CONTRADICTIONS AND CHALLENGES: SECOND GENERATION SIKH MALES IN CANADA

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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Education
York University
Toronto, Ontario

March 2015

ABSTRACT

Considering the historical and current context of their community within Canadian society and given the myriad of challenges facing young Sikhs as they negotiate family, gender, peer, cultural, and religious expectations, this study examined how these youth make sense of the world around them. It is clear that by challenging the parameters of multiculturalism, Sikh males have made their presence felt in Canada. However, the experiences of younger generations in Western diasporas are relatively absent in scholarship.

Given the sometimes varying nature of the expectations and relationships that these youth must negotiate, in addition to the current issues occurring in their communities, one component of this study ascertained how these Sikh males formulate their aspirations. What are the experiences of young Sikh males in a Canadian context where they negotiate conflicting messages about identity, religiosity, and community? The primary objective of this study was to gain an understanding of what it means to be a second generation Sikh male living in an ethnic enclave of suburban Toronto. It specifically examined the intersecting notions of identity, gender, social class, and religion amongst this population while analyzing the role of the family as well as the community in their lives.

The theoretical concepts of transnationalism, hybrid identities, as well as notions of masculinity amongst Sikh males guided this paper. An important consideration is how youth are able to discern between the varying notions of the Sikh identity. In addition, it was important to examine how these youth negotiate conflicting liberal and traditional views that are promoted within their communities and families. More specifically, this paper examined how these young people reconcile their Canadian and Sikh identities. Considering the prominence of Sikhs in broader Canadian society, this study also inquired as to how youth perceive their own community.

In summary, this exploratory study focused on how Sikh males use their social and cultural capital to negotiate a range of social institutions. It examined the kinds of thinking found amongst this group, taking into consideration the dynamics of the community in which they live and how they navigate the parameters of being a Sikh Canadian.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Rationale

Tensions within Canada's Sikh community have become well publicized over the past decade with headlines across the country focusing on emerging issues in British Columbia and Ontario. The visibility of militant Sikh martyrs in Surrey's Vaisakhi (Sikh New Year) parade, threats made by "extreme" Sikhs against "moderate" Sikh Canadian politicians urging them to stay away from the aforementioned parade, protests against an Indian minister who was alleged to have organized riots against Sikhs in 1984, and violent fights at Brampton Gurdwaras have thrust the community into the national spotlight.

In reality, discord has been evident within various Sikh communities across Canada for decades, illustrated in the long-standing debate between "traditional" and "moderate" Sikhs in British Columbia regarding the accessibility of tables and chairs in Gurdwaras. The media have described traditional community members as those who want a return to Sikh traditions, where the temple focuses on education in the history and rituals of Sikhism, and moderates as those who are considered less stringent in following religious edicts (Jiwa, 2009; Matas, 2009; Nayar, 2012). Traditionalists have argued that sitting on the floor to eat meals promotes equality and cite an edict passed by Sikh religious authorities in India. Moderates state that the presence of tables and chairs in British Columbian temples is rooted in history from 1906, a time when there was no central heating (L. Saunders, 2008). The issue culminated in violence between rival factions in the 1990s and became a noteworthy issue again over the past five years, as tensions at Gurdwaras in Toronto and Vancouver rise and mainstream media attention increases as a result.

Sikhs have come to be known as a proud and industrious people, who despite their minority status in both India and Canada have made a profound impact on the political, economic, and social landscapes of both countries. They have challenged and pushed Canadians' perceptions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as the policy of multiculturalism, specifically the role of these two significant forms of legislation in integrating new immigrants over the past 40 years. For example, in 1991, the Ontario Human Rights Commission argued against the Peel District School Board (*Peel Board of Education v. Ontario Human Rights Commission*), favouring religious accommodation for Sikhs, in the form of allowing the ceremonial dagger (kirpan) to be worn by staff, students, and teachers in schools. As noted by Gereluk (2008), the issue of kirpans in schools was revisited three times over a period of four years. After a Sikh student accidentally dropped his kirpan in the schoolyard, a Quebec school board proceeded to ban the kirpan. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court and the ban was overturned by a unanimous decision in March 2006 (p. 68).

Over the last several decades, the kirpan has been the focus of much debate and controversy. As Dhamoon (2013) asserts, moral panic has ensued anytime the kirpan issue has made its way onto the public radar: "These cases reflect not only that the kirpan has functioned as a site of contestation in Canada across time (for about 30 years) and space (across provinces), but that it has also been a signifier of insider-outside status in multiple public venues including courts, schools, airlines, convention centers and legislative buildings" (p. 10).

In addition to the issue of the kirpan, the Sikh turban became a focal point of national attention in Canada in the late 1980s. Upon being inducted into the RCMP tradition, a Sikh man "was told to cut his hair, shave his beard and remove his turban – in essence he would need to disavow his own Sikh tradition in order to uphold the 'Canadian' tradition of the RCMP uniform

and decorum" (Gereluk, 2008, p. 76). There were a number of Canadians who were outraged that the RCMP "tradition" would be challenged, particularly by someone who was seen as an "immigrant outsider." An amendment was passed in 1990 by the federal government allowing Sikhs to wear their turbans as part of the RCMP dress code (Huffman, 2008). In addition, there have been numerous challenges in British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario requesting that Sikhs be exempt from wearing motorcycle helmets. British Columbia and Manitoba have provided exemptions allowing Sikhs to ride without a helmet (Huber, 2008).

In early 2010, Sikhs protested the visit of Indian minister Kamal Nath, who was in Ontario to meet with then Premier Dalton McGuinty. Community members allege that Nath played an instrumental role in the riots against Sikhs that occurred shortly after Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 (Aulakh & Ferguson, 2010). Also, in April 2010, organizers of the Vaisakhi parade in Surrey made it clear on a community radio station that Ujjal Dosanjh and Dave Hayer, two prominent British Columbian Sikh politicians known as outspoken critics of separatist extremism, were not welcome to attend: "If they show up, they are responsible for their own safety" (Aulakh, 2010). This remark, combined with Dosanjh's response that separatist extremism is on the rise in Canada's Sikh communities, proceeded to ignite heated debate in Canada's Sikh population (Armstrong, 2010). In addition, two violent incidents that occurred at Brampton temples in the same month served to keep the Sikh community in the national spotlight. Ironically, all these events occurred around Vaisakhi, a major Sikh holy day, as well as the 25th anniversary of the Air India bombing, the largest mass murder in Canadian history.

In relation to these current issues, headlines from Canada's leading newspapers refer to "diaspora politics", "why the Canadian mosaic is in crisis", "Sikh separatism alive and festering in Canada," and "distorted multiculturalism" (Armstrong, 2010; Aulakh, 2010; Marche, 2010;

Simpson, 2010). According to media accounts, a clear divide has emerged within Sikh communities between modern Sikhs and traditional Sikhs. The "modern and moderate" want to distance themselves from the politics of those whom they label as the "brutal minority" that clamour for Khalistan, a separate Sikh homeland in Punjab state in India. However, one must question whether this summation is merely a simplification of issues driven by the media or an accurate portrayal of current realities.

This study is both timely and noteworthy in that it addresses how second generation Sikh youth internalize these cultural, political, and social issues within the communities in which they live. Traditionally, Sikhs have been recognizable as a result of outward symbols that typify their physical appearance. Symbols such as the turban and kirpan represent how Sikh males have pushed and tested the boundaries of Canada's multiculturalism. As in India, many Sikh youth in Canadian society grow up without these traditional symbols, and thus experience society in a similar manner to other young South Asians. When people see a Sikh without visible symbols, they tend to see a "South Asian" as has been socially constructed in Canadian society. For instance, Patel (2006) notes that "some scholars and community members have rightly questioned or resisted the application of the term 'South Asian,' which they see as an imposition by the larger North American society and which leaves these diverse communities little choice but to forsake their respective regional or ethno-specific attachments" (p. 150). However, it can be argued that in areas such as northeast Brampton, a specific "Sikh Canadian" community has emerged based on the large settlement of Sikhs.

What does it mean when young Sikh males in Canada do not adopt these outward symbols? It is clear that there is diversity amongst this group when considering that many more young males cut their hair and are clean-shaven than wear a turban and grow a beard. Does their appearance

influence their identity and religiosity as well as how they see these current issues? This study focuses on the experiences of visible (turbaned) and non-visible (non-turban-wearing) Sikhs in the Greater Toronto Area, specifically northeast Brampton.

The primary focus of much of the existing Canadian literature is on the immigration and settlement issues of first generation migrants from India (Basran & Bolaria, 2003; Burnet & Palmer, 1988; Chandrasekhar, 1986; Johnston, 1979; Kendall, 1992; Minhas, 1994; Nayar, 2004; N. Singh, 1994). Discussions of Sikh males are routinely placed under commonly used terms such as *South Asian*, *Asian*, *Indian*, and *Punjabi*. Regardless of these interchangeable terms, there is a dearth of research focusing on young Sikh males. As noted in an earlier study "it is important to recognize that there are distinctions within South Asian cultures, particularly with respect to the role of religion, languages spoken, and customs practised in today's families" (Johal, 2002, p. 2). While there are similarities with other South Asian groups, it is also necessary to note the distinctive "Sikh" experience within a Canadian context.

This dissertation provides significant theoretical contributions to scholarly research. It is clear that this study will fill a vital gap in global as well as Canadian literature regarding the contradictions and complexities facing Sikh males as they negotiate a myriad of challenges. Their ability to shift and move between community, family, and peer expectations to formulate their aspirations is assessed through qualitative research. First and foremost, it is clear from a review of relevant literature that there remains a significant gap with respect to the study of second generation Sikh males in Western society. As a result, this study considers how the sons of immigrant Sikhs in Canada negotiate and balance varying demands that are apparent in their families as well as in social institutions, such as schools and media. Secondly, this study explores how much pressure young Sikh males face when negotiating a hybrid identity. It considers the role

of the community in which they live as they develop their identities in both a Sikh and Canadian context. As a result, it will contribute to Canadian research that examines the relevance of hybrid and transnational identities, particularly amongst ethnic communities. Finally, how these youth conceptualize hegemonic, protest, and "cool" masculinities is also a significant part of the study. Within the existing research about the experiences of Sikh youth, the male experience is often constructed out of omission or in opposition to discussions of Sikh women, which are often predicated on conceptions of gender inequality (J. Gill, 2007; Kalsi, 2003; Sandhu & Nayar, 2008; Sodhi & Sodhi, 2000). For example, it is commonly believed that compared with Sikh females, many Sikh males are often privileged or subjected to a degree of leniency when it comes to social freedoms and educational aspirations. Thus, a critical examination of how young Sikh males "find space" in the context of family, friends, and the larger community, while often negotiating competing expectations as well as different forms of masculinity, are important elements of this study.

1.2 Sikhs in Canada

Sikhs have emerged as a noteworthy religious minority group in Canadian urban centres, particularly in suburbs of Toronto and Vancouver where they may even be considered a religious majority in communities such as Brampton and Surrey. Considering the significant number of Sikhs who have migrated here from abroad over the last century, it is important to address some of the complex issues faced by Sikh youth born and raised in this country. However, before addressing these current realities, it is necessary to shed light on the historical context of Sikhs in Canada.

To complement the existing Canadian literature on Sikhs, it is necessary to draw from research that has been conducted in Great Britain and the United States, which together represent

the primary location of the Sikh diaspora in the Western world. While recognizing that the Sikh Canadian experience may be distinctive, it is essential to take into account the depth of research occurring within a global context regarding the issues discussed in this study (Johal, 2002). This literature review explores some of the settlement, intergenerational, and gender issues facing the Sikh community in Canada. It also provides a brief overview of Sikh migration as well as some of the misperceptions and conflicts regarding culture and religion in Canadian and Sikh communities.

1.2.1 Historical Context of Sikhs in Canada

It is important to understand the struggles of the first Sikh immigrants and how their adjustment to Canadian society has influenced subsequent generations of immigrants and their children. Just prior to the 20th century, the first immigrants arrived in Canada from the Indian subcontinent. As indicated by Minhas (1994), until the 1960s, the west coast was generally more desirable because of its proximity to East Asia. Most of these early settlers, approximately 5 000, were of Sikh background and their numbers increased substantially in the early 1900s (Chandrasekhar, 1986). At the time there was a significant need for cheap labour as the national railway was near completion. There were also a large number of jobs available in other primary industries. Burnet and Palmer's (1988) study revealed that between 1905 and 1908, approximately 5,000 South Asians arrived in British Columbia. They were often referred to as Hindus, even though the vast majority of them were Sikhs, and found work chiefly as unskilled labour in railroad construction as well as in the logging and lumbering industries (p. 31). Ironically, much of this migration to British North America was due to the devastating effects of colonialism occurring in India at the hands of the British Empire (Chandrasekhar, 1986; Clarke, Peach, & Vertovec, 1990).

Immigrant Indian workers along the west coast of Canada and the United States were met with resistance and it was not long before they were accused of taking away jobs and being

ridiculed for their manner and dress (Chandrasekhar, 1986; Jensen, 1988). Capitalizing on public sentiment and antagonism towards these newcomers, the Canadian government began the process of constructing legislation that would reduce the number of Sikh migrants without appearing overtly racist. As a result, the "continuous journey" legislation of 1908 made it clear that people arriving in Canada other "than by continuous journey from the countries of which they were natives or citizens, and upon through tickets purchased in that country, may be refused entry" (Bolaria & Li, 1988, p. 170). Knowing that it was virtually impossible for Sikhs and other citizens from the Indian subcontinent to access steamship service from their country of origin to Canada, this legislation, combined with an increase in the landing fee from $25 to $200, effectively dissuaded further South Asian immigration (Bolaria & Li, 1988; Johnston, 1979).

Sikh entrepreneur Gurdit Singh, who chartered the *Komagata Maru* from Hong Kong to Canada in 1914, tested the "continuous journey" law. Holding 340 Sikh passengers, the *Komagata Maru* was denied docking privileges in Vancouver's Burrard Inlet. A decision was handed down by the Supreme Court, which resulted in all on board being forced to return to India after spending two months aboard the ship (Basran & Bolaria, 2003; Naidoo, 1987; Nayar, 2004). Facing similar exclusionary practices that had been implemented earlier against individuals of Chinese descent, Indian migration was effectively curtailed. Collectively, the Canadian government, ordinary citizens, and organized labour were able to establish a hostile climate for South Asian migrants, many of whom were Sikh. Meanwhile, those who settled in Canada faced other exclusionary policy, such as the right to vote, which was denied in both federal and provincial elections until 1947 (Bolaria & Li, 1988, p. 173).

It was not until the 1960s when relaxed immigration laws reopened Canada's doors to a diverse range of peoples. Rooted in economic necessity, a merit-based immigration system was

introduced. The Law Union of Ontario (1981) gave the following three reasons for this change: (a) racist ideologies were under attack and the government no longer wanted to appear exclusionary, (b) employers wanted a criteria-based system that would identify and admit people with specialized skills, and (c) immigration from Europe was dwindling and Canada needed to look elsewhere for immigrants (p. 40).

Furthermore, the advent of Canada's multiculturalism policy in 1971 made the country an appealing destination for potential immigrants. Individuals from Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa were now looking to Canada as a place where they could settle their families. Since this era, there has been a strong perception that Canada is very much a merit-based society that simultaneously provides opportunities for immigrants to maintain and celebrate their ethno-cultural distinctiveness.

However, many Sikh and other South Asian immigrants have continued to face challenges in their migration to Canada in the last 40 years. In a study focused on this issue, Kanungo (1984) states,

> The process of moving from a South Asian country (with its distinct culture) to Canada involves a drastic experience of cultural change or culture shock. It involves a shift from a familiar environment to a strange and unfamiliar environment. More often than not South Asians entering Canada perceive themselves as strangers or aliens at the mercy of an inhospitable, incomprehensible white population. The experience of being complete strangers creates a state of cognitive uncertainty and a feeling of anxiety within the South Asian groups with respect to the appropriateness of their behaviour in various social situations. (p. 107)

Accordingly, perceptions of the host country play an instrumental role in the consciousness of these new migrants as they sought to make Canada home. It is clear that in addition to the challenges of social adjustment, there is also a significant psychological element. Feelings of isolation and self-consciousness are common amongst not only first generation migrants but also their children (Bhatti, 1999; Ghosh, 2000; Ghuman, 1994; J. Gill, 2007; Johal, 2002).

