longer a reality. Australia is no longer a "British" nation, and yet it is the arrival of the British that is commemorated as "Australia Day." Similarly, you have an Indian population, living in Australia, with roots specifically in Woolgoolga that are over 75 years old. And yet, on January 26th, they are celebrating Republic Day, and not Australia Day, doing things that hearken back to a past of their own that is no longer an accurate representation of their present.

In this chapter, I will attempt to construct two separate narratives, told along side of each other, in the same way that Australia Day and Republic Day are celebrated along side of one another in Woolgoolga. One narrative tells the story of Australian immigration policy, and the larger issues and debates that have shaped and continue to shape it. The other narrative is one of Indian and Sikh migration to Australia, and more specifically to Woolgoolga. These two stories are not actually separable, as they overlap both temporally and spatially. The kinds of debates that shaped Australia's immigration policy include debates about Indians, and their place in Australia. At the same time, the kinds of things that drew immigrants to Australia also drew Indians to Australia--opportunities for work, and a place to earn money to send home. But at the same time, the telling of these as two stories, and the tacking back and forth between them that this approach will allow for, will in fact illustrate their interrelatedness. It will demonstrate how Australian immigration policy responded to increasing numbers of non-European immigrants, and it will in turn show how Indians responded to these changes in policy.

3.1   IMMIGRATION PRIOR TO FEDERATION

From its inception as a colony in 1788, New South Wales attracted immigrants. And from its early stages, until 1901, the colony made its own immigration policy. Each colony in Australia maintained their own immigration policies, and some had a reputation for being more accepting of non-Europeans than others. As a result, the immigration histories of the colonies are not identical, nor are their demographic makeup. A brief overview of this era of immigration will demonstrate the differential attitudes toward non-Europeans in general, and Indians in particular. This history will also set the stage for the eventual arrival of Sikhs in Woolgoolga, for it is during this period just before federation that the earliest relatives of today's Woolgoolga Sikh community first set foot on Australian soil.

3.1.1   Australian Labor Needs

From its early days as a penal colony, and right up until modern day, there has been a persistent sense that the "empty" land of the continent needed to be filled. But while New South Wales' reputation as a convict colony made it less desirable as a point of migration in early 19th century Britain, the creation of other, newer colonies based on free migration began to attract more British Settlement by the middle of the century. James Jupp (2004: 61) writes, "Advocacy of pauper emigration did not improve Australia's reputation, and many rural [British] saw Poor Law assisted immigration as little better than transportation...The Australian economy could not prosper without extra labor, which was increasingly drawn to British cities or to North America. The problem was largely resolved by the gold rushes […]." As a set of British colonies, with a vision of becoming a British settler society, this lack of rural British enthusiasm for migration to

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Australia was problematic. It left the struggling colonies in need of labor, and found them looking elsewhere for it.

The need for labor was in constant competition with ideologies of race, and notions of population homogenization. While the premium was on white settlers, the preference was for British settlers. However, there were those who were in favor of importing labor from various locations outside of Europe, including India. As early as 1816, Indian laborers were imported to Sydney to assist as domestic servants to large NSW landholder William Browne (Jupp, 2001). During the first half of the 19th century, British subjects living in India occasionally relocated to Australia, bringing with them Indian servants and laborers. During what Jupp (2001) identifies as the first phase of Indian migration to Australia, immigrants from the subcontinent to the island continent were mostly men, and mostly served as laborers and domestic help. Early on, there was even the occasional Indian convict sent by the British colonial administration in India, although this was rare.

As late as 1890's, the government of South Australia considered creating a colony in the newly acquired Northern Territories, near Darwin, to be inhabited only by Tamils imported for their labor. The logic was that as "Orientals," or "Coolies," they were better suited for the extreme heat and humidity of the tropics, something White Europeans were not well suited for (Krisjansen, 2001; Elder, 2005). This idea that certain races were better suited for living and working in the tropics was fairly widespread in Europe at the time. Here, however, it is evident that Indian labor was preferred over Chinese labor. The reasons given in letters to the editor of local papers during that time simultaneously included ideas of Indians as hard workers who understood their place, unlike the "Celestials" who were always looking to expand their sphere of influence, as well as their total population in the area.

While getting capable workers into the largely uninhabited Northern Territory was a priority for the government of Western Australia, neighboring colonies saw the importation of Asian labor as severe threat to White labor concerns, particularly during the depression that gripped Australia during the last decade of the 19th century. Krisjansen (2001) cited numerous newspaper editorials expressing fear in Queensland of being overrun by Chinese laborers illegally crossing the border from the Northern Territories in search of work. While the fear likely outweighed the reality of the situation, the notion that the border of Queensland was lined with these Chinese hoards contributed to the seeming need for several inter-colonial conferences to be held on the subject of Asian labor. Several strategies emerged from these conferences, held during the latter half of the 1880's and the first half of the 1890's, but one adopted policy had a particularly long lasting effect. In 1896, three separate colonies had adopted a dictation test as means of limiting and controlling Asian immigration (Krisjansen, 2001). This dictation test, aimed at limiting the number of immigrants by making them demonstrate their knowledge of English, later became a benchmark of the White Australia Policy.

3.1.2 Australian Labor Needs

Discovery of gold in 1850's in Victoria and Queensland prompted widespread immigration to the continent. While immigrants from Britain "rushed" to the goldfields of Victoria, so did people from throughout Europe. Gold seekers came from Italy, Germany, France, Spain, Northern Europe, Poland, and even some from Mozambique and India (Elder, 2005). Not all groups of immigrants were met with the same degree of acceptance by their British counterparts, especially those who were already thinking of themselves as Australian. However, those who bore the brunt of hostility were the Chinese. While the British population was the largest

represented in the gold fields during this time (Jupp, 2004), the Chinese were the second most populace of the 'gold fossickers' (Elder, 2004).

The backlash against the Chinese and by extension all Asian immigrants was widespread, and felt at every level of Australian society. While there were riots happening in the various gold fields, specifically targeting Chinese miners, there was also an assault at the highest levels Australian Colonial government, where legislation was passed targeting only Chinese immigrants. Laws included a tax on Chinese arrivals, tariffs on travel beyond certain regions, and eventually a dictation test to prove fluency in English (Krisjansen, 2001; Elder, 2005). News papers were littered with anti-Asian editorials, and Asian villains began to appear in popular fiction (Walker, 2005). In what could be considered part of a global fear of the "yellow peril," Australia's concern with Asian immigration seemed to be more acute, likely due to the close proximity of the two continents. There existed for a long time a fear of an "invasion" from the north, either in the form of military action or in the form of sheer volume of immigrants. As Hage puts it, "Here Australia shares with countries such as White South Africa and Israel a fear of being 'swamped' by what is perceived as a surrounding hostile and uncivilized otherness" (2003: 52). It is this fear of being overrun which perpetuated exclusionary attitudes towards immigration in Australia through the 1970's, and which continues to inform anti-immigration sentiment in Australia today. For instance, post-World War II immigration schemes, with the begrudging support of labor unions, resulted in the promise of ten British immigrants for every "foreigner" allowed into the country (Elder, 2005; MacLeod, 2006; Rickard, 1996).

3.1.3   Indian and Anti-Asian Sentiment

Throughout the 19th century, and for much of the 20th century as well, Indian immigrants in Australia existed in a precarious position. As non-Whites from Asia, they were often lumped together with the Chinese, who were both feared and loathed. But as British subjects, they were more closely akin to Australians than many of the immigrant groups that entered the country with little or no resistance. In fact, there were occasions when the Colonial government in India spoke to the crown on behalf of Indians wishing to migrate to Australia, putting pressure on the Australian colonies from above (Jupp, 2001). Rashmere Bhatti, editor of a volume published about the Sikhs in Woolgoolga to commemorate 100 years of Federation (Bhatti and Dusenbury, 2001), said that some of the elder members of that community had expressed their pride in having been able to carry a British passport. And having a British passport did allow them certain latitudes not available to non-British, non-White immigrants, but it did not prevent people on the ground from distrusting them, or from complaining about their presence in Australia.

If the period from 1800-1860 marks the first phase of Indian migration to Australia (Jupp, 2001), it could be said that this phase saw relatively small numbers of Indians, many of whom returned to India as soon as their contract terms were up. There was very little, if any, permanent settlement. According to Jupp (ibid), the second phase of Indian migration, which spanned the years of 1861-1901, saw a shift in the kind of laborer who came, and saw a geographic concentration of migrants from Northern India, specifically from Punjab. Also, these were mostly Sikhs and Muslims, regardless of the Australian tendency to officially label them Afghan, Hindoo, or even Syrian (Jupp, 2001). Many of these immigrants, like those who had come before, were men, but they made their living as agricultural laborers and hawkers, travelling extensively through the Australian countryside selling their wares.

By the 1890's, many Indian merchants - called "hawkers" - had settled in the northern part of New South Wales, as well as in rural Victoria and Queensland. They began seeking employment in the agricultural sector, cutting sugar cane or digging potatoes. If they had been tolerated prior to this time, their settlement and obtaining work ruffled some feathers, and soon the court of public opinion began hear the case for curbing Indian immigration along with the restrictions placed on the Chinese. Objections to Indian immigration began being raised in earnest in the NSW parliament as early as 1890. In 1893, the premier of the colony warned of an "influx of Syrians, Indians, and other non-Europeans," as a possible source of "increasing annoyance and trouble" (Jupp, 2001:428). In 1895, the editor of the Richmond River Times wrote a critical editorial, complaining of the increasing presence of "Black and Turbaned heathens" in the Clarence and Richmond River Valleys (ibid:428). Around this time, the NSW parliament released data indicating there were a total of 521 'Hindoos' in the colony, with the most substantial concentration in Richmond[14]. Many of these men cut cane, and some even rented land to grow their own cane.

Indian immigration to Australia more closely resembled Indian immigration to the United States and Canada at this time than it did Indian immigration to other parts of the British Empire, like Mauritius and Trinidad. Firstly, Mauritius and Trinidad, where sugar cane labor was a paramount need, fulfilled those labor needs first through slavery, and later through Indian indentured labor (Eisenlohr, 2006; Khan, 2004). In addition, a majority of these laborers were of Hindu and Muslim backgrounds. Conversely, early Indian migrants heading for the New World, like many of those who migrated to Australia, were from Punjab, and a majority of them were Sikh. There has been some debate about how much these early migrant communities can be

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[14] Richmond and Clarence River Valleys are where many of the original Sikh settlers in Woolgoolga migrated internally from.

called Sikh, rather than simply Punjabi, due to the changing character of a "Sikh Identity" over the course of the 20th century (Leonard, 1989; McLeod, 1989). However, the first Sikh gurdwara was opened in Stockton California in 1915, indicating a significant Sikh presence there (Tatla, 1999). Many Sikh who migrated to North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries met with a similar welcome to those moving to Australia during this same time. Race riots, protests, and eventually restrictive immigration polices resulted in a decline in movement to these regions from Punjab (Tatla, 1999).

By 1901, there were a total of roughly 3000 Indians in all of Australia, with most of them living in New South Wales and Queensland (Jupp, 2001). With the passage of the White Australia Policy, immigration slowed to trickle, but those already in place were allowed to stay. Some did, while others chose to return to India. Still others, like many of the "grandfathers" of today's Woolgoolga Sikh population, travelled back and forth periodically, working in Australia to raise money, and returning to India to raise a family.

3.1.4 "Grandfather" Tales

1901 is the year that Australia became unified through federation, and it is the year that restrictive immigration policy moved from the jurisdiction of individual colonies to that of the state. It also remains a significant benchmark in the minds of several Australian Sikh families, as it is often noted in "origin" stories about ancestors and their first arrival on the continent. This point of origin is important as means for demonstrating the validity of their current presence in the area. The following quotes, taken from interviews I did while in Woolgoolga are illustrative:

> "My story is probably not too dissimilar from the other stories you have, from other
>
> members of the community. I am a third generation of Punjabis in Australia. My

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grandfather came to Australia about 110 years ago, in 1901…That was prior to the federation of Australia. As you know, with federation, immigration restriction policy came in, the so called 'White Australia Policy.' So, prior to that, you didn't require any visa. You had to have a passport, so if you had a British Passport, and Indians commonly did, you could just get on a ship and come to Australia." – Amarjit Singh

"My grandfather, my father's father, was the first person from our family to migrate here. He came from a village called Mulpur…its actually Malpur Ark, which gives us our surname Arkan. It was our village for centuries, it's where we come from…and the story goes that when he [my grandfather] came out, there was another gentleman of the village that was going to go, but had some reservations and didn't want to go. My grandfather said, look, I'll take the ticket, and we will work it out later on, so he did. And he grabbed the ticket, and he came out on a ship, working for the ship, I think it was with horses. And he came out, now…there are two conflicting dates. I have always thought it was 1900, but a little while ago they tell me it was 1895…I've always thought it was the first one, based on what I knew, but I think it was Rashmere [Bhatti], and her research, she found a passport that had 1895 on it." – Jogavar Arkan

As the above quotes indicate, many Sikh families in Woolgoolga identify a grandfather as the relative who first came over from India. Similarly, the date of this arrival is often positioned in time prior to passage of the Immigration Act of 1901 (de Lapervanche, 1984, Bhatti, 2001). They were here before Australia was "White Australia" This is an important distinction for several reasons. First, it positions their family, and by extension their community on the ground

in Australia before Australia came into existence. Therefore, they are just as Australian as anyone else who claims to be. They are in essence saying, 'My family has been here since New South Wales was just a colony.' This is a powerful claim for a non-European, non-White community to be able to make in multicultural Australia. Second, these dates put the families of today's Woolgoolga Sikh community on the ground in Australia, prior to the passage of the restrictive Immigration Act of 1901, an act that literally "grandfathered" Indians who were here prior to 1901. If they can't be accepted as fully Australian, because of their skin, their dress, their food, or their religion, then they could at least point to the grandfather clause of the White Australia Policy which justified and validated their being there. Finally, the fact that it was a grandfather who first arrived a long time ago allowed for the presence of three or four generations of the family to have lived in Australia, giving the family and the community a historical and generational depth that allowed more readily for the possibility that these people belong there, regardless of what they look like. Other scholars have encountered similar stories while gathering histories of the Woolgoolga Sikh Community (de Lapervanche, 1984, Bhatti, 2001).

3.2   FEDERATION AND 'WHITE AUSTRALIA'

In 1901, two major and not altogether unrelated events occurred. All of the individual colonies on the Australian continent came under one rule, in the form of a federated Australia, and a national immigration policy was adopted. While prior to federation, individual colonies made their own immigration policies, these policies were largely exclusive and favored British migrants in their own right. There were, however, ways around the strict immigration policies of

one colony by manipulating more lax policies of a neighbor. For instance, relaxed hawker licensing practices in Victoria led to widespread Indian involvement in the occupation, but hawkers wandered by their very nature (Jupp, 2001). And while federation was not popular across the board, it did unify various policies and controls, including that of immigration (Kingston, 1989; Fox, 2005).

One of the first acts passed by the newly formed Australian government was the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, commonly known as the White Australia Policy (Vasta, 2006). To say that this policy was forged in reaction to any one specific stress or concern would be to simplify things greatly. While there is ample evidence that fear of being overrun by immigrants from nearby Asian countries was a large part of the impetus for the Immigration Restriction Act, to point to only that would be to overlook other aspects of the Australian notion of what it meant to be Australian at that time. Notions of racial difference and racial superiority, ideas of Britishness, and the importance attached to it, and a sense of vulnerability both internal and external all played a role as well.

The Immigration Act of 1901, actually makes no mention of race as a determining factor for immigration to Australia. In fact, to actually talk about the White Australia Policy is a misnomer, for it is really a set of policies that work together to institutionalize exclusion based on a range of criteria, and do so in a way that could be defensible to an international community (Elder, 2005). The mechanism for exclusion was based on language and the use of a dictation test for any immigrant wanting to enter the country. While early forms of the dictation test, borrowed from White South Africa, used English as the test language, the White Australia policy broadened the test out to include any European Language, and later any "prescribed language" (MacLeod, 2006: 107). This allowance gave immigration officials a fair degree of power over

allowing for or rejecting one's entry to Australia. MacLeod (2006) writes about a young Irish woman whose was given a dictation test in Swedish, and was sent back to Ireland when she could not pass the exam. Thus, individual biases could come into play, and people's personal prejudices could impact the immigration status of anyone not deemed acceptable by those administering the test.

The Indian population in Australia did not change much in size over the first half of the 20th century. While the White Australia Policy, and its dictation test surely impacted who was allowed in from India, those who had come prior to 1901 could move somewhat freely between India and Australia, and many did. In 1922, Australian census data showed that there were about 2200 Indians on the continent. Between 1933 and 1947, that number hovered around 2100 (Jupp, 2001). Those who had remained in country had continued earning wages through agricultural labor, or through hawking, which would eventually become obsolete as the automobile grew in popularity and accessibility (ibid).

It was during this time period, following the passage of White Australia, and prior to the loosening of immigration restriction following World War II, that Sikhs began migrating south from the cane fields of the Clarence and Richmond River valleys in northern New South Wales to seek work on the banana plantations of the Coffs Coast, and specifically in Woolgoolga (Bhatti, 2001). As I was told by one young Sikh, "My grandfather, he came here around the mid 1930's. [He] started out working on a sugar cane farm …I am not exactly sure when, but they actually came to Woolgoolga, and bought a house with the money he had made. And my grandfather then decided to get into bananas. So ever since then, it's just been…work here." It was later confirmed for me that this grandfather was in fact the first Sikh to own property in Woolgoolga, and might have even been the first to work in bananas in the region. Bhatti (2001)

interviewed many local Sikhs who pointed to the late 1930's and early 1940's as a time when their families first arrived in the area, hearing there was favorable work in the banana fields. Thus, while the period of time between the passage of the Immigration Act of 1901 and the end of World War II saw little growth in the Indian community as a whole, it did see a great deal of internal migration, and a transition from hawking and agricultural labor to one more strictly of agricultural labor and land ownership.

Bhatti (2001:54) writes that during this time, Indians also earned the right to vote in 1925, and earned the right to a pension in 1926, both things which few if any Indians knew of, or took advantage of. Another concession fought for and won by the Indian Colonial government, but which saw little practical usage was a suspension of the dictation test for carriers of British Indian passports (de Lapervanche, 1984). de Laervache describes the involvement of the Indian Colonial government as the result of a petition from Indians in Australia, who felt they were being mistreated. Another concession earned through a similar fashion was the right for Indians to bring with them wives and children for six months at a time. According to de Lapervache (1984:57-58), in the 1911 census, only 30 Indian-born females were counted, whereas Indian-born men totaled 3116! So while Indian migration was not closed from an official standpoint, and concessions were given to keep internal peace within the Empire, there were few Indians on the ground aware of their ability to migrate, leading to a stasis regarding the number of Indians in Australia. This also demonstrates how Australian attitudes about race had to contend with policies and needs from British colonial governments. Another common theme in Bahtti's (2001) interviews was that there was little doubt that Indians were not allowed, by law, to work in the sugar cane fields, which were heavily unionized, and selective about union membership. At the same time, it was clear that Indians very much did work in the cane fields. While there was no

official ban on "colored" labor in the cane fields prior to federation, Queensland did enact such a ban in 1913 (de Lapervache, 1984). However, British passport holders were exempt as long as they could pass a required dictation test, similar to one needed for entry to the country. Again, as a result of the internal politics of Empire, Indians were able to gain exemption. According to de Lapervache, in 1914, over 1000 exemptions were issued for cane workers (1984). While the number of foreign born cane workers continued to be a controversial issue in Northern Queensland, by 1932, 43% of all cane cutters were "of foreign birth and unnaturalised" (ibid:68). Many of these cutters were Indian, and it was through these networks of sugar cane employment that Woolgoolga's earliest Sikh banana workers caught wind of the opportunities available on the Coffs Coast.

3.3   THE 'THIRD PHASE' OF INDIAN IMMIGRATION

If the first two "phases" of Indian migration took place prior to the passage of White Australia, the final one did not begin until the years following World War II, a time which saw the loosening of immigration restriction due to labor needs and fear of an empty continent (Jupp, 2001, Hage, 2003). This most recent, and ongoing phase is also marked by a much more diverse regional representation from the Indian subcontinent. If the second phase was primarily made up of people from the Punjab, current immigrants come from all over India.

This third phase of Indian migration is marked by a shift in the type of immigrant, and the kinds of employment they seek. Indian immigrants were often professional, educated Indians, who pursued careers in medicine, engineering and computer sciences. Many came to Australia for education and stayed on after to make a living. These were mostly proficient English

speakers, well adapted to Western life ways, and relatively homogenous in terms of class background (Jupp, 2001).

The original opening up of Indian migration began with the independence of India from British rule in 1947. Australia, as part of the British Commonwealth, opened its doors first to Indian born British citizens displaced by the changing of the guard, and then to Anglo-Indians, the children of mixed British and Indian heritage (Jupp, 2001; Blunt, 2005). Not only did these new immigration allowances open up a space in the national imagination for Indian migration, but it also opened up the very real possibility for Indians to make their way to Australia. However, it was not until the liberalization of migration in the form of multiculturalism that race questions on the census final dropped the distinction between Indian born European and Ethnic Indian (Jupp, 2001).

During this time period, the Indian population in Australia swelled, doubling in size between 1961 and 1971, and experiencing another 50% increase the following decade (Jupp, 2001). By 1996, the Indian population was growing at a rate of 3000 people per year, and Indians remain one of the fastest growing minority groups in Australia. As of the 2006 Census, the Indian population living in Australia had increased to nearly 235,000 (www.censusdata.abs.gov.au). With the 2011 Census showing nearly 300,000 Indian born residents (as opposed to just "Indian") in Australia, an increase from roughly half that number in 2006, it is evident that Australia's Indian population continues to grow.

According to Murphy (1993), this phase can be subdivided in to three clear periods, each marked by a distinct governmental approach regarding what to do with these newly arriving immigrants. Policies of assimilation were implemented from the early 1950's until the mid 1960's. During this time, immigrants were encouraged to shed their cultural baggage in favor of

a more "Anglo-Celtic" worldview that had come to dominate Australia during its White Australia years. This was followed by a policy of integration, enacted from 1965 to roughly 1980, whereby immigrants were integrated into society with the idea that their children would be the ones to shed old cultural habits in favor of new ones (Hage, 2003). Multiculturalism would be the third and final approach to immigration during this most recent phase of Indian migration to Australia. Multiculturalism, a concept that carries many meanings, and whose meanings are unpacked in the next chapter, would here be referring to multicultural policy at the level of the federal government. Hage (2003) makes a distinction between multiculturalism as policy and multiculturalism as "national character," and here we are talking strictly about the former. These policies were most certainly introduced prior to 1980, as Murphy (1993) himself points out. The earliest legislation in favor of multiculturalism emerged in the early 1970's, part of a continuing conversation about immigration that began in the previous decade.

3.3.1   Woolgoolga during the Third Phase

It was during this "third phase" of Indian immigration that the Sikh community in Woolgoolga began to grow in earnest, as word spread up Australia's east coast about work in the banana plantations on the Coffs Coast. While India's independence might have opened up the door for Australia's allowance of Indian immigration, the partition of the Punjab that accompanied Independence acted as a push factor for Sikhs (Bhatti, 2001). While Punjab experienced widespread violence, it also found itself experiencing a transfer of large populations, and a loss of large sections of agricultural land (Butalia, 2000; Fox, 1985). Labor shortages throughout Australia, and particularly in Northern New South Wales, caused by the drain of World War II, resulted in increasing numbers of Sikh settlings in the Northern River Valleys (Richmond and

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Clarence), and finding work in the growing banana industry in Murwillumbah, near Byron Bay, and later in Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour (Bhatti, 2001). Similarly, sugar cane labor unions opened up membership to include Indians as a result of this labor shortage, allowing Indians to legally cut cane for the first time, without the need for special exemption.

The reasons that Punjabis found themselves working in the banana fields in Woolgoolga are many. Bhatti (2001) argues that as much as World War II, Partition, and labor shortages invariably played a significant role in the establishment of a Woolgoolga Sikh community, so did some more intangible things, like the personalities of some of the early White banana farmers in the area. For instance, one of the earliest Woolgoolga banana farmers, Charles Newman, had moved from Alstonville to Woolgoolga in the 1930's. He had a practice of hiring Indian laborers in Alstonville, and he brought that practice with him. Bhatti (2001:71) writes, "This pre-existing link would have served to boost their [the Sikhs] confidence in venturing forth to new territory," in this case from Queensland and northern New South Wales, to the area now known as the Northern Beaches. Thus, the movement of Indians from northern New South Wales, where they had been working for some time, to Woolgoolga mirrored a movement of White businessmen and farmers along those same routes. It should be noted that Woolgoola's earliest Indian laborers were migratory, moving between labor opportunities, and living where they could, often times bunking in the same work sheds they spent their days packing bananas in.

Year round work in Woolgoolga's banana fields led to more permanent settlement, and by the early 1950's, the area's Sikh labor force began to grow, led by the return of the sons of many of Australia's pioneering Sikh "grandfathers." Mostly born in India, and brought over as teens to assist in the labor and remittances of that labor's wages, these boys were now young adults, and often replaced their own fathers as their family's representative in Australia. Threat

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of partition, and the resultant worry about natal properties led many of these "grandfathers" to return to India to tend to family matters in 1947 (Bhatti, 2001). They often brought their sons home too, but the turmoil and upheaval in Punjab led many of those sons to eagerly return to Australia as soon as possible. Some brought their wives with them, and for the first time, they seemed to consider the possibility of permanent settlement.

Bananas brought Sikhs in to Woolgoolga from all over northern New South Wales for several reasons. While it was true that many men had gained experience with bananas while living further north, bananas also allowed for the possibility of getting a foothold in Australia for Sikhs, as owners or leasers of small plots of land for harvesting bananas (Bhatti, 2001). Land was often leased with earnings from working in the cane fields, and sugar cane cutting could continue while bananas grew on land in Woolgoolga. Banana farming, compared to sugar cane farming, required little initial investment, and could be managed by a small group of people, or even a family. It was farming that required a substantial investment in terms of manual labor, but little in the form of machinery or the like, and due to Woolgoolga's sub-tropical climate, bananas could be grown year round. Still, many of these first "settlers" continued to move between Woolgoolga and sugar caning in the north for quite some time. Bhatti (2001:77-79), writes, "All of the sons starting in the bananas in the 1950s continued to cut cane in Harwood and Maclean until the 1970s." The flexibility that banana farming allowed later came into play as Sikhs began working in blueberries, first as hired labor, and later as growers.

3.3.2   Woolgoolga experiences its own "Second Phase"

A majority of Woolgoolga's early Sikh laborers, and later settlers, had come to the village by way of the sugar cane plantations of the Northern Rivers. However, in the late 1950's and early

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1960's, Sikhs who had been working in Queensland began to move south to Woolgoolga as well. According to Bhatti, these Queensland-based Sikhs learned about opportunities in Woolgoolga through time spent working in the cane fields of the Northern Rivers, where they worked alongside some of Woolgoolga's early Sikh settlers. As news travelled north, Sikhs began travelling south to take advantage.

This period of time, the 1950s and 1960s also saw an increase in Indian families moving into Woolgoolga village proper. Prior to this, it was not uncommon for Sikhs to live on the farmland they either leased or owned, sleeping in tents or in packing sheds. But during this particular decade, seven Sikhs had purchased homes in town. This time period also witnessed a demographic shift, as well as a dramatic increase in total population with regard to the Sikhs. According to de Lapervanche (1984), in 1960, a total of 22 Sikh men were living in Woolgoolga, and all but two of them owned land. All but one had moved down from the Northern Rivers, Some were living alone, but by this time, many had brought their wives, and in some cases, their children over from India (Bhatti, 2001). At the time, land was relatively cheap, and a small plot of bananas could be worked by a family in order to secure a decent living. By 1973, the community had grown to a total of 250 people, mostly women and children, and the population was a mix of folks from the Northern Rivers and from Queensland (de Lapervanche, 1984; Bhatti, 2001).