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Immigrants from the Indian subcontinent found that racism and discrimination extended to employment as well as the social spaces in which they were situated. Many found that having no "Canadian experience," combined with unique dress styles and foreign accents often limited job opportunities (Kanungo, 1984). For new immigrants looking for work, "Canadian experience" usually refers to having specific job or training experience in Canada, which is practically impossible given their recent arrival. In addition, the common belief that South Asians were timid and passive led to a rise in "Paki-bashing," in urban areas such as Toronto and Vancouver in the 1970s and 1980s. Youth, who were cautioned by parents to "turn the other cheek," were often targeted in schools (Buchignani, 1984; Buchignani & Indra, 1985).

Historical accounts reveal the prominence of "Paki-bashing" that occurred in Canada during the 1970s and 1980s. Males of South Asian origin were especially vulnerable. While first generation migrants were relatively easy to discern within Canadian society, with identifiable clothing and language patterns, and youth who were generally taught by their parents to ignore taunts and avoid bullying were often victims of physical, verbal, and emotional assaults: "By 1976, 'Paki-baiting' outside of the school context by small groups of youths was more frequent in Vancouver and urban Ontario and was on the rise in Edmonton, Calgary, and Montreal" (Buchignani & Indra, 1985, p. 215). Similarly, Haywood and Ghaill (2001) speak of similar practices in Britain, where Asian (Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi young men) were physically and verbally attacked during the mid-1980s:

> Racial politics was simultaneously [linked with] sexual and gender politics and the research began to highlight how in the white imagination, Asian boys were constructed as a weak masculinity…..[they began] to link "paki-bashing" with "poofter-bashing," that is, physical and verbal attacks by straight people on gays – another soft masculinity, so that to be a "paki" is to be a "poof" is to be a "non-proper" boy. (p. 34)

This perception of South Asians being "soft" generally occurred in a time and place where they were a significant minority and overt racism was rampant. Perpetrators had the ability to attack without consequence.

As noted by N. Singh (1994) in his study of Canadian Sikhs, stereotypes have often extended to all group members: "Euro-Canadians perceived negatively the social and cultural practices of Sikhs, such as extended family system, and overcrowded households. The Canadians disapproved of their bringing over of illegal relatives, forming of residential ghettos, and exploiting government services" (p. 80). In addition, recent studies of Sikhs in Canada demonstrate the continued influence of 1984 on the diaspora. The year 1984 was marked by the Indian army's attack on the Sikhs' holiest shrine, the Golden Temple, as they sought to remove members of a Sikh political party that was clashing with the national government.

L. Kaur (2014) states that "since 1984, there has been a recurring image of Sikhs in Canadian media, as extremists, militants, and terrorists. These images provoke conversations among the mainstream Canadian public questioning the level of belonging of Sikhs to the nation" (p. 71). Nijhawan and Arora (2013) argue that 1984 occupies a central space in the mind-set of Canadian Sikhs to the point where "homeland politics" continues to overshadow community matters while producing harsh divisions within (p. 300). As some Sikh Canadians tend to be more focused on the "Sikh cause" in India, debating the merits of a separate homeland in the Punjab, this has in turn created a gulf between community members here in Canada. There is concern that the prioritization of issues in India leads to neglecting more pertinent issues closer to home.

South Asians, and Sikhs in particular, continue to represent a significant proportion of Canada's urban population. Data from the most recent National Household Survey reveal that South Asians are considered to be the largest minority group, with half of that population living in

Toronto and approximately 16% living in Vancouver. About 455 000 people nationwide identified as being Sikh, though their overall number is extremely low when looking at the population outside of urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Information from the 2011 census regarding the population dynamics of Toronto and Vancouver – two of the three largest cities in Canada – is quite informative. With respect to religion, Sikhs are considered one of the most populous groups in both of these census metropolitan areas (CMAs), particularly in the suburban cities of Surrey, British Columbia, and Brampton, Ontario, which are considered among the largest Punjabi settlements outside of Punjab (G. Singh, 2013, p. 5).

Questions about religious affiliation were not asked in the last mandatory census of 2006, but were included in the voluntary National Household Survey of 2011. According to the 2001 census, Sikhs represented 2% of the Toronto CMA and 5% of the Vancouver CMA. In addition, Sikhs represented 10.6% of the population in the city of Brampton and 16.2% of the population in the city of Surrey (Statistics Canada, 2007). The absence of questions based on religious affiliation in the 2006 census is a significant limitation of the data available.

There have been significant demographic changes over the last 15 years in cities such as Brampton. The voluntary National Household Survey of 2011 indicates that 22% of Brampton's population was of the Sikh faith and Punjabi was the most widely spoken language after English (City of Brampton Economic Development Office, 2013). Based on recent demographic trends, one could logically conclude that present figures regarding Sikh religious affiliation would be considerably higher in Toronto, Vancouver, Brampton, and Surrey. It will be quite interesting to see what kind of information is revealed in Canada's 2016 census, as demographic trends logically suggest that the Sikh population in these cities continues to grow.

1.2.2 Community

For the purpose of this paper, the term *community* is defined by where the participants are situated in terms of geographic space, while also taking into consideration family and social networks that are informed by race, ethnicity, religion, and class. As noted by C. James (2005), "Individuals may draw on ideas and knowledge gained through the community or communities with which they identify ethnically or racially, and in which they participate. Hence, notwithstanding a lack of material resources, they can acquire important cultural resources that provide them with the ability and capacity to construct aspirations and access opportunities" (p. 219). Youth have been provided with a vast array of cultural resources within their Brampton community that help them navigate the traditions of their parents and realities of the society in which they live.

An important aspect of this study is how the young Sikh male sees himself within his community. In terms of geographic and cultural space, it is clear that Sikhs live in different types of communities – some geographic areas where there are substantial numbers of other Sikhs and other areas where their numbers may not be as great. Therefore, a notable aspect of this project is to explore how Sikh males reference and position themselves with respect to their community. How are they oriented towards the community in which they live, learn, and were raised? Moreover, how does the community in which they live influence their interactions and aspirations?

N. Kaur's (2014) study of Sikhs in southeastern Michigan explored the volunteering practices of this demographic within their community. It was found that terms such as *getting connected to the community*, *doing something for the community*, *involvement with the community*, and *giving back to the community* were common refrains amongst participants (p. 44). It is

therefore necessary to contextualize and note the connections that young Sikhs have in terms of their awareness of cultural norms, in addition to their loyalty and responsibility to the community.

Recently, more research has been devoted to examining the residential settlement patterns of ethnic minorities in Canada. Some have debated whether ethnic neighbourhoods are ghettos where people are trapped in a culturally isolated island of poverty and permanent segregation (D. Saunders, 2009). New immigrants, particularly those who have difficulty finding employment, may settle in an area with others who share common socio-economic struggles. As noted by Qadeer (2003), it is sometimes assumed that these communities are segregated from others. It is interesting to note that ethnic neighbourhoods can be referred to as areas of "segregation" or "ghettos" – words that often carry significant negative connotations.

The term *ethnic enclave*, considered a residential area that has more than 30% of its population from one ethnic group and has institutions that cater to the needs of that dominant population, has different connotations (Jimenez, 2007; Qadeer & Kumar, 2005). How do these communities form? Qadeer (2003) argues that these enclaves are representative of a contemporary form of multiculturalism in Canada which, in addition to recognizing an individual's right to maintain his/her attachment to a particular culture, also recognizes the group's right to build communal institutions and maintain its heritage and language within the limits prescribed by the Canadian constitution and Charter" (p. 2). It appears that Canada's multiculturalism is a notable pull factor for immigrants, particularly for individuals able to locate themselves within established urban areas such as Toronto. Kumar and Leung (2005) argue that ethnic enclaves are "emblems of Canada's multiculturalism" that provide a source for social capital, mutual support and "ethnic economies" as opposed to being a product of racism and poverty (p. 2). The ability to settle in an ethnic enclave may alleviate some of the tensions and stressors incurred by immigrants. For others,

notably those who have been established here for some time, it may provide services that are not always available in other areas.

Based on the population figures cited earlier, it is clear that areas such as the Greater Toronto Area are home to a significant number of Sikhs. Qadeer and Kumar's (2005) presentation on Toronto's ethnic enclaves provides some interesting data regarding South Asian enclaves. The authors found that there was a primary concentration – South Asians represented more than 50% of the census tract population – in Malton and South Brampton, which are distinctively noted as Sikh enclaves. Meanwhile, there was a secondary concentration – South Asians were the single largest group but not the majority of the census tract population – in Northeast Brampton as well as parts of Mississauga. These types of ethnic enclaves have been defined by Qadeer, Agrawal, and Lovell (2010) "as a residential concentration combined with religious, cultural institutions and services," asserting that these communities are, for the most part, concentrations by choice and the "product of the housing market and opportunities" (p. 5). They are unlike ghettos in the sense that these areas "are not the result of discrimination and poverty" (p. 5).

Similarly, the population figures from Surrey, B.C,. indicate a substantial Sikh population. What is interesting to observe is that Brampton and Surrey are rapidly growing suburbs of the larger Toronto and Vancouver CMAs that attract many new immigrants to Canada. Sikhs are likely to be attracted to these areas because their ethno-religious community is prominently established in these communities. Qadeer (2003) explains, "Suburban ethnic enclaves are not transplants of the city's old neighbourhoods. The immigrants, who start as professionals, business entrepreneurs, or investors buy homes in areas where their compatriots have settled, creating ethnoburbs" (p. 2). In essence, the enclave provides the security of a common language, culture, and religion for those who decide to settle in such an environment.

The diversity and variances among Sikhs are often overlooked. Often, negative labels and assumptions rooted in ignorance make settlement quite challenging for newcomers. Therefore, it is not surprising that like other ethnic and religious groups, some Sikhs prefer to live together in a communal-like setting such as the emerging ethnic enclaves in suburban Toronto and Vancouver. With the children and grandchildren of these immigrants now growing up in Canada, numerous issues have emerged both within and outside of Sikh communities. With more Sikh migration over the last 25 years, there are other elements of intra-group tension, particularly when reviewing how second generation Sikhs typecast newer immigrants as "refugees" and "freshies." As noted by Sidhu (2012), it is common for younger, Canadian-born Sikhs to refer to these new immigrants as "they," so as to construct a distinct identity for themselves (p. 59). This may lead to tension as those born here generally consider themselves more "Canadian" than their newly arrived compatriots from Punjab.

Walton-Roberts and Pratt's (2005) study of a Sikh family that recently immigrated to Canada outlines some interesting thoughts they had about fellow Punjabis in Vancouver. The new migrants found that Punjabis in Vancouver used "odd language" and exhibited "coarse behaviour" rooted in the norms and customs of rural Punjab (p. 177). It is key to discern that a common theme of this research study was the traditionalist nature of the Sikh population in Vancouver compared to the participant family's orientation to liberal values of the upper class Sikhs from India. For instance, a mother discusses the "old-school mentality" in British Columbia while her daughter-in-law talks about females having less freedom in Surrey than in the Punjab (p. 183). This was an interesting assertion that has led to recent studies examining the dynamic of gender roles and practices within Canada's Sikh communities.

1.2.3 Family Systems

The Sikh family often takes an active primary role in the decision-making of youth. For many, it is not unusual to involve family members in decisions concerning educational aspirations, career pursuits, and marriage. Therefore, a collective orientation often includes parents, grandparents, and extended family members such as uncles and aunts. N. Singh's (1994) study of Canadian Sikhs states that "the most important element in Sikh communities anywhere in the world is the family. Family means the extended family, which is the principal social unit in Punjab" (p. 97). As such, youth learn from an early age to keep the family's interests in mind while attending to the demands of their parents and grandparents. As a result, respect is key for youth when engaging in discussions with elders. Depending on family dynamics, such discussions, which are usually predicated on intergenerational communication, may or may not occur as they focus on contentious issues such as education, marriage, and freedom to socialize with peers.

Nayar and Sandhu (2006) explain that "in traditional societies communication involves a collective orientation; direct confrontation is generally avoided and non-verbal communication is emphasized; conversation styles involve concrete, rather than abstract and/or affective, expressions; and elders and authority figures are to be respected" (p. 140). This hierarchy continues through adolescence and adulthood, where younger generations are expected to defer to parents and grandparents. There is expected to be minimal argumentation as children follow the demands that are set forth for them. This is often consistently role-modelled in exchanges that younger Sikhs observe as children (R. Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993; Netting, 2006). As a result, young Sikhs may often consult with elder family members well into adulthood, a process usually facilitated by an established extended family network.

Communication between family members may vary depending on age and immigrant status. In their study of intergenerational communication, Nayar and Sandhu (2006) analyze the interactions between Sikh grandparents, parents, and children living in Canada. It was revealed that methods of communication varied between these three generations. The authors argued that elders, who were often illiterate, tended to rely on an oral traditional mode of communication while immigrant parents tended to rely more on the literacy mode of communication. On the other hand, children relied more on an analytical mode of communication that was more focused on self-orientation and critical inquiry (p. 142). This type of "individual-oriented" communication amongst the younger generation is likely influenced by their Western schooling. As a result, they are more likely to engage in questioning of how certain expectations are rationalized by the family. For example, the authors' study examined family tensions as a daughter was pressured to be open and accepting of an arranged marriage. They found that the grandmother relied on tradition and biographical storytelling to express her thoughts and the parents relied on interpretations at the literal level, while the daughter demonstrated "a critical view of learned concrete facts even as she is able to analyze information about the world without having experienced it" (pp. 147–148). This demonstrates that differing communication styles may sometimes result in intergenerational tensions in Sikh families, particularly with respect to issues such as education and marriage.

Education is another sphere where intergenerational communication is significant in Sikh families. Studying parental educational strategies, Bhachu (1985) states, "The Punjabi attitude towards education is purpose-orientated. Education has to be instrumental in getting an individual a suitable job" (p. 5). Regardless of parental background, the vast majority of Sikh families see education as pragmatic and the key to achieving social mobility (Bhachu, 1985; Gibson, 1988; A.

James, 1974; Kendall, 1992). Many parents see Western nations as functioning meritocracies where education will lead to further prosperity for the family.

Given the high emphasis placed on education amongst families, Sikhs have been seen as people who place tremendous importance on the scholastic pursuits of their children. Bhachu's (1985) study outlines the difference between interventionist and non-interventionist Sikh parents in England. She suggests that interventionists take a proactive role in their children's education and have knowledge of, and access to, the system. Non-interventionists, on the other hand, may be less educated and somewhat ambivalent about going into a school and discussing their child's progress (p. 147). What is clear from Bhachu's study, however, is that parents, regardless of whether they are interventionist or non-interventionist, have the same high expectations for their children. The high expectations and high value placed on education, along with the way many Sikh youth have applied themselves in school, has led to their gaining "model minority" status throughout the Western diaspora. Capitalizing on these educational opportunities can bring honour to the family and enhance its standing within the local community.

Helweg (1986) points out that "shame" is the opposite of "honour" and works as a powerful influence within South Asian communities. Shame "is the public rejection of one's performance and therefore, results in disrepute. For example, a Jat daughter who develops a reputation for looseness brings shame upon herself and her whole family" (p. 13). Similarly, a son who is deemed irresponsible by community members brings disgrace upon his entire family and may "ruin his father's good name" (Helweg, 1986, p. 19). Protecting and guarding honour is a cultural norm that is very common amongst Sikh families living in Canada. And as Nayar (2004) writes: "The value of honour (*izzat*) is pan-Indian…but it is particularly esteemed by the warrior castes, including the Punjabi Sikhs. Warrior culture typically elevates fighting in the protection of one's honour as a

value at both the personal level and the level of community. Consequently, the value of honour is extremely powerful among Punjabi Sikhs (p. 48). *Izzat* is applicable to all community members, and is used to uphold norms of accepted behaviour as well as traditions within the family.