It was during this time of community expansion that the Sikhs in Woolgoolga opened their first temple, or gurdwara. With money generated within the community, the First Sikh Gurdwara of Australia opened its doors in 1968. Within six months, a group split off with the intention of opening a second temple. That temple, the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, was also paid for with money raised within the community. It officially opened its doors in 1970, though

it had its first continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib in 1969. While there are many stories circulating within town about the reasons for the split between the two temples, there is some agreement that is represents a factionalization between the migrants from the Northern Rivers and those from Queensland. And while there can be debate about the significance of this factionalization, there is little doubt that by the start of the 1970s, the Sikh community of Woolgoolga was firmly in place.

3.3.3   Sikh Firsts in Woolgoolga

Like the "Grandfather" stories earlier in this chapter, there were a number of stories I heard while in Woolgoolga that seemed to act as validation or justification for the community's place in the larger fabric of Australian society. These stories, which I classify as 'Sikh Firsts' describe benchmark achievements that seems to act as another mechanism for supporting claims of legitimacy in terms of the community's Australian roots. Some of these come much later in the narrative then the "Grandfather" stories, but operate at the level of community memory in much the same way. What is important about these stories is not their accuracy, in a strictly historical sense, but rather that they represent stories that the Sikhs "tell themselves about themselves" (Geertz, 1973), stories which position the Woolgoolga Sikh community firmly in the history of the region, and represent its character as both unique and pioneering.

Some "Sikh Firsts", like the opening of the first Sikh gurdwara in all of Australia, is both a source of pride, and a fact that acts to draw Australian Indians to the town on holiday. Others are firmly rooted in the liminal period between the closing of immigration in 1901, and the gradual reopening of it in the post-War period. As mentioned above, I talked to a young Sikh whose grandfather was the first Sikh land owner in the region. I spent one night at one of the

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town's two gurdwaras, discussing Baba Ram Singh, an amritdhari Sikh who lived an hour or so north of Woolgoolga. He was said to have brought the first copy of the Guru Granth Sahib to Australia, and regularly had readings at his home (Bhatti, 2001: 63). He had a Nishan Sahib (Khalsa Flag) outside his house, and Sikhs would travel from Woolgoolga, Grafton, and even farther north to celebrate important Sikh holy days with him. Another time, I was at the RSL (Retired Servicemens League), talking to a Sikh and a white Australian about my project. The Sikh, a patron of the club, explained proudly that his grandfather had the first arranged marriage in Australia. The white Australian, an employee of the club, offered that his grandfather had been the first Australian banana farmer to hire Indians to work in the fields. This juxtaposition was not lost on me. As one, a Sikh, made claims to his own historical depth in the community, the other, a white Australian, was making his own claim, one that linked him to acceptance of Indians, and to progressive thinking in the 1930's that shaped the make-up of the village today. Regardless of his own opinions about the Indians, and he did not share any of those with me, he was staking claims to the forward thinking that is represented in the multicultural rhetoric of a "New Australia."

Over the weekend of Vaisakhi, the most important holiday of the Sikh Calendar,[15] an exhibit of photos regarding the history of Sikhs in Victoria were in town, along with their curators, an Australian couple who were seeking both financial support and new photos for their ongoing, self-funded project that explored the role of Indian migration in the early stages of Australian development. The photos were fascinating, and the crowd at the Guru Nanak Temple spent a great deal of time taking in these images, some of which included the funeral of a Sikh from the early part of the 20th century, while others were of a fully restored hawker wagon once

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[15] It was on Vaisakhi, in 1699, that Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa.

owned by a Victorian Sikh. This was a moving photo exhibit, but one section of the photos seemed to garner more attention than others. There were two photos, side by side, that depicted a group of a dozen or so Sikh men, conducting a reading of the Guru Granth Sahib. In both photos, they were all seated on the ground in a semi-circle, under the shade of a white sheet propped up by two stakes, and attached otherwise to the side of a shed. At the center of the semi-circle was a turbaned man, with a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib elevated on a pillow before him. The date on the poster board next to the two photos was 1921. This date can be taken as problematic for some of Woolgoolga's 'Sikh Firsts," for several reasons.

First, the picture depicts a group of Sikhs, in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib, having a reading. These elements combine to define, in its most rudimentary sense, a gurdwara. A group of Sikhs gathered together for worship is considered a *sangat*,[16] and when they are gathered in front of, and in deference to, the Guru Granth Sahib, it is considered a gurdwara. According to one version of the Rahitnama, a gurdwara is defined as follows:

> Sikhs who wish to see the Guru will do so when they come to the Granth. He
>
> who is wise will bathe at dawn and humbly approach the sacred scripture.
>
> Come with reverence and sit in my presence. Humbly bow and hear the words
>
> of the Guru Granth. Hear them with affection and alert attention. Hear the
>
> Guru's Word of wisdom and read it that others may also hear. He who wishes
>
> to converse with me should read or hear the Granth and reflect on what it says.
>
> (McLeod, 1984:76).

In this photo, there is clearly a gurdwara, and one that predates Woolgoolga's first gurdwara by more than 45 years. But the truth is that Baba Ram Singh, with his copy of the

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[16] A sangat is a term for a congregation of Sikhs, though it can also refer to the totality of the Sikh community around the world.

Guru Granth Sahib, and his Nishan Sahib, also had a gurdwara at his house. And while there is clear recognition of this fact, there was never a question of the importance of the significance of opening the first "purposeful" gurdwara in Woolgoolga, in 1968. Purposeful because its primary function was that of a space of worship, the gurdwara was literally called the "First Sikh Temple," and it does represent the first organized temple building in the nation. No photograph from 1921 was going to take that away. The fact that the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara which opened official in 1970, was the second "purposeful" gurdwara in Australia lends credence to the fact that this is one of the most established, and historical Sikh communities in all of Australia.

The second issue raised by the photographs has to do with local claims to Baba Ram Singh, and his first copy of the Guru Granth Sahib "to Australia shores" (Bhatti, 2001:60). While no one seemed to have a clear idea when Baba Ram Singh brought his copy of the Guru Granth Sahib to Australia, most accounts seem to put him personally arriving in Australia prior to 1901 (Bhatti, 2001). This photo, from Victoria, calls into question a long held belief that the very first copy of the Sikh scriptures in Australia was brought into New South Wales by Baba Ram Singh. This photo sparked conversation about the whereabouts of this copy of the Guru Granth Sahib. Unfortunately, its whereabouts was never determined. While some people were not in any way affected by the idea that this long held belief was being called into question, others seemed to think it was important to discuss this fact, and the reality of these claims. Those efforts, however, were met with disinterest. It is quite possible that the discussion was not forthcoming because it undermined the "Sikh First" that had long been held to be true: That it was in New South Wales that Sikhism was truly introduced to Australia. By extension, it was from New South Wales that Sikhism flourished in Australia. These photos from Victoria made those claims shaky at best.

Again, the realities of these histories is much less important than the perception of the claims made by the Sikhs in Woolgoolga. And these claims are not made in a vacuum, but rather in the continued face of attitudes about immigration, and its place in Australia as a nation.

3.4   CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this chapter, I have aimed to demonstrate that immigration to Australia has not occurred in a vacuum. By juxtaposing Australian immigration and Indian migration to Australia, I have tried to show that both developed independent of one another, while also developing in reaction to the other. India and Australia have a shared history as British properties, and Indians were among the earliest non-British migrants to the continent. However, Indians were never fully accepted as members of Australian society, and some would argue that they still have not been.

By tracing Australia's concerns as a growing settler society, I have argued that notions of white superiority were only part of the overall concern regarding immigration. Ideas of "Britishness" certainly were central to the overall rhetoric of immigration debates, but labor needs often outweighed ideological ones at the level of government. Sugar cane cutter's unions were exclusively white, and the hiring of sugar cane cutters who were not was against the law. Still, Indian migrants were active in the cane fields, and at times even leased land for the purposes of growing their own cane crops. Similarly, prior to World War II, Indians were moving into New South Wales, and leasing and even purchasing properties to grow their own bananas.

Part of this is because as Indians, they enjoyed some diplomatic support from the colonial government in India. And as Indians, they were not quite Asian enough to be considered part of

the "yellow peril." While some people did not see the need to make a distinction between Indian and Chinese immigrants, there was clearly a greater fear that Chinese immigration posed a threat to the sanctity of Australia's racial makeup. This was likely to do with sheer numbers, but there were certainly localized backlashes against Indian migrants, as seen in editorials in newspapers in the Clarence and Richmond River valleys at the close of the 19th century. But as Indians, they were British subjects, which allowed for some allowances not available to other non-European immigrant groups. Still, as Indians, they remained far from white, and did meet with resistance on the ground. This kept the Indian population low for quite some time.

As trends in Woolgoolga's Sikh population show, loosening of immigration policy following the Second World War allowed for an increase in Indian migration to Australia. Labor needs combined with fear of an "empty continent" prompted Australia to seek migrants from outside of Britain, and even outside of Europe. Indian independence and the sub-continent's subsequent partition led to renewed interest in Australia for many Indians. Punjabis sought refuge from land loss and violence, while other Indians began taking advantage of Australia's need for educated professionals. In the end, Australia's India population began to grow, and Australia's attitudes about non-European migration began to shift. In the next chapter, I will look at the shifting nature of Woolgoolga's Sikh community against a backdrop of rising multiculturalism.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: MUTLICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA

In 2001, The Woolgoolga Neighborhood Centre, a social work center located in Woopi's old police station, published *A Punjabi Sikh Community in Australia: From Indian Sojourners to Australian Citizens* (Bhatti & Dusenbery, 2001). The book, published through a government grant, was released to coincide with the centennial of Australia's federation. Ironically, this book, which celebrates the multiculturalism of contemporary Australia, was also released in a year that would be celebrating the 100th year since the passage of Australia's infamous "White Australia" Immigration policy.

Ten years later, as the 6th annual CurryFest was being organized in Woolgoolga, Rashmere Bhatti, one of the book's editors, approached the festival organizers about having a stall. Her intention was to pre-sell copies of a second edition of the book, which would include a new chapter covering the 10 years that had passed since its original publication. The original book had sold quite well, and the copies held at the local library had even been stolen. It was clearly in high demand. However, there was a lack of buzz about the proposed second edition, even though it was hoped that pre-sales would provide the seed money for funding the actual publication. There was no government grant this time around. Around the time I was leaving the field for home, I was told that Bhatti had to return money to people who purchased the pre-sale copies at CurryFest, due to the lack of interest. The second edition had been tabled for a while.

The lack of book sales is not indicative of the book's quality, for the book, as mentioned before, has been well received. Is it indicative of Australia's changing attitudes towards multiculturalism as a policy? Is it more of an indicator of the relationship between Woolgoolga and its Sikhs? Or is something else afoot? While at the level of government, multiculturalism has been more and more entrenched in policy making, the term 'multiculturalism' has never really captured the Australian national imagination. It has become less and less common in public and political discourse, and has generally fallen out of favor. In this chapter, I will trace the development of multiculturalism in Australia, and discuss the ways in which Australian Multiculturalism is now commonly understood. I will also discuss the decline in popularity of multiculturalism as a catchphrase in Australian discourse regarding internal population diversity. Finally, I will provide a brief history of Woolgoolga's Sikh community during the rise and retreat of multiculturalism in Australia, a history which at times reflects both the waxing and waning of Australia's faith in multiculturalism. However, to talk about the Sikh community as a singular unified entity is to overlook divisions that exist with the group. The Sikhs living in Woolgoolga have several lines of internal division, some of which have been more pronounced at some times more than others. These include underlying factionalization between families who moved to Woolgoolga from northern New South Wales, and others who came from Queensland a few years later. Also, there are differences, though to a lesser extent, between Sikhs born in Australia, and the spouses who have moved to Woolgoolga from Punjab. Finally, and most recently, there have been varying degrees of division between newly arrived international migrant laborers from Punjab, mostly young Sikh men, and the rest of the Sikh community. And it is during this era of multiculturalism that some of these divisions have become most visible.

4.1   MULTICULTURALISM CONCEPTUALIZED

The transition from White Australia to Multicultural Australia was neither swift nor sudden. In fact, it can be argued that there really never has been one without the other (Elder, 2007). There is little doubt that this transition can be thought of more as a slow trajectory, one that is not neatly linear, not nearly complete. It has its roots in post-World War II worries about national defense- the "populate or perish" era of Australian immigration history- but did not find its first official articulation as policy until 1989's National Agenda for Multiculturalism (Fleras, 2009). There were several major shifts in attitude, as well as policy, over this 50 year period, though there is currently little evidence of a universally accepted place for Multiculturalism in the larger discourse of Australian politics. Everything is still very much up for debate. Let's begin by looking at what Multiculturalism is.

4.1.1   Multiculturalism and its Iterations

Multiculturalism appears to be a modern response to modern issues of global population mobility, and other global processes in a rapidly shrinking world. However, Watson (2000) rightly points out that the movement of people, and interaction of varying cultures is not a new phenomenon. He (Watson, 2000: 87) writes, "though the label and the slant of the discussion may be new, the issues themselves are historically familiar. The mobility of populations is as old as the history of humanity itself, and states and nations in the past have always had to confront the problems arising from the diversity of groups within one polity." So why has multiculturalism become so prominent in the discourse of population movement and diversity management? Watson says it has developed in different places for different reasons. Post World

War II labor needs, "brain drain", decolonization and the subsequent relocation from the colony to the metropole for former colonial subjects, refugees from conflict in South East Asia, civil rights in the US, and recognition of indigenous rights around the world have all contributed in some way to the rise of Multiculturalism around the globe.

While multiculturalism has been a popular catch phrase in the later part of the 20th century and early moments of the 21st, there is no singular universal philosophy or singular practice when it comes to multiculturalism. It is always context dependent. However, there are some common similarities and differences as to how multiculturalism and multicultural discourse appear throughout the world. Certain "types" of nation-states experience and implement multiculturalism in some specific ways, and depending on the political climate of a given context, there are some trends that can be identified.

Augie Fleras (2009) begins by making a distinction between official multiculturalism, or multiculturalism as governance, and more main stream, popular uses of the term. He then further divides multiculturalism in three major categories, which he identifies as *conservative, liberal,* and *plural* models of official multiculturalism. He writes (2009:13), "Each of these multicultural models differs in terms of defining the challenges of living together differently, underlying assumptions, proposed solutions, and anticipated outcomes." A brief discussion of each model will be instructive.

4.1.2   Conservative Multiculturalism

Conservative models of multiculturalism espouse equal treatment of all groups in society, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, etc (Fleras, 2009). The crux of this model is that everyone is equal, and should be treated as such. Therefore, minority groups receive no concessions or

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special treatment. Neither do they experience discrimination or exclusion based on those same criteria. Fleras (2009:14) refers to this type of multiculturalism as "culture-blind," saying, "differences are tolerable […], but should neither hinder nor help in defining who gets what." Individual attachments to difference are welcome, but expected to remain a part of their private life. Public selves should not reflect existing differences, making the governance of a diverse population possible through the glossing over of difference. Fleras (2009) identifies this form of multiculturalism with that practiced in the United States, or in the former colonial powers of Europe, such as France.

4.1.3   Liberal Multiculturalism

Fleras (2009:17) describes Liberal models of multiculturalism as "culture-tolerant," emphasizing unity in diversity, or equality in difference. Liberal models are based on three basic tenets about how society should operate. First, society must have a dominant culture that is willing to allow room for alternative modes of cultural expression. Second, difference must be accepted without repercussion for those who are not part of the majority. Minorities should feel safe identifying with their own cultures without worrying about it impacting their ability to participate in civic life. And finally, minorities status as equals is paradoxical, in that they should be treated as equals, and will receive concessions from the state in order to make that possible. Fleras (2009:15) writes, "To overcome the tyranny of standardization at institutional levels (equal treatment), an equivalence of treatment (treatment as equals) endorses the salience of cultural differences." In sum, liberal models posit that society must make room for difference, and make sure that said difference does not stand in the way of equality. At times, this is done by using difference to justify certain allowances aimed at negating historic inequalities. Liberal

multiculturalism is most closely associated with Canada, though Fleras (2009) identifies Australia as one other example. I will return to this point in a moment.

4.1.4 Plural Multiculturalism

Where other forms of multiculturalism are either culture-blind or culture tolerant, Plural Multiculturalism is culture-conscious. This model most closely resembles the anthropological notion of cultural relativism, whereby all cultural practices are of equal value. Plural Multiculturalism does not only celebrate diversity, but attempts to maintain diversity through the valuing of group rights over individual rights. Fleras (2009:16) writes, "the primacy of multiple and coexisting groups and identities within a state-bounded territory takes precedence over the salience of liberal universalism as a basis for governance." Some argue that this approach to cultural diversity can result in a fragmenting of society, or a "tendency towards *coexistence without commingling*" (ibid:16; italics in the original). While a plural model has been adopted at times in Europe, by nations like Britain and the Netherlands, it had also later been rejected in favor of more conservative models. There is no nation that has adopted and maintained a plural model over time.

There are other ways to conceptualize multiculturalism than simply this three model scheme, and this scheme is itself more of an analytical exercise than a hard and fast reality (Fleras, 2009: 18). The importance of this analytical exercise is twofold. First, in breaking down the possible ways that states can manage diversity, it becomes clear that multiculturalism is far from monolithic, and far from static. Differing contexts, and differing political climates, can result in very different manifestations of multiculturalism as philosophy, as policy, and as prevailing attitude. In fact, as political climates change, so do attitudes regarding

multiculturalism. This is the case in Australia, where public discourse has moved away from multiculturalism, even as policy becomes more firmly entrenched in a multicultural framework (Levey, 2008).

Secondly, the reasons for embracing multiculturalism are different in different places. As a result, who benefits from multiculturalism also differs from place to place. Fleras (2009) argues that Australian Multiculturalism is unapologetically rooted in the nation's larger economic plan, and has much less to do with minorities, and their protection. And while politicians have backed away from multicultural discourse at the national level, at the level of the state, policies have become much more a standard way of operating. For instance, Queensland has actively engaged in multicultural policy making, in an attempt to make Australia more competitive economically. Fleras (2009:126) writes, "To put a not-too-fine spin on it: [It is] Not what multiculturalism can do for minorities, but what minorities can do for Australia in advancing the benefits of diversity and difference." The point is that multiculturalism is a way for Australia to put its racist past behind it, and build strong economic relationships with the very people they have been historically excluding, the peoples and nations of Asia (Jupp, 1995).

A final important point is that Fleras (2009) identifies Australia with liberal multiculturalism, though he acknowledges it is not a perfect match. This is true for several reasons, not the least of which is Australia's motivations for embarking along the multiculturalist path. As mentioned above, multiculturalism is as much about improved international reputation, and improved relations with neighbors as it is about anything to do with minority or aboriginal rights (Fleras, 2009; Jupp, 1995; Smolicz, 1997). This undermines to some degree the claim of culture-tolerance that defines liberal models of multiculturalism. Also, as Hage (2003:59) points out, there is a "difference between multiculturalism as a mode of governing ethnic cultures and

multiculturalism as national identity." While Fleras' models are exclusively focused on ideas of governance, Hage's concern is with how people on the ground feel about these kinds of issues. And it seems like a more conservative attitude about diversity prevails in some sectors of Australian public life. This could account for the way that politicians have backed away from multicultural discourse, especially in the wake of September 11th, and of the night club bombings in Bali in 2005 (Elder, 2007). And it would also account for the way in which diversity within migrant communities, like Sikhs living in Woolgoolga, remain ambivalent to integration to the larger community, and react equally slowly to integration within ethnic boundaries.

Hage's distinction between national governance and national identity might also shed light on why it seems to be the word "multiculturalism" that is so unpopular, and not the actual policies enacted in its name. While several scholars attribute Australia's retreat from multiculturalism to the conservative administration of John Howard (Fleras, 2009; Hage, 2003, Jacobs, 2011; Levey, 2008; Moran, 2005), Levey argues that much of the public debate focuses less on the policies than on the various interpretations of what the word means. He writes (Levey, 2008:19):

> Indeed, it is striking how much of the criticism of multiculturalism focuses on the
>
> word and its perceived connotations, rather than on the various policies of
>
> minority inclusion and equal opportunity for which the word stands in the
>
> Australian context. Few of those calling for the abolition of 'multiculturalism'
>
> specify which multicultural programs and measures they would terminate.

The point here is that prevailing attitudes about diversity and immigration are inherently conservative at the level of the general population. As much as governments implement new policies to level the playing field between cultural groups, or to better the national image on the

international stage, the people on the ground are slower to adopt these new attitudes. And as Hage (2003) rightly points out, it is these attitudes that are most likely to retreat to older forms of discrimination and paranoia during times of stress. So while the model of multiculturalism espoused by the government may closely resemble a liberal one, the model that people on the ground are more comfortable with might more closely resemble a conservative one, whereby difference is tolerated, as long as it is expressed in private.

4.2   MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA: A HISTORY

While Australia's White Australia immigration policy became harder to maintain following the end of World War II, due to a strong desire to increase the nation's population in the wake of labor needs and spreading fears of external threats, it was not until the mid 1970's that White Australia was officially repealed. It took another 15 years for a clearly articulated multicultural position to be expressed by the federal government. And still, less than 15 years after that first clear statement of multiculturalism, the degrees to which Australia practices, or should practice multicultural governance are still very much up for debate. In this section, I will look at some of the steps that Australia took to make its own model of Multiculturalism, and some of the internal and external forces that helped shape this process. I will also look at some of the factors leading to the retreat from Multiculturalism in the first decade of the 21st century.

4.2.1 Early Factors

The period of time between 1945 and 1989 marks a period of complete transition in Australia, from exclusionary immigration in the form of White Australia to one of more inclusive multiculturalism, though the term itself was a latecomer to the process. It is also, according to Jupp (1995), a period of transition for Australia as part of Europe to Australia as part of Asia. This is not to say that Australia did not on occasion look to Asia prior to the Second World War. Walker (2005) argues that some forward thinking Australian politicians and scholars were arguing for a tightening of relationships with Asia as early as the last decade of the 19th century. Walker (2005:65) writes. "When viewed from an Australian perspective, Asia loomed very large indeed, whereas Europe shrank appreciably in size and cultural power." And while this might be true, it was Australia's unease with its Asian neighbors that defined its relationships with all countries to the North for most of the 20th century.

Australia's first changes to the White Australia policy were geared toward increasing population. In 1945, Australia's population stood at roughly 7.5 million people, a number that looked small both for the nation's developing industrial needs, as well as its ongoing military defense needs (MacLeod, 2006). The solution to Australia's population problems lay in a massive immigration program, aimed at attracting worthy candidates to fill Australia's population needs, both in terms of people, and in terms of people from the right background. Following World War II, Australia accepted a disproportionate number of Europe's displaced peoples, taking in up 25% of all people emigrating from Europe in the years following the war. Australia's immigration program allowed for entry on the condition that immigrants accepted government work placement for their first two years in country. This immigration program marks the first time that non-British Europeans were actively pursued in the name of

immigration. Eastern and Southern European immigrants increased substantially during this time. However, preference was for fairer skinned Baltic immigrants over other populations, demonstrating the government's desire to not stray too far from "White Australia" (Elder, 2005).

When most displaced peoples had been relocated following the Second World War, Australia continued to promote emigration from Europe by signing a series of treaties with European nations, aimed at easing some of the restriction for entering the country (MacLeod, 2006). Knowing that this project might not sit well with a xenophobic Anglo-Celtic populace, Australian Immigration Minister Arthur Caldwell expressed a hope that for every one "foreign" migrant, Australia would still be able to attract 10 British settlers (Elder, 2005; MacLeod, 2006). And while a call for more migration was made, the response was nothing like Caldwell had hoped. While British migrants still moved to Australia, often with assistance from the Australian government, they did not keep pace with Caldwell's promise (Jupp, 2004).

Another important factor to consider in the years immediately following World War II has to do with the displacement of Anglo-Indians from India following Indian independence in 1947 (Blunt, 2005). Ships commissioned to retrieve British and Australian citizen from the newly independent India instead arrived in Fremantle, Australia, carrying 700 Anglo-Indians, people of mixed Indian and British ancestry. These travelers did not fit neatly into the racial categories used for inclusion and exclusion in the Australian nation, and it set off many debates about the role Australia should play in their relocation. Blunt (2005:149) writes, "Assimilation in Australia was only thought possible if Anglo-Indians could prove a line of predominantly European descent and if they were seen to be white both in photographs and at interview." By 1950, restrictions against Anglo-Indians focused on the ability to prove 75% European ancestry, and an ability to demonstrate a "fully European upbringing and outlook,' and to be 'European

rather than non-European in appearance'" (ibid:150). It was clear that regardless of labor needs, and concerns about population, acting and looking European was still of primary focus.

The overall approach to immigration during the post-War years was one of assimilation, with the dominant Anglo-Celtic culture not allowing room for alternative modes of expression (MacLeod, 2006). However, in the 1960's, a shift in how to approach new immigration resulted in a change in official policy from assimilation to integration. Hage (2003) argues that this shift, while still rooted in a desire to soothe what he calls the "White Colonial Paranoia" of Australia's general population, also marks the first recognition by the government of Australia's multi-ethnic makeup. He writes, "integration also prefigured multiculturalism in that it was the first state/bureaucratic recognition that Australia was no longer a homogeneous White European society; it did now contain non-English speaking communities (the non-assimilated first generation) whose needs required special government policies" (Hage, 2003:58).

Whereas assimilation required the rapid adoption of "Australian ways," integration recognized that immigrants were less inclined to shed their old lifeways, and there might be value in that fact (Hage, 2003, MacLeod, 2006). Hage sees integration as an extension of the timeframe for assimilation, shifting the focus from the immigrant to their children as the focus for assimilative practice. MacLeod (2006) presents integration as cultural pluralism, and argues that its rewards were felt though the introduction to Australian culture of new, diverse practices. She argues that pluralism recognized the ability of immigrants to be both true to their cultural roots and loyal to the nation of Australia. Either way, integration as policy was an important first step towards multiculturalism. The question remains to what end did multiculturalism solve Australia's problems? Or was that even the goal? Fleras (2009:3) writes, "On the one hand, multiculturalism may inadvertently encourage the very divisiveness it hoped to avoid; on the

other, it may unwittingly end up reinforcing the very assimilation it hoped to discourage." Let's take a closer look at Australian Multiculturalism.

4.2.2 Multiculturalism Emerges

As mentioned above, Multiculturalism in Australia was not the result of a single moment, or a single act of legislation. In fact, as Fleras (2009) points out, Australia's commitment to multiculturalism remains at the level of policy, but has yet to become institutionalized in law. He writes, "Multiculturalism in Australia exists as policy rather than entrenched in law or the constitution. Its status as policy subjects multiculturalism to prevailing ideologies or whims of the government in power" (ibid: 122). This remains to be a fundamental characteristic of multiculturalism in Australia, with no signs of change to come.

Multiculturalism, by most accounts, became part of the Australian political vocabulary in the early 1970's, during the administration of Gough Whitlam (Castles, 1992; Jupp; 2001; Kivisto, 2002; MacLeod, 2006). According to MacLeod, Whitlam campaigned on platform of immigration reform, one he upheld after coming into office. However, Boese and Phillips (2011) point out that this move should be considered more the necessary by-product of past failures with regard to immigration policy. Australia's government had spent more time trying to deny the reality of cultural diversity within its borders, and multiculturalism was more the result of a paradigm shift than forward thinking policy making. They write, " Multiculturalism emerged out of the failure of earlier attempts at assimilation during the 1960s…Being adopted defensively rather than as a proactive response arguably highlights the unwillingness of government in Australia to deeply and consistently engage with the level of diversity that had emerged from the sizable post-war migration intake" (Boese and Phillips, 2011:190). In other words, government

policy created a diverse population, while at the same time attempting to deny its existence through assimilation. However, adopting integration led to the forcing of eyes to see the reality of the situation. Multiculturalism was not progressive, but the only option left.

While multiculturalism entered the Australian consciousness during the election year of 1972, and the early policy changes of the Whitlam government in 1973, it began as an immigrant settlement program, one that provided welfare support for the recently created category of people from Non-English speaking background, or NESB. Over the next 10 years or so, Multiculturalism was shaped through a succession of coalition governments. Levey (2008) argues that during this time, and probably most clearly in the 1978 Galbally Report, Australian Multiculturalism emerged with a focus on cultural pluralism and a recognition of ethnic groups as distinct and homogenous. The Galbally Report, also known as the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants, was a commissioned government report, named after the Chair, a Melbourne barrister named Frank Galbally (MacLeod, 2006). As its official name suggests, this was less about culture and diversity, and more about assessing government services available to aide and assist in the settlement of new migrants (Jupp, 2002; MacLeod, 2006). The report recommended goods and services be provided especially for migrant groups, and premium was placed on funding organizations within migrant communities which provided these services. MacLeod (2006:119) writes, "In practice this meant that more funds were given to ethnic associations whose staff came from the same background as its clients and spoke their language." In Woolgoolga, the Woolgoolga Neighborhood Centre acts as this kind of organization. While it was not established to specifically support Punjabi immigrant settlement, many of the programs available were directed at the Indian community, and its director, a Sikh,

is fluent in both English and Punjabi, thus meeting government criteria for grant-in-aid money available after the passage of the Galbally Report.

An assessment of the kinds of programs recommended by the Galbally Report indicated that these services had been working, and that not only migrants, but the communities they lived in were benefiting from Australia's multicultural policies (MacLeod, 2006). However, the early 1980's also saw a slight shift in the discourse of multiculturalism, one that provided some foreshadowing regarding where Australians stood in relation to this relatively new immigration policy. The language of multiculturalism shifted from concerning immigrants to being inclusive of all Australians. This is reminiscent of kind of multiculturalism Fleras (2009) would identify as conservative, where national cohesion trumps group needs, and where diversity is acceptable, but only to a point. Levey (2008:6) writes, "By the early 1980s, the ambit of multiculturalism had begun to be framed in terms of addressing 'all Australians' rather than only immigrants and 'ethnics,' and had crystallized around themes of social cohesion, cultural identity and equality of opportunity and access." Here, the themes of multiculturalism continue to focus on assisting with the integration of immigrant communities into the larger civic framework of the nation, but the language used has shifted away from explicit concessions, even if policy had not.

1989 witnessed the first national policy statement on multiculturalism, the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, which outlined the four main goals of Australian multiculturalism as follows: all Australians have the right to maintain their cultural identities within the framework of the law; all Australians have the right to equal opportunity without discrimination based on group membership; the nation itself will benefit (including economic benefits) from a culturally diverse populace; and all Australians should have respect for core Australian values and Australian institutions (Levey, 2009:6). These core values include

"reciprocity, tolerance and equality (including of the sexes), freedom of speech and religion, the rule of law, the Constitution, parliamentary democracy, and English as the national language" (ibid:6).

James Jupp (2001) boils this down to a definition of multiculturalism based on three principles- cultural identity, social justice, and economic efficiency. All cultural identities are treated equal under the law, and individuals have the right to express culture, speak language, or practice religion based on their heritage. If there is discrimination based on group membership, there is recourse. And finally, all Australians should be utilized for their skill, regardless of ethnic or religious background. Jupp argues that the range of multiculturalism makes it a diffuse set of policies, and not something under the control of one single government agency. Instead, there are agencies at both state and federal levels which concern themselves with issues of multiculturalism. And still, with English as the national language, and "Non-English speaking background" as an officially recognized demographic category, the history of Australia as a "British" nation is never far removed. This link to Britain, however, was strengthened during the Howard administration, with the launching of the "new agenda."

The original Multicultural policy agenda was revised twice, both times during the Howard era. And while the original agenda was maintained for the most part, some aspects of it were refined to reflect a more conservative attitude. The stress shifted to national identity, social cohesion, and communal harmony, as well as to the British legacy in Australia (Levey, 2008:7).

In addition to making claims about rights regarding cultural identity and social justice, multicultural policies also invested in cultural diversity both nationally and locally. A recommendation by the Galbally Report for broadcasting minority languages led to the launching of Special Broadcast System (SBS) radio and television in 1980 (Jupp, 2001). SBS programming

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focuses on the diversity of cultures in Australia, with programs like Compass, which features documentary style shows about some of Australia's ethnic populations. An episode of Compass was filmed in Woolgoolga in 2009, featuring a close look at one Sikh family with the International Sikh Games, held that year in Coffs Harbour, as a backdrop. While I was in Australia for fieldwork, SBS ran a three night documentary of the transition from "White Australia" to multicultural Australia, called *Immigration Nation*. It was complimented by interactive section on SBS's website featuring information and short video clips about Australia's diverse cultural makeup, some of which focused on Woolgoolga's Indian community, and their history of banana farming. Finally, SBS offers a variety of radio programming as well as streaming news programs and podcasts on their website in nearly 70 different "non-English" languages, including Punjabi, each representing an immigrant population in Australia (http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/punjabi). While SBS has been under constant threat of budget cuts, or consolidation with ABC, the other national public network, it remains independent and focused on educating Australia about its own diversity, as well as offering unique services to those minority communities themselves.

4.2.3   Immigration Nation

The airing of *Immigration Nation* took place over three consecutive nights early in 2011. I was made aware of it by a local Sikh man who was to be featured on the program. He had told me about film crews being it the area recently, and that he was looking forward to seeing it. When I saw an advertisement on TV, saying that it was coming up the following weekend, and I too was very excited. The documentary covered the history of immigration to Australia, from federation to present day, highlighting some of the shortcomings of the restrictive "White Australia" policy,

as well as some of the improvements is this era of multiculturalism. The history of immigration was mostly told through the stories of a few Australian families whose families had overcome the racism built into immigration policy to establish themselves in the larger context of Australian society. My Sikh friend was not featured in the program, nor were any other Indians.

Accompanying the airing of the three part documentary was the launch of an interactive page on SBS's internet homepage (http://www.sbs.com.au/immigrationnation/). This interactive exhibit is rich with stories, both in text and as video clips, of many more ethnic and national groups that represent Australia's current multicultural make-up. The information is divided into segments featuring immigrant contributions to various aspects of Australian life, including agriculture and aquaculture, wine, food, labor, politics and sport, to name a few. Each topic features a few ethnic groups, and their contributions, again told through the stories of an individual or a family. Woolgoolga's Sikhs are featured prominently in the segment about agriculture, and my Sikh friend was the focal point of these vignettes. Other features in the section on agriculture include information on Albanian fruit farmers, Japanese contributions to Rice growing in Australia, and slave labor of South Sea Islanders in the cane fields.

The videos, and the text blocks, tell the story of how Sikhs came to Woolgoolga, and how they have been contributing to the local economy and the local culture ever since. They provide contributions that Sikhs, as experienced farmers, brought to the region, and explain how Sikhs have successfully integrated themselves in the local community, in other ways, as landowners, doctors, solicitors, and as small business owners. Much of the information focuses on John Arkan, local "foodie" and politician, who was born and raised in Woolgoolga. He talks about how he feels that these roles are indicative of the progress that Sikhs have made, in terms of being integrated, and how he represents "Australia" and "Australian" as much as anyone else.

Like the documentary, the interactive website celebrates the successes of multiculturalism in Australia. And yet, the longest video clip in the section that focuses on Sikhs and agriculture is portion of an SBS television talk show, called Insight, in which Arkan as his wife field questions about their arranged marriage in front of a live studio audience. In some ways, this portion of the interactive material, which is one of the last things a viewer will see, due to its location on the website, acts to reinforce the difference that the rest of the materials attempts to breakdown. Like some of the other national media coverage that Woolgoolga has received, in various other documentaries made for Australian public television (discussed in Chapter Six), this focus on traditional and "exotic" practice acts as much as a barrier for cross cultural understanding as it does to blurring the lines that divide.

4.2.4 Community Language Programs

Another program to grow out of the Galbally Report was Multicultural Education Program, whereby local minority communities are promoted to all Australian children (Castles, 1992). One such program is the Punjabi Community Language Program at Woologoolga's primary school. The program in Woolgoolga is the first of its kind in rural Australia, and does not focus on teaching the Sikh religion, so much as it focuses on teaching Punjabi culture. This program, part of the standard curriculum for all school children in years 1 through 6, teaches basic Punjabi language and cultural practices through a variety of exercises and activities. While fluency is not the goal, familiarity is. School children are exposed to Punjabi language and the *Gurmukhi* script, enjoy tours of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, and get instruction on the basic history and tenets of Sikhism. While all of the children in the school receive instruction on Punjabi, the teachers acknowledge the importance of such a program for the children of Sikh families. I was

told, "Our language is important for maintaining our culture." The school also celebrates Sikh holidays like Vaisakhi, and more pan-Indian holidays like Diwali and Holi. Signs in both English and Punjabi hang throughout the school, indicating which room is the Principal's office, and which is the cafeteria. A large mural of the town, designed and decorated by the school's students, includes a depiction of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, sitting atop the hill, and overlooking the town. Children learn about the history of the Sikhs, learn why Sikhs dress the way they do, and why they "keep their hair." I was told by one of the teachers the focus is on what it means to "belong" to the Sikh community, and not so much on religion itself. All parents are encouraged to get involved, and are even hosted at the school for certain special events. However, one of the teachers of the Community Language Program shared that the presence of the program at school, and the fact that both of its teachers were in fact members of the Sikh community, did a great deal in opening up communication between Sikh parents and the school. This is something I was told was not as common prior to the introduction of the program in the early 1990's. Prior to that, Punjabi parents had a tendency to shy away from interaction with the school, and its teachers. Teachers hold a highly respected position in Punjabi culture, I was told. For this reason, Sikh parents would often not question what was going on at school, with regards to their children. The presence of fellow Sikhs as part of the structure of the school made these same parents more likely to talk to them about school related things. It helped break down barriers.

I was at the temple for an Akand Path on the Friday of Vaisakhi weekend, when two grades of primary school students were brought to the gurdwara for a visit. They were met outside by one of the management committee members, and given some "fun facts" about Sikhism, and why this was an important weekend. They were then led into the main hall, where

they listened for a minute to the *gurbani*, or writings of the Sikh Gurus, being read by a local Sikh woman, before they were allowed to walk past the Guru Granth Sahib, in its position at the front of the main hall. Afterward, all the kids were brought to the Langar hall, where they were given a traditional Langar meal, and told about why Sikhs eat after every service. The goal was to de-mystify the "temple on the hill" for these kids, and to make their Indian classmates seem all the more like them.

4.2.5   Resistance to Multiculturalism

While multiculturalism as policy became more and more entrenched in Australian governance, there appeared to be a withdrawal from it in discourse during the late 1990's and onward. This resistance to, or retreat from, multiculturalism is most closely associated with two political figures from this time period, John Howard and Pauline Hanson. John Howard, as Prime Minister between 1996 and 2007, oversaw one of the more conservative eras in recent Australian politics. While he was not anti-multiculturalism per se, he was often publicly critical of it. He criticized the policy for creating "a federation of cultures" in Australia (Jacobs, 2011), stressing instead the centrality of "Australian Values" as a marker of membership in the nation (Hage, 2003). But, as discussed earlier, Howard's rhetoric about the British-ness of Australian-ness had moved the notion of values from unity in diversity back towards a Anglo-centric notion that at best excluded those who did not share in the same background, or at least in some assimilated version of it. The problem here is not only that "Australian Values" is an amorphous and ever changing concept, but so too is multiculturalism. Levey (2008:7) writes, "Because an official multiculturalism is primarily a hegemonic discourse in defense of dominant ideology, it constitutes a clever branding strategy for conflict resolution and impression management- all in

defense of a racialized status quo." And while Howard criticized multiculturalism in favor of Australian values, he was playing more of a semantic game.

Pauline Hanson, on the other hand, played no semantic games whatsoever. As the face of the One Nation Party, a radically conservative political party that was making some noise in the late 1990's, Hanson gained notoriety, and public office, on a platform that was very reminiscent of "White Australia" attitudes toward minorities and diversity (Jupp, 2001; Levey, 2008, MacLeod, 2006). Hanson famously called for a "radical review" of immigration policy and an abolishing of multiculturalism in her first speech as a member of parliament in 1996, a speech that put her on the national map (Jupp, 2001). Jupp argues that Hanson's message, rooted in standard critiques of multiculturalism, has less to do with issues of superiority or inferiority than it does with the notion that different cultures are simply incompatible, and should not mix. MacLeod (2006) points out that Hanson's speech opened a flood gate of anti-immigrant, anti-aboriginal sentiment in a nation enduring the simultaneous frustrations of economic recession and draught. While the One Nation Party enjoyed short lived success in the wake of its leader's radical, headline grabbing speeches, there was also plenty of anti-Hanson backlash, leading to her eventually losing her seat in 1999. While I was in Australia, Hanson attempted a bid for election to NSW state level parliament, but was unsuccessful.

In the end, while there was clearly a backlash against multiculturalism following September 11th, 2001 attacks in America and the Bali night club bombings in 2005 in which many Australian vacationers were killed, multiculturalism lives on in policy at both state and national levels in Australia. Jupp (2001) argues that state level multiculturalism is not concerned with issues of immigration, which remain federal issues. For this reason alone, state level programs are under much less scrutiny, and the result has been a florescence of multiculturalism

at the level of the state. Multiculturalism at the level of the nation has not been as fortunate. Jupp (2001:274-75) sums it up as follows:

> The 25 years since Australia became officially multicultural are littered with abandoned programs and practices. The Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (1979-1986), the Office of Multicultural Affairs (1987-1996), and the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (1989-1996) were all abolished and their staff, research material and libraries disbanded. Multicultural education, the national language policy, free English tuition, ethnic affirmative action, monitored access and equity and subsidy for 'weekend schools' were either abandoned or severely curtailed. Yet SBS continued and its scope was extended, state governments and some local councils increased their activity, the Australian Council and the museums adopted multicultural policies, festivals flourished at the state and local levels, autonomous associations of ethnic and multicultural creative artists were formed, the ethnic press expanded…and clubs and associations grew in numbers and in wealth. The viability of multiculturalism depended on who controlled these activities and on the support and enthusiasm of their constituencies, rather than on the often inconsistent policies of politicians and bureaucrats."

Multiculturalism lives on in Australia, but under very different circumstances than as it was introduced.

4.3   WOOLGOOLGA IN AN AGE OF MULTICULTURALISM

The period of Australian history marked by the rise of Multiculturalism coincides with the period of Woolgoolga history marked by expansion of the Sikh community, in terms of numbers and in terms of influence. The question becomes to what extent, if any, is multiculturalism responsible for the changes in Woolgoolga? The remainder if this chapter will focus on this period, and that question.

Between 1968 and 1973, Australian anthropologist Marie de Lapervanche conducted field work among Woolgoolga's growing Sikh community. The Woolgoolga that she visited had a population of roughly 1350 people, and of that population, about 250 were of Punjabi origin, over half of whom had been born overseas (de Lapervanche, 1984). By the middle of the 1990's, Woolgoolga had grown a great deal, but so had its Indian community. Singh (2001:231) puts the Sikh community in Woolgoolga at roughly 2000 people, saying they made up close to one third of the total population of the village. An official census was taken just as I was leaving town in the winter of 2011, but local estimates put the Indian population in Woolgoolga at about 1000, larger if you take into account all of the families living up and down the Coffs Coast. While there are those who told me of a drop off in population around the turn of the 21st century, due in large part to the lack of financial security in bananas at the time, I suspect Singh's numbers may be inclusive of the entire population of the northern beaches of the Coffs Coast, and not just Woolgoolga proper. Still, the trend is the same. The population of the town has grown about three fold, while the size of the Sikh population has grown four-fold.

Since 1968, Woolgoolga has seen the opening of two gurdwaras and one Punjabi school. There has been a transition from primarily growing bananas to primarily growing blueberries. There has been a shift in the makeup of the population over the past 10 years, with the regular

influx of Indian labor in the form of "international students," a term used to actually describe the spouses of international students who are working while their wives are in school in Australia's larger metropolitan areas. There has been a book published celebrating the town, and its uniquely Indian heritage. There has been the creation of CurryFest, an Indian Cultural and Food Festival, and there has been the promotion of Woolgoolga as tourist destination with a twist. Woolgoolga has hosted the International Sikh Games, and been featured on national television several times, the result of attention drawn in by the Sikh community there. And Coffs Harbour has elected its first Sikh councilman, the first Australian born, turban wearing Sikh elected to any public office in the nation. While there is not room to deal with each of these in this chapter, I will talk briefly about a few, and revisit others in later chapters.

4.3.1   The Tale of Two Temples

In 1968, the First Sikh Gurdwara of Australia opened its doors, the collective effort of Indian and white Australians. The management committee consisted of nine men, three of whom were leaders of the Anglo-Australian community in Woolgoolga. I was told in an interview that this was a deliberate decision, an attempt to bridge the distance between Indians and their white neighbors. Similarly, the gurdwara itself, which deLapervanche (1984:13) describes as a "modest red-brick building," was carefully considered, with bridging the distance between two communities in mind. The structure was not outwardly Indian in architecture or aesthetics, and blended in neatly with the town's other religious halls, several of which are just a block away.

Chairs were placed inside the new gurdwara, and chairs and tables were set up in the Langar hall. I was told that the chairs were first placed in the gurdwara in an attempt to emulate local churches, the logic being that if white neighbors felt comfortable coming in, they would be

more likely to try to learn more about Sikhism. In a way, one might think of this first temple as representing an assimilationist/intergrationist model of immigration, where allowances were made to make it more like a Western place or worship. Chairs, however, are not common in a gurdwara, and chairs and tables in Langar halls have been a source of friction between Sikhs in the diaspora and Sikh in Punjab on other occasions, and in other locations. Part of the problem with chairs is that it is not "traditional," whereas sitting on the floor is. Also, it is not acceptable for anyone to sit higher than the Guru Granth Sahib, thus forcing the founders of the First Sikh Gurdwara of Australia to construct the scripture's place at the front of the room considerably higher than is usual.

Similarly, it is traditional to sit on the floor during Langar, a practice that symbolizes the equality of all Sikhs, and visitors to the gurdwara before God. There is even a story of Guru Nanak refusing to provide a chair for a visiting Mughal emperor who had come to seek his counsel. Chairs and tables in the Langar hall place those seated in chairs physically and symbolically above those who chose to remain on the floor, and thus contradict the inherent symbolic meaning and purpose of the communal meal. At times, in Canada, the US, and even in Australia, Sikhs upset by the presence of chairs and tables in the Langar hall have appealed to the Akhal Tahkt, the highest seat of religious authority in Sikhism, to intervene.   These two things later became a bone of contention between the two temples in Woolgoolga, and some cite the chairs as the reason for the initial split between the two.

The second temple in town, the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, officially opened on January 3rd, 1970. However, the first services were conducted under a tent as early as December of 1968. The original management committee of this gurdwara consisted, according most of my informants, of people who were dissatisfied with the existing management committee at the First

Sikh Temple, known locally as the "lower temple," based on its location at the bottom of a hill (as opposed to the "top temple" which sits atop the hill that is River Street). If the First Sikh Gurdwara represents an assimilation model of thinking, then the Guru Nanak temple represents multiculturalism. The original Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara was very Indian in its architectural style, with a large white dome constructed in a traditional fashion. There were no chairs inside the main hall, and all attendees were required to sit on the floor. Similarly, the Langar hall was without seats or tables. While it could be argued that this was in line with Sikh tenets, it could also be argued that this was done to distinguish it from the other gurdwara in town. Two gurdwaras opening in a town with just over 250 Sikhs, a mere six months apart, has as much to do with internal factionalism as it does with anything else.

4.3.2 Factionalism

When I first started asking around town about why there might be two temples, I found there were as many stories as people who I asked. Members of the Anglo-Australian community had some pretty far flung ideas about the subject, demonstrating just how much of a gap there was between the two groups of people. One woman told me that they represented two different religions. Another man told me that they were separated according to caste, in the traditional occupational sense. People who went to one gurdwara represent the professional class, while those who went to the other were all farmers. He even had a story to tell about someone bringing their relatives visiting from India to the wrong temple, accidently taking two professionals to a farmer's temple, and the associated embarrassment such a gaffe caused.

Among the Indians I talked to, there were also many stories, though many of them seemed more plausible. Many of these stories seem to be filtered through a family member's

memory or personal opinion, and many of them smacked of personal conflict. My goal in asking was not to stir up trouble, nor open old wounds, but to gain a sense of how local history was understood by local people. And the variety of stories I heard was telling.

In the end, I was directed to read a program from the 2009 International Sikh Games, hosted by the Woolgoolga Sikh community, and held in Coffs Harbour. The program had a brief history of each of the two gurdwaras. These histories are interesting in how they deal with, or do not deal with, the factionalism in the community that created the need for two separate gurdwaras. I think that the story is included in one history, and overlooked in the other that might be most telling about the relationship between these two temples, and the people who attend them.

In the history of the First Sikh Gurdwara of Australia, written by local medical doctor, Dr. Amarjit More, a story is told about why the Sikhs decided to open a temple in the first place. More (2009:20) wrote:

> A small group (Village Panchyat) assembled on the beach reserve to resolve a
> local family dispute. Any gathering of male Punjabi Jats is not exactly a subtle
> quiet affair. The loud boisterous group talking in a foreign language attracted the
> attention of the irate caretaker, who told the group in no uncertain terms to leave
> the park. The Jats were humiliated and demeaned. Then and there they vowed to
> build a place of their own.

More's focus on Jats, a caste in Punjab associated with landownership, comes up again as he discusses the splintering of the group in to two, leading to the opening to two gurdwaras within 18 months of each other. Citing the propensity for Jats to be stubborn, arrogant, and combative, More argues that the factionalism that defined this period in Woolgoolga Sikh history

is not surprising. I was later told during an interview that a similar schism developed within the ranks of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara's leadership in the years that followed its opening, a division that grew so volatile that a case was brought before the Supreme Court of Australia to settle the dispute.

Interestingly, in the brief history of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, provided by local historian Rashmere Bhatti (2009), there is no mention of the opening of the first gurdwara, of the split, and of the initial hostility between the two groups. Bhatti (2009:25) writes:

> In the mid 1960's there were approx six Punjabi Sikh family clusters in the Woolgoolga area…These families decided that a place of worship was fundamental for the community. In this spirit the community began to raise funds in 1966 to build a Sikh Gurdwara. Donations were also received from North Queensland and Murwhillumbah. A prominent site was bought and in December 1968, the birth of our 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji was celebrated in a marquee on the site. A Nishan Sahib was erected and a Gurdwara Committee was elected on this memorable occasion…An Architect, Mr Trevor Redcliff was appointed and plans were drawn for a new building, including traditional Gurdwara design of arches and domes. The Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara was completed in late 1969, and officially opened on 3rd January 1970.

Bhatti's description, while not inaccurate, leaves out certain details. First, there is not a single mention of another gurdwara, implying that the motivations and fundraising activities beginning in 1966 were committed to building the Guru Nanak Temple. Secondly, the mentioning of six families opening a gurdwara for the benefit of the community also implies a unity that was not there. No mention of an earlier temple, of communal infighting, or of

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factionalization is mentioned in Bhatti's account. The complete absence of reference to the First Sikh Gurdwara of Australia in Bhatti's account is just as telling as More's reference to the Jat tendency for infighting. And both of these histories demonstrate how collective memory of this time period is heavily filtered through very different lenses, depending on which group is doing the remembering.

The tensions between these two temples have waxed and waned over time. The current state of relations is one of collaboration. During my field stay, there was a weekly Tuesday night meditation session at the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara that was attended by members of both temples. Similarly, there was a Saturday night Kirtan session held at the First Sikh Gurdwara that would regularly attract members of Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara. On several occasions, the *granthi*, or religious specialist, from the top temple would come down to sing Kirtan. In addition, there were Punjabi classes held across from the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara every Sunday, after services, and children from both temples attended.

In addition to these weekly interactions, there were occasions where the two temples collaborated directly. The Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara has on occasion shared it granthi with the lower temple when there was a need. Together, the two temples have co-sponsored the hosting of Australian Sikh Games on a number of occasions, the most recently in 2009. These kinds of interactions indicate a dissipation of animosity which could be indicative of the passage of time. However, there is also some indication that new business ventures between members of the two temples might be facilitating this renewed cooperation.

4.3.3   Changing Agricultural Landscape

In the late 1980's and early 1990's the banana industry in Woolgoolga began to suffer in competition with larger industrial banana farming in northern Queensland. Queensland is a flatter, more open landscape than that of Woolgoolga, where most bananas were grown on the sloped foothills of the Great Dividing Range. This difference allowed for massive, industrial farming being conducted on a larger scale in Queensland than any of the family farms in Woolgoolga could compete with. Queensland's warmer annual temperatures and absence of a definable winter also allowed for the harvesting of multiple banana crops during the course of a year. The result was Sikh farmers in Woolgoolga were losing money, and many of them transitioned their farms into blueberries, a crop that grew well in Woolgoolga's sub-tropical climates. Blueberry farming was not new to the area, and some Sikhs had already begun working in blueberry fields in the slower times of the year, when there was little to be done on their own banana farms (Bhatti, 2001).

This transition from small scale banana farming to blueberries brought with it changes in how the farming was done. Bananas had originally been attractive to Sikh farmers because of the limited start -up costs, and the ability to manage the labor required to be successful within the existing family structure. Blueberries required a greater investment in time, and became more difficult to manage on one's own. The harvesting, in particular, which is done by hand, plucking each individual berry from the plant, is very labor intensive and time consuming. The result has been the formation of larger blueberry cooperatives, changes in the role of women in the Sikh community, and the hiring of migrant labor.

Significant changes in the lives of Sikh women in Woolgoolga seem to have occurred in the 1980s, at a time when blueberries became part of the agricultural lifestyle. While most every

land owning farmer has now transitioned completely from growing bananas to growing blueberries, during the 1980s most farms were family run banana operations. Women rarely left the home, with the exception of going to temple. Much of their time was spent raising children, and helping out around the farm, boxing bananas and other activities. But in the late 1980s, due to slumping banana prices, women began supplementing the family income by picking blueberries in nearby Corindi (Bhatti, 2001). According to Bhatti (ibid:137), "initially, Punjabi women started picking blueberries for 'spending money,' followed by new arrivals (spouses and independent migrants) seeking accessible employment and by low income families looking for a financial leg up." At first, Punjabis made up three quarters of the seasonal employment, and two thirds of them were women. Since that time, more and more men began picking, and eventually growing, and the region has transformed in to a major supplier of Australian blueberries. However, Bhatti describes the employment of women in the blueberries as "liberating."

The flexibility of blueberry picking allowed women to pick while maintaining activities on the family farm and at home, as well as additional religious and social obligations. The extra money allowed them to both contribute to the family, and to purchase items otherwise unavailable to them. However, the largest impact came from working outside the home, and interacting with people beyond the extended family (Bhatti, 2001). Women began working alongside one another, and formed new bonds. Additional impacts included women obtaining driver's licenses, in order to get to work. This cascaded into women taking on a larger public role for the family, paying bills, doing the banking, and attending school functions. Not the least significant of implications of this money earned is that women could and did save money to pay for return trips to India, increasing the frequency of such trips, and reinforcing the connections between the two continents. However, Bhatti (ibid: 140) cautions that while these changes are

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noticeable, there is much that has stayed the same, writing, "It must be noted, however, that the women are still working in unskilled temporary agricultural labour, and mostly with other Punjabis. As a consequence, cultural patterns, gender expectations, language abilities, and food habits remain basically the same…women by and large are neither learning workplace skills transferable to the formal labor force nor greatly extending their involvement with the non-Punjabi community." At the time of Bhatti's publication, this was still a fairly new development, and the transition to blueberries was not as significant as it is today. The influx of cheap student labor from Punjab, and the fact that many Sikh men are now also farming blueberries full time will likely impact this small degree of freedom enjoyed by women working in the blueberry fields.

Another of the visible changes in Woolgoolga over the past ten years has been an increasing influx of young Punjabi men who have come to town in search of agricultural work. Australian immigration policy regarding international students, especially those coming from Asia found its earliest articulation in 1950s Colombo Plan, an initiative that encouraged students from nearby Asian countries to pursue higher education at Australia's universities (MacLeod, 2006). This plan was a larger symbolic gesture, used repeatedly throughout the 1950's to ward of claims that Australia's immigration policies were anti-Asian (Walker, 2005). Though students were allowed to study in Australia, the expectation was that they would return home upon graduation (Jupp, 2002; Rickard, 1996). However, the Colombo Plan, and its allowance for Asian students is seen as an early step toward the reconfiguration of immigration policy in Australia. Jupp (2002:203) writes,

> Asian students started coming to Australia in significant numbers under the
> Colombo Plan from the mid-1950s, but they were forbidden to take up permanent

residence. Most were lost to Australia, although some began the process of skilled Asians securing residence which eventually undermined the rigours of White Australia in the following decade. Quite recently, such students have become a major reservoir actively drawn on for skilled migrants.