Bhatti (1999) states that parents are more concerned with their daughters, as the family's honour is usually gauged by the behaviour of its female members (p. 55). There is great concern that a family will have a difficult time finding a marriage partner for their daughters if even one of them has a "reputation." For instance, Sandhu (2011) interviewed eight Sikh women between the ages of 19 and 36 in Prince George, B.C. Participants discussed at length the patriarchal nature of their families, and the burdens experienced by young women who have an innate "fear of judgement" based on how their appearance, dress, and actions are perceived by others within their local Sikh community (pg. 62–63). It was clear that expectations of these females compared to differed from those of their male siblings and peers.

Netting (2006) identified a number of issues in her examination of young Indo-Canadians perceptions of love and arranged marriages. The majority of her participants were Sikh, many of whom indicated some struggles when negotiating the issue of an arranged marriage with parents. Generally, youth fell into one of three categories when it came to their families "arranged introduction" of a potential marriage partner: traditionalists, rebels, and negotiators. The study revealed that while conflict might exist, many youth were "negotiators " who worked to resolve family discord and that two-way communication often resulted in "intergenerational equality" through ongoing constructive discussion (p. 143).

Existing literature reveals discrepancies in the lives of Sikh males and females as they grow up in Western society. This is often reflected in the different levels of freedom as it relates to socializing with peers and dating. Accordingly, literature reveals that there are often different

expectations along gender lines within Sikh as well as other South Asian families (R. Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993; Joy, 1984; Mehta & Spooner, 2000). This is noted in N. Singh's (1994) research on Canadian Sikhs:

> Sometimes serious conflicts arise between parents and their children, particularly with female children. Whenever Sikh girls go out as they wish to participate in the Canadian society the parents object, which results in a good deal of tension. When Sikh girls go to school they observe that Canadian girls have more freedom. In school they are in a different world. (p. 85)

Family structure can influence the differential treatment of males and females. The Sikh Religious Society (in J. Gill, 2007) has commented that gender roles are often sanctioned by families through religiosity, and that double standards have become a growing problem for Sikh youth in the United States. Accordingly, studies reveal that many Sikh females feel resentment seeing their brothers and male cousins, in addition to their Canadian peers, with much more social freedom.

Generally, young females have less influence than their male siblings, something that does not really change upon marriage, as they usually have to yield to their husbands as well as their in-laws. Examining the Sikh community in British Columbia, Joy (1984) notes "given the high status that males have, it is understandable that the men 'protect' the women, first in their father's household and then in their own" (p. 92). This was reiterated in Kalsi's (2003) study, where participants revealed that more freedom and trust is given to sons than daughters: "Males are often given more freedom to date and socialize outside of the home environment than females….Females are expected to assume gender specific chores and duties (including cleaning, disciplining younger siblings and cooking) and engage in minimal socialization outside of the home" (p. 3). According to Mehta and Spooner (2000), "There is a complete double standard when it comes to sons and daughters. Sometimes sons are given implicit approval to have relationships or date, but a daughter's marriageability is something parents would not even dare to risk by giving

permission to date" (p. 157). This reflects the patriarchal attitudes that may exist in South Asian families and the subsequent need to "protect" females.

Deception is often used by Sikh youth to augment freedom. J. Gill's (2007) study of Punjabi-Sikh youth in Toronto revealed the practice of using "white lies," notably amongst female participants, to socialize with friends. Similarly, my previous research indicated the practice of deception used by Sikh males to increase social time with peers (2002). They often cited studying or going to work as reasons to stay away from home and socialize with friends. This coincides with Gobin's (1999) observations of Sikh youth who revealed acts of defiance, as well as feelings of guilt about not being truthful to parents who did not approve of socialization (p. 252). It appears as though deception is utilized by Sikh youth regardless of gender, though this would be a subject open to more exploration.

A significant source of contention amongst Sikh males and females is the issue of dating. Netting (2006) states that "date, don't tell" is a common mantra amongst Indo-Canadian and Sikh youth. Further, Ghosh (2000) summarizes the conflict between home and peer cultures that South Asian females often endure: "Problems are related mainly to dating and dress. Girls are precariously positioned in the overly protective environment and strongly resent double standards for boys and girls" (p. 290). This again points to the differential standards that can exist between sons and daughters. Kalsi (2003) indicates that in many Punjabi families, "males are often given more freedom to date and socialize outside of the home environment than females" (p. 3).

Many have articulated the challenges that exist with respect to communication between youth growing up in the West and their elders whose formative years were in India (Ghuman, 1994; Ghuman, 1999; N. Singh, 1994; Sodhi & Sodhi, 2000; Wadhwani, 1999). Often, intergenerational communication issues may exacerbate these tensions. As a result, the terms

cultural conflict and *intergenerational gap* have been commonly used in literature that examines these interactions. However, it is clear that numerous factors such as family, gender, and geographic location may affect how these relations are played out.

1.2.4 Influence of Peers

The nature of peer relationships in South Asian and Sikh families is often a focal point of study. There has been significant research conducted on the experiences of second generation Sikh and South Asian females. It is also important to consider that Sikh youth, particularly females, may compare their level of freedom with those of other ethno-religious groups. Many studies indicate that there are double standards with respect to the social freedom accorded to Sikh youth based on gender.

Like many other Asian groups, Sikhs have often been considered a "model minority." This concept has been considered problematic as Mahalingam (2012) contends the term "implies that a particular ethnic group is identified as the exemplar for all ethnic minorities to aspire to be…[where] model minority groups often were positioned discursively against other ethnic groups" (p. 300). While Sikhs in Canada have often been praised for their work ethic and orientation to social mobility, the community has often challenged the status quo as evidenced by the RCMP turban debate and kirpan issue. In addition, the model minority stereotype suggests that ethnic groups work to assimilate and "fit in," whereas it could be argued that Sikhs are working to preserve their minority identity within a Canadian context.

It is worth exploring the relevance of the model minority concept to second generation males, particularly in the context of the communities in which they live and the nature of their peer relationships. For instance, Sandhu and Nayar (2008) reveal that the minority model construct has been increasingly challenged in Western Canada: "There has…in recent years emerged the

phenomenon of South Asian gangs where there exists a lucrative underground marijuana industry. In the Vancouver metropolis, where there is a large concentration of South Asians, an alarming rate of gang-related homicides involving South Asians is evident" (p. 6). There is concern that some of the peer relationships constructed by young Sikh males are limiting their focus on education and moving them into what would be typically classified as "deviant" subcultures. Frost's (2010a) study of youth in Surrey, where a high proportion of the Indo-Canadian population is Punjabi Sikh, explores perceptions of gang violence and drug activity within this community. In this context, the "Surrey Jack" has been constructed as the negative disposition of these peer relationships. The life of the "Surrey Jack" as Frost writes,

> revolves around partying, heavy drinking, doing, and in many cases, dealing drugs, picking fights, and "messing around" with different girls. Jacks are not concerned with school or potential careers, and many are expelled from or are unable to cope with attending regular public schools with their peers, and are enrolled in Work and Learn programs. Jacks are especially well-known for provoking fights. (p. 221-222)

The author indicates that there is tension between Surrey Jacks and other Indo-Canadian males who shun that label. It is interesting to note that the actions of Surrey Jacks are in some ways directly in contrast to parental expectations, raising the question of whether as young males, there are certain entitlements they experience at home leading them to act out in such a manner.

In recent years, there has also been concern about the escalating violence occurring amongst young Punjabis in the Toronto area, notably around Brampton and Mississauga. Specifically, there have been fears that these communities are on the verge of experiencing "Vancouver-style" conflict, drawing parallels with the aggressive and fierce actions of young Sikhs in British Columbia. The stabbing death of a young Sikh male from Brampton led many to question what needs to be done to address emerging issues within the community and by law enforcement authorities (Grewal, 2007,). Perceptions of Brampton are also very different today,

particularly given the changing demographics of the area and growth of immigrant communities. No longer is the city considered a quiet neighbour of Toronto; rather, it is viewed as an emerging suburban area enduring urban challenges. How Brampton is seen today is similar to the portrayal in media reports of the eastern Toronto suburb of Scarborough as analyzed by Basu, O'Connor, Fiedler, Ko, and Prier (2013). In a time of transition from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, "criminality was repeatedly discussed in parallel with observations about changing demographic trends…often in racialized undertones" (p. 9). Therefore it is important to consider how media portrayals may influence perceptions of local communities such as Brampton and the various ethno-religious groups that live there.

Sidhu (2012) examined the criminal behaviours of second generation Sikh males in Ontario. It was found that while family influences played a major role in their illegal activities in the form of excessive social freedom, "association with ethnic peers groups was a reality for many of the interview participants because of the composition of their communities among other factors. Peer influences were also referenced as a pathway to criminal lifestyles. Loyalty, respect, toughness, and coolness were consistently linked to aspects of criminality" (p. 80). It was clear from this research that for some participants, living in an ethnic enclave contributed to their involvement in crime despite a community ethos that would look down on these types of conduct. While the ethnic enclave is deemed a space for comfort and support, for males with excessive social freedom it could be a location for networking amongst youth subcultures that are focused on deviance and criminality.

For many young Sikhs in North America, navigating local communities and initiating friendships with others of a similar ethnic or religious background serve to reinforce a common identity with pride – "being brown", "being Sikh," and "being Punjabi." In a study of an Indo-

Pakistan basketball circuit in the United States and Canada, Thangaraj (2010) found that a Toronto team made up of turbaned and non-turbaned Sikhs was formulated solely on friendship and coming from the "same community." By calling themselves Toronto Khalsa, "the team, containing Sikh men with turbans and those with shaven faces, simultaneously constructs an 'imagined community'" (p. 53). Because of the social freedom that Sikh males generally have compared to their female counterparts, analysis of literature demonstrates that their peer relationships tend to be rooted in their ethno-religious identity, particularly when they are in a multicultural setting.

The influence of peers is always a consideration when examining the aspirations of young adults. However, it is important to consider that for Sikh males living in Canada as a racialized minority, it is crucial to balance the expectations of family, the community, and their friends who may or may not share the same ethno-religious background, as they complete their education and embark on occupational life.

1.2.5 Identity

Despite the policy of multiculturalism, Sikhs and other South Asians have often faced discrimination from "white" Canadians because of differences in race, ethnicity, language, and religion. Multiculturalism may be seen as a double-edged sword for minorities. While it encourages them to maintain the cultural traditions they bring to Canada, it does not necessarily protect them from any harassment and discrimination that may occur as a result of maintaining customs.

While many Sikhs still want to preserve their distinctive heritage and culture as they settle in Canada, a important proportion of Sikh males in Canada do not maintain the visible markers of the religion. Consequently, they do not fit the general image of a bearded man with a turban and kirpan, which suggests that being a non-turbaned Sikh could be a reflection of a wanting to

integrate or a varied interpretation of religiosity that is founded on not having to have these visible markers. Despite these variances amongst the population, the Sikh community has still managed to guard its identity. The foundations of this identity are commonly considered the Gurdwara and the community's strong ties with its homeland of Punjab. It is through the Gurdwara that people of the community meet and interact with one another, sharing pride in the religion: "The Sikhs have maintained their distinctiveness through Gurdwaras, separate shopping centers, community organizations, endogamous marriages and links with Punjab" (Ghuman, 1994, p. 34).

Second generation youth face complex issues surrounding identity development, as there is typically significant community pressure to maintain cultural values and norms. For instance, there are numerous challenges facing youth as they negotiate "Eastern" and "Western" notions of Sikh culture in identity formation. For some youth, their disconnect with religious institutions exacerbates these tensions as they struggle to negotiate family and community demands. In terms of identity, young men must also navigate varying expectations of what it means to be a Sikh male. In addition, individuals must come to grips with the intra-group conflicts and dynamics that exist in Sikh communities with respect to the Khalistani movement that has stemmed from the violent political turmoil within India and across the Sikh diaspora since 1984. Some of the local Gurdwaras in the Greater Toronto Area have vivid messages and images about the fallout from 1984 and the Sikh quest for an independent Punjab homeland. Depending on their families' orientation to these events, youth often attempt to negotiate these conflicting ideals.

In addition, one challenge is to understand the sometimes blurred line between varying notions of the Sikh identity. For instance, J. Gill (2007) states that it has become much more "difficult for members of the Punjabi-Sikh community to identify what is in accordance with their faith, and what is merely cultural" (p. 12). Studies have revealed that Punjabi values are sometimes

considered synonymous with Sikh values, particularly with respect to ideas about gender roles, the caste system, and arranged marriages (J. Gill, 2007; Jakobsh, 2006). These are considered issues of importance to younger Canadian Sikhs. Specifically, young people are concerned about "the status of women and prejudice rooted in caste" (Jakobsh, 2006, p. 25). While the Sikh religion calls for equality between males and females and does not support the caste system, the Punjabi culture is often considered patriarchal and aligned with a hierarchy of castes. As a result, Punjabi Sikhs may find themselves conflicted between religious norms and perceived cultural norms of all South Asians.

J. Gill (2007) mentions that Punjabi-Sikh youth often have difficulty finding a space for themselves in the context of family, friends, and the larger community because of competing expectations (p. 1). It is important to realize that while J. Gill's study examined five males and five females, each of the males was a "visible" Sikh and all participants were from the Greater Toronto Area, without a specific focus on the type of community they lived in. However, J. Gill's work indicated that Sikh youth often had to employ subtle rebellion in the form of deception in order to reconcile conflicting expectations, particularly as they negotiated the intersection of their parents' Indian identities and their own Canadian identities.

Kalsi's (2003) study of Punjabi women in Canada refers to biculturalism as their ability to function in more than one culture and move between roles as dictated by a situation (p. 1). This definition is similar to "situational ethnicity," where identity changes are dependent on context as one learns how to "act" differently in different settings (Nodwell, 1993; Rosenthal, 1987). As a result, young Sikhs learn how to negotiate their "Canadian-ness" with their Indian or Punjabi identity, which may lead to a conflict between two value systems. Further, ideas regarding gender roles, culture, language, and religious preservation, as well as identity formation and family

expectations can all be derived from the competing collective and individualistic value systems at work in their community. Hence, the challenge for youth is to negotiate the varying norms, values, and expectations that exist within the geographic spaces they navigate.

Of particular relevance to this study is Kalsi's (2003) claim that biculturalism tends to be more applicable to Sikh females, as a double standard employed by many families tends to benefit their male counterparts. Similarly, Netting (2006) refers to Indo-Canadians' ability to balance two cultures, though it might mean leading "two lives" at times, a process that generally becomes easier with age (p. 134). As in the previously mentioned study, it was also articulated by female respondents that they had less freedom than their male siblings. In addition, Netting's study of Punjabi males and females, the majority Sikh, indicated that "by their early twenties, conflicts had subsided, and most respondents felt they had blended Indian and Canadian elements into a coherent identity, with relative proportions ranging from very Indian to very western" (p. 133).

Many youth feel some detachment from the religious institutions, figures, and scriptures of Sikhism. As noted by J. Gill (2007), this can be particularly true of youth who speak less Punjabi, and are thus less likely to understand the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib. Further, participants in her study wanted more of the donated money to Gurdwaras to be allocated to the needs of young Sikhs as many had "expressed a degree of frustration and disappointment with the lack of involvement that members of the Gurdwara committee had taken in the education of youth" (p. 28). The detachment that Sikh youth may experience in terms of their religious identity can often be attributed to "Gurdwara politics." This refers to the perception that exists amongst some youth that Gurdwaras are sites characterized by internal strife as religious leaders vie for power and influence as opposed to supporting issues that are more pertinent to youth.

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Based on the research, there is further evidence that a number of Sikh youth feel disconnected from the Gurdwara. Jakobsh's (2006) study revealed that many young Sikhs were going online to create a safe third space in the virtual world to circumvent parents and religious elders, and to have open discussions about religion: "For many Sikhs, particularly, young, educated, and often disenfranchised Sikh 'gatherers,' in other words, postmoderns, it is within these virtual 'third places' on the Web that this essential and utterly valid discourse is taking place" (p. 32). Consequently, it has provided an avenue for transnational connections with Sikhs around the world, particularly for youth that feel disenfranchised from Sikh religious institutions. Jakobsh asserts that many youth have turned to the Internet to discuss issues that they do not feel comfortable discussing in Sikh temples. She surmises that "it is on the WWW that questions of caste, gender, abortion, Sikh ritual identity, premarital sex, homosexuality, to name only a few, can be found almost on a daily basis. The anonymity of the Web is particularly conducive for stances taken on these controversial issues" (p. 29). As such, youth are finding different venues to air their concerns and queries pertaining to religion beyond the religious institution itself. This is important to consider given the intergenerational communication dynamics that take place in Sikh homes, where youth are not always comfortable speaking on taboo issues.

Chanda and Ford's (2010) critique of Shauna Singh Baldwin's collection of short stories about Sikh males offers some enlightenment to this often neglected subject. Like Kalra (2005), Chanda and Ford pinpoint the turban as the foremost identifier of the Khalsa (baptized) Sikh male, who is therefore a marked body (p. 464). However, it is clear that the majority of transnational Sikh males do not wear the turban. So how do we reconcile the "clean-shaven" Sikh with the turban-wearer? Chanda and Ford assert that both could be seen as acts of defiance:

> As one young man anecdotally explained, he felt that keeping the turban was not only an
> important assertion of an identity of difference, it was a defiance of mainstream pressure

to conform to the short hair norm. However, he also acknowledged that it is possible to read the cutting of hair and shedding of the turban as a defiance of both parental authority and the Sikh (Khalsa) community. In addition, the community (panth) in Sikhism is regarded as the equivalent of a living guru. The keeping or cutting of hair, however, is a recurrent and continually contentious issue that takes on more or less significance depending on the sociopolitical contingencies of specific places, political climates, and historical time periods. (pp. 13-14)

This demonstrates that when looking at Sikh masculinities, we must be conscious of the constant negotiated, shifting hybrid identity. Family and peer expectations, as well as the socio-political climate in which one is located, will influence the wearing of the turban.

This is evident in Nayar's (2008) work, which explores the role of media in how society sees the Sikh male. Speaking of the orthodox Sikh as "misunderstood in the diaspora," Nayar (2008) remarks that he is stereotyped not only by larger society but also within his own community:

The phenomenon of stereotypes related to a basic external mark of Sikh identity is not only found among the general public or mainstream, but it also manifests itself within the larger Sikh community itself. Many Sikhs turn to the mainstream media for the news and follow it, believing it must be the correct portrayal of events. In fact, all the orthodox Sikhs interviewed stated that the clean-shaven Sikhs often view them negatively, just as presented in the media, to such an extent that they often attempt to disassociate themselves from the orthodox Sikhs. In this manner, the media stereotypes are carried over into the larger community of the Punjabis or South Asians, making orthodox Sikhs in a sense "a minority within a minority." (p. 28)

It becomes clear that there is tension within Sikh communities in Canada concerning the construct of what a Sikh male should look like. While turbaned Sikhs may feel marginalized by larger society as well as their own community, males who do not wear the turban may be criticized for not following the Sikh code of conduct (Nayar, 2008, p. 29). This demonstrates a significant irony – that the "visible," turbaned Sikh may be pressured from those outside of the community while the "non-visible," clean-shaven Sikh may be pressured from those inside of the community.

A participant in Nijhawan and Arora's (2013) study of young Sikhs in Canada, demonstrates the complexity of how turbaned and non-turbaned Sikhs are perceived:

We're in 21st century now, I think if you look like that, you know, persona of a Sikh, you wear a turban, you have, you know, a beard…but just 'cuz you look like that, doesn't define what you are inside. You can be someone who cuts your hair, you do your eyebrows, you do all of that, a guy who cuts his hair, but at the end of the day, what's inside of you, how your relationship is with God, the way that you believe in your religion and the beliefs you have – that's what's gonna count. What's inside of you. In your mind. If you look a certain way, but you never in a day think of God, that doesn't define you as a Sikh. If you look a certain way and you're going and smoking and drinking every day of your life with your friends that doesn't define you as a Sikh. (p. 310)

This account demonstrates that while both insiders and outsiders may be quick to classify and label who is a Sikh based on physical appearances, there are others that prefer to measure religiosity through individual actions and spirituality.

Finally, it is important to consider how the political environment in India has affected Sikh identity in other parts of the world. For instance, Gunawardena (2000) defines the Sikhs as an "ethnoreligious" group – "an ethnic group, a religious group, a nation and 'a people'" – similar to the Jews (p. 49). Research indicates that the identities of Sikhs in Western countries such as Canada, Britain, and the United States has been profoundly influenced by the Sikh struggle in India. Numerous authors have made mention of the "critical event" of 1984 – when the Indian military raided the Sikhs' holiest shrine, the Golden Temple – as a key element in the advent of Sikh nationalism overseas (Gayer, 2002; Gunawardena, 2000; Razavy, 2006; Tatla, 1999). This has led to calls amongst some in the diaspora for an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, in Punjab, India. According to Gunawardena (2000),

The cataclysmic events of 1984, however, were to drastically change the course of the Khalistan movement which had been, until then, considered by most Sikhs as unworthy of serious attention. The events that occurred in the Punjab in 1984 were single-handedly responsible for creating a deep sense of insecurity among the Sikh community, and these fears, in turn, were effectively harnessed by Khalistani activists into mass support for the separatist movement. Thus the expansion and popularity of the movement during the mid-1980s may be directly attributed to actions taken by the Indian government. (pp. 58–59)

These events served to unite many Sikhs around the world in a way they had never been before. The Indian army's initiative, Operation Bluestar, caused grief and outrage as it was seen as an attack on the Sikh identity.

Gayer's (2002) study revealed that in the ensuing years, many Sikhs embraced their religion with considerably more devotion. He states "Almost all the Khalistani activists that I met during my fieldwork in Britain and Canada…prior to the Golden Temple attack, they were *mona* (cleanshaven) or *sahajdhari* (latitudinarian) Sikhs and easily inclined toward frequenting pubs and bars (alcohol and tobacco consumption being against the *rahit*)" (p. 19). As a result of the Golden Temple attack in 1984, many more Sikhs became baptized (*amritdhari*) and increasingly supportive of the Khalistani cause.

This impact was no doubt further heightened in Canada by the bombing of Air India Flight 182, which originated in Vancouver, off the coast of Ireland in 1985. Canadian Sikhs came under increasing scrutiny following the airplane disaster, particularly given evidence that suggested Sikh militant movements were operating in Canada (Razavy, 2006, p. 79). The murder of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards and the riots that killed thousands of Sikhs in India shortly thereafter only heightened the Khalistani movement abroad. As a result, the current issues that have made their way into mainstream Canadian media have served to create dialogue and questions about the prevalence of extremism within the Sikh community. Some argue that identifying with the Sikh separatist cause, does not in itself make them extremists. Others contend that the Sikh militancy movement in India as well as Canada has ceased to exist.

1.3 Summary

This literature review demonstrates the fluidity of the Sikh experience in Canada. There are a variety of issues ranging from first generation migrants enduring overt racism to younger

generations growing up within a developing multicultural society. Additionally, families often contend with questions that are marked by intergenerational and gender differences. Also, while Sikhs have often come together to challenge the parameters of Canada's multiculturalism policy, their communities have often been sites of intra-group tension and discord.

In this dissertation, I seek to examine how young Sikhs living in suburban Toronto negotiate a myriad of expectations. These sometimes conflicting norms and values are manifested through their daily family as well as community interactions living in the unique setting of northeast Brampton. The distinctiveness of this work compared to other research in the area of South Asian and Sikh studies is that it focuses on youth living in an emerging ethnic enclave within a larger multicultural setting. There is minimal scholarly research that examines the dynamic realities facing young Sikh males who live in a predominantly Sikh Canadian community. It sheds light on how seven participants formulate their educational aspirations, interact within religious settings, and navigate the community in which they live based on family, peer, and societal expectations.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical underpinnings of this research, aimed at exploring the complexities of second generation Canadian Sikh males, are rooted in notions of transnationalism, hybrid identities, and masculinity. Theories of transnationalism demonstrate the relationship between the second generation birthplace of participants and the homeland of their immigrant parents. Transnational identities of youth are often influenced by the intertwining norms and values of the host country and their parents' originating country, in addition to their cultural capital, as expressed through the dynamic interactions of race, ethnicity, religion, class, and gender.

Much of the research around South Asian, Indo-Canadian, and Sikh youth in Canada discusses the challenges they face in developing a "hybrid" (also often referred to as a bicultural, transnational, or negotiated) identity. These terms speak to young people that are trying to reconcile a variety of expectations that emanate from the family, community, and schooling environment. Coinciding with this are questions about race, culture, and religion, which often influence youth to find a "safe", "third" space where they can deal with questions of identity. This study incorporates the theoretical construct of hybrid identities and their usefulness in the study of young Sikh males in Canada.

Notions of identity intersect with the concept of masculinity within the Sikh community, particularly in relation to gender roles. It is also necessary to consider how experiences may vary according to physical appearance, specifically how turbaned and non-turbaned Sikh males perceive themselves. Consequently, a significant component of this study examines how young Sikh males perceive themselves and express masculinity within and outside of their own community.

2.1 Transnationalism

Defined broadly, Vertovec (1999) states that transnationalism "refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (p. 447). It considers nation states and their boundaries in the postmodern world less pronounced in light of the global economy, advanced technology, and continued international migration (Atari, 2013). Schiller, Glick, and Blanc-Szanton (1992) define transnationalism as a process where immigrants build "social fields" as they develop and maintain familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political relations that cross borders and allow them to be concurrently attached to two or more societies (pp. 1–2). While these notions of transnationalism consider networks that transcend space, others also consider networks that transcend time. For instance, Plaza (2006) notes "transnationalism implies the regular and sustained engagement of persons in activities and networks that span societies of origin and settlement" (p. 213).

An important element of transnationalism is the ability to maintain a distinctive ethnicity once the migrant population has left the country of origin. According to Sahoo (2009), "diasporic Indians" have been able to construct and maintain identities in the Western world through the preservation of language, cultural traditions, and religion (pp. 529–530). This has generally been a trait emphasized by many in the first immigrant generation who have migrated to Western countries, including Canada. As adults, they have been able to cultivate identities with the norms, customs, and values of their native land, developed through the existence and promotion of transnational networks.

Castles and Miller (in Atari, 2013) provide a framework for examining how the characteristics of a host country influence immigrants' transnational identities by identifying three varying models. First, the differential exclusionary model makes it difficult for immigrants to

become citizens in their new country as they often have to face exclusionary policies. Second, the assimilationist model promotes cultural assimilation, with the expectation that immigrants will abandon their ethnic identities in favour of citizenship. Finally, the multicultural model advocates that immigrants become citizens of their adopted homeland while maintaining their distinct cultural identity. Based on these models, a country such as Canada, which has been seen in the post-1960s era as one that will advocate for immigrants to maintain transnational ties (e.g. through policies such as the Multiculturalism Policy of 1971 and Multiculturalism Act of 1988), would be considered an exemplar of the multicultural model (pp. 36–37). While the literature review indicates that first generation migrants still faced overt racism and discrimination, it could be argued that their Canadian-born children, particularly those living in urban centres, have grown up in a multicultural setting that promotes diversity. For these youth, racism and discrimination may be considered more subtle and hidden through structural inequities.

Somerville's (2008) study of second generation South Indian Canadians found that these youth felt a substantive connection to India and were working to sustain transnational networks through communication and clothing that linked them simultaneously to two countries.

> They feel emotional attachment and belonging to their Indian families in India and promote their ties to their parents' country of origin as a way to express these connections. Simultaneously, these second generation youth feel an emotional connection to Canada and promote their belonging within Canada….Selecting of ethnic clothes is an important way in which second generation Indo-Canadians express their transnational belonging…..The children of migrants create their own fashion styles that reflect their connection to their parents' birthplace, and their own country of citizenship. By creating Indian inspired clothing, second-generation migrants symbolically position themselves as Indian but, at the same time, clearly differentiate themselves from their Indian parents by expressing their "Canadianness" (pp. 27–28).

This demonstrates the development of an emerging, dynamic identity that is contingent on transnationalism. Previous research indicates that many young South Asians attempt to adopt elements of both Indian and Canadian cultures as they actively work to maintain the transnational

bond. For the second generation immigrant youth, this can be developed through popular culture that fuses Western and Eastern ideals, a component of transnationalism.

Further examining the concept of transnationalism, Vertovec (2009) delineates a number of overlapping clusters – social morphology, type of consciousness, cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, site of political engagement, and reconstruction of "place" or locality (p. 4). Social morphology refers to the ever-expanding "network" of social relationships that is facilitated by the development of new technologies. Yeoh, Huang, and Lam (2005) summarize how Filipino migrant women often have to negotiate transnational space in order to maintain communication and intergenerational ties. Phone calls, text messages, daily e-mail communication, and remittances through the electronic transfer of funds are examples of how relationships are sustained transnationally (p. 310). It is with these emerging technologies and advances in social media that transnational networks continue to be enhanced.

Type of consciousness denotes the dual or multiple identifications that individuals maintain, particularly those in immigrant communities who often experience feelings of "home" as well as their "home away from home." Patel (2006) describes this as being a part of everyday interactions with social institutions and "marked by more than one identity and by simultaneous links to more than one nation. Often, it is maintained through cultural artefacts and a shared imagination" (p. 151). Cultural reproduction has been described by Hall (1991) as the "new ethnicities" where young people select and create new forms of culture based on more than one heritage. Cultural reproduction can occur through the schooling of second and third generation immigrant families. Norms, customs, and values purported at home from the immigrant grandparents or parents are meshed with the knowledge that children and youth gain from the school environment. In addition, Garbin (2009) discusses the emergence of "new ethnicities"

amongst British Bangladeshi and mixed-heritage youth in London. Popular culture as expressed in music, consumption patterns, leisure, and media is influenced by how intercultural, diasporic, and hybrid identities are produced and expressed. Research found that youth often contested national, ethnic, cultural, and religious practices which had an effect on their social practices (p. 11).

The movement of financial resources to and from the country of origin and amongst the network typifies the movement of capital. This is often epitomized by extended family networks that move money back and forth between the countries, as necessary to support business interests or elders overseas. This is analogous to Levitt's (2004) findings, in that Gujarati immigrants settling in Massachusetts often pursue more than just the "American Dream" by continuing to pursue "Gujarati dreams as well. They send money back to India to open businesses or improve family homes and farms. They work closely with religious leaders to establish Hindu groups in the United States, to strengthen religious life in their homeland, and to build a global Hindu community transcending national borders" (p. 1).

Site of political engagement is synonymous with the idea of "homeland politics," where members of diasporas may still be engaged with the current events and affairs of the country of origin. A notable example is the development of satellite TV which permits immigrant families in Canada to keep in touch with their roots through a variety of ethnic channels in the form of news stories, religious programming, cinema, and sports. Reconstruction of "place" or locality refers to "the transference and regrounding of practices and meanings" that stem from a geographical space and history rooted in a place of origin (Patel, 2006, p. 151). It is necessary to reflect upon the complexity of "place." As Ma (2003) notes, a place is more than just a location or "spatial container." Rather, it is "a locality of experience, meanings, and feelings, constituted historically

from social actions….[where] cultural sediments are bound, eroded, and metamorphosed locally"
(p. 10).