Through changes to immigration policy, and the types of international student visas available, students have also become a reservoir for unskilled labor. Spousal allowances built into student visas allow for a partner to accompany the student, and earn a wage to help support them through the period of their education. In Woolgoolga, this has translated into the arrival of young men from Punjab, ready to work on the blueberry farms. I was told that now Woolgoolga, like in the early days of the banana industry, has a reputation for a place to go to find work. Like the grandfathers of old, these young Punjabis heard word-of-mouth in their natal villages of opportunities to make money in Woolgoolga, and they came in large numbers.

The arrival of such large numbers of young Punjabi men caused problems in the town. Locals were not comfortable with large numbers of non-English speaking youth wandering around the town, hanging out at the beach, and visiting the pub. This unease reflects just how little headway multiculturalism as national culture had made in regional New South Wales. The sudden arrival of these workers, referred to locally as "students," though none of them are actually enrolled in school, created distrust and disapproval on the part of some of Woolgoolga's white Australian population. They complained of overcrowding in rental units, in violation of rental leases. They felt the young men were disrespectful, particularly to women. They felt that these boys leered and spoke suggestively about girls at the beach, and were not happy about it. On more than one occasion, members of the Sikh community were asked to intervene, and speak to the students about expected behavior in town.

Interesting, many of the local Indians I talked to were just as uneasy, and continue to be, with the influx of foreign born Indians. One Sikh mother told me she used to make her daughter come inside the house when she saw of group of them coming down the street. Another Sikh man told me, "I don't know why…I just don't like them." These comments speak to the existence of the same distrust and disapproval within the Sikh community as in the larger community of Woolgoolga. This is an interesting role reversal for a group who has its own history of feeling discriminated against in Woolgoolga. And it demonstrates the degree to which acceptance of multiculturalism as national culture is a slow process. Not only do ideas and acceptance of integration and respect for difference remain more firmly in the realm of policy, and not in the practice on the ground, diversity within one immigrant community also continues to remain contentious.

Another layer of this story was just developing as I arrived in the field. A national refugee relocation program had recently place a small population (50-60 individuals) of Sudanese in town, and they were in the process of getting acclimated. One Sikh joked, "We're not the only 'Blacks' in town anymore." But this was not a statement of solidarities as much as it was a reminder of difference. Like the influx of Indian students that began a few years ago, these refugees represented one more group of people that will experience the unevenness of multiculturalism in regional Australia.

4.4   CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this chapter has been to review the development of multiculturalism as policy in Australia. While a quick look at the history of Australian immigration policy would indicate that

Multiculturalism replaced "White Australia" as official policy in 1972, the reality of the situation is far more complex. The dismantling of White Australia was a long slow process, beginning at least by 1947, though there has always been a "non-White" population mixed in with Australia's Anglo-Celtic majority. As changing labor needs and concerns about a thinly populated continent overlapped following the Second World War, Australia began aggressively recruiting new immigrants. A lack of response from Britain, and a need for placement of post war refuges led to the recruitment of eastern and southern Europeans for the first time. Anglo-Indian migration in the wake of de-colonization in India also contributed to recognition that a "White" Australia in terms of race was no longer feasible (Blunt, 2005). The focus became to create a population that is culturally uniform.

As the reality of Australia's new, mixed population became clear, how to "deal" with the influx on non-English speaking migrants led to shifting ideas about assimilation as a national policy. As the government moved away from assimilation, ideas about multiculturalism crept into the national dialogue. In the 1972 elections, multiculturalism was firmly part of the discourse on immigration, and became a platform issue for the Whitlam government. What multiculturalism means has shifted over time, and was not officially defined until 1989. Since that time, the official definition has been amended only twice, but the political discourse surrounding multiculturalism has undergone a great deal more change.

As Hage (2003) points out, there does not necessarily have to be overlap between multiculturalism as a government policy, and multiculturalism as a national identity. The policy of multiculturalism has become readily adopted at both national and regional levels of government. The idea of multiculturalism as national identity has enjoyed less popularity, and has even been the focal point of anti-immigration rhetoric. Particularly in times of economic or

national security uncertainty, the public discourse shrinks away from multiculturalism, while the policy being adopted throughout the nation was quietly firming up the idea of multiculturalism as a means for broadening Australia's economic interests and labor needs.

Finally, this chapter presents a brief history of Woolgoolga during the era of multiculturalism in Australia. It was a time of growth for both Woolgoolga and its Sikh Community. It was also a time where the Sikh community settled down and opened houses of worship. Farming became prosperous for Sikhs, and attracted friends and relatives from around Australia, and the world. However banana farming became harder and harder to manage in terms of financial security, and many Sikh farmers transitioned to blueberry farming. This transition led to changes in the family dynamic, the role of women in the Indian community, and a shift in immigration trends. Labor needs and changing immigration law regarding international students led to a sharp increase in young rural Indian males migrating to Woolgoolga to fill in labor needs for a growing blueberry industry. This led to tensions between Indians and Australians, and tensions between long standing Indian families and their new employees. The nature of future relations between whites and Indians in Woolgoolga will partially hinge on the nature of these labor needs and how they are filled. Initial problems with these "students" have dissipated for the most part, but there is still an underlying tension that makes that future hard to predict.

5.0   CHAPTER FIVE: UNDERSTANDING HOMELANDS-CROSS-GENERATIONAL

MEANING IN A DIASPORA

On a cool night in June, as people milled about the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, digesting the night's Langar, and coming and going from the main hall, as the words of an Akhand Path filtered down through the PA system, I sat outside talking with a small group of Sikh men. We sipped hot chai, some people wrapped in blankets to ward off the cool Australian winter's night air. Conversation had meandered all over, covering things from Punjabi politics to local personalities, and most everything in between. At one point, however, two men began talking about Punjab, and specifically about land in Punjab. They were discussing a local man, a fellow Sikh, who had recently sold of his land holdings in Punjab for a fair amount of money, to help finance the building of a home for his children in Australia. As one of the men lamented the fact that there would soon be no Punjabis left in Punjab, the other said he would always hold on to his two acres, regardless of how much he could get for them. Current prices for some of the best land in Punjab were hovering around $100,000 AU per acre, so it was clearly a temptation for diasporic Sikhs who had no intention of returning to live in Punjab. But the fear, as articulated by one of these two gentlemen, was that selling of ancestral homes was problematic, and could eventually lead to the permanent separation of Sikhs from Punjab. He said, "One day we will wake up, and have no home to return to."

This chapter will focus specifically on this issue- the relationship between Australian Sikhs and their cultural homeland of Punjab. In approaching this issue, I will critically engage some of the literature on diaspora and transnationalism, and work through some of the prevalent themes found within that body of literature. At the same time, I will be focusing my attention on the differences that exist between generations of Sikhs in Woolgoolga, with specific focus on two separate aspects of that relationship. First, I will examine ethnographically how different generations of Sikhs talk about Punjab, and about India. In this analysis, special attention will be paid to differing attitudes about the nature of Punjab, and its importance in the larger psyche of diasporic Sikhs living in Australia.

The second aspect of this relationship between Sikhs and their homeland that I will focus on will be differing degrees of knowledge about the political history of Punjab, with specific focus on the Khalistani era. I will argue that older generations of Sikhs, who lived through the Khalistani era, are keenly aware of the nuances of the issues that underscored the militancy, and its demise. And while they look to that time as an extremely important time for Sikhs everywhere, they lack any sympathy for the idea of an independent Sikh homeland. Their children, however, are often much less informed about the politics of the era. Yet, they are much more likely to support the notion that Sikhs suffer mistreatment in India, and need a separate state. In moving through these issues, I hope to demonstrate that Punjab does not exist in the collective imagination of Australia Sikhs as "a place," universally understood and appreciated. Rather, Punjab means different things to different people. And this multivalent quality of Punjab's place in the imagination of Sikhs is strongly influenced by generational differences in understanding history.

5.1   THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Using a variant of transnationalism as framework, Dusenbery (2001) argues that Sikhs in Australia are positioned in three distinct ways vis a vis Australia, and more directly a sense of belonging within Australia's multicultural fabric. He identifies a sort of hierarchy of immigrant positionality, in terms of their ability to move between cultures, their sense of responsibility to Punjab, and their sense of inclusion in what Hage (1998) calls "governmental belonging": the degree to which individuals attempt to influence governmental policy to their own end. Dusenbery's typology includes what he calls, cosmopolitan Australian Sikhs, (bi)local Australian Sikhs, and transnational labor migrants. And while a case could certainly be made for the presence of all three in Woolgoolga, Dusenbery argues that Woolgoolga is mostly inhabited by (bi)local Australian Sikhs. This is a point I will return to examine in more detail. But first, let's look at the typology itself.

5.1.1   Cosmopolitan Australian Sikhs

In alignment with Hannerz (1989, 1990), Dusenbery defines "cosmopolitan" as a person who can move smoothly between cultural contexts, who has both educational and cultural capital that is not linked to territory, but that is instead transferable and flexible. He (Dusenbery, 2001: 245) writes, "Cosmopolitans challenge the dualism of home and abroad, since they are competent operating in various spatial and cultural contexts and are comfortable interacting with those from different localities and diverse cultural backgrounds." He identifies these cosmopolitans among the Australian Sikh community as skilled migrants or migrants who entered the country as post-graduate students and remained on in a professional capacity. These individuals are found mostly

in urban areas, and represent a group of people who are financially successful, well integrated into Australian society, and who have well establish global social and familial networks, with friends and relatives living in several countries. Finally, Dusenbery (2001:246) argues that cosmopolitans aspire to influence politics and policy at all levels of government, but particularly at the level of the state, with regards to issues surrounding citizenship, immigration, multiculturalism, anti-racism, and education. This dedication to making Australia home, coupled with the flexible nature of their cultural affiliation makes cosmopolitan Sikhs less connected to Punjab in the eyes of other Sikhs.

While there are certainly Sikhs living in Woolgoolga who fit these criteria, in some ways, as cosmopolitans, there is little doubt that the rhythm of rural, agricultural life in Woolgoolga neutralizes some of those qualities. For instance, foreign educated men who marry into farming families in Woolgoolga, usually through pre-existing kin and social networks, still find themselves heavily investing their time and energy in agricultural pursuits. In fact, the president of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee during my field stay was born in India, raised in Woolgoolga, and educated in Sydney. He earned a university degree in engineering and when he finished school he returned to Woolgoolga to help run the farm. He is now financially successful as a farmer, and is active in the local Sikh community, but lacks, at least in appearances, the qualities that Dusenbery uses to define a "cosmopolitan." Singh (2001:239) writes, "As Woolgoolga is a small place, with a rural and strong agricultural environment, despite its Western location and outlook, there is less pressure within the Sikh community for social change." This works both in terms of slow adoption of western attitudes and ideas, and the absorption of cosmopolitan thinking by more traditional values and mores. In fact, when I told a Sikh woman in Sydney of my intention to go to Woolgoolga to study the

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Sikhs there, her response was "Why? They are so boring there." However, I would argue that many of Woolgoolga's Sikh residents are fully capable of cosmopolitan behavior, and do use their own cultural hybridity to their advantage when necessary.

5.1.2   (bi)local Australian Sikhs

Dusenbery (2001:246) describes (bi)locality as "a Sikh who literally has 'two homes,' one in the village in Punjab and the other in the ethnic neighborhood in Australia, but who participates in a single social network and cultural frame encompassing both homes."   He identifies Woolgoolga's farmers as archetypical examples of this type of positionality, someone who travels frequently between Woolgoolga and their natal village in Punjab, but who remains heavily invested in their Australian life, both emotionally and financially. Dusenbery argues that they may be more invested than their cosmopolitan counterpart, because they lack the cultural capital and flexibility to migrate elsewhere, and because they are financially invested in the land. He writes, "In the case of those [(bi)local Sikhs] in Woolgoolga, their grandfathers were sojourners; their parents were settlers; they are locals. But they are at home in Australia in a very different way from the cosmopolitan." As I have discussed elsewhere, it is the "grandfather" stories which underscore narratives of belonging for many of the Sikh families in Woolgoolga, so in this way, Dusenbery is quite right. However, I would argue that Sikhs in Woolgoolga are capable of managing elsewhere, both in terms of their cultural knowledge, and their financial ability. That they choose to remain in rural Australia has as much to with notions of family obligation, the financial investment that Dusenbury speaks of, and a general comfort level with "small town" living as it does with anything else.

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According to Dusenbery, however, (bi)locals are much less invested in the political process, or with issues surrounding immigration and citizenship, issues that the children of cosmopolitan Sikhs might be invested in. They instead have a passive acceptance of belonging, and keep mostly to themselves. However, Dusenbery acknowledges that the children of (bi)local Australian Sikhs have the potential of becoming more cosmopolitan than their parents. He (2001:248-49) writes, "Not surprisingly, the Australian-born children of the (bi)locals run the risk that higher education, occupational mobility and travel will make them too cosmopolitan to fit into the local community, and they may find themselves caught between the model of their parents and the example provided by Sikh cosmopolitans" This seems to be very much the case, with many children of Woolgoolga's Sikhs demonstrating a desire to go to University, and when possible, pursue occupations not available to their parents. It is also clear that these younger Sikhs have a very different notion about their own relationship with Punjab than that of their parents. It is not so clear, however, what role this difference in educational or occupational options for Sikhs born in Australia plays in these differing ideas about "homeland."

5.1.3   Transnational Labor Migrant

Dusenbery's third category of positionality in Australia is that of the transnational labor migrant. He describes this type of migrant as less connected to Australia than the (bi)local Sikh, but less capable of navigating the global cultural fields in the way that a cosmopolitan Sikh might. They lack both the ability to engage in governmental belonging, like a cosmopolitan, nor passive belonging, like the (bi)local. Rather, transnational labor migrants exist in the margins, both political and socially (Dusenbery, 2001). In Woolgoolga, these migrants exist in the form "students," migrant agricultural workers who are in Australia on international student visas,

either as students themselves, or as the spouses of students. And as the local farmers have transitioned from banana farming to the farming of blueberries, the demand for this kind of labor has increased. This suggests that the presence of "students" in Woolgoolga will also only increase as time goes on.

5.2   ONE MAN'S STORY OF NOSTALGIA

While the story of Jorahvar Singh is one of an atypical Woolgoolga Sikh, there are certain aspects of his story, and his attitudes toward Punjab, that fit very nicely in to Dusenbery's typology as a (bi)local Sikh. Here, I want to tell his narrative, and explore some of the ways in which he is a typical (bi)local Australian Sikh, as a launch point to analyze generational differences in how local Sikhs conceptualize Punjab in this diasporic setting. In telling his story, I am including his narrative of family migration, and including his "grandfather" story, to establish his own narrative of belonging, one that displays both his belonging in Australia, and his deeply nostalgic connection with his grandfather's village in Punjab, a village that Jorahvar repeatedly refers to as "our village" throughout our interview.

5.2.1   Jorahvar's Story

Jorahvar Singh was born in Woolgoolga, in the mid 1960's. But his story, like those of many of Woolgoolga's Sikh families, did not begin there. It began long ago, with the arrival in Australia of his grandfather in 1895. Like others, Jorahvar had always believed that his grandfather arrived in 1900, just before the passage of the White Australia policy. The discovery of a passport with

the date of 1895 stamped on it has lead to a recent change in the story, but only a minor one. His grandfather, who "came over" by way of a ticket someone else purchased, but decided not to use, first settled in the Clarence Valley, near the town of Grafton, NSW. He worked in the sugar cane fields, and earned extra money selling vegetables and doing odd jobs. Like many of the grandfathers, described as "Pioneers" in Bhatti's (2001) book on Woolgoolga's Sikhs, Jorahvar's grandfather came to Australia with the express purpose of making money to bring home to India. And that is exactly what he did. Jorahvar explains:

> So he came out because there were two brothers in India, his younger brother and himself, and we only had 2 acres of land, it was really hard to live in India. So he came looking for a better life. He was a young man, he was only 18, 19 years old. And he came out [to Australia] and he looked for work…His major time he spent in the Clarence valley, which is close to here. Grafton. He worked as a sugar cane farming person…chopping cane, and he also sold veggies. Whatever you could get your hands on- corn, peeling corn, whatever he could do. It was all labor intensive work. And then he went back to India. He never stayed long. He always came and went. He just kept coming and going, taking some money back to India. And the story in India is that he built a house outside of the internal village. He built it out in the fields, and I have seen that house. It is torn down now. He bought 12 acres of land with his earnings. And we've still got those 12 acres of land. It was divided up between the sons…the, ah, grandchildren.

The fact that his grandfather built his house in the fields is a great source of pride for Jorahvar. For in his mind, this was a very Australian thing to do. He sees his family, beginning with his grandfather, to be very progressive, and quick to adopt Australian lifeways. Another

great source of pride was the fact that the house had archways in it that were modeled after the archways of the Anglican Church in Grafton. Jorahvar's grandfather had brought Australia to Punjab, and for that he was a pioneer, as well.

The other thing I remember vividly, and I know more about it now, was the archways, I think I told you about it the other day…the arches in Granddad's home…nowhere else were there arches like that. And now I discovered the cathedral on the Clarence River has the exact same arches as inside my [Grandfather's house]…well, you have an open courtyard, and then you go into the foyer, and then internally, they had arches internally there…they are exactly the same as the Clarence cathedral. And that for me was a spinout, too. I will never forget that.

When I build a house, I am going to put a whopping big veranda on it. That's not an Indian thing. It's an Aussie thing. So, Granddad would have been aspiring as a migrant, to looking at the…The Clarence Cathedral was the only majestic building around, so he would have really got a kick out it. I am sure he would have. He would have got a "Wow." There's no way to prove it. He's got them inside his house. No one else in the village has got a dome like that. Not a dome, it is a…Christian Arch. There's lots of round arches in town. There's lots of pointy looking arches [gestures toward the gurdwara behind us] in our village. But nowhere is there this red brick turned into…it's almost. Yeah. [Trails off]

Finally, when talking about his grandfather, Jorahvar recounts his experiences of going to India, and meeting villagers who remember his grandfather fondly. His grandfather had learned

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to ride a horse while working Australia, and one of the things he did upon returning to Punjab was to purchase a horse for himself. Jorahvar tells the story like this:

> Great man, he used to ride a horse. And he learned those skills out here, I think, on the farms here in Australia. But when he went back to India, he bought a horse. And when you go back to the villages now, they always say things like "Ah, We always knew when [my grandfather] was coming. We could hear the horse riding along the cobble stone. So that's a real nice history. I love that…when you go back to India and they talk about [those] things…

When we talked about his grandfather, and his commitment to Sikhism, Jorahvar was quick to point out that his grandfather was a baptized Sikh. But he also quickly pointed out that his grandfather acted as bridge between other migrant Indians and the outside world, something he very closely associates with himself, and his entire family, both historically and contemporaneously. For him, there is continuity between the past and the present.

> My grandfather was a practicing amritdhari Sikh…which was good. He also had year 8 level education in India. And why I mention that is because not a lot of the people were educated here, and one of granddad's jobs when it was raining, they'd all write letters and they'd all come to him in the sugar cane fields in Grafton, to have him write letters back to India. He could write the gurmukhi script. And that's a really nice thing. I like that as well. It just gives that level of participation. All our family now, all of us, we are all involved in the community in some way, in some sort of field. I just think that's nice to have that background, as well, in that area.

Jorahvar's grandfather married in India, and had three sons. He brought all three of them to Australia when they were all fairly young, and by that time, they had all come to Woolgoolga. The three boys became part of what Dusenbery (2001) refers to as the "settler" generation in the area. The youngest of the three was the first Indian to attend primary school in Woolgoolga, according to Jorahvar[17]. All three boys married and settled in the area, eventually bringing over wives from Punjab. The two older brothers,one of whom was Jorahvar's father, married sisters, a practice described to me as pretty routine:

> Well, Marriage is a gamble. The arranged marriage scenario is a hard call. If you already know a family, and there are already commonalities there, you can link marriages that way. There's two ways of thinking about it…on the girls side, [marrying siblings] strengthens their side of things, so that they won't be rejected or treated badly… Well, there's a shame thing already there, you know. They've already got this linkage, and you don't want to treat somebody bad, or it will get through the whole family. That's how it is a good system. I suppose it has its negatives as well. You never get any fresh people in. You always get in the same type of people. If you go and get married in the city, or something, you might get this new, sparkling person with different ideas and thoughts, if you can handle them [laughs]…makes life good.

Jorahvar explained that his father and mother had been betrothed at the age of 13 or 14, though their actual marriage did not take place for some time. But unlike his own father before him, Jorahvar's father brought his wife and children over to Australia with him, and set up a permanent settlement. Jorahvar was born in Woolgoolga in 1966, the second youngest of six

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[17] This claim is reminiscent of some of the "Sikh Firsts" I discussed in Chapter Three, claims to being the first to do something as a mechanism for legitimizing claims of belonging.

children. Two of his siblings were born in India, the oldest and the fourth in line. This demonstrates that even though the wife and children were brought over to Australia, the whole family continued to move between the two continents, and that India was never far from their minds. This fact was further accentuated by the fact that Jorahvar's father also built a house in Punjab with the money he earned working in Australia.

> Yeah, so that's Dad and them's story. They never went back to India to make anything, but Dad built a house. That was [built with money earned] from here. It is a really nice house. It is still standing. It has actually got a really nice plaque on it […] It says " Deva Singh," that was his Indian name. "Australian." It has got a big plaque there, "Australian." Because that's what we're known as, we're the Australians.

The house serves as home for Jorahvar and his family whenever they return to India for vacations or for family events. And in the years in between visits, a village family lives in the home, and keeps it up. But it represents much more than a place for them to stay. The house, like his grandfather's house, and horse for that matter, represent the (bi)locality of these men's lives. Time spent in Australia, and the back and forth between India and Australia that came from understanding the migration system, allowed for the building of families, and the building of *izzat*, or family honor. This was done through the construction of nicer, newer houses in their natal villages, and the purchasing of more farm land in Punjab. Whether it is the building of a farm house, complete with Anglican Archways, in the middle of the fields, or the riding of a horse down cobble stones paths, or simply, and most explicitly, with a plaque on the wall, these men inserted Australia into village life in Punjab. They also clearly marked their understanding of Australian society in the naming of their children. Both Jorahvar's grandfather, and later

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father, opted to name their male children with Anglo names, as well as Indian names. That they did not afford their daughters the same treatment is both interesting, and not particularly surprising. Interestingly, Jorahvar did not carry on this tradition, giving his own children all traditional Indian names. He said he deliberately did so, thinking that they (Sikhs) had been in Australia for over 100 years, and should no longer have to adopt "Australian ways," for they were just as Australian as the next person. "Australians can have any name, we are a diverse group of people. We should be proud of whatever heritage we have," Jorahvar explained. This can be read as an assertion by Jorahvar that his Sikh-ness and his Australian-ness do not stand in opposition of one another.

When Jorahvar was three years old, his father died in a car accident, leaving his mother to raise six children in a foreign land. With limited English skills, and no farm land, this would prove to be a challenge. Jorahvar recalls how his father, and his uncles, had a tendency to buy and sell land in Woolgoolga, but rarely held on to it for long. He explained, "They never kept anything …Uncle, Dad, they just cleared it, put the farm in, made some money, and then sold it." With the passing of his father, life became tough for Jorahvar and his family. They received land as a gift from one of his father's former business partners. Jorahvar's mother received 2 half-acre blocks of land. In a statement that demonstrated his Australian side, Jorahvar explained the situation to me like this (italics are mine):

> And when Dad died, they told my Mum that if you ever need a hand, or need the
> help, we're always here for you, because they knew Dad. And that is a real Aussie
> thing to. *It is a real mateship, you know, when you're mates, you're mates*. So
> Mum took that up, and I remember that as well. I was older then, I don't know, I
> was always in the bloody midst of all the adult stuff, but so we had 2 half-acre

blocks. We bought one, and the other one he just gave it to us and said, 'when the boys grow up, they can pay for it.' I remember that vividly. And that was a really good thing.

The passing of Jorahvar's father impacted his life in many ways, not the least of all in that his mother began to exert her influence over all of her children. While his dad had been a bit of a freewheeler who understood how to navigate Australian social and economic life, Jorahvar's mother had some very solid ideas about the role that she wanted Sikhism to play in the lives of her children. She had all of her children "keeping their hair" from the time of their birth, in accordance with the Khalsa *rahit*, or code of conduct handed down by Guru Gobind Singh (MacLeod, 1984). Jorahvar recounts how this put her at odds with school teachers regarding the children's lack of swimming. He explained that she had to comb out all of their hair, and the hair of an Uncle's six children, too. This was too much work to have to do over again every time the children went swimming, so it was forbidden. She also insisted her kids speak only Punjabi in the home, largely due to her lack of English. Jorahvar insists this is the reason that all of his brothers and sisters speak such good Punjabi, good enough to garner compliments from Indian relatives whenever they visit Punjab.

When asked about the role that Punjab played in his life growing up, Jorahvar pointed again to several things regarding his mother raising the kids on her own. Besides language, and the keeping of the Sikh "uniform," she insisted they attend gurdwara services regularly. Growing up in a Woolgoolga that had two gurdwaras made this easy, but they still had to walk from one end of town, by the beach, to the "Temple on the Hill,' the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara every Sunday morning, a walk of 1 km that I myself did a few times, so I can attest to its length. Every

Sunday was spent at the temple, and Jorahvar even took up the tabla, which he still plays quite regularly during Sunday services.

Another way in which Jorhavar's mother made sure her kids were connected to their heritage was to tell them stories at night- Punjabi folk tales, stories of the gurus, the history of their natal village, things of that nature. Jorahvar explains:

At night time, we had no TV. We were really poor. We would all get in the double bed with some blankets. I remember it, we would be hiding under the blankets, and Mum would tell stories about stuff like that…I am a parent now, I pass on what I know, so it was what Mum knew. And she didn't have her English stuff here, so she didn't have anything else. You have got to make it interesting, you've gotta entertain the kids. But I think also the Sikh part of it was always a link to the bravery… whatever odds come to you, don't worry about it. Because Dad wasn't around, and we had hard times. I remember. It doesn't matter that Dad's not around. It doesn't matter if whatever…Don't worry about the odds life has thrown at you. Think about your Gurus. And I think that worked really well.

The stories that his mother told him as a child, and the descriptions of the villages in Punjab, and their surroundings, became the basis for Jorahvar's nostalgia for India, and for the way of life there, a way of life he never actually experienced firsthand in his own background. He talked about how he knew all about the village long before he ever set foot in Punjab, how he knew the history, how he knew about some of the people who lived there, and how he felt personally connected to it. When I asked to recall his first trip to Punjab, he perked right up, and said, "Ah, love it!" He went on to describe in detail the very first time he went to India, with his mother, a brother, and his Uncle. He was 9 years old, and he turned 10 while there. He has been

back every ten years or so, and he now sends his eldest son, now age 14, to a school in Amritsar, run by American converts to Sikhism, known as the 3HO (Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization). But this first trip to Punjab clearly had a lasting impact on Jorahvar. Here is how he described his first impressions:

My first experience, and always the thing that I have instilled in [my son], is going to my village. Going to my Granddad's village, which is my village. And because Mum had told me what it looked like, looking out the little car to see if it looked like I had imagined…and seeing the swamp, and smelling the swamp. I will never forget that swamp. The smell…it's got a distinct smell… and then seeing Dad's house, Mum's house. It was all locked up in those days. We couldn't live in it because it was all overgrown. And meeting Thay. Everyone talked about Thay. See, Granddad's family had left, but Granddad's cousin had never left until recently. In 1987, they went to Canada. Thay was the old lady there, and Mum used to talk about Thay. And I met Thay […] meeting her was just like, 'Wow.' The whole village was like…I was part of it. I just knew. I just looked at it, and I thought, ah…that's the house. That's the well, right in front of our house. It was a communal well, and Granddad and them used to sit there. The horse riding thing. 'Cause its all made of bricks turned upside down…cobblestone. So, that sound when we walked, 'cause you know, we wore Western shoes …Click…click…click. And Granddad's horse. I know it sounds silly, but I love India. I have always had my personal thing with India, and I can see all that…

Jogahvar's impressions of Punjab as a child were not those of a tourist, or a visitor, but of a person with a deep seated connection to the land, the people, and the lifestyle. He felt like he belonged. Now, these memories are surely filtered through years of living, and visiting, and learning about his own family's history. And it is this temporal distance, and the looking back it enables, that has help build nostalgic bridges across the spatial divide between Australia and Punjab. In a similar fashion, Jorahvar sees the landscape of Woolgoolga through a historic, nostalgic lens, one that sees his family's impact on the development of the town, and its Sikh community.