2.2 Identity

Identity is a complex notion, particularly when its construct is examined within the setting of an ethnic enclave with a significant immigrant population. Schecter and Bayley (2002) state that recent discussions of ethnic identity "have approached the process of identity construction as complex, multifaceted, dynamic, and dialogic" (p. 51). As a result, it is important to consider how the intersection of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and social class affect contemporary identities. However, as noted by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identities encompass not only macro-level demographic categories, but also local ethnographically specific cultural positions and day-to-day interactions as well as participatory roles (p. 592). Identities are not fixed, static, and unchanging demographic markers. Rather, as Atari (2013) notes, "the dynamic approach views identities as multiple, conflicting, contradictory, relational, contextual, and always in process" (p. 17).

Identity as it relates to race and culture can be a difficult concept to grasp. The term *ethnic* is often substituted for race, immigrant, or culture, when defining identity (C. James, 2003, p. 50). With respect to the study of South Asians living in the diaspora, the terms *South Asian*, *Indian*, and *Asian* are often used to describe people of Hindu or Sikh religious background. While Sikhs are often recognizable because of their outward symbols (i.e., turban, unshorn hair, kirpan), those without these identifiers are socially constructed as "South Asian," a very loose, broad term that does not account for religious, linguistic, and other variances that may exist between ethno-religious groups.

At times, literature may refer to Sikh participants as "Punjabi." This attachment can be used as a cultural identifier though the Punjabi language itself is generally considered the native

language of Sikhs, in terms of religious scriptures and teachings. As noted by Spolsky (1999), "language is a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity" (p. 181). For Sikhs who have been considered a minority community in both India and abroad, this is noteworthy as it serves as a chief component of their collective identity, particularly in urban Canada. As Schecter and Bayley (in Atari, 2013) assert, research in a variety of fields demonstrates that language is crucial to the development of an immigrant identity (p. 21).

Frost (2010b) uses the terms *Punjabi* and *brown* to define the contemporary South Asian community living in Surrey, British Columbia. The "brown" identity amongst Punjabi males has developed from common experiences – "being raised by Punjabi immigrant parents, growing up with and alongside the children of other Punjabi parents, and attending school where the majority of students are also Punjabi" (p. 80). This demonstrates the dynamic approach to identity that moves beyond the static identifiers of race, ethnicity, and class. The collective, day-to-day interactions and similar home-life trajectories of youth leads to a shared, common identity.

Research in Canada has also indicated that as a social construct, identity is a fluid notion that is particularly complex for the children and youth of immigrants who often endure conflicting ideas about what it means to belong to the community, religious group, and school institutions (J. Gill, 2007; Nayar, 2004). They may endure competing expectations, norms, and values based on their geographic space and the presence or absence of a community that shares similar ideals.

2.2.1 Hybridity

Hybridity is a concept that has a variety of meanings and interpretations. As noted by Kalra, Kaur, and Hutnyk (2005), "Hybridity has come to mean all sorts of things to do with mixing and combination in the moment of cultural exchange" (p. 71). The term can be considered both broad and vague depending on context. An important point to consider is the contention that some

applications of the term *hybridity* fail to consider power dynamics of the merging cultures. Considering liberal multicultural perspectives, Williams (2003) states that this type of view

> maintains the dominant culture at the invisible center and defines the multicultural and the hybrid space as existing in the undifferentiated margin. In doing so, such a position argues for definitions of equal cultural worth, while actually maintaining a center/margin worldview. (pp. 600–601)

Consequently, it is necessary to consider the underlying power dynamics between dominant and minority cultures that may form these hybrid identities. Sangari (in Giardina, 2008) states that the culturally hybrid individual is "already open to two worlds [or more] and is constructed within the national and international, political and cultural systems of colonialism and neo-colonialism…[so that] to be hybrid is to understand the question as well as to represent the pressure of such historical placement" (p. 70). Consequently, there is recognition within the hybrid culture of a "past" as well as a "present" within a socio-political context. Bhabha (1996) similarly recognizes that at times, hybridity "does not recognize the disjunctive, 'borderline' temporalities of partial, minority cultures" (p. 56).

Asher (2008) argues that youth often negotiate hybrid identities as they encounter differences and contradictions when race, culture, class, and gender intersect at both home and school. Studying the experiences of Indian-American high school students in New York City, she found that "as individuals and communities craft hybrid identities and cultures by synthesizing the differences they encounter, they may find themselves in in-between spaces" (p. 15), which can be sites of struggle and contradiction.

In a study of how second generation immigrants negotiate competing demands for their various cultural identities, Lui (2008) states that the hybrid identity often involves the minority culture being overwhelmed by the dominant culture. For instance, in the popular film *Bend it Like Beckham*, it was evident that the main character, like many other second generation immigrants,

faced the challenge of combining the home culture of her parents with the culture of the place where she lived: "As a result, a new hybrid identity emerges, which combines elements of both cultures, and which is formed through the process of negotiation. In the movie…Jess, a girl of Indian descent lives in the British society, and her British cultural identity devours part of her traditional identity. Therefore, a hybrid British Indian identity is formed." (p. 60). Thus, it is important to consider the underlying power dynamic when examining hybrid identities, particularly of second generation immigrant youth who are attempting to integrate their "home" and "schooling" identities.

Under the guise of Canada's policy of multiculturalism, many young people in Canada express the concept of a hybrid identity. In a study of one-and-a-half and second generation Indo-Caribbean and African-Caribbean migrants to Canada, Plaza (2006) writes that young people have been encouraged "to live between two worlds where national boundaries, national cultures, and national identities are flexible" (pp. 213–214). However, considering the dynamics of race and power that exist in Canada despite this policy, one must reflect on the prevalence of hybrid identities amongst visible minority youth who often have to straddle their "ancestral culture" with Canadian culture. According to Plaza, a segmented hybrid identity emerges as a result of the visible marker that his participants shared – skin colour. Experiences growing up led them to feel ethnic while they simultaneously took on aspects of Canadian culture (p. 227).

The idea of a "negotiated", "shifting" process in Canada coincides with much research around dynamic, multiple, constantly changing identities. Heller (1987) states that "there will be certain activities in which ethnicity is more meaningful or central than others" (p. 184). Hall (1990) suggests that identity should be considered a "production, which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (p. 222). As a result, for the

purposes of this paper, the term *hybridity* refers to the development of a hybrid identity amongst second generation immigrants. The term evokes images of cultural production or "mixing of cultures," in addition to diasporic sentiments of transnationalism that consider a "home" and "home away from home." For example, according to Chambers (in Kalra et al., 2005), "the most conventional accounts assert hybridity as the process of cultural mixing where the diasporic arrivals adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform and reconfigure this in production of a new hybrid culture or 'hybrid identities'" (p. 71). Based on this definition, immigrants would create a new hybrid culture by taking elements of their culture from their homeland and mixing them with elements of culture from their new country. Further, Portes and Zhou (in Smith, 2014) recognize that "children of immigrants who attribute successful adaptation to the association with and support from their ethnic community may deploy a hybrid identity" (p. 10).

It is also important to note the role of ethnic enclaves within the process of developing a hybrid identity. As Laus (2014) notes in a study of Filipino students in the United States and Canada, this type of setting is conducive to maintaining connections between the North American and the "Asian homeland." Through the growth of transnationalism and the availability of related products and services, "children of immigrants have many reasons to retain ties with their parents' homeland" (pp. 35–36). As noted earlier many Sikh immigrants to Canada have settled in areas such as the suburbs of Toronto and Vancouver where their ethnic and religious community is already established.

Hybridity can be demonstrated overtly, in dress, language, and symbols. This is especially common amongst younger, second generation migrants who are claiming their family's heritage while expressing current realities in the "new" country through a variety of media: "This can be seen in individuals – particularly youth – who strategically and situationally patch together their

identities from an international array of global television, popular music, and techno-culture so as to actively manipulate global configurations of cultural difference, racial hierarchy, and citizenship" (Giardina, 2008, p. 73). A similar concept was noted in my previous (2002) study that looked at the intersection of situational and symbolic ethnicity where youth may utilize certain symbols tosignify their identity to outsiders as well as their own peers.

2.3 Masculinity

Notions of masculinity and their applicability to the Canadian Sikh community are explored in this study. Masculinity is a chief component in the social construction of how gender relations are played out in society (Chua & Fujino, 1999). Hence, the concept of masculinity is utilized to understand the varying cultural, familial, and social expectations between Sikh males and females. Leach (1994) defines masculinity as "the cultural interpretation of maleness, learnt through participation in society and its institutions" (p. 36). As such, it is important to recognize how theories of masculinity can be utilized to study the target group of young Sikh males. In our continuous effort to define what it means to be "male," we must consider factors such as race, class, ethnicity and geographical location to understand the ways in which young men learn to relate in certain social situations and social institutions such as schools (Martino, 2001, p. xi). As noted by Nayak (2003), "An in-depth and multi-textured analysis of masculinities is now better served by also accounting for young men's multiple relationships to the family, locality, peers and changing labour market in global times" (p. 148). This must be taken one step further to recognize the multicultural context of Canada and the influence this has on various masculinities that pertain to youth. Frost (2010b) reinforces the importance of recognizing "that not only is there no monolithic version of masculinity but that masculinity is something that is done in different ways in different contexts" (p. 131).

2.3.1 Hegemonic Masculinity

Given the interplay of gender, class, and ethnicity in a Western context, the term *hegemonic masculinity* differentiates members of minority groups from the common, Western notion of masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explain that hegemonic masculinity "was distinguished from other masculinities," because it "embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it" (p. 832). Consequently, in Canadian society, one must take note of the relationship between ethnic minority males and the normative concept of hegemonic masculinity.

Men who belong to racial and ethnic minority groups "are also oppressed and marginalised by hegemonic patriarchal discourses which establish norms for 'appropriate' male behaviour" (Martino, 2001, p. 208). As a result, it is necessary to consider the power dynamics within Western society, in that men typically have power over women, yet there are men who are subordinate to other men, which can be further explored by understanding the role of hegemonic masculinity in relation to minority populations. For example, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation are factors that differentiate power dynamics amongst men. In a study of schooling experiences of Black youth in Canada, C. James (2009) states that while Black males may be socialized towards a "mainstream" masculinity, their perceived lack of the requisite values, norms, and attitudes may prevent them from acquiring it (p. 105). This demonstrates that some racial minority men in Canada, while being pushed towards the expectations of hegemonic masculinities, often cannot achieve this ideal because of the way they are seen and "otherized" within a multicultural society.

It is also important to consider variances of masculinity within ethnic groups among different generations. In a study of Asian-American men, Chua and Fujino (1999) found that

second generation participants had a more varied perception of masculinity that competed with the efforts of first generation immigrants to work towards a hegemonic masculinity:

> Only U.S.-born Asian men said that they would do domestic tasks, suggesting that these men would be more open to sharing household responsibilities, while others might not be. This is one indication of how they have a more expanded notion of masculinity and do not readily accept hegemonic masculine notions that view housework as women's work. Asian-American men hold male privilege at the same time they are racially subordinated. Because of their subordinated position, some Asian-American men try to counter the effeminate image of Asian-American men by emulating hegemonic masculinities, which include dominance over women. Though they can engage in patriarchy and obtain male privileges, they find that racism eventually prevents them from fully copying white hegemonic masculinity (p. 405).

Hence, the authors' study demonstrates that there can be competing masculinities within immigrant minority groups as they struggle to make sense of gender roles. In addition to negotiating their ethnic identity, they are also trying to negotiate the masculine identity.

Pascoe (in H. Gill, 2012) remarks that very few men actually seek out active dominance and would be considered hegemonically masculine (p. 9). However, it has been found that men, including those belonging to minority ethnic groups, often benefit from what is termed the "patriarchal dividend" (Connell, 1995). It is entirely possible for men to find rewards from simply "being male" without exerting the aggression, strength, and control associated with hegemonic masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) suggest that men may gain ascendancy through culture, social institutions, and persuasion and those "who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance could be regarded as showing a complicit masculinity" (p. 832).

Class, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation often intersect to influence subordinate or marginalized masculinities. Theorizing masculinity is a complex notion as it takes into consideration these other demographic factors. As framed by Connell (in Frost, 2010b), "while processes of domination and subordination operate between groups of men, the dynamics of

marginalization operate between masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups" (p. 130). Men who may be deemed subordinate in relation to hegemonic forms of masculinity, based on their ethnicity and class, can also engage in this hegemonic form based other factors such as location, culture, and in South Asian societies, caste. For instance, in India, a male farmer may be deemed subordinate to a white-collar male professional. Yet as noted by Chopra (in H. Gill, 2012), Punjabi men in India often emulate notions of hegemonic masculinity that characterized their fathers and other men in their family and allowed "the hardworking Jat farmer to claim a sense of masculine entitlement and privilege" (p. 199).

2.3.2 Protest and "Cool" Masculinity

Frost (2010b) cites Connell's concept of "protest masculinity" as a reworking of the hegemonic premise by youth within "a 'context of poverty' where young men's claims to power and status are repeatedly denied and negated by their economic and/or cultural weakness" (p. 221). Males from marginalized ethnic groups that feel powerless or face exclusionary practices may engage in this type of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 847). The conduct and behaviours end up being quite overt as they adopt an extremely aggressive mentality. Consequently, protest masculinity may involve "resorting to excessively macho behaviors and hypermasculine practices including violence, criminal activity and drug and/or alcohol abuse" (Frost, 2010a, p. 221).

Engaging in smoking, drinking, and drug abuse coincides with research into "cool" masculinities, which may also involve youth demonstrating minimal effort in educational spheres so as to maintain a level of "coolness." Hodgetts (in C. Jackson & Dempster, 2009) argues that "to be a boy is to succeed without trying" (p. 341). Being seen as interested in studies may result in the application of negative labels such as "nerd", "geek", "swot", "sissy," and "poof" with

consistent bullying (Epstein, 2001; Haywood & Ghaill, 2001; C. Jackson & Dempster, 2009). For example, Mills (2001) argues, "The desire for manly success, and consequently societal respect, is also complemented by a fear of being one of those subordinated boys/men who provide a means by which other boys/men can assert their manliness" (pp. 48–49). Youth engage in varying forms of masculinity in order to gain "respect" from other males and sustain peer relationships. Being "cool" is synonymous with C. Jackson and Dempster's (2009) use of Kimmel's "guycode" where males in U.S. and U.K. post-secondary institutions attempt to achieve mainstream hegemonic masculinity through sport, drinking, and success with women (p. 342). Oftentimes, behaviour that does not coincide with these purported norms is seen as countering the "normal" male.

Similarly, homophobia also works to define various forms of masculinity. Kimmel (in C. Jackson & Dempster, 2009), argues that "the fear of being perceived as gay, as not a real man, keeps men exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity" (p. 342). As a result, youth will go above and beyond to amplify their masculinity. Similarly, C. James (2009) notes that the gendered notion of heterosexuality is an essential component of masculinity. Black youth would demonstrate masculinity through overt and visible attributes such as words, dress, and actions and seek to avoid further marginalization by demonstrating their gendered attributes of heterosexuality (p. 104). Through these actions, males seek to show that they are "straight," which is synonymous with being a "man."

In addition, Lee's (2007) study found that second generation Hmong males tended to alienate themselves from their studies and did not value education in the same way as their parents or Hmong female peers. This could be considered an expression of "cool" masculinity in that these young men did not consider studying and success in school important. Yet while teachers believed that Americanization and hip hop culture was responsible for the lack of commitment to school,

the author saw a Eurocentric curriculum as a reason for academic underachievement. In addition, Lee mentions that "as in other immigrant and refugee communities, Hmong girls and young women are more strictly controlled by their parents than boys and young men. While Hmong boys and young men are often allowed to spend time socializing with their peers after school, girls and young women are expected to go home and perform household chores and care for younger siblings" (p. 177). Gender privileges are accorded to males who are rewarded with much more social freedom. This is similar to accounts from Sikh families where there has been the perception that females tend to endure greater scrutiny than their male counterparts.