I spent one of my last afternoons in Woolgoolga driving up and down the rutted hillside roads that snake through the banana orchards that cover the foothills overlooking the town, and its pristine beaches. Plots of land, side by side, with little or no distinction between where one farm ends and the next begins, make up the Western skyline of Woolgoolga. But as we drove through, Jorahvar pointed to areas of land his father or his uncle once owned, once cleared, and once sold. He pointed out a lone avocado tree in a field, and told me his father had planted that tree over 50 years ago. We drove through the newer residential areas on the west side of the Pacific highway, and he pointed out houses that such and such a family owned, or once owned. This place belonged to that person's father, and this place is where so and so once lived. It was like the town came to life through his memories, and through the histories he had learned as an adult. There was nostalgia present, in the same way it was when he talked about Punjab, and his grandfather's village. Both of these villages, one in Australia and one in Punjab, where connected by this man's family and the narrative of that family that he has constructed over a lifetime.

Jorahvar's narrative also raises some questions about the categories that Dusenbury (2001) proposes for Woolgoolga, and it's Sikhs. While Jorahvar does represent well the notion of (bi)locality, and demonstrates his own flexibility in functioning both in an Australian cultural milieu, and an Indian one, his family's narrative points to some of the nuances present in this "migrant" community. One of the defining characteristics of Woolgoolga's Sikh community is the variability of diasporic experience for its members, some of whom might be born on Australia, but who also found a spouse in the villages of Punjab. Thus, in some families, there are members of the same generation with very different degrees of experience with Australia, and with very different degrees of integration as a result. In Jorahavar's family, his father had been in Australia since he was a child, and was quite adept at navigating the cultural system in place in Woolgoolga. His wife, Jogahvar's mother, was much less adapted to life in Australia, and found herself in a very difficult position with the passing of her husband. As a woman in a traditional Indian community, and a recent migrant in a relatively unaccepting host country, she was at a double disadvantage.

One of the shortcomings of Dusenbury's typology, and of many typologies, is that in creating umbrella categories of analysis, it glosses over rich diversity within those categories. This is not a new critique, but one that warrants a brief discussion. Dusenbury talks about the (bi)locality of Woolgoolga's Sikh farmers, but not all of Woologoolga's Sikhs fit neatly into that category. Jorahvar's family migration narrative throws this in to sharp relief, demonstrating the disparity between both well established diasporic Sikhs and their newly migrated spouses, and the way this can play out along gender lines. However, it is important to note that spouses from Punjab have been historically found for both males and females living in Woolgoolga, though this trend is beginning to shift. It has been a common practice for "daughters" of the village to

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seek marriageable partners in Punjab as often as it has been for males from Woolgoolga. In recent years, though, and likely as a result of a growing Sikh population nation-wide, marriage partners are being found in other parts of Australia, for both men and women in Woolgoolga.

5.3   OTHER REFLECTIONS ON PUNJAB

Jorahvar's story is not unlike the stories other people tell when asked about their family's origins. Some elements of his family's migration narrative are unique, but many others are part of a general narrative framework shared by many of Woolgoolga's Sikh families. There were other stories of "grandfathers" arriving just prior to federation, searching for opportunity, without any plans of settlement. There were other stories of fathers and uncles being brought along after they were old enough to work. And there were many tales of those fathers settling down, sending for wives and children, and becoming permanent residents in Australia. And there were other stories about feeling connected to Punjab by people who had never actually lived there full time. The case of Amarjit Singh is a good example.

Amarjit Singh was born in Punjab in 1952, but at the age of 12, he became the third generation of his family to set off for Australia, this time for good. His grandfather was an early immigrant, arriving around 1901, and like many of the other grandfathers, he had no intention of settling there. He took remittances back, and purchased land in Punjab, and even some land in what is now Pakistan, in western Punjab. He and his brother took turns coming out; one would stay in Punjab and work the land while the other would go to Australia to cut sugar cane, or work other odd jobs. He built a brick house in the village, in India, and later brought his sons out. Amarjit's father worked in Queensland, and had no real intention of staying in Australia full

time, though he did consider purchasing some farm land. His father, Amarjit's grandfather would have none of it, saying this is not our home, India is our home. But Amarjit's father caught wind of banana farming in Woolgoolga, and decided to give it a try. Amarjit explains:

My uncle was going to go back to India in 1962, and he travelled from Cairns by rail, through Woolgoolga/Coffs Harbour. He stopped here, he had some friends here. So he stayed with them, and he saw the banana industry here. He thought, you know, we could make a start here. It didn't require much capital, but you can easily start off, and have your own farm and land. And he got on a ship to go to India, but he but he advised my father to come down to Woolgoolga [from Queensland]…and then in '62, my father came here.

Amarjit came to Woolgoolga in 1964, and has been living there ever since. His relationship with Punjab is different than some of the other Sikh in the area, for he distinctly remembers growing up there. Return trips to the village for him are marked by noticing how different it is each time. But he maintains ancestral land there, and has recently spent money to build a new house to replace his grandfather's brick one. He did so because he wanted to make a place that his own children would be comfortable visiting.

The original house, my grandfather built in '36. And it stood until 1997, I think. Somewhere around there. And she [Amarjit's cousin] said, 'now look, everyone else in the village who are expats, you know, living in Canada or America, they got huge houses- modern, power, running water. So I said alright. And we pulled that down, and built a new one on the same site. It's a house, you know…I think four bedrooms, a couple of showers, a dining room, electricity. Modern cons [conveniences]…I mean, fine, I can still go and live as I was before, but my

children, they are not happy going back to the village. And other migrant kids too.

They don't want to go back to Punjab, where there's nothing there…Unless you

build something which is decent.

James Watson's (1977) research among Hong Kong migrants living in Britain has shown some similar trends, as has Arthur Helweg's research among Sikhs living in Gravesend, UK (1986). While Helweg discusses the increase in *izzat*, or family honor, that comes with having family members living overseas, he also describes the way that remittances get invested in the natal village, in the form of new home construction and other projects. Similarly, Watson (1977) discusses "sterling houses," built by emigrant Hong Kong residents with money earned in Britain. These houses, so called because of the remittances that pay for them, are often much larger and much nicer than homes traditionally built in the area. Watson (1977:208) writes, "It is impossible to ignore these new houses, because they loom high above the neighboring structures and dominate many New Territories villages, thereby announcing the presence of successful emigrants." Watson points out that these houses are built by both older migrants who are hoping to retire in their natal villages, and also by younger workers who look to raise their own status. In the case of Woolgoolga, houses have been built in Punjab for a number of reasons, like those mentioned above. Jorahvar and Amarjit both tell of houses their grandfathers had built, houses that are both the result of, and a display of their having worked overseas. However, there is growing concern among Woolgoolga's Sikh community regarding ways to keep their children interested in visiting Punjab. And it is to these children of migrants that I want to turn to now, to look at how they talk and think about Punjab, in a manner very different from that of their parents.

5.4   PUNJAB IS A FILTHY, STINKY PLACE

When I originally proposed this research, I expected younger generations of Sikhs living in Woolgoolga, those under the age of 35, to have a strong, romanticized notion of what their relationship with Punjab would be. I expected these younger members of the diasporic community to feel what Appadurai (1996) refers to as 'Nostalgia without memory,' or the emotional longing for that which one has never experienced. What I found out is that many families take regular trips to Punjab, and everyone has been there at least once. So the idea of nostalgia for that which has not been experienced is not so widespread, though it can be argued that a few weeks every few years is not the same as having lived there. Also, the degree to which these young Sikhs, as the relatives that everyone knows about, but few in Punjab actually know, get treated like minor celebrities when they arrive. This too would make for a very different kind of experience than that of their parents. But what I found much more surprising was the degree to which many of these young Sikhs I talked to did not like Punjab that much at all. Some were largely indifferent to Punjab, while others had opinions that bordered on downright hostile. Here, I want to present some of the ways that young Sikhs in Woolgoolga are talking and thinking about Punjab, and about India. Every member of this younger generation that I spoke with had been to India at least once, and most had been several times. And what I found was that the weather, the population density, the constant attention from distant and unknown relatives, and the general differences in attitudes all created a sense of unease, or even distaste for the these young Australian Sikhs.

5.4.1 Population and pollution

The first time I asked anyone in Woolgoolga about their opinions about Punjab, I asked a 21 year male who had recently "found" his religion. He comes from a family that is not very active in the Gurdwara, and until about a year earlier, he had kept his hair short, and his face clean shaven. But recent religious experiences had changed his mind about Sikhism, and he began to become actively involved temple life. The first time I met him, he was teaching Sikh history to young children on a Sunday morning, something done to keep the kids busy while their parents were attending the Gurdwara. Later, when we talked at length for the first time, I asked him about trips to India. He had been four times, and was hoping to go back in the upcoming year, if he could afford it. And when I asked him what he thought of Punjab, he didn't hesitate. He said, "It's a filthy, stinky place." When I asked him to elaborate, he said, "It's just dirty." Another time, he described a visit to Punjab as "smelly, stinky, boring."

I would have chalked this up to one man's opinion if it hadn't been for the way others later talked about their own experiences in Punjab. Some described it as overcrowded, while others talked about how violent it was. Others still described the feeling of always being the center of attention, and having to talk to, and spend time with people they didn't know, but who clearly knew a whole lot about them. I have several ethnographic examples I want to use here. All of the subjects were between the age of 18 and 35, all had been born and raised in Woolgoolga, and all but one of them expressed some degree of apathy or disdain for Punjab. Each seemed to feel like going to India was important, and many said they would probably take their own kids there someday. Yet they all seemed not to like it.

Manjit Singh is a 32 year old banana farmer, one of the few farmers left who have not converted to blueberries. He was born in Brisbane, but moved to Woolgoolga at a young age,

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when his father gave up accounting to become a farmer. He is married, with children, and his wife is from Punjab, having moved to Woolgoolga after their wedding. The night I met him, we chatted over chai outside of the temple. And when I asked him if he had ever been to Punjab, he said he had. When he talked about his experiences with Punjab, he focused on the negative, recalling how violent a place it was, saying that people in India "do not value life."

Later, in a more formal interview setting, I asked Manjit about the first time he made a trip to Punjab. Our conversation went as follows:

Manjit: Every time we go back now, when we get back, we are always so grateful that we live in this lucky country here. It just opens your eyes, you know. Every single little bit…the first time I went over, when I think I was about 19. And it just opens your eyes. You know, you could be one of these people walking around…We're just so lucky to be where we are…

I think the impression [that I had] was just the, ah, just the pollution. It sort of got…it was just in your face […] the amount of traffic. That just blew me away, the amount of traffic on the road. The amount of population. And everyone is just trying to do anything. There were not really any set rules. We are used to following rules here. When you go to that country, there are no rules. You make your own as you go along…You always just try to do the right thing, but over there, if you did that, you wouldn't get anywhere.

RM: did you feel a connection to Punjab at all?

Manjit: Naw, there wasn't really a connection there, for me, at all, no. I was happy to see my relatives, don't get me wrong, yeah, and visiting the temples was really good…We went to Amritsar, and probably went to about another 9 or 10

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other temples. That was really good. There's a bit of meaning behind that, because there's a bit of history in India about our prophets, so when you go to these places, they really mean something to you. That was good. But at the end of the day, I knew I was coming back home. So, it wasn't too bad; you just brush everything off- The pollution, the population, the corruption, you just brush it off, 'cause you knew you were only there temporary. But to have to live there, I'll tell you what….ough…When you are there, you really appreciate what you have here.

There were certain things about Punjab that Manjit felt were worthwhile, and he acknowledged that he felt it important for his kids to experience Punjab, too. He saw it as historically important, particularly with regard to religion. But nowhere was there the sense of nostalgia or love that was always present in Jorahvar's stories about his own experiences. Punjab seemed like something Manjit had to put up with, rather than something he felt emotionally connected to.

Manpreet is a young professional woman who was born and raised in Punjab. She was educated in Sydney, and also in the interior of New South Wales, something Singh (2001) says was relatively uncommon. Daughters were not often allowed to go away to school, although it is something that is clearly becoming more common in the past couple of decades. At the age of 27, she is unmarried, also unusual for a Sikh woman in Woolgoolga. She took her first trip to Punjab at the age of 13, and I asked her if she remembered what her anticipation for that trip might have been. She answered:

 I did, because all our friends had been. And they come back and tell you stories. I did have…I am trying to remember. I think the expectation was probably at that stage of my life, I was more excited about shopping, and doing fun things, like

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being able to ride a scooter, and stuff like that. But also a little bit scared because

of the horror stories you hear, like, you know, someone dying in a crash, and so

many thieves and stuff, you gotta keep careful of your jewelry and that stuff, and

your money. And the corruption and that sort of thing.

She acknowledged that her first impressions did not match up with her expectations,

saying that once she got there, and realized it was not as dangerous as everyone was saying, she

relaxed and enjoyed herself. However, when I asked her if she would want to go back, she said:

If I was there to go by myself, and just to meet family, No, 'cause it is really

boring [laughs]. But if I was going with someone, and we're gonna do touristy

things, yeah. [I ask what kind of things]…Go visit the Taj Mahal…yeah, and go

visit the gurdwaras. Because mainly when we go, we visit the local gurdwaras,

and the Golden Temple, and that's about it.

Clearly, she did not enjoy village life, and spending time with distant relatives. That her

parents wanted to spend time in the villages, while she wanted to do 'typical' tourist things like

visit the Taj Mahal speaks to the generational differences regarding Punjab, and its place in their

lives. I went on to ask her about her feeling of connection with Punjab. Our conversation went

like this:

RM: Do you feel a personal connection to Punjab?

Manpreet: [hesitates]..em..Yeah. I think…my grandparents came from there, my

parents were born there. Definitely consider myself Punjabi, even though I just

said I don't want to go back! [laughs]

RM: Do you think that a mixed opinion of Punjab is common for people who are

born outside of it?

Manpreet: I think so. I mean, in terms of, when you...People who are born in Punjab, our age, that are here [in Australia]…they have, obviously, much more connection with Punjab, and they would do anything for their country, whatever, whatever. Obviously, I am not that connected. But still feel that, you know, that being from that background, that there's still some significance. I think most people our age probably have a similar sort of thing.

RM: do you think that most of your friends, who have grown up around here, feel similarly about Punjab?

Manpreet: Yeah, yup. Not that much of a deep connection that they're going to do anything about it. [laughs]

Again, there is a clear sense that Punjab should be important, but the degree of connection is considerably less intense than that of Manpreet's parent's generation. Going to Punjab is what these Sikhs do, but not because they necessarily want to. These younger Sikhs do not feel the emotional and nostalgic connection to Punjab that Jorahvar clearly does. But they remain aware that it is, or it should be, important to them as Sikhs. Theirs is more of an intellectual relationship than an affective one.

5.5   INDIAN POLITICS AND THE GENERATION GAP

The second area of significant difference I found in interviewing members of two distinct generations of Sikhs in Woolgoolga was the differing knowledge sets about the political struggles in Punjab between 1984 and 1995. The "Parent" generation seemed to have been deeply moved by the storming of the Golden Temple, and by the anti-Sikh Riots in New Delhi,

and elsewhere in India following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, both of which occurred in 1984. Some talked about how the frustration about what was going on in Punjab during this time, often referred to as the Khalistani era, was felt in Australia, and how some people took to the streets in protest. Some were almost arrested, others were arrested. This time period in Woolgoolga saw an increase in Sikhs taking amrit, and becoming *amritdhari*, or baptized Khalsa Sikhs (Singh, 2001). But distance in time and space have brought about changing attitudes about the idea of Khalistan, an independent Sikh state in Punjab, something that had been at the center of politics in Punjab during the 1980's and 1990's. Conversely, among members of the "Children" generation of Sikhs in Woolgoolga, attitudes about Khalistan range from complete ignorance to fiery, unquestioning support. If there was little nostalgia without memory for Punjab among these Sikhs, there was plenty of it regarding Khalistan.

5.5.1   Living Through A Crisis

For older Sikhs living in Woolgoolga, the events of 1984 in Punjab, and the ensuing Khalistani movement were not just historical events, but memories from their youth. For their children, it was more of a historical moment, and one they are not all that familiar with. The result is divergent attitudes and understanding of the time period, its politics, and the meaning it casts on Sikh history. In this section, I want to present some ethnographic examples of these differences, and explore the possible reasons why generations see this era in such a different light.

5.5.2 Sons of the Village React: "It was us bearded people…"

Many of the Sikhs I talked to who were old enough to remember the storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar by the Indian Army in June of 1984 had very powerful memories of the event, and the of the global ripple of anger that followed in the Sikh Diaspora. While most people acknowledged that the events of 1984 had little direct impact on life in Woolgoolga, several Sikh youth in Woolgoolga at the time became involved in some of the activism that was developing in the cities, like Sydney, Brisbane, and Canberra. These were mostly marches and protests at Indian Consulates or at speeches given by Australian politicians. There were Australian based Sikh groups with which these "sons of the village" became active, and there were a few who even began to grow their hair, and be more involved with the local religious community.

Akalpreet is a successful blueberry farmer, and member of one of the larger and more influential Sikh families in Woolgoolga. He is actively involved in the Guru Nanak Sikh gurdwara, and is a very pious man. He had attended the University of Sydney, and received an engineering degree before returning home to help run the family farm. We sat talking in the empty gurdwara one night, when the subject of Operation Bluestar came up:

> It brought about a big change in my life. Before '84, I was clean shaven. Actually
> that brought about a change in the diaspora. Big change. With people, sort of,
> actually started thinking about Sikhism…their own path. But, I didn't know
> about the politics there before that. I hadn't really bothered…When it happened, it
> was sort of…when we heard what happened, it was sort of like you'd been
> violated yourself. It's like you've been violated…There were a lot of marches and

that in the cities. In Canberra. Buses going down to Canberra, demonstrating against the Indian government action.

Jorahvar had a similar story to tell. He was just finishing Year 12 when he heard about what happened. He decided to get involved. He told his story this way:

Jorahvar: I left school that year. I graduate year 12 in 1984. And all that stuff happened. With our mate, Bhindranwale. That's when it happened, didn't it?

RM: 1984, in June, Operation Bluestar, as it's called...

Jorahvar: All of that, yeah. I remember that, coming home on the school bus, hearing about it all. My views now and then were different…

RM: What were your views then?

Jorahvar: Then, it was like, I was involved in that era, a little bit. '84, yeah, about that time. And I felt threatened, and 'how dare they go and do what they were doing.' The bombing and all that sort of stuff. And really angry that all those things were happening in those days…To the point that we joined a federation, the Sikh Federation in Australia. And I became active, later, not 1984, but a bit later, because of all that. I spoke at Canberra, and in Sydney. And the trade minister was here, and that big mouth of mine, was out front, there. I paid for that really dearly, because I had my name on record, and I wanted to get [my wife] out here, it delayed it like all hell…they wouldn't give me a visa […] They wouldn't give me a visa, because of my big mouth.

RM: Now, how prevalent was this feeling that you were having, around here? Were others feeling it too?

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Jorahvar: It was us bearded people. Us bearded and turbaned people, thinking that
"We are the Sikhs." So [a few of us] and the Brisbane boys and Griffith Boys, we
all got together and organized this rebel, sort of, well, not rebel, but you know, a
voice. So it was prevalent among the bearded, Amritdhari Sikhs, I suppose. Now
my views, it's not the way to go about it. It's not the way to go about it.

While not everyone was affected in the same way, it seems like younger Sikh men began
to take both their religion, and the politics of their cultural homeland more seriously. Akalpreet
returned to India in 1987 to take amrit, and become a baptized member of the Khalsa. Others
locally also took amrit, and became involved in temple life. Akalpreet explained:

I felt, you know, the Sikh youth had to take action now…To counter this attack on
our religion. So we had to become proper Sikhs ourselves, if we were going to do
that. It was the only way we could do it.

While the events of 1984 seemed to have drawn many Australian Sikhs closer to their
faith, and more emotionally connected to the politics of Punjab, this latter point has shifted over
time to thoughtful reflection about the importance of Punjabi politics to Sikhism. Many members
of this generation who were just reaching adulthood at the time of Operation Bluestar now
question the need for an independent Sikh state. They often see a need for separation of Sikhism
as a world religion from the regionalism of Punjabi politics. Similarly, though this generation of
Sikh is more likely to feel nostalgically connected to Punjab as a place, they also see a need to
not allow Sikhism to become too closely connected to the soil.

Seva is one of very few Sikh women in the Woolgoolga/Coffs Harbour area who works
with the public, but does not work primarily in a family-run business. She was born, raised, and
educated in Punjab, and moved to Woolgoolga after being married. She comes from a religious

family. When I interviewed her, and the discussion turned to Khalistan, she spent a great deal of time talking about the reasons that people were upset with the government of India at the time, and included a discussion of the allocation of water, among other things. She had lived in Punjab during the Khalistani era, and had a clear handle on the political and religious issues Sikhs were fighting for. But when I asked her about whether or not she thought Sikhs needed an independent homeland, she said this:

> I am not in favor of Khalistan; not from a religious perspective…because from a religious point of view, land is not important. It is a material thing. Physical, material things have nothing to do with spirituality. Spirituality is something different, as I understand it. And from a skills perspective, as I've said before, we're not even skilled enough to run one temple, how are we going to run a nation? [laughs] I think it will be a joke if we get a Khalistan. But the spirit behind it is that we are not getting the true representation in what we deserve. We are being ripped off. And from that perspective, you can understand why someone would want [an independent] Punjab…

Similarly, when discussing Khalistan with Jorahvar, he made a clear distinction between how he once felt about the issue, and how he now felt. While the events of 1984 inspired an emotional response in an 18 year old Jorahvar, the mid 40's Jorahvar talked about the reality of a Khalistan with much more reflection and introspection. Our conversation went as follows:

> RM: At the time, were you in support of the idea of an independent homeland for Sikhs?

> Jorahvar: Yeah, yeah, again, now I can understand it more. The threat on the Golden Temple and a Sikh became very personal, where the politics, now, you

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understand are…you know, we can survive without a homeland. It's not that

important. Like I explained earlier, the Takhts[18] are important. You don't need to

have a…in my mind. I don't think…the whole philosophy, the whole belief

doesn't need a homeland. We need to have the guru…you know the whole thing,

if you look at history, is the granth can be anywhere. Anyone can be a Sikh. You

are not born a Sikh. Anybody can live a Sikh way. So what the hell do you need a

homeland for?

The generation of Sikhs living in Woolgoolga who lived through the Khalistani Era, and who

were old enough to have a handle on what was going on at the time continue to think about, and

reflect on the ideas and the issues that surround the separatist movement. Many were instilled

with rage, and also a sense of pride in their Sikh identity by the events of 1984. Many are

painfully aware of the militancy, and the Indian government's response. These same people,

however, are less inclined to agree with the idea that Sikhs need a "homeland," or that Khalistan

would ever work. These are people who remain connected to a Punjab that is still a part of India,

and who recognize the impact of the global diaspora on Sikhism as a religion. For many of their

children, the issues and their implications are much less clear.

5.5.3 "He was a saint…"

Of the members of what I am calling the "Children's" generation, or those under the age of 35,

only one remembered the way people in town talked about 1984. He was a fairly young child at

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[18] There are five *Takhts*, or 'thrones,' that are seats of religious authority in Sikhism. Each is built in a place significant in Sikh history. The most important of these, the *Akal Takht*, is in Amritsar, in the Golden Temple Complex, and was built by the 6th Guru, Guru Hargobind. It sustained considerable damage during Operation Bluestar.

the time of the events, no more than 5 years old, and there is the possibility that his memory of this time is as informed by hearing others talking about what things were like as they are his actual experiences. However, he remembered local Sikhs in Woolgoolga be shocked and angry. He said:

> I've only got flashes. I remember the community here wasn't happy at all. I just remember when it happened, it was just talked about, for the next probably three or four months, like it was just, "Like this is not on," you know, there's nothing…we can't do nothing, but this shouldn't happen again, you know. Things like that. Basically, the community here, from what I remember, was emotionally upset, angry, whatnot. But you know there's a lot of things that, sometimes your only meant to just see, you don't really know what's really happening. You just see the end result, and you judge, that's how you judge it. Obviously the end result didn't look too good, you know, what did happen. But you can pretty much, you know…but you aren't starting to work out what's going on there.

However, when I asked him what he knew about the grievances behind the movement for Khalistan, he said he was not really sure. His knowledge that something happened is clear, but beyond that, he was not aware of what people's complaints were, or why they might have been inclined to continue fighting.

Others had simply never heard of Khalistan. They knew that something bad had happened in 1984, but were not aware of the connections between those events and the 10 year militancy that grew potent in the years to follow. Others still seemed to have 1984, and the Khalistani movement confused with other important events to take place in the Punjab since Indian Independence, including the partition in 1947.

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5.5.4 Romanticized Nostalgia

Not every younger Sikh was uniformed about Khalistan, and the struggle for an independent Sikh homeland. While this attitude was admittedly less prominent in Woolgoolga, there were those who adhered to a more romanticized view of the past, one that included a strong sense of Sikh pride, and a stronger sense that Sikhs had been, and continue to be treated poorly in India. Some of this is informed by hearing others talking about the Khalistani era, and some of it comes from seeking out information on the internet. Videos and information about Khalistan on the internet are filled with the kinds of images and descriptions that Axel (2001) identifies as a source for a subjectivity that is rooted in violence and victimhood. However, these images do not seem to only create a subjectivity based on victimhood. They also seem to stir up feelings of a romanticized nostalgia for a past that is unknown. Feelings of discrimination and mistreatment are transferred from the past to the present, and nearly 20 years of peace in Punjab are overlooked in favor of claims for autonomy. Ajit's story is instructive.

I met Ajit when I went into a local bank in Woolgoolga, to open an account. We hit it off right away, and spent much of my field stay having regular conversations about many topics. As a young man born and raised in Woolgoolga, Ajit was not atypical of many third and fourth generation "Indian boys" in the town. Now in his early 20s, he had gone to school at the public school in town, and he was heavily involved in sport. His family ran a local farm, and he was expected to help out around that farm when he could. He had recently graduated from university, which he attended at a school about three hours away, a place where many local people went to get an education. While at university, Ajit admits to having "partied" far too much and in his last year of classes, he started getting very interested in his faith. He stopped drinking, grew his hair,

and began to wear a turban, something he had not done previously. He began to do regular prayer, and think a lot about the role that religion could play in his life.

When he moved back to Woolgoolga after getting his degree, he returned to playing tabla in the gurdwara, something his had learned to do at his grandmother's encouragement. He was active in religious life in town, attending mediation classes during the week at the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara and participating in Kirtan at the First Sikh Gurdwara on Saturday nights. And then one day, Ajit cut his hair, and shaved his beard. He put away his turban. While all of this happened before I ever arrived in Woolgoolga, I was told by a few people how much of a shock it was when he decided not to "keep his hair" any longer. When I asked him about it, he said "The time just wasn't right. I know I will one day keep it again, but it is just not the right time in my life." He acknowledged that with the hair, the beard, and the turban came a sense of pressure from others about what he should be doing with his life. In all of my conversations with Ajit, he struck me as thoughtful, and deliberate, and I am sure the decision to cut his hair was not one he took lightly.

When our conversation turned to the politics of Punjab, I asked him about the Khalistani movement, and how familiar he was with it. His response was immediate:

Yes, very familiar. More familiar with that…that was interesting. Well, my thought process from being a Sikh, I think that it is the Indian government against the Sikhs, trying to wean them out. When they [the Indian Army] bombed the temple, there was no real need to do that. I don't think so. I don't know why they did that. That is like knocking over Mecca, or something. I don't understand what drove them to do that. Just because there was weapons in the temple, or because they were saying there was this "So-called Terrorist" in there that has done all

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these bad things, you know. I think the Indian Government just set it all up; it was

all just propaganda, to wean out Sikhs. They don't particularly want too many

Sikhs around, I don't think, the Hindu majority, no […] I think they are

threatened by the Sikhs…Because the Sikhs are an immortal race; if they wanted

to…you only have to look at the history to see what they're capable of. I just

think they are always going to be threatened by the Sikhs being around. Always…

I asked for clarification, and he made a distinction between the Hindu majority, and the

Government of India. He identified the government as feeling threatened, and pointed to the

demand for Khalistan as to why. He fully supported the idea of an independent Sikh state, and

felt that Sikhs still suffered discrimination in India today. He said,

Bhindranwale, Sant Jarnail Singh…he was a saint, you know. He was. They made

him out to be a terrorist, but he was a saint. There's even [He references a video

he watched on YouTube]…really good video, it leaves you with your own

opinion. From that movie, it just sold it to me.