2.4 Applicability of Theories to Canadian Sikhs

It is clear that many of Vertovec's aspects of transnationalism can be applied to Canada's Sikh communities. The events of 1984, the growth of the Sikh diaspora, and the advent of the Internet have all contributed to a strong sense of transnationalism, particularly amongst the first generation immigrants and their Canadian-born children: "While migrants continue to retain strong bonds of emotion, loyalty and affiliation with families, traditions, institutions and political organizations in their homelands, advances in the 'technology of contact' have powerfully affected the extent, intensity and speed at which they can do so" (Vertovec, 2009, pp. 14–15). It has been shown in some studies that "cyber spaces" have supported transnational ties for immigrant Sikhs and their children. Considering that the Sikhs are a religious minority in India, they have managed, for the most part, to maintain their distinctive religion and language (Punjabi) in Canada, Britain, and the United States.

Additionally, in terms of type of consciousness, many immigrant Sikhs in Canada consider Punjab their home, and often a desirable vacation. Travelling to and from India can provide parents and their children with a connection to a "homeland." At the same time, in the ethnic enclaves that

dot the suburbs of Toronto and Vancouver, their immediate surroundings are replete with social, commercial, and religious institutions that reflect the Punjab within a Canadian context, in essence creating a "home away from home." In terms of avenue of capital, scholars of the Sikh diaspora have often noted finances going back and forth between the Punjab and overseas communities. This occurs in the form of land ownership as well as support for Sikh religious societies (Basran & Bolaria, 2003; Nayar, 2004). Regarding cultural reproduction, one can choose to examine the emergence of bhangra music in the West, where traditional Punjabi lyrics, instrumentation, and beats have fused with contemporary pop, R&B, reggae, and hip hop modes that are popular in Britain, the United States, and Canada.

The new country, Canada, can be considered a site of political engagement. For instance, in northeast Brampton, it is not uncommon for Sikh families to have a subscription to a "Punjabi combo" of channels that are often geared towards the older audience of grandparents and parents within the household. For second and third generation children, its existence can promote an idea of their immigrant parents' home country and the current political events that are taking place. At the same time, it is a way for parents and grandparents to stay engaged with the political landscape of their native country while being in Canada. Reconstruction of place is relevant to the emergence of a significant Sikh community in northeast Brampton over the past 20 years, particularly in relation to youth. This geographic area has its own set of meanings and experiences that are rooted in a cultural space that has similarities and obvious differences from community members' Punjabi homeland.

H. Gill (2012) found that transnationalism is very much tied to successful expression of masculinity in the state of Punjab. Since 1984 there has been continued ambivalence towards the Indian government, and Punjabi Sikhs see transnational migration as a worthy goal, which is "often

featured prominently in Punjabi cinema and visual culture" (p. 47). Sikhs abroad maintain distinct ties with Punjab, yet achieving success in the West is seen as almost the ultimate objective. For instance, participants in H. Gill's study identified with heroes of Punjabi films who demonstrated successful masculinity through migrating overseas, achieving financial success, maintaining family values and providing for parents (p. 10). It was determined that social mobility is seen as a key indicator of accomplishment for the immigrant Sikh male.

At the same time, migration also works to reinforce gender-based privileges and dominance for men. It is important to consider that while patriarchal norms and values exist worldwide, the context for an immigrant family may vary as they move to Canada. In their study of an immigrant Sikh family in Canada, Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2005) found that migration "seems to strengthen patriarchal authority, as women may find themselves having to 'bargain with patriarchy' in order to maintain access to various economic and social resources" (p. 175). Settlement in a new country, with its own elements of patriarchy, can serve to further enhance the status of men at the expense of women. Gender disparities that have existed in Canada with respect to work opportunities and income can accentuate the status of immigrant men within their families and communities.

H. Gill's (2012) study found that Sikh masculinities are complex and multi-faceted as they challenge and redefine contextualized notions of hegemonic masculinity within contemporary Britain's Sikh diaspora. There are a number of ways in which Sikh men negotiate their masculinity as they select a variety of markers to denote their faith. It is asserted that "ideal" and "authentic" Sikh masculinity is reflected in the *amritdhari* orthodox male who maintains all the markers of the religion, notably the turban which signifies respect for male honour. (p. 342). However, this research also inferred that many second and third generation Sikh males in Britain construct and perform their masculinity in a variety of ways.

For many youth, wearing the *kara* (steel bracelet) or utilizing the *Khanda* (a vertical double edged sword in the centre surrounded by a circle) symbolically denotes their Sikh masculinity. Based on participant accounts, H. Gill (2012) asserted that "the use of the Khanda as a visual symbol of 'being' Sikh can also become commoditized, for example taking the form of miniature car flags, on gold chains or earrings, symbolized through tattoos or even evident in garden fencing….The selective use of symbols remains representative markers of being a Sikh and an active means of asserting group belonging for young men" (pp. 345–346). This points to the dynamic nature of how Sikh masculinities are performed in Britain, particularly in light of the localized geographic spaces and intersection of race, gender, and faith. It is observed that "British Sikh men negotiate their Sikh masculinity in relation to dominant and hegemonic masculinities to construct specific Sikh masculinities in the post-colonial context" (H. Gill, 2012, p. 349). Therefore, hegemonic masculinities and their performances vary according to context, informed by demographic factors, spaces, and personal experiences.

Sandhu and Nayar's (2008) work reveals that young Sikh males in Western Canada have been influenced to join criminal gangs because of feelings of marginalization and isolation from the family, for protection against bullying and racism, or to seek social relationships that cultivate a sense of identity and respect (pp. 6–7). Youth find comfort in exhibiting these extraordinary modes of behaviour to demonstrate masculinity, even though such risk-taking behaviour can also have a severely detrimental effect on family relationships, schooling, as well as emotional and physical well-being.

Transnationalism as a concept is applied in this study to examine the relationships that are nurtured by second generation Sikh youth in northeast Brampton. The importance of family, significance of community, and emphasis on cultivating specific norms, customs, and values is

very much influenced by realities facing individuals living in Canadian society. In addition, when examining this concept and its applicability to young Canadian Sikhs, it is necessary to ascertain the level of attachment that these young people have to their parents' homeland and how it influences identity formation as well as expression of masculinity. It is therefore important to examine the relationships and social networks cultivated by first generation immigrant Sikh parents which influence notions of identity and masculinity amongst their second generation sons. This study takes into consideration how second generation youth engage in notions of transnationalism to construct notions of what life is like in the Punjab based on parental accounts and community interactions, while determining what it means to be a Sikh male in Canada.

It is important to convey how the concept of hybrid identities varies from transnationalism. Cuninghame (2008) asserts that the transnational identity is related more to the political and economic spheres, with a stronger emphasis on the collective identity (p. 23). As a result, this paper views transnationalism through the lens of a Sikh Canadian community that has collectively identified northeast Brampton as their "home away from home," a geographic space where common norms, values, and ideals can be promoted. How the community maintains and promotes specific norms, values, and ideals based on a connection to the Punjab is very much rooted in notions of transnationalism.

In contrast, Iyall Smith (2008) emphasizes that "hybridity encompasses partial identities, multiple roles, and pluralistic selves" (p. 5). The dynamic approach to identity recognizes the intersection of race, ethnicity, religion, class, and gender of immigrant youth living in multicultural Canada. It is also important to note the geographic and social space of participants living in northeast Brampton and the multiple roles they regularly take on. As a result, the idea of a hybrid identity as it pertains to seven young Sikh participants examines their ability to negotiate

challenges and contradictions through the establishment of a "third space." Using the concepts of hybrid identity and transnationalism, this paper examines the contextual aspect of youth experiences in more detail, while considering how these experiences are shaped by the community in which they live.

2.5 Summary

This study focused on what it means to be a Sikh male in urban Canada. It took into consideration the expectations and roles of the young Sikh man in his family as well as his community and peer group. Also, it is generally considered that Sikh parents have a positive orientation towards education and place tremendous importance on education as a necessity for upward social mobility. Consequently, a number of theoretical concepts are integral to my dissertation research. For instance, it was important to gather data regarding how transnational networks inform the dynamic identities that are expressed amongst second generation Sikh males in northeast Brampton.

Given that their community is deemed in some ways to replicate the Punjab in a Canadian context, it was essential to study the findings with reference to notions of transnationalism and hybrid identities. Additionally, when examining the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, religion, and gender, one must consider masculinity as socially constructed, understanding that the ways in which participants exhibit Sikh maleness is related to the social structures and cultural dynamics of the physical spaces in which they interact. It was clear that gender and class played a significant role in relation to masculinity within ethno-religious groups such as Sikh Canadians, especially within a particular geographic space such as an ethnic enclave.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to examine the perceptions, experiences, and aspirations of second generation Sikh males living in northeast Brampton. When discussing the realities of the participants, I focused on the influence of family and peers with respect to how participants are oriented to school, their community, and broader Canadian society. In addition, I examined how the construct of a "Sikh male" is negotiated and reconciled with being "Canadian" as well as variances between turbaned and non-turbaned Sikhs. This chapter begins with a discussion of the qualitative research methodology that guided the research followed by a review of the research design and process utilized in this study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how data were interpreted and analyzed.

3.1 Theorizing the Research Methodology

This project used a qualitative research design to gain an appreciation and promote a better understanding of the dynamics faced by young Sikh males living in Canadian urban centres. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations" (p. 3). It was necessary to gain an appreciation of the complex ways in which second generation Sikh youth navigate concepts such as identity and masculinity within their family and community, as well as social institutions such as school. Participant accounts revealed a set of experiences and interactions that are very much influenced by time and place, which in turn affects how they see themselves, their family, and their community.

As Maxwell (2005) indicates, "understanding" is not simply the participants account of events and actions, but "part of the reality" that we are trying to understand (p. 22). How realities are constructed and "lived out" is a chief focus of qualitative research. As noted by Merriam (1998), qualitative researchers "are interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 6). This study explored how participants made sense of their parents' as well as their own experiences over time and in different spaces. It was understood that there may be multiple constructions and interpretations which may also vary according to their lived experiences.

S. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) note that central to qualitative research is "understanding people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it….Qualitative researchers empathize and identify with the people they study in order to understand how those people see things" (p. 7). Accordingly, the settings that are explored, in addition to each participant's experiences, are key to understanding participant realities. Frames of reference may very much be influenced by interactions within their own families and homes and it is necessary for the researcher to be aware of these caveats. G. Taylor (2005) reiterates that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 101). This study incorporates qualitative research to consider how past experiences inform present and future realities of Sikh youth as they progress through childhood and adolescence, and into adult life.

3.2 Researcher's Positionality

It is important to note some of my own biases, perceptions, and experiences that may have influenced how I internalized participant accounts. In terms of religious practice, I would likely be considered an "ascribed" Sikh who is not very spiritual. Family obligations and functions typically

determine when I attend the Gurdwara and my very basic knowledge of Punjabi results in not completely understanding, or being able to engage in services that are offered. Additionally, it is important to note that in my family, there are very few turbaned Sikhs. The overwhelming majority of males are clean-shaven, and span across England, the United States, and Canada. I have very few family members actually living in Punjab as most have settled in England and North America.

I am aware that as a second generation Sikh male who is currently working as a school administrator, there would be benefits and drawbacks as I interacted with participants. In addition, my experience of having worked as a teacher and vice principal in northeast Brampton for eight years at the time of the interviews, provided me with significant knowledge about the dynamics of the Springdale/Castlemore community in northeast Brampton. Also, having lived in north Brampton while having friends as well as family members move into the Springdale area in the late-1990s and early-2000s, afforded me the opportunity to understand many of the cultural nuances of this emerging area, as well as challenging issues facing it. Because of my own experiences growing up initially in south Brampton, moving to north Brampton, and then working in northeast Brampton, I have been provided with the impetus to further examine the dynamics of youth growing up in this community.

As I was considered an "insider" with knowledge of cultural practices and norms, participants were at ease discussing questions around identity, family, and community. Many of their responses included comments such as "you know" and "you understand how..." as they identified me as having some common experiences. Whether speaking of their local community or geographic regions of Punjab, it was assumed by the respondents that given my background, I would easily relate to them. In addition, participants occasionally felt comfortable using Punjabi

words and phrases, with a tacit assumption that I would understand them, because it was difficult to convey the same information in English.

It is important to note that there are some variances in upbringing between me and the participants. My paternal and maternal grandparents left India in the 1950s, with my parents growing up in England. Therefore my family is technically a couple of generations "out of India." Though I am a second generation Sikh Canadian and the son of immigrants like the participants, my parents grew up in "the West," unlike the Sikh youth in this study whose parents, with few exceptions, migrated from India to Canada. As a result, there were some differences in experience between my parents to those of the participants, given my family's intermediary stopover in England prior to coming to Canada.

Additionally, the vast majority of participants experienced their elementary schooling in multicultural settings. I had spent a significant part of my schooling, up until high school, in settings that were not particularly diverse. It was uncommon for these participants to have spent their pre-adolescent years in educational settings where there were few others who "looked" like them. Finally, while my high school experience was in a multicultural environment where there were many other Sikh students, I never lived in an ethnic enclave like northeast Brampton. Therefore, I cannot readily identify with some of the realities and complexities expressed by the participants regarding their community settings.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Research Questions

It is important to discern that research questions were formulated based on literature that has expressed the challenges faced by turbaned Sikhs with respect to integration and barriers to entry in occupational settings. This dissertation aims to explore the experiences, perceptions, and

realities of second generation turbaned and non-turbaned Sikh males living in an urban Canadian setting. I research the intersection of factors such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, and social class while considering the role of family and community in their daily realities.

The following research questions are used to guide my inquiry:

1. How do family and peer influences affect the educational and occupational pursuits of second generation Sikh males? That is,

   (a) How does the family influence the young Sikh male and his orientation to schooling and academic success?

   (b) How does the young Sikh male negotiate peer relationships and the pressure to "fit in" socially with others?

2. How is the identity of a Sikh male negotiated and constructed in Canadian society? That is,

   (a) What influence does the community have on the young Sikh male's ability to reconcile both "Canadian" and "Sikh" aspects of his identity?

   (b) How do family, peers, and social institutions such as schools influence the identity of the young Sikh male?

3. What notions of masculinity do young Sikh males live out in urban Canada? For instance,

   (a) How is masculinity expressed by second generation Sikh males where the construct of the "traditional" male is one with a beard and turban and the "modern" male is one who is clean-shaven?

   (b) Does the turbaned Sikh male have a greater sense of attachment to culture than the non-turbaned Sikh male?

3.3.2 Research Site

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, South Asians are the largest visible minority group in Canada and Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2011). Previous census data reveal that the majority of Canadian Sikhs live in British Columbia and Ontario, with the highest concentrations being in the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the Greater Toronto Area. In addition, a relatively high percentage of Sikh Canadians reside in the Region of Peel, with Sikhs comprising approximately one-fifth of Brampton's population (City of Brampton Economic Development Offie, 2013). For this reason, the geographical site of this research is in the Greater Toronto Area, specifically a northeast pocket of Brampton which is considered an ethnic enclave with a large population of Sikh Canadians.

The geographical area of northeast Brampton is considered to be north of Bovaird Drive and East of Highway 410. Initially, this area was known as an emerging residential area called "Springdale" where development commenced in the mid-1990s extending eastward to Airport Road and northward to Mayfield Road, which is the boundary between Brampton and Caledon. In the early 2000s, development continued eastward around an already existing development of exclusive estate-homes in an area known as "Castlemore." Development has continued eastward to Highway 50 which is the boundary between Brampton and Vaughan.

The area between Highway 410 and Airport Road has been labelled affectionately by insiders and denigrated by outsiders as "Singhdale," based on the large number of South Asian residents, particularly Sikhs. The area between Airport Road and Highway 50 is known by the developers' term as "Vales of Castlemore" but is also recognized for its large Sikh population. The website ImmigrationGuides.com describes the area as follows: "A drive through some areas of Brampton, northwest of Toronto, might have you wondering if you had somehow lost your way

and found yourself in the northern Indian state of Punjab. One of Canada's fastest growing cities, Brampton's stupendous growth has in large part been fuelled by the influx of new immigrants, a large percentage of them Indians of Punjabi/Sikh origin" (Caleb, n.d.). This area of Brampton is distinctive because of its South Asian "feel." There are a number of religious institutions for Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims. Take-out and sit down restaurants, clothing shops, and services are predominantly operated by people of South Asian background. Walking through the various neighbourhoods during summer months, or after school in the fall, provides a visual representation of the number of South Asian children, adults, and grandparents in the area. For the purpose of this study, the area known as Brampton Springdale/Castlemore is referred to as "northeast Brampton."

The settings for data collection included residential homes, workplace settings, and institutional (i.e., school) community settings. It was understood that for the participants, these defined sites and settings are merely locales to share their life experiences, which may not necessarily be confined to these places. Given that hybridity and transnationalism are focal points of the theoretical framework of this paper, it is important to consider the idea of "negotiated" and "shifting" identities amongst the participant group that are often contingent on place and context.

3.3.3 Participants

The study sample is made up of four non-visible (non-turbaned) Sikhs and three visible (turbaned) Sikhs. Potential participants were identified through contact with community members and purposive sampling, while controlling for age and class. Given the diversity of the Greater Toronto Area and dynamics of Brampton, rich data that unearth the complexity of what it means to be a "young Sikh" in Canada can be obtained. G. Taylor (2005) indicates that this "qualitative

approach is inductive, with the purpose of describing multiple realities, developing deep understanding, and capturing everyday life and human perspectives" (p. 101).

As I attempted to recruit participants through word of mouth among colleagues and family members or by sending emails to a variety of Sikh post-secondary student groups, it was found that I was more likely to find participants who were on a university pathway. As a result, the objective of the study is to draw upon the experiences of Canadian-born Sikh males between the ages of 18 and 22 who are either university-bound or in university. This age was selected as it is typically a time when young Sikhs tend to experience the conflicting nature of individual-oriented and collective-oriented decisions with respect to education, occupational choices, and potential marriage.

In addition, participants are from families where at least one parent migrated from India to Canada prior to 1984. As indicated previously, the "critical event" of 1984 was the Indian army's attack on Sikhs' holiest shrine, the Golden Temple. Youth from families who were in Canada prior to this event taking place were chosen to differentiate them from families that might have migrated from India after 1984, as a result of an unstable political and social climate for Sikhs. Their reasons for migration might be different and it is interesting to see how families in the Canadian diaspora prior to 1984 responded to the aftermath of the Golden Temple attack.

Finally, the interview participants are from working middle-class, suburban families that have managed to attain a certain level of social mobility in Canadian society. The professional and educational backgrounds of parents were used to gather this information about participants. In order to ensure confidentiality, all the participants are identified by pseudonyms. The following account provides details about each participant at the time of their individual interview.

Baljit, 18

Baljit is a young-looking visible Sikh, with some facial hair. He was born in Downsview and has lived in Brampton since 2001. About Brampton, he remarks that everything "I need is here already and I see my community and the Sikh community growing here and all the necessities that I need are here so I don't really have ties to back home. I feel that I'm more tied down to Canada and I feel like I'm Canadian rather than an Indian person." Baljit's father is a construction worker who has lived in Canada since 1976. While his mother has a math degree from India, she has been a labourer since arriving to Canada in 1992. Punjabi is the main language in the household, though Baljit does converse with his sister in English. He is in the first year of an engineering program at a university just outside of the Greater Toronto Area and would like to work in an engineering related field upon graduating. Baljit went to a high school with a large number of Sikh students and considers himself religious.

Dalvir, 21

Dalvir is a young Sikh with a natural, long flowing beard. Of his background, he says "I would always say I'm Canadian obviously but then they would dissect that as, 'oh you're Indian.' I never say Indian...always say Punjabi and I think of my parents." Dalvir was born in Etobicoke and grew up in Malton prior to moving to Brampton in 1998. He lives with his parents as well as his older sister and brother. His father migrated to Canada in 1978 and his mother migrated in 1980. Dalvir's father is now retired while his mother works as a labourer. English has replaced Punjabi as the dominant language in the household. He is currently in the second year of a law program overseas and aspires to return to Canada as a practising lawyer upon completion of his studies. Dalvir grew up going to schools with a lot of other Sikh students and considers himself religious.

Gagan, 19

Gagan's thoughts and ideas are rooted in a politically active family. Having been to India on a number of occasions in recent years, he says "The last two times I think I was sick and tired of the system [in India]...and you remember why you came to Canada." A clean-shaven Sikh, Gagan was born in Scarborough and his family moved to Brampton in 2005. Both of his parents immigrated to Canada in 1982 and currently work as small-business owners after working in blue-collar occupations. He currently lives with his sister and is about to start his first year of university, away from home studying political science. Given that Gagan's family is politically active, he has aspirations of going into politics at some point.

Jinder, 20

Jinder is a tall, young man who states that "for myself, I just think I'm a Sikh and I'm a Canadian as well." An orthodox Sikh, he was born in Rexdale and his family moved to an exclusive northeast Brampton neighbourhood comprised of very large homes in 2000. Both of his parents are machine operators and he lives at home within an extended family network consisting of his brother, two uncles and their families, as well as his paternal grandparents. His father came to Canada in 1982 and his mother immigrated here in 1989. Punjabi is spoken with the adults in his house and English is the language used between his sibling and "cousin siblings." Jinder is in the third year of an undergraduate program in business administration and aspires to be an accountant. He went to a high school that was more "mixed," with fewer Sikh students than some of the other high schools in the area.

Lucky, 22

Lucky is tall, with a faded hairstyle and goatee, and his only religious marker is the *kara* (steel bracelet) that he wears on his right wrist. Comparing his parents' view of Punjab to his own,

he says "it's more of a family attachment to me…and I think for them it's more about born or raised there. I went to school here, this is my home." Lucky was born in Etobicoke and his family moved to Brampton in the early 1990s. His father is a businessman who immigrated to Canada in 1986 and his mother is a homemaker who has been in the country since 1982. Lucky lives at home with his parents, two younger sisters, and his paternal grandmother. The spoken language amongst his siblings and parents is a mix of English and Punjabi, while Punjabi is exclusively spoken with their grandmother. Lucky just completed his undergraduate degree in Law and Society at a Toronto area university and is planning to attend law school overseas. He went to elementary and high schools where there were many other Sikh students. In terms of religiosity, he considers himself a "moderate" Sikh.

Mandeep, 19

Mandeep is a clean-shaven, athletic male who says "I feel more comfortable actually in Canada than in India even though it is where my parents are from and where my background is. I feel that I am more Canadianized." Mandeep was born in Malton and has been living in Brampton since 1999. Both of his parents came to Canada in 1983. His father is working as an assembly line worker at a local automotive plant while his mother is currently unemployed. Mandeep also has two siblings who live at home – an older brother and sister. Punjabi is spoken at home with his mother and everyone else converses in English. Mandeep is in the second year of a business program at a Toronto university and would like to work in a business-related field upon graduation. Up until university, he had always gone to schools with a large number of Sikh students. Mandeep considers himself "somewhat religious."

Sunny, 20

Sunny is a young man with black hair cropped short on the sides. Despite having been to the Punjab on a number of family trips, he succinctly says "I think if my grandparents didn't live there, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't go." He was born in Malton and along with his parents and three older sisters, moved to Brampton in 1996. His father moved to Canada from India in 1970 and his mother immigrated from the United Kingdom in 1974; together they now run their own business. English is the language most spoken at home. Sunny is currently in his third year of university studying actuarial science and would consider earning a post-graduate degree before proceeding into occupational life. He went to a high school that had few Sikh students, though previously, in elementary school, Sunny had many peers of the same ethno-cultural background.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Interviews

The chief source of data collection was from individual and group interviews. The individual interviews were the primary source of data while the group interview was structured to follow-up and glean additional information in an interactive setting. I interviewed four non-turbaned Sikh males and three turbaned Sikh males. These interviews ranged in time from an hour and a half to two hours. The follow-up group interview session was two hours in length with all participants present with the exception of one of the turbaned Sikhs. The interviews occurred in different places and times based on the availability of participants: the interviewer's workplace, the interviewee's home and the interviewee's workplace.

As noted by Rubin and Rubin (1995), "Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds" (p. 1). As part of this study, it was necessary to discern how second generation Sikh youth reconcile varying expectations. Hence the importance

of qualitative research, which tends to lend itself to attempting to unearth the complexity of divergent experiences while also recognizing new meanings and perspectives (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 17). In this study, I took into account life experiences that have shaped how Sikh males currently see the world around them as well as how they formulate their future aspirations. As described by Kirby and McKenna (1989), "The researcher's task is to bring the available data together to 'make sense' of an individual's life. This is done by drawing as complete a picture as possible using an individual's own story" (p. 82).

Individual interviews consisted of open-ended, sequenced questions in a semi-structured one-on-one session that lasted approximately two hours in length, with the same questions used for all participants in the same order. Based on participant responses, I had some discretion to delve into questions in more detail. The individual interviews were structured (see Appendix A) so as to employ questions that would elicit responses reflective of both life histories and present realities. This allowed participants to respond to "where are you now" questions by recounting "how did you get here." What participants remember plays an important role in their identity construction. Crawford et al. (in Onyx & Small, 2001) explain "subjectively significant events, events which are remembered, and the way they are subsequently constructed, play an important part in the construction of self" (p. 37).

These individual interviews took the form of what Lofland and Lofland (in Kirby & McKenna, 1989) refer to as "a guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis" (p. 66). While having a structured set of questions, it was also essential to encourage open communication by developing questions of interest to the participants. As a researcher who may share some similar experiences with the participants, I needed to establish trust where personal anecdotes could be discussed in a relaxed

setting. Questions were divided into the following categories: Demographics, Family Relations, Schooling and Education, Community and Social Network, and Identity and Cultural Maintenance.

One follow-up group interview session was conducted, to help clarify some of the issues brought up in the individual interviews, as well as to contribute to the data analysis. As noted by Morgan (1997), such group interviews "typically add to the data that are gathered through other qualitative methods, such as participant observation and individual interviews. In these combined uses of qualitative methods, the goal is to use each method so that it contributes something unique to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study" (p. 3). In this light, the benefit of organizing a follow-up group session was to provide more data regarding the experiences of these Sikh youth. Finch and Lewis (2003) suggest that group interviews are able to refine and focus data, as "participants present their own views and experience, but they also hear from other people. They listen, reflect on what is said, and in the light of this consider their standpoint further. Additional material is thus triggered in response to what they hear. Participants ask questions of each other, seek clarification, comment on what they have heard and prompt others to reveal more" (p. 171). As a result, the group interview in this study provided rich conversation and details that were not always gained in a one-on-one setting.

The interview protocol for the follow-up group session emerged from data gained from the individual interviews through recursive analysis in a constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This recursive analysis took into account the five themes from the individual interviews and utilized some new questions which formed the basis of the group interview session. The group interview provided the opportunity for participants to engage in what Finch and Lewis (2003) refer to as a discussion "led by respondents" which tends to be more "grounded" and

"naturally occurring" as there is further reflection and debate as participants discuss topics that are important to them (p. 181).

3.5 Data Analysis

Participants were asked to share their personal stories that relate to the formulation of their aspirations as they negotiate varying expectations of family, peers, and social institutions. Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) "constant comparative" method was employed to combine data collection and analysis by looking for connections between the participants and commonalities amongst what they speak about (p. 67). Comparisons were made between individual participants, notably between the assertions of turbaned youth and non-turbaned youth. For instance, data revealed significant discrepancies when discussing the topic of religiosity. In addition, comparisons were made between the majority of participants who attended high schools with a significant Sikh population and the two participants who attended a predominantly "White" school. Another important consideration for research was to compare my findings to other recent studies of young Sikh males in urban Canada. It is important to note some significant variations between my research and that of others. I was not aware of any published research that looked specifically at university aged Sikh students living in a Canadian ethnic enclave.

The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim, with inductive data analysis occurring throughout the study. Coding categories were established based on data analysis that revealed specific patterns and topics that were brought up in the initial interviews. Individual interviews took place between May and August of 2011. It was anticipated that there would be items from the individual interviews that needed clarification or required reassessment to determine applicability with the follow-up group interview. As a result, new questions were

created and existing questions were refined for the group interview that was held in late August 2011.

Transcriptions and observational notes formed the basis for data analysis. The themes that were proposed for initial study were family, community, peers, and identity. Upon completion of the individual and group interviews, the data analysis revealed the recurring intersection of these themes in light of other topics that emerged from participant accounts. Hence the chapters were organized into the larger umbrella topics of education, religiosity, and "Indian mentality," each of which was influenced by the intersecting themes of family, community, peers, and identity.

As noted by Fetterman (in Atari, 2013), it can be challenging to ask participants to recall personal historical information given that the qualitative interview "does not elicit the most accurate data" because "people forget or filter past events" (p. 62). Participants may be selective in terms of how they recount stories and describe interpretations of events to the interviewer. As a researcher, I was conscious of this aspect throughout the interviews as it led me to ask further probing questions to gain greater clarity about a specific topic or theme. Legard, Keegan, and Ward (2003) substantiate the importance of probing questions to "obtain greater clarity, detail, or depth of understanding…to elicit further description" (p. 168). Through an analysis of the transcribed participants' accounts, it was also important to analyze the unspoken and unstated, which was particularly noticeable when discussing patriarchy and the privilege conferred to these young Sikh males within their families and local community.

3.6 Limitations of the Study

Seeing me as a fellow "community member," youth were also careful in responding to certain questions that I posed as they wanted to portray their family in an extremely positive light. Additionally, despite various prompts, there were certain topics that participants did not discuss in

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greater detail in the individual interviews. My position as a secondary vice principal likely played a role in their hesitancy to discuss certain subjects as well. Participants were more willing to discuss these topics in the group interview where the presence of a peer group provided additional security. Occasionally, participants would cite "other families" or "people they know" instead of commenting on their own experiences. This again is possibly due to my position as a Sikh male who is simultaneously working in a position of authority and as a researcher.

There were a number of anticipated issues that the youth did not discuss in great detail. For instance, there was little engagement in topics such as drugs, gangs, and sexual activity in the individual interviews. While the participants discussed these subjects in greater length during the group interview, they seemed to minimize societal concerns that exist among troubled Sikh youth. This demonstrates the benefit of a group interview setting, where participants felt a certain level of comfort when discussing topics that may have been considered taboo in the individual interview. That participants shared some common experiences and were of a similar socio-economic background provided reassurances that sensitive topics could be broached in a more relaxed setting.

Also, there was limited discussion around Indian and Punjabi politics circa 1984. Some participants, notably the turbaned Sikhs and the politically attuned Gagan, were able to engage in this topic because they were evidently informed of the issues at home. When discussing the political climate in India and how it affected Sikhs, participants in this study had varying opinions and degrees of knowledge. Youth such as Lucky, Sunny, and Mandeep had limited knowledge of the political issues that were occurring when their parents lived in Punjab. Generally, turbaned Sikhs such as Baljit and Dalvir had more awareness than their non-turbaned peers, which suggests their heightened awareness of issues related to religion and culture. The one notable exception was

the politically attuned Gagan, whose father gave him a first-hand account of the climate in Punjab during 1984.

For the most part, respondents presented their families and community in a very positive light, which may be due to their standing as privileged males as well as engaging with a researcher of the same background. Their responses may have been formulated to seek "acceptance" or what could be deemed a "correct" answer based on the focus of my study.

CHAPTER 4

VALUE OF EDUCATION

Immigrants to Canada often deem the country a "land of opportunity." This is particularly true when evaluating the opportunities that their children will have in terms of education. It is a place where immigrants sense that they can reach beyond the shackles of discrimination, class, and caste. Canada is often considered a "meritocracy," where social mobility is achieved through an industrious work ethic and commitment to schooling. Immigrants are driven by the promises of prosperity in Western nations and the belief that a society where educational and occupational achievement is recognized will benefit the family in terms of upward social mobility (Bhachu, 1985; Frost, 2010b; Gibson, 1988; J. Gill, 2007; A. James, 1974; C. James, 2003; Kendall, 1992). A life with purpose, combined with education, is seen through their lens as a world with infinite possibilities and potential. Families note the convergence of values espoused at home and school, such as respect for elders, maintaining a strong work ethic, and achieving social mobility. Teachers are to be held in high regard and are customarily seen as "second only to parents" in many South Asian families, such as those in Sikh communities in the West (Bhatti, 1999, p. 75). For immigrants, educational opportunities for their children are among the most influential pull factors that lead them to Canada.