His opinion about discrimination against Sikhs in India is not unheard of in the

global Sikh diaspora, and the assessment on Bhindranwale is not unusual either. It is

something I have heard many times before. However, it does not reflect an opinion I had

been hearing in Woolgoolga, particularly among members of the "Parent" generation.

Two things are interesting about Ajit's statements about Khalistan. First, he is clearly in favor of

a separate state for the Sikhs. The fact that the struggle in Punjab for Khalistan began and ended

before he was old enough to be aware of it is not the least bit problematic for him. I think of this

as a romanticized notion of the conflict, one filtered through time and distance that living in the

diaspora affords. Secondly, his mention of a video on YouTube, and his admission that he looked

for a lot of information on the internet demonstrates how central a place the internet has become for knowledge among today's youth. It also demonstrates that Appadurai's (1996) "media-scape," driven by the proliferation of ideas and images afloat on various global media super-highways, is a location where diasporic identity is formed, and where elements of a people's narrative is constructed. More specifically, it also shows how the internet can be a site of identity production for diasporic Sikhs, a site that is formulated on ideas of masculinity and of violence (Axel, 2001). But it is also a site for a nostalgic reframing of the past in the present, and source for pride in being a Sikh.

5.5.5   Women, Marriage and the Family

As a transnational community, Sikhs in Australia, and more specifically in Woolgoolga, have historically maintained connections to Punjab in several ways. In addition to travelling back and forth, managing land and family affairs in the Punjab, Sikh men have also historically returned to the village in Punjab to find suitable spouses. In the early years of migration, it was not uncommon for a man to marry in Punjab, start a family, and return alone to Australia to continue to work. Women remained in Punjab, raising children. By the 1950's, Sikhs began taking their children who were old enough, and bringing them to Australia to work. Several people I met in Australia had family members who fit this description, and it was often these children who in adulthood first established permanent residency.

Permanent residency brought about changes in the Sikh community in Woolgoolga, in large part because the demographic makeup of the community was no longer predominantly male. Bhachu (1991) has argued that the arrival of Sikh women in Britain contributed to the reemergence and reaffirmation of certain religious and cultural values that had become lax

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during earlier years of migration, when most migrants were male. Marie deLaperveche (1984) argues that the transition from migrant men to settled families in Woolgoolga saw a surge in the number of women and children in the seaside village. Whether the arrival of women in Woolgoolga resulted in a return to more traditional practices is not documented, but permanent settlement did result in changing demographics with regard to Sikhs, and shifting patterns in terms of marriage and spouse selection.

In the introduction to her edited volume on cross-border marriage, Constable (2005) points out that cross-border marriage has become increasingly common in recent decades, and with this increase in occurrence certain visible trends have emerged. While certainly not always the case, in is most common for women from poorer countries to migrate through marriage to wealthy countries. In the context of Woolgoolga, cross border marriages between brides from Punjab and grooms from Australia would seem to mirror this tendency, but it is not that simple. Other factors contribute to the decision to migrate from Punjab to Australia rather than merely economic ones, and brides are not the only ones utilizing transnational marriage as a means for migration (Charsley, 2005; Mooney, 2006; 2011).

Constable (2005) argues that notions of global hypergamy, or marrying up, are paradoxical in nature, and careful attention needs to be paid to who benefits from marriage migration, and in what ways. Rait (2005) argues that while arranged marriage is a tradition that has travelled with transnational Sikhs, more than simply individual attributes are considered when finding a suitable husband for marriageable Sikh women. She writes (2005:97), "Another important factor when arranging a marriage is family attributes, including standing and status of the family." Combined with such other characteristics as caste background, region of origin, education, occupation, and the like, the status of the family is important, and that status is raised

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by overseas migration. This is true for both potential brides and grooms, something the Mooney (2011) discusses regarding the education of Sikh women in Punjab. Even though the assumption is that Sikh women will put family obligations before any type of career, education and English fluency make transnational marriage more likely for a girl growing up in Punjab.

Marriage also is utilized as a means for the migration of family, as Mooney (2006) describes in the context of Canada. Mooney argues that traditional forms of kinship in Punjab, especially ones not recognized by Canada's Reunification policies related to immigration become lines along which marriages are arranged, bringing families together across borders. Sikh women, born in Canada are often arranged to be marriage to males in extended kin systems to facilitate migration of those relatives. As a result, characteristics of arranged marriage that are often cited as proof of women's lower status in South Asia become recast in ways that lend women an increase in power in the diaspora. She writes (2006:395),

> Among Jat Sikhs, the utilization of family reunification strategies ensures women
>
> are critical to the migration process. In this context, Jat women have central roles
>
> in negotiating and transcending the regulations the state imposes on transnational
>
> movement […] the particularly gendered nexus of tradition, aspiration and
>
> identity in Jat Sikh marriage is transformed in the transnational context, and that
>
> in this process hypergamy, dowry, patrilocal residence practices and the social
>
> roles of Jat Sikh women may be positively reconfigured.

A similar argument can be made for Sikh women who are born and raised in Australia, and in Woolgoolga. It is not uncommon for pairs of brothers to marry sisters in Punjab, or for brides and grooms to be matched through consanguinal networks that extend between Woolgoolga and rural Punjab.

Charlsey's (2005) research among Pakistan transnational grooms in Britain suggests that the role reversal inherent in male marriage migration can prove difficult for some men. Punjabis from Pakistan have similar marriage practices to their Indian counterparts, practices which include patrilocality, dowry, and social roles in which men enjoy a higher social status in the natal home after marriage. Moving to Britain, to live with a bride and her family results in a renegotiation of those traditional roles for men, and can leave some grooms feeling quite literally out of place. Charlsey (ibid:94) writes, "A husband's migration disrupts the conventional configuration of kinship after marriage, resulting in not only the unusual absence of some relations, but also the unusual presence of, or at least proximity, of others." Rather than being surrounded by his own kin, he is living with those of his wife. This is also true of Sikh husbands who marry into families living in Woolgoolga. It could also be the impetus for additional marriage arrangements with relatives, bringing close some of those who remain separated by migration. So while global hypergamy might be happening in Australia, due in large part to Australia's position in the Global North, there complex negotiations of marriage, tradition, and family arrangement taking place at the same time.

Contemporary marriage practices in Woolgoolga result in a constant influx of new arrivals, each with their own existing familial, cultural, social, and economic connection to Punjab. Several men I met have wives from Punjab, and as a result, had extended kinship networks that stretched across national boundaries. These networks result in guests visiting from overseas, additional visiting when travelling to India, and renewed or renegotiated emotional connection to a cultural homeland. These issues are complex, and deserve further investigation.

5.6   CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this chapter, I have been arguing that generational differences exist between younger and middle aged Sikhs living in Woolgoolga regarding their attitudes and feelings about Punjab. The older generation of Sikhs, some of whom were among the first Sikh children born in the area, have a closer emotional connection to Punjab, and often feel strongly nostalgic for the village of their grandfathers. They can draw historical links to Woolgoolga in the same way they draw historical links to their ancestral village in Punjab, and actively do both in constructing a narrative of family migration and belonging in Australia. Their children's generation, however, do not feel the same sort of connection to Punjab. They have travelled there, and visited these same ancestral villages, but have left feeling very differently about their own place in India, and the place of Punjab in their lives. They find it dirty, overcrowded and violent. They find village life to slow, and the attention of distant relatives unwanted. Punjab is more of a bother than an inspiration.

Similarly, Punjabi politics, and its influences on Sikh history are understood very differently from one generation to the next. Older Sikhs, who have lived through the time period, though mostly at a safe distance in Woolgoolga, are keenly aware of the nuances of the struggle for an independent Sikh State during the latter half of the 20th century. They look to that time with sadness, and yet find inspiration, realizing that while the violence was tragic, and often misguided, the resulting resurgence in awareness of the importance of Sikhism within their community was important in a lot of ways. Their children's generation is much less informed about the background of the Khalistani movement, and much less likely to question it. While their parents look at the infighting among all of the militant groups, and the relative peace that came in the wake of the movement's failure, and say that Sikhs don't need, nor could they run,

their own state, their children, when they have any knowledge of Khalistan, tend not to ask critical questions. Rather, they accept that Sikhs are treated badly, and that Hindus are "the bad guys." It is here, in the realm of separatist politics that younger Sikhs become the most romantic, and nostalgic. It is here that not experiencing creates a wish for something they are often admittedly unfamiliar with.

Let us return again to Dusenbury's typopology of positionality for Sikhs in Australia, and his classification of Woolgoolga'a Sikh community as (bi)local, living with one foot in Australia and the other in the natal village in Punjab. What I have demonstrated in this chapter is that (bi)locality is experienced unevenly in Woolgoolga, particularly along generational lines, but also within these generations. Some of the older generations of Sikhs in Woolgoolga do seem to move smoothly between Australia and Punjab, and fulfill other characteristics of (bi)locality, including a tendency to shy away from public life, and a tendency to stick together. I have tried to show that these same Sikhs have a tendency to maintain a strong emotional connection to Punjab, one that is mediated between real life experience and a nostalgic reflection on a lifestyle witnessed but never lived, experienced but only for short visits separated by many years.

The next generation of Sikhs in Woolgoolga don't fit as neatly in the category of (bi)local, and some of this stems from their own relationship with the "natal village in Punjab." Unlike their parent's generation, these Sikhs feel less connected to Punjab, and much less at home when they visit the ancestral village. This lack of comfort and connection can be manifest in many ways, but it is most obvious in the attitudes they maintain about Punjab as a dirty, smelly, and even dangerous place. While Duesnbury approaches his typology via positionality of Sikhs with in Australian civic life, I have tried to show that there are also differences in positionality with regard to the location of Punjab in the larger sense of what it means to be Sikh.

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6.0   CHAPTER SIX: "GET IT INDIA"[19]: MULTICULTURALISM AND WHITE

PARANOIA IN AUSTRALIA

CurryFest, a day-long Indian food and cultural festival, by its very nature and without intention, becomes a touchstone for a number of social issues in Woolgoolga. Some of these issues concern the future of the town while others concern the nature of the relationship between the Sikh community and the larger community of the seaside village. Business owners are divided on its utility, while locals demonstrate a continuum of attitudes regarding the festival. Some Sikhs feel it lacks in authenticity while others feel it lacks a significant "Indian" voice. Among Non-Indians, some complain that Indians should become more involved in the process while others feel those Indians who are involved are more of a problem than anything else, accusing them of merely seeing it as a chance to make a buck.

In this chapter, I will use the CurryFest as a lens into Sikh/non-Sikh relations in Woolgoolga, analyzing how racial and religious difference act to create an invisible barrier between the two interspersed, intermingling communities that make up the village. I will argue that a general lack of understanding on both sides of that barrier regarding those existing across the invisible line continue to interfere with the two groups coming together, and working together. At the same time, differing goals for each segment of the village community also

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[19] "Get it India" is a slogan for one of the curry vendors who participates in the annual CurryFest, the subject of much of this chapter.

undermine true cooperation. By also taking into consideration two documentary films made in Woolgoolga, about the Sikh community, for Australia's version of public television, and the discourse about the Sikhs among people in the town, I will challenge the assertion that Woolgoolga exists as shining example of multiculturalism in a newly multicultural Australia.

On the morning of April 9th, 2011, the sun was the only thing visible in a cloudless sky a color of deep blue that had not been seen in Woolgoolga for several days. You would not know that just hours before, in the middle of the night, the area had received some of its heaviest rainfall in recent weeks, storms and lightning having passed through while the village slept. That is, until you looked at the ground, especially the ground in the Beach Reserve, a small grassy park adjacent to both Woolgoolga's beach and its Central Business District (CBD). This was the site of the sixth annual CurryFest, and this site was wet. There were plenty of places in the large grassy area that were dry, but there were many that were underwater. With several consecutive days of rain leading up to this hallmark event already saturating the ground, the previous night's rain had nowhere to go.

There was a small band of volunteers milling about, as well as a professional sound crew and a large number of vendors- merchants who made a living travelling from weekend market to weekend market, selling anything from sunglasses to used books to food. Larger festivals like this were where they made the most money, and everyone was hoping this year's CurryFest would be bigger than ever. The festival, now in its sixth year, had grown in size each year, with more and more people attending as its reputation grew. But this year was different. There was buzz about town in the weeks leading up to it, and people's expectations were rising. This year's volunteer committee was under new leadership, and only one or two members of the 10 person committee had ever served on it before. There had been a changing of the guard, so to speak,

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with many members of the previous committees feeling compelled to take a step back, and let the festival grow on its own. And grow it did. This year's event featured a beer tent, the first time that alcohol had been present, and a full line-up of regional talent. People were indeed talking.

By the end of the night, over 11,000 people had passed through the gates, and many more had entered unaccounted for. Ten artists had performed on stage, some doing more than one set, and vendors were packing up after having a record year for sales. A major insurance company's interactive trailer had had more visitors than at any previous event that year. A celebrity chef, a contestant from television's Master Chef, had conducted three cooking demonstrations, each time to a full tent of observers. Skydivers even landed on the beach as part of a CurryFest promotion. By all accounts, the event was a success, with improved numbers over each of the previous years, and with hints of positive things to come. But was it a success? In order to best answer this question, several things need to be taken into account, not the least of which is what purpose there was for such a festival in the first place. Before exploring the festival, and its origins, it is worth looking at the tenuous nature of Australia and its increasing diverse population in this era of retreating multiculturalism.

6.1   WHITE PARANOIA IN GHASSAN HAGE'S AUSTRALIA

Woolgoolga is described in the popular tourist guide Lonely Planet (2011) as a "Surf and Sikh" community. There is little doubt that one of the things that most separates Woolgoolga from the countless seaside villages that make up the Coffs Coast region is the presence of this large Sikh population, the largest rural Indian population in Australia, and the largest per capita rural Sikh population outside of Punjab (Singh, 2001). As you approach the town from the south on the

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Pacific Highway, the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara imposes itself upon all travelers, standing tall and bright on the right side of the road. If you are approaching the town from the north on the same highway, the decrepit structure that once housed the Indian Palace, an Indian themed arcade of gift shops and a restaurant that went out of business several years ago, is similarly prominent. It is also a large, white, imposing structure on the right side of the road, and it too has a large, thoroughly Indian dome. But this building has clearly seen better days.

These two buildings have little in common actually, though they were built in roughly the same time period. The gurdwara is the shining example of immigrant success in Australia, of a community's ability to find a place in a new land without losing touch with their roots, or their culture. Meanwhile, the Indian Palace is a symbol of the things that are wrong with the Indian community, both to members of the Indian community itself, and to non-Indians in Woolgoolga. The Indian Palace is a symbol of greed, of disregard for the law, and of the unseemly aspects of immigration in general. As an arcade of shops and a restaurant, the Indian Palace was built to capitalize on Woolgoolga's growing reputation as tourist spot with an "Indian" flair. The owner, a Sikh with an unscrupulous reputation, has been accused of gouging tenants with high rents, and was later rumored to use the empty building to house undocumented workers living in the area as part of an agricultural workforce. While both buildings remain shrouded in mystery to the average Australian in Woolgoolga, activities at the Gurdwara are accepted as normal religious practice. Conversely, what has gone on at the former Indian Palace has been the subject of rumor and innuendo, though none were corroborated during research. But what is for certain is that these two structures, like the uneasy relationship between the CurryFest and the Indian community it represents, act as windows into what Ghassan Hage (2002, 2003) calls "White Colonial Paranoia" as it continues to exist today in Australia.

Hage (2002) contends that inclusion in a category marked first as civilized, and later as "the nation," was historically rooted in access to the hope and dignity that was associated with such a social category. In Europe, this category was also marked as "White," and for a long time whiteness was a strong expression of class. According to Hage, it was not until colonial projects brought Europeans face to face with, and in control of, the racialized "other" that lower class Europeans became accepted as part of the "White" crowd, and "civilization" became the property of the nation rather than simply the elite classes. This sense of belonging was, for the lower classes, tenuous at best. In colonial settler societies like Australia, this tenuousness was often compounded by the fact that society simultaneously faced perceived threats internally, from indigenous populations, and externally, from both would-be enemies and would-be immigrants. Hage (2003:48) writes:

> The core element of Australia's colonial paranoia is a fear of loss of Europeanness or Whiteness and of the lifestyle and privileges that are seen to emanate directly from that. It is a combination of the fragility of White European colonial identity in general and the Australian situation in particular.

Australia's notorious "White Australia" policy for immigration went a long way toward alleviating some of this paranoia by restricting immigration from virtually all countries outside of Europe, and even some European immigrants were only begrudgingly accepted. The Immigration Act of 1901 dictated who was allowed into Australia for much of the first half of the 20th Century, and it was not until post war economic and labor needs outpaced "white" immigration in the 1940s and 1950s that changes in the policy began to be considered necessary. It was during this time that Eastern European and then Southern European migrants were not only allowed, but actively sought (Gage, 2003). Post war insecurity had made Australians feel

vulnerable, but new immigration programs were bringing to the surface uncomfortable realities. Gage (2003:55) writes, "This population was now torn between the phobic war fantasy 'populate or perish' and the racial non-White immigration fantasy 'populate and perish'."

While the reality of White Australia was beginning to crumble in the years following World War II, the spirit of it continued on unabated in the justification for immigration policy, and in public attitudes and opinions on the subject. First Assimilation and later Integration became strategies for incorporating immigrants into Australian society without losing its "British-ness." Here, a shift in defining "Whiteness" was necessary, and thus it moved from being a racial category to being one defined as Anglo-Celtic culture (Hage, 2003). If you couldn't look Australian, you better be capable of acting Australian. And throughout the White Australia era, as discussed in Chapter Three, it was Asian immigration that was seen as most dangerous, with Indians not fitting neatly into any category. With their geographical origin in South Asia and their important position within the global British Empire and later the Commonwealth, Indians were a problematic fit.

Though changes were being made as early as the end of the Second World War, the White Australia policy was not officially ended until the early 1970's, at which time Multiculturalism became official policy, and began to permeate political and social life in ways previously unimaginable. According to Hage (2003), this was due to increasing marginalization in the political realm of a voice for White paranoia. But while White paranoia became a fringe idea, it never went completely away, and would reemerge in political debate during times of uncertainty, economic or otherwise. The rise of Pauline Hanson and the One Nation political party would be a good example of this.

One last point from Hage's work is important here. In discussing the ideal relationship between the nation and its citizens, Hage (2003) argues that in addition to hope and dignity, the nation should provide its citizenry with a reciprocal relationship based on caring. He calls this need by individuals to feel caring from above, and reciprocate caring on their own terms a "well administered cuddle" (Hage, 2003:26). Ideally, when this relationship is in balance, a well administered cuddle results in citizens caring for their nation. When this relationship is unfulfilling, like during time of economic uncertainty and threat, that caring can turn to worry, a breeding ground for paranoia. And because paranoia forces citizens to look both externally and internally for threats, it is during these times of worry that the weaknesses of Australian multiculturalism are most noticeable, according to Hage.

But if caring represents balance, what happens when a minority group gives the impression that they don't care? What happens when the immigrants shun civic activity and instead focus their attentions and their energies on their own community? It is this set of questions which I will turn my attention to for the remainder of the chapter. I posit that part of the divide between Indian and non-Indian that CurryFest seems to exacerbate is just that- the seeming lack of Indian desire to be involved in the festival that was established to ostensibly celebrate their very presence in the town of Woolgoolga. They simply act like they don't care.

When considering the CurryFest as a cultural festival, it is important to keep two things in mind. First, at its heart, this festival has been established as a tool for increasing tourism to the region, and more specifically to the town of Woolgoolga. Secondly, States play a role in defining ethnicity in relation to their own agendas surrounding tourism. The CurryFest offers a unique glimpse into the ways in which tourism, ethnicity and state policies interact, and the resultant responses to that interaction on the ground by real people. I will consider that first point

ethnographically, but let's first consider some of the theoretical implications of the second point first.

Tourism is a major economic force in many parts of the world (Wood, 1997; Stronza, 2001), and in Australia, this is no different. In fact, during my field stay, Oprah Winfrey brought an entire studio audience to Australia, and filmed a week's worth of episodes on the steps of the Sydney Opera house, a publicity stunt that Tourism Australia partially funded. The goal was to increase US tourists, and recent evidence has shown that it worked (http://www.news.com.au/national-news/us-visitor-numbers-continue-to-rise-since-oprahs-visit-in-2010/). Anthropologist have been investigating tourism and its impacts on local populations since the 1970s, and recent scholarship has begun to focus on the relationship between the state, tourism, and the construction and consumption of ethnic identity (Picard and Wood, 1997; Brunner, 2000; Stronza, 2001), or what Linnekin (1997) calls "staged authenticity." Particularly in states where ethnicity is either contested, or varied, this process can be disadvantageous to those who are being put on display. Australian tourism can be analyzed in this way, in that it elevates Aboriginal culture for international tourist consumption while struggling with how to manage its own multicultural demographic makeup.

Arguing that the "tourist's gaze" can at times "present local people with a distorted mirror for viewing their own lifeways," Linnekin (ibid:216) and others (Brunner, 2000; Stronza, 2001) also caution that locals are not hapless victims in a global economic process. Most of the time, local ethnic populations engage in touristic activities on their own terms, and present certain aspects of their own culture for objectification and commodification by others. These presentations can shape their own understandings of themselves, but that is not necessarily the case.

CurryFest represents a different kind of tourism, where both those in attendance, and those on display are for the most part local, but the essentialized culture in question represents something far away. While the hope is to draw larger and larger crowds from further and further away, this is not an example of international tourism. It is very domestic in its scope, and regional at that. Also, degrees of involvement by the Sikh community, and their resultant attitudes about the festival also raise questions about the extent to which this festival is a "distorted mirror" at all. More than likely, the CurryFest represents a simplification of Punjabi culture, distilled down to food, dance and dress. A brief history of the festival and its goals follows.

6.2   CURRYFEST: A BRIEF HISTORY

In 2011, CurryFest was in its 6th year in Woolgoolga, and had become the benchmark festival on the Coffs Coast, attracting larger crowds than any other annual single day event held in the region. Knowing this, the fact that the event had been created and managed by a volunteer committee every year of its existence makes it all the more remarkable. But there was a moment when it looked like the 2011 CurryFest was not even going to happen. In order to understand the difficulties in the present let us look at to the past, and understand that how the festival came to be in the first place.

The original idea for a festival of any kind in Woolgoolga originated with an event held by the Sikhs, which was attended by a local solicitor. Described to me as the "Festival of Lights" by more than one member of the original CurryFest management committee, the event had consisted of a parade through town, with several wire and paper mache figures representing

"animals and symbols and things," which were eventually burned. While it was never confirmed, I believe this was a celebration of Diwali, which for the Sikhs commemorates the release of Guru Hargobind, the sixth living Guru, from Mughal captivity. As the story goes, the Guru was offered his release, but asked that he be allowed to take with him other prisoners, at total of 52 Hindu princes. The Moghul Emperor agree to allow only as many as could hold on to his cloak. Guru Hargobind had 52 strings sewn onto his cloak, and thus secured the release of all 52 of the Hindu princes in captivity. This story is used to point to the ideal that Sikhs support the right for anyone to practice their religion, regardless of what it might be.

The Diwali event in Woolgoolga had been organized specifically for the Sikh community by a Sikh businessman from Brisbane, described to me as a "very entrepreneurial-type fellow." The event had been a onetime thing, but this local solicitor had been in attendance, and it got him thinking about trying to organize a yearly event to draw people into the town. I was told by one of the original organizers that he "was so impressed that it had been one of those [things in the] background, in the back of his mind…all that time, saying 'Boy, if we could do that consistently within the community,' but he didn't ever get enough support…I guess the scope of what it was…was just too great to consider as a first-off."

Sometime later, with others interested in trying to organize something to draw people into town, a meeting was held at a local cafe. The members of the initial committee to organize the festival were also all members of the local chamber of commerce, but they were definitely acting independent of the chamber at first. It should also be noted that these were all White Australians involved. The idea of an Indian theme had not yet been generated, and no members of the Indian community had been invited to be involved. I would argue that this lack of Indian participation at the beginning is due to merely chance, and not a deliberate attempt to exclude. But I would also

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argue that that it might suggest something about the involvement of the Indian community with the Chamber of Commerce, and their general involvement in civic life. They might simply not have been in a position to be involved.

The original six or so members of the first committee met several times over lunch to discuss what exactly it was they hoped to do. Renee, one of the members of this original organizing committee told me that the town was in need of "something [for tourists] to latch on to…in order to expose everything that was here, because, you know, the highway exposure is not encouraging at all, and it is not until people get inside the township itself that they realize what a sweet little community it is." She continued by saying there was "no invitation there…So we thought that as long as we can get them here, that is just the foundation of further prosperity, you know."

A number of ideas had been passed around before settling on the idea of CurryFest. When I asked why CurryFest had been selected as the theme, Joe, another member of the original organizing committee told me "I think it just…we came to the realization that we had this very, very strong Indian community here, and everybody tended…They did things in isolation to the rest of the community."

"Yes, parallel," Renee chimed in.

Joe continued, "So let's do something together that will get the two groups working toward something that is a common interest. And think that's sort of how it came about." I want to raise a question here, one I will return to later: How common are the interests these two groups are supposed to share as they move forward with planning this festival, and in the years that follow? It is worth noting here that tourism has been as focus of the Australian economy, with varying degrees of urgency, over the past few decades (Craik, 2001). At the level of the

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federal government, this has included the promotion of sport, nature, and culture through various ministries, and with differing degrees of import, depending on the government of the time. This has resulted, to some extent, in the objectification of Aboriginal culture, and Aboriginal sites, like Ularu. At the same time, there has been a focus on regional tourism, and its development (ibid). The CurryFest represents one aspect of regional development, to which the grant money they received can attest. At the same time, it could be argued, and is by some, that at this local level, Indian culture is also being objectified with tourist dollars in mind.

Once the idea for CurryFest was agreed upon, local financial support was complimented by a successful bid for a government grant, given for the development of a "cultural event." This money was made available as result of multicultural policies at the level of the state of New South Wales, an example of what Jupp (2001) points to as the innocuous manner in which Multiculturalism becomes embedded in policy without causing any sort of backlash. Thus, the Indian theme became an important component of the event. It was central to both the celebration of Woolgoolga as a unique tourist stop along the Pacific Highway, and to the procurement of valuable funding, something that continued to be a central issue for the success of the festival in years to come. It was decided that the festival would be held in the center of town, taking advantage of the shops that were located there. While local merchants complained that the festival would interfere with their day's business, these same merchants were complaining two years later, when the event was moved to the beach, saying that the foot traffic was being taken away from them. But this became a common theme over the years. Local business owners were never happy with the CurryFest.

When I asked about Indian involvement in the very first CurryFest, I was told the following, "Now listen, the first year we had a lot of trouble getting the Indians to be a part of

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it… They really couldn't…I guess, I don't know what they were thinking. I don't want to presume that I know what they were thinking…But, no…we had trouble getting them to be committed or involved in it…certainly in the organizing part of it. When it came to setting up stalls the first year, I think we had a couple of people, including John (Arkan) that set up a stall. And John made a killing…and all the rest of them [the Indians] realized, ah, ok maybe there is something going on here." And here is where some of the local attitudes regarding Indians begin to show through. While a common attitude is that Indians cannot be concerned enough to get involved at the organizational level of the festival, they are thought to be more than willing to get involved once they realize there is money to be made. This overlaps with attitudes espoused by other White Australians at different times during my field stay, attitudes that linked Indians closely with ideas of greed, dishonesty in business dealings ("They always try to pull one over on you"), and being fiscally "tight." These attitudes, while fairly widespread, were never expressed as outright condemnation of the Indian community. Rather, they were told more as cautionary tales, where a friend's brother or a friend of a friend had a bad experience running electrical wire, or hanging drywall for an Indian family. I will return to local attitudes about the Indian community later in this chapter.

In the second year of the festival, the dates happened to coincide with Vaishakhi, the most important Sikh religious holiday of the year. It is the holiday that commemorates Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th and final living guru, and his formation of the Khalsa in 1699. It is this historical event that is identified by Sikhs at the point of origin of the *amritdhari,* or "baptized" identity, and it commonly draws the largest crowds to the gurdwara, and to related events held at or around the temples. In this particular year, Sikhs had been in the process of organizing a Khalsa Day Parade, and with the help of the CurryFest community, they worked out a route that

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brought them right through the festival, much to the delight of the crowd. Renee explains, "There were some years previously that the Sikh Community had been denied the option to have a parade. So they were delighted that that was an opportunity for them as well. I think that was sort of the initial foundation in to the community itself in terms of an interest of we could help each other." Here, the idea of intra-communal collaboration finds its most tangible expression, and the members of the CurryFest committee clearly feel good about that. Unfortunately, it was a onetime thing, with the Sikhs being denied the parade again in the years to follow. While I was in Woolgoolga, I was told by a member of the Gurdwara management committee that the Sikhs were not trying to organize a parade that year because it was too much of a hassle.

Joe said that after the success of the second CurryFest, many Indians expressed a desire to be involved in the festival itself rather than doing the parade. He said they realized, "this is alright, this is actually going to work…and they saw some people making some very good money opening stalls, so they wanted be more involved from the food provider's point of view, than to be a part of the parade. They said, 'We'd rather be there, being a part of the festival than to walk [through it].'" This again seems to highlight a notion, in the minds of the organizers, that for Woolgoolga's Sikhs, it is the money that matters.

The focus in these early years was on the Indian theme, and more specifically on providing Indian food for sale, and having Indian entertainment on the stage. Acts ranged from local troupes that did Punjabi dance to Indian musicians and DJs from Sydney and Brisbane. One year, they even brought in international Sikh recording artist Dya Singh. And while the entertainment was a mix of local, regional and national, the curries were all the producted by local Indians. Over the years, the festival's entertainment seemed to lose its quality, however, and in 2010 the headline act was a busker from Emerald Beach, a town about 5 km south on the

Pacific Highway. The effort of organizing the festival was beginning to wear down the volunteer committee. They had begun to hire on an event organizing company to handle some of the workload, and after the fifth festival, most members of the original committee no longer had a strong interest in gearing up for the next one. Renee explained that each year, when the festival was over and had been a success, she felt empowered and ready for the challenge of the next one to come. After the fifth year, however, she said "last year, I thought 'Thank goodness it is over.' And I thought, alright, this is a sign."

The transition from the "old guard" to the "new guard" also marked a shift in focus for the festival. The new head of the management committee came to the table with some background in event management, and brought in some like minded people. The new committee was organized with the idea that the festival should represent all aspects of Woolgoolga's civic community, and members of all of the local organizations were asked to be involved in organizing. A couple of people who served on the committee in years past stayed on for easy transition, while members of the Lion's Club, the Rotary, the Resident's Association, the Chamber of Commerce and other local organizations were invited to send a representative. Members of the Indian community were also sought, and while the goal was to have one representative from each gurdwara in town on the committee, a leader from the First Sikh Gurdwara of Australia was approached, and he sent two representatives from his congregation, leaving the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara unrepresented. This was not an intended slight to the Guru Nanak Temple so much as it was an indication that people in town do not understand the inner workings of the Indian community in Woolgoolga. The fact that there are two gurdwara is the result of internal factionalism, factionalism that occurred over 40 years ago, but still manages to have resonance today, in subtle ways. One such way is that there is no one person to approach

for "Indian representation," for each temple operates independently, and in isolation of the other. There is no unifying organization that represent the Sikh community in Woolgoolga, and those few organizations that do exist focus mostly on promoting sport among Sikh youth, though these are more organizations in name. Either way, when I joined the CurryFest planning meetings in January, neither of these Indian representatives were involved in the festival planning any longer. This fact only added to the notion that Indians didn't "care" about the festival, and were not interested in helping make it a success. During the four months that I sat in on committee meetings, other members of the Indian community offered to help, but ultimately never followed through. The end result was a sense among the committee members that Indian support was just not there.

Other significant changes included a move away from an "Indian" themed festival and one toward one that celebrated the region's "multicultural" make up. While there was still "Indian" entertainment in the form of music, dance and a Punjabi DJ, other bands included a blues musician from Byron Bay, a Reggae/Hip-Hop fusion band from the area, a Latin acoustic guitar trio and an African world music/Reggae artist. Curries were still the focus, but Indian curries were not all there was. A local bistro was serving curry dishes their chef created, as was the local pub. The website for the festival broadened the importance of the curry theme for the area, describing it as follows: "The curry theme links our major ethnic group, the Sikh Indians (largest regional Sikh settlement in Australia) as well as representations from many other groups from Germany, Thailand, Holland, *England*, and *Scotland*." (www.CurryFest.com.au; italics mine). For the first time, the music extended into the night, ending at 9pm instead of the usual 4pm. A bar was constructed on site, and the local pub sold alcohol, also for the first time in the event's history. All of this was accompanied by an increase in gate admission fees.

Ballantyne's (2006) work on *Bhangra*, a Punjabi dance form, and its relationship with Punjabi identity is instructive here. In developing an understanding of the relationship between Bhangra as an expressive form and Sikh identity, Ballantyne cautions limiting the discussion to Sikhism, arguing that the dance form is more a reflection of Punjabi Jat[20] cultural practices. He also argues, and rightly so, that Bhangra has expanded beyond the confines of the Sikh, or Punjabi diaspora, and become a part of youth culture writ large in several parts of the world, though one that is still intimately linked with South Asian cultural expression. Important in this is that the popularity, and associated transformation of Bhangra in the diaspora is as much a by-product of the interaction between South Asian and Afro-Caribbean disaporas in cities like London, as it is anything else. Ballantyne's point is that disaporas do not exist in isolation, but interact with other populations around them. He writes (2006:158), "the Punjabi diaspora has never been entirely self-contained or hermetically sealed; rather, the networks, institutions, communities, families, and individuals that comprise the diaspora have productively engaged with various urban environments and cultural landscapes that they have encountered outside of India." Hall (2002) approaches a similar aspect of Sikh identity from a different angle, arguing that media discourse and forms of popular culture, like Bhangra and British Punjabi hip hop provide filters through which ideas of 'imagined communities' are translated, filters which juxtapose similarity and difference in ways that are unique to the diasporic experiences of British Sikh youth, when compared to those experiences of their parents.

Ballantyne's and Hall's arguments point to some additional considerations about CurryFest, its theme, and the relationship between Indian food, Sikhism and the shifting relationship between the two in Australia. As mentioned above, CurryFest was originally chosen

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[20] Jat is an agricultural landowning caste in Punjab, and one that has close associations with Sikhism, but is by no means synonymous with the religion.

as a theme for this annual festival because it highlighted a unique quality of Woolgoolga, its vibrant "Indian" community, and their culture. Curry, as a food, is something people like, and can relate to. It is not too exotic, and it is safe. However, the CurryFest held during my field stay broadened its approach to curry, linking it to several ethnic groups that contribute to Australia's multicultural makeup, and to Australia's British heritage. In a sense, like Bhangra, curry has transcended it ethnic specificity, and yet still linked to Indian culture in very specific ways. For this reason, it becomes a source of identity formation within the larger context of multicultural discourse in Australia, a source of recognition of similarity and of difference, for both White Australians and their Sikh counterparts.

Curry as a food category, however, has its own unique relationship with Britain, and British heritage. Collingham (2006), in a thorough cultural history of Indian cuisine and its global influences, argues that the very concept of curry is a product of European colonialism in India. She (Collingham, 2006:115) writes, "No Indian, however, would have referred to his or her food as curry. The idea of a curry is, in fact, a concept that the Europeans imposed on India's food culture…which the British then used as a generic term for any spicy dish with a thick sauce or gravy." Curry powders in particular were a British invention, one that simplified the making of curry while circumventing the cooking process of releasing the flavors of spices used. Thus British curries did not resemble Indian versions of the same dishes in flavor or consistency. The CurryFest organizers' reference to curry as a marker of British and Scottish heritage works in ways to support a model of multiculturalism that Fleras (2009) describes as conservative, one that recognizes sameness above diversity.

Some things to think about: Does the switch to a more global focus make the CurryFest a more multicultural event? Or does it simply widen the gap between the White and Indian

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communities in town? What about the reclamation of curry as "British"? And does the CurryFest still represent an opportunity for the Indian community and the wider White community to work together toward a common goal? Did it ever? Let us look at the way Indians talk about CurryFest.

6.2.1 "It's not really a CurryFest at all, is it?"

When asked about the CurryFest, most Sikhs seem to think it is a good thing for the town, but when asked about how the Sikhs themselves benefited from an Indian-themed festival in town every year, answers seemed to vary. No one questions that the extra business and publicity for the town can benefit Woolgoolga as a whole. But when asked about the potential benefits for the Indian community itself, responses run the continuum from positive to ambivalent to negative. One thing is for certain. Everyone is quick to make the distinction between Sikhism and Punjabi culture, and are just as quick to point out that CurryFest attempts to capture Punjabi Culture. As one man told me, "It is really putting us out there, our community out there…maybe not quite the right way that I would want, but still [laughs]… you can't turn it into a religious thing anyway…It doesn't sort of fit in. It's more sort of a Punjabi culture thing than a Sikh culture thing." This distinction between Sikh religious practice and Punjabi cultural practice is not a new one, and is often invoked to explain why certain practices common in the Sikh diaspora do not match up neatly with Sikh tenets, particularly with regard to issues of gender equality and caste identity. Here, however, it is being used differently. The division is being noted in part to emphasize the secular nature of the festival, and its lack or correlation to Sikh religious practices. Women dancing in public, the consumption of alcohol, and other activities associated with the

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festival do not match up neatly with Sikh doctrine, and conservative Sikh attitudes about what is acceptable behavior.

As for Indian involvement in the festival, some Sikhs told me that they were involved, on the day of the event, when they showed up with the food. One Sikh man told me he thought the festival might benefit from more involvement from members of the Indian community, though he thought direct involvement from the temples would be inappropriate, as they are constructed for religious purposes, and not events like this one. A Sikh woman who I talked to was less sure of how much the festival would benefit from more Indian involvement. She said, "It's not organized by Indians at all, which is probably a better thing…because if Indians organized it, it wouldn't work." When I asked her why she felt that way she laughed, before saying, "When Indians come together to put on an event or anything, they always divide, and they always have political issues, and stuff like that." All in all, though, she felt the CurryFest was good, describing it as a "snapshot" into life in Woolgoolga, and into Punjabi culture. Again, there was no mention of Sikhism, and its practices.

Others were not so positive about the festival. After this year's festival, one younger Sikh man said to me, "Well, it wasn't really a 'CurryFest' at all, was it?" He felt this year's departure from the strictly Indian theme was simply too much. He was also not supportive of the selling of alcohol, which goes against Sikh beliefs. That some Sikhs regularly frequent the local pub, and its bottle shop, was not mentioned in this context though, as this is something that is often not talked about. Another Indian woman put it more eloquently, focusing her critique on the issue of cooperative organization. She said, "We need to share it together, and we need to manage it together so it becomes a harmonious event rather than somebody's running it and somebody's on display."

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6.2.2   Inferences and Implications

Through this discussion of Woolgoolga's annual CurryFest, I have been arguing three basic points, two practical and one more theoretical. First, that the mission of the CurryFest had originally been to bring together two communities within one town to work toward a common goal is an admirable one. Unfortunately, it has not seemingly done so. In fact, in some ways it has encouraged the exact opposite, creating an event where the diverging tendencies of the two communities seems to be all the more noticeable. Part of the problem comes from the assumption that the Sikh community would share in the desire to build up the town's reputation as a tourist spot in the first place. It is not that they are against the idea so much as they are largely ambivalent. When I asked one member of this year's committee, a man with a fair degree of familiarity with the Sikh community, why they were not more involved, his response was, "They're simple farmers, mate." If this is to be taken to its logical conclusion, these farmers will farm whether people are visiting the town, or not. Add to it that they are being used as the "draw," and that they have a tendency to keep to themselves, suddenly it is not all that surprising that the Sikhs are not more actively involved in the planning process of the festival. Now, very few people actually complained that they felt "used" by the festival or the Chamber of Commerce, but as the comment about one group being on display does indicate, those ideas about objectification are out there in the community.

Second, there is clearly a discrepancy between ideas of appropriate involvement between the two communities. While the complaints I heard about Indian involvement were limited to the community leaders in Woolgoolga who worked on the CurryFest committee, they seemed to mirror some of the complaints I would hear about Indians when I struck up conversation at the pub, or in the café. Indians only cared about money, and would show up on the day of,

disregarding the rules that all the vendors were given, and go home with more money than the festival itself made. But they couldn't be bothered to come to a meeting, or help procure talent or sponsorship that allowed for the whole festival to work. This mirrored the discourse in the town about Indians as greedy and cheap. However, Sikhs who did participate in the festival as vendors saw their involvement as having an important role in the success of the festival, considering this role as important as the planning. So there is a discrepancy regarding the role the Indian community should play in festival, and it's worth.

Finally, these former two points, that of concern about tourism, and interest in planning a good CurryFest within the Sikh community, lend themselves to the more abstract theoretical arguments of Ghasson Hage (2002, 2003) regarding White paranoia in Australia, and regarding caring and worrying as two sides of the same civic coin that can lend itself to the emergence of such a paranoia. That the Sikhs are seen as "uncaring' about civic life in town does not lead to rampant White paranoia in Woolgoolga. Rather, it plays into existing divides between the two communities, divides that a may be the lingering effects of a White paranoia that is slowly loosening up in the era of multiculturalism. Renee, one of the founders of the festival, had described the two communities as existing "parallel" to one another. I would argue that the CurryFest, instead of bringing the two communities together, acts to deepen the divide in some ways, and maintain the status quo in others. Indians, while being the inspiration for the CurryFest, are criticized for not being more involved, and for being greedy and disrespectful in the capacities that they do participate. Both of these charges act to prop up existing attitudes that separate Indians from the rest of the Australian population in Woolgoolga, rather than acting to create such difference. And with CurryFest moving towards a more mainstream, more

multicultural theme, the chance that it will fulfill its original goal of bridging that gap between these two communities is becoming less and less likely.

6.3   LOCAL DISCOURSE ABOUT INDIANS

While the CurryFest is instructive in demonstrating how Indians are understood (or misunderstood) by White Australians in Woolgoolga, it only paints a portion of the picture. Other parts of the picture become clear when you take into consideration some of the ways local people talk about the Sikh community. It is important to keep in mind that Sikhs have been living in Woolgoolga since the 1930's, and have made up a significant portion of the town's population since as early as the 1960's. Thus, people who have grown up in the town should in fact be quite used to the presence of the Indians there. One would think that over time, in a small community, the differences between these two communities would begin to fade, and with each new generation, acceptance would be more and more noticeable. But this has not been the case entirely.

In order to understand how it is that this divide between Sikh and non-Sikh is maintained in Woolgoolga, I will turn to the work of Stanley Tambiah (1996) on the role of rumor in ethnic violence in South Asia. While a discussion of ethnic rioting might seem a long way from a discussion of two separate communities living peacefully in one small town in northern New South Wales, there are actually similar processes at work. Just to a much lesser degree.

According to Tambiah (1996), rumor in particular becomes an effective tool in creating and sustaining animosity between ethnic groups, especially during moments of extreme tension and violence. Rumor acts to increase difference, and further divide those who already feel

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divided. While Tambiah spends much time talking about the role of mass media in the perpetuation of rumor during times of ethnic violence, he points out that rumor often originates from within the majority community, and deals with the alleged actions of the minority. Put another way, aggressors spread rumors about their victims, rumors which encourage and sustain more intense levels of aggression. He writes, "Examples from South Asia and all over the world of distorted communication adding fuel to the fires of internecine conflict can easily be multiplied to confirm the role of rumors in creating stereotypes, causing panic and serving as justification for brutalities" (1996:239). Clearly, there is not ethnic violence happening in Woolgoolga, and there is no real history of it. These two communities live together in relative peace, and there have been few reported incidents of violence between Indians and Whites, especially any which were rooted in that difference as a reason for conflict. But that does not mean that rumor and innuendo don't play a role in the ways that the Sikhs and the Australians relate to one another in Woolgoolga. It would be easy to chalk some of this up to simply being small town gossip if it were not for that fact that is plays out very specifically along racial, ethnic and religious lines of division, and if it were not for the fact that several common themes seem to emerge. Let us turn to some of those themes now.

6.3.1   Indian Houses

In Woolgoolga, the spectrum of rumor runs the gamut from the innocuous to the outrageous. And while none of the rumors I heard were said with any kind of damaging intent, it is the very fact that they circulate that can be damaging. My first confrontation with rumor occurred one Saturday morning, at the Bollywood Bazaar Market, held two weekends every month at the Woolgoolga Beach Reserve, the same grassy park which hosts the CurryFest. I had stopped into

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visit Jorahvar Singh, who runs a Curry Wagon at the markets. He asked me to look after his stall for a moment, while he stepped away. Before doing so, he introduced me to a man who had been standing there, talking to him when I had approached. While Jorahvar was away, I chatted with this man for several minutes, talking about all sorts of things. But what was most telling was when he began to speak about his recent search to buy a home in the area for his daughter. He told me several times, and in several ways, that one thing he refused to do was buy a house from an Indian. In the end, his reason was that "you could never get the smell of curry out of the house." He said it got trapped in the wood, and you would smell it forever.

The likelihood that one could or could not get the smell of any kind of food out of a house is completely beside the point. The point is, rather, that he was identifying an entire segment of home owners in town who he would refuse to do business with. That it was the culturally specific food of curry that he was pinpointing as the problem is only more evidence that his problem was with the Indians themselves. It could be another example of Hage's (2002) White Colonial Paranoia in its modern form, a deliberate attempt to separate White and Indian communities by creating basic essentialized qualities that are multivalent, almost a short hand for a longer list of issues and problems that do not need to be spoken.

Another time, I was introduced to one of the local publicans while stopping in for a beer at the end of the night. Upon hearing that I was in town studying the Indian community, I was asked by the publican if I had ever been to "one of their" houses. When I said that I had not, he told me that he had heard they were filthy. When I raised my eyebrows a bit, he reiterated that he had heard they were all filthy, and shook his head in disgust. Here we have a separation of groups through constructed notions of cleanliness, and that it was hearsay, yet so readily accepted made it all the more significant. Does his implication that Indians cannot keep a clean

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house say something about their hygiene or their civility? Are they simply not "Australian" enough to know how to keep house? Are all Indian homes really dirty? The important thing about this rumor, like the comment above about the curry smell in Indian houses, is that is juxtaposes one community against the other. "They" have smelly, dirty houses. "We" do not. "Their" houses stink of curry. "Ours" do not. They are not like us; they are not us. These perceived differences provide an example of a powerful "othering" through fairly simple, seemingly harmless means.

6.3.2 "I could tell you some stories"

On more than one occasion, the knowledge of my research project got local people talking about their thoughts on the Indian community in town. And many of these conversations moved to the subject of the "students" who had come to reshape the Indian community in recent years. As noted earlier, these students, mostly male spouses of international students from India, were in Woolgoolga to serve as laborers on the farms, where the transition from bananas to blueberries had required altogether new labor needs for these once family run farms. Referred to by local people, both Sikh and non-Sikh, as "FOBs" (Fresh off the Boat), or "freshies," the presence of these students had further distanced the Indian community in town from the rest of Woolgoolga. Interestingly, it also had created new divisions within the Sikh community itself. Many of the conversations I had with local white Australians ended with the phrase, "I could tell you some stories," implying that what they had just shared was merely the tip of the iceberg. I will give two examples.

One night, again at the local pub, I was talking to one of the bartenders, a woman who had moved to Woolgoolga from Southern New South Wales a couple of years earlier. She was

asking what brought me to town, having noticed my accent. I told her about my project, and she began telling me about how much she disliked the way Indian guys acted when they came into the pub or the attached bottle shop. She told me about how they don't know how to treat women, and about how they boss around all of "the girls" who worked in the pub the way they would back home. And she did not like the way they always leer. "I could tell you some stories," she said, as she finished wiping a table and went back to behind the bar. She never did tell me any more stories, but I couldn't help thinking of our conversation a couple of months later, when I was talking to a local shop owner, and she told me a very similar thing.

I was in a take away shop (a snack bar), enjoying some chips and a Coke when I struck up a conversation with one of the owners. When conversation turned to my research, she told me about how her niece is with an Indian boy, and has been for a long time. She said she knew quite a few girls who are with Indians, but these Indians were boys who were born here, whose families had been here a long time. "Not FOBs," she said. She must have seen the confused look on my face because she said, "We call them FOBs. 'Fresh off the Boat.'" She went on to tell me about a time, a couple of years back when a lot of "them" came, and it caused some problems. She said "students," with a note of sarcasm. She said the students were causing problems, being disrespectful, harassing local girls down on the beach and such. She said the "local Indians didn't like it either," because it was giving them a bad name too. She told me that some of the "local Indians" had a talk with them, and told them they had to stop. She finished by saying, "I could tell you some stories, believe me."

Both of these stories act to do two things simultaneously. First, they separate the Indian community from the rest of Woolgoolga based on bad behavior, especially bad behavior by Indian men towards white Australian women and girls. In this way, it is not all that different

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from Tambiah's (1996) rumors during moments of ethnic violence, rumors that often focus on the violation of women from one group by male members of the other. And though these stories are certainly not as extreme, nor do they evoke the same sorts of violent responses, they do act to further divide, or further strengthen an existing divide within the town of Woolgoolga. That it is Indian students who are the center of both tales only reinforces the ways in which the infusion of young Punjabis over the past few years has impacted Woolgoolga, and it's Sikhs.

Second, these stories hint at more stories, stories unspoken but well known. While both people I talked to told stories about specific incidents, or about very specific behaviors, both storytellers imply that they are only scratching the surface of their knowledge about similar stories regarding the Indians in town. The implication suggests there is plenty more where that story came from, or that these incidents are not isolated. And neither person seemed to have stories to share about how well Indians fit into the larger fabric of town. In other words, Indians behave badly all of the time. These are just some examples. Whether this is true or not is not nearly as important or as instructive as the fact that our storytellers believe it to be, because behavior separates, in this case separating Indian from Australian. That the perpetrators of the behavior described were recently arriving Indian students and not Australian-born Sikhs doesn't matter to our storytellers. In fact, if anything, it further supports the idea that Indians are separate from Australians by collapsing the two "kinds" of Indian in to one category.

6.3.3 The Indian Palace

I would like to return now to the Indian Palace, the large, decrepit structure on the north end of town, once home to gift shops and an Indian restaurant, now home to the single family who owns it, and subject of a fair amount of rumor and innuendo. By this, I mean that the structure itself,

which has been empty of shops and restaurants for several years, sits as a mystery on the edge of town, a structure that is enveloped in speculation about what really happens inside. As it has been Indian owned, and Indian themed, much of the rumor that swirls has to do with ideas about the Indians who live in the area, and what exactly they are capable of. It is important to remember here that these are rumors that swirl about town, and there is no evidence to support their accuracy.

The building is an impressive structure, and it is hard not to long to see what it looked like in its day. It has a large white dome on top, with stained glass windows around its base. The roof is a large flat surface, with a railing of Indian influence around it, making it essentially a large veranda surrounding the dome. Next to the building's entrance, two large elephant statues stand side by side, each now missing its trunk, another reminder of the venue's fall from grace. But what is going on outside of the Indian Palace is not nearly as interesting to the townsfolk as what has allegedly taken place inside its walls over the years.

The owner of the building has developed a fairly negative reputation[21] in town, both in and out of the Indian community, and most of the things the Indians criticize him for have made their way into the larger community of Woolgoolga. Indians thought he had price gauged on rent for the shops, and was only concerned with making money. People in town were all too quick to latch on to that, being that it matched up with generally accepted ideas about all Indians. Other gossip that I heard in town regarded his alledged attempt to sell one of the disintegrating elephant statues for an exorbitant price, claiming it was worth it because it had been made in India. But

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[21] I should note that I never met the man, and all of this information is hearsay. It is also illustrative of how rumor works when it lines up with existing prejudices about Indians. That some of this stems from Indians gossiping about Indians only contributes to its complexity.

the most scandalous rumors about the Indian Palace had to do with things unrelated to the owner, at least directly.

During the initial influx of international students, there was a shortage of rental space for many of the Indians who came to Woolgoolga looking for work on the farms. One landlord told me that she rented a studio unit attached to her home to a Sikh, only to find "five or six" living there before long. They were nice boys, she said, but they had to go. At this time, the Indian Palace was alleged to have become a "boarding home" of sorts, with students renting the vacant shops as rooms, at a fairly cheap nightly rate. While the legality of such a scenario was debated by some, stories also floated that rooms were being rented to "illegals," Indians who were not there on a student visa with a spouse, but who were merely there. This fits nicely into Hage's (2002) notion of White paranoia, whereby Australians would feel threatened by "enemies" internal and external simultaneously through their identification of (or rumor of) illegal aliens in their midst. And the Indian Palace, as a crumbling reminder of an Indian obsession with making money, was a perfect location for such activity to be taking place, in the minds of most people in town.

On one occasion, while chatting with a local shop owner, I was asked what "goes on" in the temple. I had been mentioning that I had recently spent a few weeks living in the gurdwara, while trying to find a place to live. This shop owner, who had moved to town a few years ago, seemed confused about where the temple was, mistaking the Indian Palace for the gurdwara. When I asked her if it was the Indian Palace she was thinking about, she said she was not sure, but she heard it was brothel in recent years, and that Indian women were for sale inside. She was the only person I ever heard mention this rumor in town, and while I suppose it is possible she made it up, it is more likely that she had heard it from someone else. A more important question

though is what exactly does this rumor imply about the relations between the two communities? Is it merely small town gossip, the kind of thing that circulates in a small community where everyone knows everyone else? I think not. In fact, if that were the case, I would have heard similar musings about other people in town, regardless of their ethnic background. Here, the story is one about Indians, as told by White people, and the story acts to create or support existing distance. What better way to create distance than to talk about one group in terms of an absence of morality. "I heard it was a brothel," acts to separate the physical space of the Indian Palace from the rest of town, but it also separates the people associated with that space. Here, this is not only a specific person or a specific family, but rather the Indians writ large.

When all of these stories are taken together, a trend in the discourse about Indians and their place in Woolgoolga becomes evident. Each set of stories, though dealing with completely different aspects of social life, acts to set the Indian community apart from the rest of the town, creating a barrier between people based on race, religion and "national" background. Whether it is how homes are kept, or how men treat women, the end result is the same. They do things differently than we do. However, there is an inherent value judgment applied to each of these stories, where "they" not only do things differently, they do things in a way that is not right. Finally, these stories are unidirectional, told by white Australians about Indians, and not the other way around. I did not hear many stories about what white people did that acted to separate in the same way that these stories seemed to. And while some of these stories are rooted in peoples experiences, many more of them are part of a shared collection of ideas about the Sikhs living in Woolgoolga, a shared collection that people imply is quite vast.

6.4   INDIANS ON NATIONAL PUBLIC TELEVISION

Thus far, I have talked about how Indians are portrayed through the organization of an annual cultural festival, and how Indians are portrayed through local discourse in the form of rumors and stories. Both of these portrayals act at the local level, and speak to local perceptions of belonging and exclusion. I will finish with a content analysis of two documentaries made about the Sikh community in Woolgoolga for a national audience. Here, rather than talking about local attitudes, I will focus on how this town, and its uniquely large Indian community, is portrayed in the national media. This portrayal begs questions about attitudes in the country regarding multiculturalism, and its realities.

There is a growing body of literature in anthropology about media consumption and interpretation, particularly with regard to South Asia and South Asians living transnationally (Gillespie, 1995; Mankekar, 1999). This scholarship reminds us that regardless of the messages encoded in mass media texts, both written and visual, viewers are not passive recipients, but rather actively interpret and attach meaning to the media they consume (Dickey, 1997). As a result, mass media can become a site of contest, and a place where notions of exclusion and belonging are constructed. Mankekar and Schein (2004:358), when discussing the construction of Asian sexualities, write, "What emerge from our ethnographic treatments of media production and consumption are contestations around national and ethnic belonging and around normativities and transgressions that constrain membership." Similarly, Mankekar (1998: 32) writes elsewhere, "Television audiences…are one among several sites in which local negotiations of meaning are suffused by translocal relations of knowledge and power." Together, these authors are arguing that television programming and viewership represent a key site of negotiation and one where multiple meanings can be simultaneously constructed.

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Unfortunately, I did not watch these videos until I had returned from the field, and therefore was unable to ethnographically investigate how they were received in Woolgoolga.

6.4.1 "Sikhing Woopi"

In 2009, ABC, or the Australian Broadcast Corporation, sent a film crew to Woolgoolga to film an episode of Compass, a news magazine show that features human interest stories about Australia and Australians. The episode filmed in Woolgoolga focused on the story of one family, with the Annual Sikh Games as a backdrop. The Sikh Games is an annual competition held in different parts of Australia, bringing together an international community of Sikhs to compete in both standard athletic games and some more traditional Punjabi ones. Woolgoolga and nearby Coffs Harbour have hosted the games from time to time, most recently in 2009. And while the Sikh Games served to bring together Sikhs from all over, it also served as a vehicle for this show to introduce a larger Australian audience to Sikhism, its history in Woolgoolga, and to some of the ways Punjabi culture is maintained in northern New South Wales. Though the episode is to some degree successful in doing these things, it also focuses to a large degree on some issues that seem to separate Woolgoolga's Sikh community from the fabric of Australian society: issues surrounding "exotic" Indian practices such as arranged marriage and traditional gender roles.

The family that is the focus of the episode is a Sikh family, and a typical one in many ways. The husband was Australian born, while the wife was from Punjab. And like many marriages in the Sikh community in Woolgoolga, it was arranged, the product of matrimonial advertisements, family meetings, and decisions involving more than just the couple at hand. Spouses, both male and female, are often found in India, and often from the same general region of Punjab that many of Woolgoolga's Sikhs come from. What makes this family different than

some of the other Sikh families in town is that the wife comes from an urban, educated background, and was not used to the traditional roles expected of women in this small Indian community. And while the intent of the show may have been to juxtapose this family with its mix of tradition and modernity, with its blend of India and Australia, in order to celebrate Australia's multiculturalism, it also acts to portray multiculturalism as what Hage (2003:60) calls "cultural government," rather than as "national identity." Cultural government refers to a policy project that acts to support minority expression of "their" culture, while guiding them through a process of assimilation, whereas "national identity" is more specific to the process of Australia reflecting its multicultural, multiethnic composition. Again, this speaks to the disconnect between official policy and on the ground attitudes, which are much more conservative and resistant to change.

In "Sikhing Woopi," the focus of the camera seems to be activities which are uniquely Sikh: the brushing and combing of hair and beard, the tying of a turban, the preparation of food for Langar, worship at the gurdwara, and participation in or attendance at the Sikh Games. People interviewed for the show consist of only three members of the one Sikh family, and no white voice is heard beyond that of the narrator, and one local councilman. With a focus on exclusively "Indian" space and practice, the message delivered by this episode of Compass is one that shows how different these Indians are, and not one that demonstrates how much like "us" they are. The backdrop of Woolgoolga looks very Australian, with its beautiful beaches, its sunny weather, and its palm trees, yet the people who appear on camera do not fit properly into the picture. Instead of white Australians, the viewer sees brown skinned people, the men with turbans and beards, the women in colorful silk clothing that was distinctly from afar. Unfamiliar

foods are seen being prepared, and religious practices that are unfamiliar are seen being done. The Sikhs in Woolgoolga seem to the viewer to be exotic and different.

6.4.2   The Temple on the Hill

This video, made over a decade earlier, in 1997, was filmed in association with SBS, Australia's other news and culture station. This short film focuses even more explicitly on marriage and on gender roles in the Indian community than does *Sikhing Woopi*, and in doing so makes the Sikhs seem even more exotic. This film focuses largely on two different families in Woolgoolga, one where all of the children have had arranged marriages with Indian born spouses (two boys and one girl) and another where three of the four children have married white Australians, described as "marrying into the Australian community." The very way the movie sets up this dichotomy between the two families acts to portray the Indian community in Woolgoolga as at times backwards, and more importantly, as foreign.

The film opens with a large group of Sikhs in full regalia, preparing for and then carrying out a parade through town. This is likely a Khalsa Day parade. They are barefooted as they march, and some of the kids complain that the pavement is burning their feet. One person is even shown pouring a drink on the soles of his feet to cool them down. The film then cuts to a man, with a banana farm behind him, talking about how hard it is for the Sikhs to maintain their culture here in Australia. This acts as foreshadowing, for it is his children, we later learn, who all married white Australians, with one of his sons converting to Christianity and becoming a minister. The other family's story focuses mostly on the daughter, who feels she has always been treated differently than her brothers, and how she wishes she could have been more "Australian" growing up.

In this film, scenes of women cooking are juxtaposed with men playing pool, and drinking beer in the back yard. The two families are also set up against one another on film, with one home being full of children and grand children, with lots of happiness. A house full of love and family, Punjabi being spoke by three generations. Women cook together in the kitchen while men sit around together and chat. The sisters-in-law talk about how they never go anywhere without each other, and the mother, the matriarch, talks about how there is no room for change in these traditions. "We decide who they marry, and they except it," she says in Punjabi, smiling to the camera.

In the other home, the mother complains about how none of her children married Indian girls, and as a result she has no one to talk to. Scenes of the white daughters-in-law seeming uncomfortable in the home are interspersed with interviews with the mother-in-law bemoaning her fate. The film ends with a scene of the Indian daughters-in-law dancing and singing traditional Punjabi songs in one home, followed by a shot of the other mother-in-law sitting in her living room, looking sad, as she watches a Bollywood film alone.

In this video, the dichotomy between Indian and Australian is not only constructed, it is taken for granted. There are two ways of life in Woolgoolga. In one family, Indian traditions are maintained, and they are happy. In the other family, the intrusion of Australian ways has corrupted an entire generation, so much so that the father says he would have to sell the banana farm when he got too old to manage it alone, because his kids took interest in sport and other Australian activities, and never cared about farming. This house was depicted as empty and sad.

The end result is a portrayal of Indians being more satisfied when they stay "Indian," and follow traditional practices brought over from Punjab. While an argument might be made for this film upholding values of multiculturalism in Australia, it also demonstrates how foreign and far

removed from Australian life this Indian community is. It portrays Indians as incapable of making the transition to Australian life ways, and it shows how the adoption of Australian values is shunned by the local Sikhs. When children move towards Australian ways, families are left devastated and broken. It could be easily argued that this documentary is a polemic about the dangers of assimilation, and the positive benefits of multiculturalism. However, it could just easily be said that this film is showing why Indians will never be a part of the fabric of the Australian nation.

6.5   CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the precarious place that Woolgoolga's Sikh community occupies in the larger context of the village. Sikhs make up a significant portion of the town's total population, and their presence in Woolgoolga is what makes the village unique among numerous other small seaside tourist destinations along the Northern coast of New South Wales. And while the town's Chamber of Commerce and some of its small business owners attempt to capitalize on this uniqueness with large events like the CurryFest, at the same time some people in town talk about the Indians like they don't really belong. It is a strange contrast made possible by lingering attitudes regarding racial and religious difference associated with Colonial White Paranoia, and its modern incarnations.

Because many residents in Woolgoolga know, grew up with, went to school with, or live next to Sikhs who have also been there for a long time, they are less inclined to think of these attitudes as racist. They have Indian friends. But they still discuss "Indian" as a category, and one that is set apart from the rest of the community that is Woolgoolga. Many of the stories,

which I classified as rumor, act to make those separations value-laden and pejorative. When you add to that the fact that film crews have appeared in town on a couple of occasions over the past few years, and each has produced a film whose underlying, and likely unintended message overlaps with these preexisting divisions between white and non-white, you have a situation where there is a large divide between the two major communities that make up Woolgoolga.

CurryFest, its organization and its mission, actually works to strengthen that divide, pitting white business owners and their desire to improve commerce in town against Indian farmers, who are disinterested at best when it comes to the management of the festival. Where Indians do get involved, at the level of vending, they act to fulfill one aspect of their existing stereotype in town, that of being interested only in money. This works to frustrate those trying to create the festival, causing them to complain about those Indians who do get involved while simultaneously complaining about those who don't.

Rumor sets the Indian community apart as being "other," and as not very Australian, focusing on behaviors that might be common among anyone in the community, and linking those behaviors inextricably to Indian-ness. Keeping a messy house or leering at a girl on the beach is not something inherently Indian, but when an Indian does either, it becomes something "Indians do." Adding to that are unfounded rumors and stereotypes about Indians as greedy and untrustworthy in business dealings, which turns into Indians as subversive to the law, hiding illegal laborers or prostitutes in the Indian Palace.

Finally, films made for a national audience project Indians in Woolgoolga as stuck in traditional mindsets that do not fit nicely with ideas about what it means to be Australian. Whether showing a family as an example of atypical of Indian-ness, as in *Sikhing Woopi,* or juxtaposing two families as examples of tradition and integration, each with their associated ills,

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these two films do two things at once. They show Indians as backward and stuck in time, focusing largely on arranged marriages and gender inequality within the family. At the same time, they show how becoming "Australian" can cause actual harm to families better suited for Indian values, values that are more suited for India.

The end result is a community in Australia that has the largest rural Indian population in the country, but has yet managed to fully incorporate that diversity completely in to village life. The end result is a community that celebrates it multicultural make up publicly, but complains about it in conversations both public and private. In the end, it is a situation where multiculturalism is ok, as long as it does not define what it means to be Australian.

7.0   CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

One night in June, Jorahvar and I walked down River Street, having just left the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, and its commemoration of the Martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Guru, in the early 17th century. It was a seasonable cool night for Winter in Woolgoolga, but it was Saturday, and a band was playing at the pub on the corner. There were a number of people coming and going from the pub, and the sidewalk, usually completely empty at this time of night, had some foot traffic. Jorahvar had been pointing to various storefronts, and explaining what businesses used to be there, what businesses might be coming, and what some of his own ideas for a business might be. This was not an unusual kind of conversation for us to have, with him thinking about the past and the future simultaneously.

As we stopped in front of one store, and Jorahvar explained his vision for a successful business that would work there, a drunken youth from the pub walked up and asked, "Hey, can I touch your beard?" He indicated towards Jorahvar's long flowing beard, and began reaching for it. Some of his friends stood chuckling in the background. Jorahvar gently blocked his hands, and declined the invitation. "It's my beard," he said smiling, typically good natured. Feigning disappointment, the youth wandered on.

As Jorahvar and I returned to conversation, the same youth came sneaking back, and reached around Jorahvar from behind, touching his beard with both hands, before running off, much to the delight of his groups of friends, who had remained just up the sidewalk watching.

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There was a bizarre moment of silence as Jorahvar processed what had just happened, before he made some jovial and good natured comment about how the youth had "just got" him. He seemed rather unbothered by the whole event. I, on the other hand, was outraged. "Would he have been so brave if you were a biker, or some local 'tradie'?" I asked, indignantly. Jorahvar dismissed the whole thing as just "kids being kids," but I couldn't help seeing it as evidence of a double standard, one that places Sikhs in town as a bit of an attraction or an oddity, and as not deserving of the same courtesy and respect, or even fear, that an Aussie man standing outside of a pub might garner on a Saturday night.

Without question, this was an isolated event, and the only one of its kind that I personally witnessed in all of my time in Woolgoolga, or in Australia. And while it would be easy to chalk the whole thing up to the indiscretion of youth, or the influences of alcohol, there are also some elements of the story that speak to social distance that exists in town between White and Indian residents. And while it would also be hasty to point to this incident in Woolgoolga, and say it typifies race relations and the shortcomings of multiculturalism in Australia as a whole, it might be just as hasty to dismiss those as factors.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that the Sikh community in Woolgoolga did not develop in a vacuum, but is rather the product of multiple local, regional, national and transnational processes, both historically and in the present day. I have argued that global systems of politics and economics, national level concerns with labor and immigration, regional issues surrounding opportunity and option, and local issues which overlap with all of the above have intersected and continue to interact in villages in both Punjab and northern New South Wales to create a scenario that we now see in Woolgoolga. Some of these processes were specific to British colonial projects in India and in Australia. Others were the product of

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Australian governmental policy and concern in the advent of federation. Still others can be traced to local economies in Punjab, and in New South Wales. But none can be separated out as causal, and none can be dismissed as unimportant. For this reason, it is important to approach the study of diasporic Sikhs living in Woolgoolga from a transnational perspective, one that includes both a focus on historical trajectories of migration and history of immigration policy. By focusing simultaneously on diaspora, and its related conceptualization of homeland, and on multiculturalism, and its related politics of belonging, I have argued that a more nuanced understanding of transnational communities can be wrought. At this point, I would like to summarize the main points of this dissertation.

7.1 "WEBS OF EMPIRE"

The story of Indian, and more specifically Sikh migration to Australia begins in Punjab, but is by no means limited to factors from the Indian region alone. As Ballantyne (2006) rightly point out, understanding migration and diaspora cannot be dependent on looking at only the impact of colonialism in Punjab, or only at the migration out of Punjab. In recognizing the interrelatedness of these two processes, Ballantyne argues for a more comprehensive view, one that takes both historical processes into account simultaneously. I have tried to do this, looking at the colonial impact on the economy of Punjab, but also arguing that colonialism as a project broadened the imagination of what was possible for Punjab's Sikhs. At the same time, I have argued that Australian immigration policy and Australian labor needs, two spheres of political life that have rarely matched up perfectly, contributed to Australia as a potential destination for any would be migrants from Punjab.

Richard Fox (1985) demonstrates how British colonialism impacted Sikhs in Punjab in several ways. The difficulty that British had in annexing Punjab produced notions of the Sikhs as "martial" race, which in turn lead to preferential recruitment of amritdhari Sikhs into military and police service. This led to young men travelling throughout the empire, and learning firsthand about opportunities for employment, and economic improvement. Word of these opportunities spread through the villages of Punjab, and migration followed. One reason for outward migration from Punjab had to do with land shortages, and the increasing value of agricultural land in the region. While the British effectively opened up land in West Punjab in the form of canal colonies, which resulted in internal migration, many families sent sons abroad to both acquire more land, and to relieve demands on existing land. In the family migration of Jorahvar Singh, this is made quite explicit. His grandfather came to Australia because there was not enough land in the family for both he and his brother to adequately share. Monies earned in Australia allowed for the purchase of more land, resulting in a 12 acre plot in the village where there had once only been 2 acres owned.

If colonialism opened up opportunities for Sikhs to migrate out of Punjab, it also created opportunities for migration to Australia. As a British settler society, Australia was constantly forced to deal with the dueling and contradictory desires of increasing population based on labor needs and limiting who was allowed in, based on racial ideologies and a desire to recreate Britain in the southern hemisphere. The results were increasingly limiting policy regarding who would be allowed in, and in the days before federation, this was done at the level of each individual colony. However, not all colonies had the same stringent rules, and immigrants often began in a colony that had more relaxed immigration laws, and then simply moved to where the work was.

Indians existed in a unique and tenuous position within the larger framework of Australian immigration. As South Asians, they represented a racialized "other" who was not welcome. But as subjects of the queen, they had certain rights and privileges that could not be ignored. These two characteristics shaped Sikh migration to Australia, and ultimately to Woolgoolga. Many of the "grandfather" stories made mention of the benefits of holding a British passport when it came to moving to Australia. Similarly, the ease at which some of these early Sikh migrants moved back and forth between Punjab and Australia made it a preferred destination. Thus, opportunities available in Australia, and made known to Sikhs in Punjab through networks created by Empire, resulted in movement from one colony to another. Economic conditions in Punjab, and labor needs in Australia were also connected through "webs of Empire" in ways that necessitate a broader analysis as described by Ballantyne (2006).

One way to better understand the nature of Woolgoolga's Sikh community is to maintain a transnational framework, and view Punjab and New South Wales as part of a larger social field. This social field includes relatives in all corners of the world, travel to fulfill family obligations, both in India, and in Australia, as well as in Canada, the US, and New Zealand. This social field includes property ownership, management and agricultural labor, both now and in the past, both in Australia and in India. This social field includes economic and social relationships, kinship networks, networks of marriage, and religious ties. And this social field includes travel between countries and between continents, both past and present. Most of all, this transnational social field involves space where the diasporic imagination can construct identities, drawing on multiple sources in multiple places for inspiration. Here, farming can mean multiple things at the same time, connecting Sikhs to banana and blueberry farms in Woolgoolga while simultaneously

connecting them to ancestral farms in Punjab. It is where 'rural nostalgia' (Mooney, 2011) intersects with cosmopolitan multiculturalism, and problematizes them both.

7.2   MULTICULTURALISM

Australia's immigration history can be viewed as discreet time periods, characterized by changes in policy, but this would not be accurate. Instead, it should be viewed as a changing landscape, shaped by global, national and local processes that are constantly shifting. In the case of Australia, the political goals of maintaining racial purity have consistently been at odds with on the ground needs for increased population and labor needs. This has led to a gradual opening of immigration policy during the "White Australia" era, and the eventual adoption of Multiculturalism at the level of government. In other words, there has been a trajectory towards opening up immigration that, though slow at times, has been relatively constant. However, as Hage (2003) and others have pointed out, policy change does not necessarily mean changes in attitude for "average" Australians. This is not to say that multiculturalism "as national culture" in completely absent from Australia. Certainly, there have been changes in attitudes throughout the nation about the role of immigration, and the nature of Australia's highly diverse population. But Hage is right in saying that there lingers some uncertainty and unsettled aspects of Australia's changing demographic makeup, uncertainties that become more visible when there are economic or political uncertainties at play.

Sikhs in Woolgoolga are a good case study for some of these issues surrounding multiculturalism and its varying footholds in Australia's national psyche. The Sikh community in Woolgoolga has been in place for nearly 80 years, and has roots in 19th century migration from

India, a period of immigration that was dominated by Punjabi migration. Multiple generations of Sikhs in Woolgoolga were born there, and yet the demographic makeup of the community is highly variable, with significant proportion of the population being Indian born. This is the result of the practice of finding marriage partners through existing kin and village networks that bring new spouses, both men and women, over from Punjab. In addition to that, there has been an increasing number of young labor migrants moving into the community to improve their economic lot, not unlike many of the "grandfathers" from a century ago. The result is a mixed diasporic population which brings certain aspects of Australia's multicultural nature to light.

For starters, Woolgoolga has on occasion been held up as an example of Australia's multicultural success. Multiple documentaries, made for public television, have been made about the town's Sikh community, and in 2001, a book was published giving the history of the Sikhs in Woolgoolga. *A Punjabi Sikh Community in Australia: From Indian Sojourner to Australian Citizens* (Bhatti and Dusenbury, 2001) was published by the Woolgoolga Neighborhood Centre, and funded through grant money available through governmental multicultural policy. Published to coincide with the centennial of Australia federation, the book celebrates Woolgoolga's Sikhs, and provides a rich historical account of the community's origins, and development. The book also provides some valuable academic critique of multiculturalism and its successes and failures.

My own research has demonstrated that the longevity of this rural immigrant population has not completely broken down the barriers that "White Australia" constructed, and that the Sikh community in Woolgoolga remains unevenly integrated into the larger social and cultural fabric of the village, and its surroundings. Sikhs make up nearly a quarter of the population of Woolgoolga, yet they remain somewhat separate from the remainder of the population in many ways. While Sikhs live along side White Australians throughout the residential neighborhoods in

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town, there are conspicuously less Indians on the street in the CBD than the one in four ratio would indicate. Indians own 95% of the farm land around town, and also own rental properties, small business, and work as professionals in the fields of medicine and law. There is little doubt that their presence in town is integral to the town's existence, yet non-Indian residents remain largely uninformed about their Sikh neighbors, and Sikhism itself. My discussion of the CurryFest, and some of the tensions it highlights speaks directly to this lack of understanding, and some of the misconceptions that exist between these two co-existing communities in town.

If Sikhs remain separate from the larger community of Woolgoolga, Sikh women remain further isolated due to familial obligations and lack of integration to the world beyond the home. As Bhatti (2001) has noted, this has been changing in the past few decades, as women enter the workforce, though often at the lowest, and most tenuous of positions. The transition from bananas to blueberries was instrumental in providing a context where by women could work outside the home, while continuing to fulfill obligations in the home and on the farm. A more recent influx of cheap labor from India will likely impact this aspect of Sikh women's lives in Woolgoolga, and would certainly warrant further investigation. Similarly, as more and more younger Sikhs in Woolgoolga are finding spouses from within the growing Australian Sikh community, especially in the major metropolitan areas like Sydney, if will be interesting to note whether some of the renegotiation of marriage practices described by Mooney (2006) are felt in rural Australia.

In discussing the history of immigration policy in Australia, the history of immigration from Punjab to Australia, and the rise of multiculturalism as policy in Australia and in New South Wales, I have argued that these larger historical processes both shape, and are shaped by each other. Woolgoolga's Sikh community is no different. It is both the product of these

intertwining histories, and a factor in shaping them. It is important to note that these histories also shape how Sikhs see themselves in Australia, and how they construct ideas about their relationship with, and connection to Punjab.

7.3   HOMELAND

Sikhs in Woolgoolga have a fair amount of experience with Punjab, with most having visited on multiple occasions. Some Sikhs I interviewed were born there, while others had visited regularly throughout their lives. And yet, when asked to talk about Punjab, and what it meant to them, their answers were highly variable. Some had extremely nostalgic thoughts and feelings about Punjab, and the place it held for them in their lives. Others were high ambivalent, while others still had very negative attitudes regarding their "cultural homeland." Interestingly, some of these themes seem to follow generational lines, with younger generations, or those under the age of 35 years old, seeming the least connected to Punjab in an emotional way. These Sikhs still recognize Punjab as important, both to them and to Sikhism, but these feelings of import take on a quality of reluctant responsibility or obligation, and not that of emotional, affective connection. Older generations, between the ages of 35 and 55 years old, by contrast feel a much stronger sense of emotional, nostalgic relationship with Punjab, with the villages of their grandfathers, and with their sense of origination there. They do not, however, connect Sikhism as closely with Punjab, as evidenced by a general consensus that a need for an independent Sikh homeland, in the form of Khalistan, might be somewhat misplaced. Conversely, younger Sikhs do not seem to have a handle on why Sikhs were fighting for a homeland, if they know anything about it all. Those who were familiar with the struggle for Khalistan seem to fully support it, at times in a

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way that reveals a romanticized notion of the struggle, and what it represents. This romanticized understanding glosses over the reality and horror associated the violence that such a struggle produced, and places blame on the Indian government, or the Hindu majority, without any critical thinking about the role Sikh militants themselves might have played in the conflict. Thus, there is evidence of Sikh attitudes in Woolgoolga diverging along generational lines, both on the importance of Punjab as a cultural homeland, and on Khalistan as a political one.

And this brings the discussion full circle, to the idea of diaspora and of homeland. I argue that homeland is a concept that is complicated and multivalent, one that does not have a single, reified meaning for populations living in diaspora. Scholarship on diaspora recognizes the importance of a relationship between diasporic populations and their points of origin, but does not always take into account the dynamic nature of this relationship. There are certainly economic and cultural connections that span time and space, crossing borders and connecting diffuse populations in multiple settings. At the same time, there are regional and local understandings of these connections, some of which are shared between diasporic populations and others which are unique to a given locality. Similarly, there is variation at the local level regarding how important Punjab might be to Sikhs, and how it is experienced on an emotional level. Thus, while one informant told me that she felt Punjab would be more meaningful to someone her own age who was born there, she acknowledged that people like herself, born and raised in Australia, did not feel that same connection.

Older Sikhs, like Jorahvar, have traveled between Australia and Punjab on several occasions, and are married to people who were born and raised there. These Australian Sikhs feel a much stronger connection to their "homeland," and several indicated a feeling of being "at home" when visiting. This difference can be accounted for in a number of ways. The presence of

extended family in Punjab, in the form of in-laws, and the presence of someone who is from Punjab in their homes in Australia may in fact increase the degree of emotional connection experienced when thinking about Punjab. However, as Manjit's story demonstrates, this might not be a factor at all. He is married to a woman from Punjab, and he has traveled there on several occasions, but has no emotional connection whatsoever. If anything, he actively dislikes going there, and is always glad to return home to Australia again.

Age itself might be a factor, with lived experience and responsibility possibly shaping the emotional ties that one has with the place their parents or grandparents grew up. It would be interesting to talk to these younger Sikhs in 20 years, and see if their feelings about Punjab have changed at all. Another aspect of age that might be an important factor is having lived through the transition from White Australia to multicultural Australia, and the ways in which that experience might have shaped a sense of belonging, and attachment to both Australia and Punjab. Younger Sikhs, born and raised in an Australia that had a different political and social climate than that of their parents, might feel much more at home in Woolgoolga as a result.

In the end, there is important insight to be found when delving into the ways in which "homeland" as a concept can vary within a diaspora, within a local community, and even within a household. Emotional connections to "homeland" add to a nuanced understanding of the relationships that exist between dispersed populations, and their recognized points of origin. In the case of Sikhs in Woolgoolga, these connections represent a broad spectrum of experience and understanding. And within that continuum of responses, there are points of overlap, and points of disconnection. Generational differences represent just one avenue of exploration for how homeland is experienced, and understood for those living in a diaspora. As Woolgoolga's Sikhs have demonstrated, Punjab does not exist as a uniform idea in the Sikh diasporic imagination.

While Sikhs is in Woolgoolga represent a unique situation, their transnational experiences provide insight into broader themes and critical issues in the field of transnational studies. Woolgoolga's Sikh community provides a nexus by which to investigate the intersection of several important globalizing processes, including diaspora and homeland, transnational migration, tourism and the production of popular culture in a multicultural society. The intersection of globalization, transnationalism and nation building create a context where identities are contested, constructed, and negotiated. For migrant communities in centers of tourism, this can be exacerbated by the competing agendas of cultural politics and political economy, leading to an essentializing of cultural identity from outside, and from within. For Sikhs in Woolgoolga, this essentialization results in a celebration of an agricultural past and present, a living out of what Mooney (2011) calls 'rural nostalgia." But at the same time, the celebration of Woolgoolga's Indian character through the CurryFest results in an external essentializing that favors Indian music and dance, food and clothing. These conflicting portrayals of "Indian-ness" represent ends of a continuum, and yet bleed into one another in a way that could be called "staged multiculturalism." Here, I am referring to multicultural practice that celebrates diversity while simultaneously reinforcing unequal access to power.

This is not an intentional process, but rather the result of an ongoing symbolic conversation about ethnic identity in which both participants are talking past one another. Minority groups express their ethnicity in ways that are meaningful, but at the same time feed into generalizations about them from a dominant group. In Woolgoolga, this can be seen on Australia Day, when Sikhs gather in the Centennial Reserve to watch Kabbadi. It can also be seen when the International Sikh Games are held in nearby Coffs Harbour, or when the gurdwaras sponsor a Khalsa Day Parade for Vaisakhi. And it can be seen in the music and dance

that has become so closely associated with Punjabis around the world (Ballantyne, 2006). Ballantyne (ibid: 158) writes, "the history of Bhangra reminds us that music and dance have played a key role in the performance of Punjabi identities over the last five decades. These expressive traditions, however, are by their very nature porous and have been constantly remade, redefined, and reworked." Nowhere is this more obvious than when CurryFest is held, and Indians dance on stage while non-Indians watch, and celebrate Multicultural Australia.

This is not to say that CurryFest is a deliberate exploitation of the Sikh community's presence in Woolgoolga, for it is not. It is both an honest attempt to celebrate diversity and at the same time to bring business in to a small tourist town, where every dollar spent is thought of as good for the community. But it is a safe way to celebrate diversity, a day where "India" can literally be consumed, in the form of curries and roti, and in the visual display of music and dance. And at the end of the day, people return to their homes, the safe distance that exists between the two communities remaining in place.

Thus, the duel processes of transnationalism and tourism intersect and interact in important ways in Woolgoolga. And the result is the production of popular culture, and by extension, cultural identity that raises interesting questions about the nature of diaspora, homeland and globalization and how they are experienced at the local level.

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