The value of education within families is evident when examining the lives of Sikh youth in Canada. The participants in this study consistently revealed that in their homes, education was paramount. However, education was seen as not only a means to an end in terms of a secure, stable life, but also as an indicator of status and prestige within the Sikh community. According to these Sikh youth, setting educational goals was very important for both sons and daughters, yet at times there were varied gendered expectations. Parents utilize a number of strategies to reinforce the

importance of schooling to ensure their children do not diverge from the ideal path, which is considered to be a university education. In addition, living in an area with peers of the same ethno-cultural identity helped reinforce the importance of schooling as similar discussions were taking place in their friends' homes. Sikh communities across Canada see education as the key to success, literally and figuratively. As noted by Basran and Bolaria (2003), academic achievement can serve the dual purpose of acquiring wealth as well as combating racism and discrimination (p. 198).

This chapter explores a number of themes: (a) parents' orientation to education and how their own experiences have influenced the way in which they see their children's education; (b) how schooling is seen as both pragmatic and an indicator of social standing within Sikh communities; (c) the parental strategies utilized to reinforce expectations around educational pursuits as well as how youth negotiate peer expectations; and (d) how Sikh youth justify their optimistic outlook despite obstacles that may arise.

4.1 Parents' Orientation to Education

Participants indicated that from an early age, education was emphasized in their home environment, regardless of their parents' own educational background and occupational life. This is consistent with literature over the last 25 years that examines Sikh experiences in Western countries such as Britain, the United States, and Canada. As noted by Bhachu (1985) in a study of Punjabi Sikhs in Britain, "parental desires for their children to acquire credentials and their purpose-oriented behaviour applies almost universally to parents of different class, occupational and caste groups" (p. 23). Gibson's (1988) study found that parents saw education as the single most important factor in future job opportunities in the United States (p. 28). Similarly, Gibson and Bhachu's (1991) study of Sikhs in the United States and Britain asserted that the community saw education as a means to "open new worlds." A common theme in literature is the belief of

Sikh parents that capitalizing on opportunities with hard work and diligence will lead to prosperity. In a study of Asian adolescents, including Sikhs in Canada, Ghuman (1994) claimed that amongst parents,

> Canada is seen by them as a land of golden opportunity where hard work, industriousness and qualifications are rewarded quite fairly. Such positive attitudes are based on their personal observations and experiences. Most of them came to Canada with very little, and now through persistent hard work, thrift and sheer doggedness have bought spacious houses, big cars and have been able to sponsor their relatives from their former home countries. (p. 122)

While it is noted that parents have a favourable orientation to education and its potential, their lives in countries such as Canada have often been marked by enduring racism and discrimination, particularly in occupational settings. Nonetheless, parents believe that if they are able to accomplish so much through hard labour and industriousness, there is endless potential for their children armed with a sound education.

4.1.1 Moving to Canada for Opportunity

"Without education you can achieve nothing"

In this study, all parents except for one were educated in India. Lucky was the only participant who had two parents with university degrees. His father graduated with a BA while his mother completed a BSc. Sunny's and Dalvir's parents had a high school education while Gagan's mother completed high school and his father did not. Jinder's father completed high school while his mother earned a BA. Baljit's father had the equivalent of a Grade 9 education while his mother completed a math degree at university. Mandeep's father had an engineering degree while his mother earned the equivalent of a Grade 10 education. While parents' educational backgrounds varied from minimal to significant third tier formal education, each youth described their parents' habitual focus on studies.

A common theme was their parents' struggle in terms of settling economically following migration, hence their emphasis on the children maximizing their educational opportunities in Canada. For example, Mandeep highlighted the challenges his parents faced when settling in Canada and their limited options:

> When my parents moved here, they pretty much had one option – they had to work and get established in Canada because they didn't come with a lot of money so they had to establish themselves, have children, and raise us so that we have the opportunities that are offered in Canada. Education wise, we had a lot more opportunities. My dad, when he came to Canada, he didn't have much education opportunities because he was forced to work in order to raise us, me, my brother, and sister (May 2011, p. 3).

Mandeep also indicated that his parents had limited educational opportunities growing up in India. His father had to choose between engineering or becoming a doctor. Meanwhile his mother had the equivalent of a Grade 10 education. Mandeep understood from his parents that there was a much wider array of educational opportunities in Canada.

Similarly, according to Gagan, his parents were "poor" growing up in India, and lacked the necessities to receive an education because of their family's farming background. He said, "They don't want us to go through what they went through; three shifts a day, factory to factory, landscaping, construction. They don't want us to receive that and for them it's just out of their heart. No one else will push you that hard to receive an education, not your friends and not even your extended family" (July 2011, p. 14). Further, Gagan reflects that had his parents been afforded the opportunities he is afforded in Canada, they could have been in an even more advanced economic position.

> I guess I have seen that without education you can achieve nothing and looking at my dad and my mom....If my dad had just reached a high school education, or maybe a first year or two years of university education or college education, what he is doing now, he could have doubled and that's what I want to do. I want to take education and apply it to what we have and expand it. (July 2011, p. 13)

Gagan believed that education was always given top priority at home: "It was just one of those things that for them its trumps the list. It's number one for them" (July 2011, p. 14).

Like Gagan, Baljit explained that his father wanted him to avoid the hard, menial labour that he has had to endure since immigrating to Canada. Baljit's father wanted him to focus on education so that he could work in a more comfortable work environment "as opposed to working in a factory or working outside, in construction. Because that's where my dad works, in construction, and…because he's been there, and truck driving…because he's been on the road, he's been out, working outside, very hard labour" (May 2011, p. 10).

4.1.2 Parents' Hierarchy of University Degrees

"My parents wouldn't really want me to get some sort of film degree or something"

Sikhs see education as pragmatic and purposeful in terms of finding a career that will support oneself and one's family. Youth are expected to heed parental expectations with respect to schooling so as to establish themselves, particularly as they have opportunities available to them that a majority of parents did not have. As Gibson's (1988) study noted, education is required to obtain "good" jobs and a "good" income. Investigating Sikh parents' educational strategies in Britain, Bhachu (1985) remarks that

> the Punjabi attitude towards education is purpose-orientated. Education has to be instrumental in getting an individual a suitable job. It is considered to be wasted otherwise, since there is no interest in whether it helps to broaden a person's horizons or personal development. For this reason Arts and Social Sciences degrees are considered useless by pragmatic Punjabis. (p. 5)

Similarly, Helweg (1986) notes that education is seen as insignificant unless it leads to a "money-making" profession, which may lead to resentment amongst young Sikhs if their educational goals do not conform to parental wishes (p. 138). According to Kendall's (1992) study of the Punjabi community in Toronto, parents want their children to take another step forward in terms of

economic and social mobility as well as to enhance their marketability for marriage (p. 13). The emphasis on economic success and prioritizing university over college education was reiterated in J. Gill's (2007) study of young Sikh males and females in Toronto.

The Sikh youth in this study indicated that focus on financial success existed to some degree amongst their parents, but that there were also varying definitions of what constitutes "success." Some parents wanted their children to pursue their passions while others wanted them to forego blue-collar jobs that they themselves had experienced in favour of what they deemed more "successful" occupations.

For instance, Gagan believes that while his parents have attained a certain level of affluence in Canada, their lack of education is seen as a detriment when compared with others in the community: "Looking at themselves they have no education. It was out of their reach and I guess, looking at their peers and how some of their peers have received education and where they are at now, they look at themselves as behind" (August 2011, p. 14). As a result, in discussions with their own children, their parents would routinely remind Gagan and his sister of how fortunate they are to have schooling opportunities and that they should make the most of their prospects.

Dalvir stated that while his parents were very pleased that he was pursuing a law degree, for them success also meant being able to have a contented family life: "Living in my family household, success would be being comfortable enough in the sense of you have no worries of bills, paying for kids, like necessities, mortgage or what not…that would be success. But in terms of being like a billionaire or something that is not defined as success type of thing" (May 2011, p. 5). Dalvir's sister was also in the process of becoming a lawyer and his parents were very supportive of her ambitions to do the same. He stated that there was no explicit expectation beforehand other than his parents' consideration that a "B.A. degree would be a minimum."

Interestingly, by his account, Dalvir and his sister were both exceeding parental expectations by pursuing studies in graduate law programs.

Mandeep acknowledged that his parents did emphasize following a career pathway in either the law or business field. He believed that their reason for pursuing either of these fields was to avoid the manual labour that his parents themselves were accustomed to. The following exchange demonstrates how his parents idealized a specific educational and occupational course for their son:

> Mandeep: They said that they don't want us to perhaps drop out of school and work at factories, like how they do, and do hard work like that. So they believe education is very important for the future, because they want us to be…perhaps sit in an office, wear a suit and tie and not work as hard as they do, as in a factory and…so they believe that education is the path to take, so that…to provide us with that opportunity. I think it's usually just not going to a factory job, not going to, like, a warehouse job, working low minimum wage. So, for them, it's any job where you can go, wear a suit and tie, and get a really good paying job is, perhaps, for them, a good occupation.
>
> Interviewer: Do they have expectations about certain types of jobs?
>
> Mandeep: Well, my dad was mostly focused on me doing something in law, in the field of law, or in the field of business, usually. But now as I grow older, he's becoming more open to other options that I tell him that I'm interested in.
>
> Interviewer: What do you think that has made your father more open to some of these other fields?
>
> Mandeep: I think, when he was telling us about narrowing our options before, I think he was just getting us to the right steps to take the right education path. But now as he knows we're growing smarter, we have…more jobs available, and now he trusts us to make decisions that will be good for our future.

The conversation with Mandeep points towards a contradiction within his own family, where his older brother left college after one year to go and work at an automotive plant. Later, in our focus group interview, he admitted that perhaps education is not quite the obligation that his parents sometimes make it out to be. He says,

I don't think that education is an obligation that much because now that I see my brother, he didn't get much of an education after high school and now he works and he has a good job, and then my parents they are not mad at him or upset at him. They actually support him. As long as you establish what you are doing and you are…going to work or if you are going to school. As long as you are settled and you are doing one or the other, they are happy with that. (August 2011, p. 4)

Mandeep's parents seemed to accept that his older brother, while not necessarily motivated to enter college, was successful because of the income he was earning. In essence, he was able to secure a well-paying manufacturing sector job while not having a formal education. While aware that significant money can be made in labour intensive, blue-collar jobs such as manufacturing, carpentry, construction, and plumbing, these Sikh parents seemed determined that their children obtain white-collar, "office" jobs that they equated with monetary success. The discussion with Mandeep details some inconsistencies. While his parents stressed the importance of education to him and his sister who recently completed her faculty of education degree, it is almost as though there was a different standard for the older brother who was working in a "factory job," albeit financially rewarding, from which Mandeep was dissuaded. It is clear that Mandeep is somewhat puzzled by his parents' orientation to education. On one hand, he feels that a successful education leading to a "white-collar" job is what they want him to pursue. On the other hand, seeing his older brother's example makes Mandeep question whether his parents truly value the importance of education or whether they are willing to compromise if their child is able to obtain employment with good financial rewards.

For Sunny, who had three older sisters with multiple university degrees, success was defined as "going to university, get a second degree" as that was on his parents' "list of what they want me to do." A higher education meant going beyond the bachelor's degree with a post-graduate degree that was pragmatic in terms of occupational potential:

Just any postgraduate like...my dad kind of wants me to get an MBA you know. I don't know if I'm going to get that…maybe something else. Just a Masters, that's just what they see as achievement…like they wouldn't really want me to get some sort of film degree or something. They want it towards like business you know…just like, that's not like any too much artsy stuff. But they're okay with it…they're not too strict anymore. They would just want me to do what I want to do. (July 2011, p. 7)

It was noteworthy that in Sunny's family, there was not only the expectation of multiple degrees, but also a hierarchy in terms of university programs. While others indicated that parents were happy with their pursuit of what they "enjoyed" or were "passionate" about, Sunny understood that a liberal arts or "film degree" was generally frowned upon and not accepted at home. Yet he was also challenging his own assertion that parents were not too stringent by simultaneously indicating that multiple degrees were expected. In his opinion, perhaps they were not as rigid because he had already started his undergraduate degree and was well aware of the expectations beyond completion of that program.

4.1.3 Families' Emphasis on Higher Education as Status

"It's more about having a strong reputation"

Sikhs are considered one of the more successful immigrant groups in Canada, in terms of their upward social mobility (Johal, 2002; Nayar, 2004; N. Singh, 1994). From early immigrant settlers of the early 20th century to the post-1960s migrants, Sikhs are often noted for their industrious work ethic, economic savvy, and commitment to education. In today's Sikh communities, education has also become a status symbol, which is not lost on youth who often feel pressure to pursue specific vocations that reflect positively on the family and enhance their reputation. As Bhatti (1999) notes, once a certain level of economic stability is achieved, a competition emerges between families that are in a similar situation. In addition to material possessions such as large homes and luxury cars, children's education also becomes a point of competition: "Punjabi society in general is highly status conscious and respectful of educational

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achievement which is greatly encouraged amongst its young. To fail in the educational system is tantamount to failing as a social being within the Punjabi world" (Bhachu, 1985, p. 22). It is noted that education not only enhances status within one's own community but also allows the family to gain respect from the broader society (Frost, 2010b; Ghuman, 1999; Gibson, 1988; A. James, 1974). As noted in an earlier study (Johal, 2002), Sikh youth sometimes feel pressure to pursue what their parents desire, as opposed to their own interests. There is an emphasis in some families on children aspiring to be a doctor, engineer, lawyer, or accountant.

For Sikh youth, there is also pressure to pursue post-secondary studies, with parents espousing the values of a university education for both financial and community status. Bhattacharya (in Sandhu & Nayar, 2008) asserts that in South Asian families, "higher education is often viewed as a means to enhance family status as well as to acquire wealth, rather than being understood as an opportunity to develop an individual's potential" (p. 36). Those who attend university bring recognition to the family, which can often be enhanced by the type of degree obtained. Sikh youth feel this pressure throughout their schooling, and it becomes particularly intense in high school. Frost's (2010b) study found that young Sikhs in Vancouver attend university merely to project a certain image as well as to alleviate pressure from the community (p. 206).

Parents believe that for their children to achieve success in Canada, they must pursue post-secondary education, with university the preferred destination. While the participants indicate that they are pursuing areas of study that interest them, there appears to be pressure from parents to pursue certain degrees as well as occupations that are held in high regard within the community and are financially rewarding. The participants reiterated that parents see education as the key to prosperity. In Sikh communities such as the one in northeast Brampton, children's schooling is

seen not only as a way of "moving up," but also as a key indicator of socioeconomic status amongst others of the same community.

In our group discussion about community, Sunny and Mandeep addressed the topic of socioeconomic status and education. They had a different take on how parents represent their children's education to one another in terms of "competition" and "reputation":

> Sunny: I think that parents will always brag about their kids. "Oh my kids are going to this university, he's doing this" and they just want to have that status….just something that I've noticed when they are talking to like just different relatives. They are actually just comparing each other's kids and stuff.

> Mandeep: I don't think it's competition. I think it's more about having a strong reputation so like if your kids are doing good they are going to feel good about themselves. They are not trying to compete with other kids….I think they just want to have a good reputation for themselves so other people [and] relatives will be like, "oh this is his son, or his daughter's going to university." [That] makes your parents look good, but I don't think they are trying to compete with other people.

While these youth disagree about whether families articulate their children's accomplishments to compete or to enhance their reputation, it is clear that one's level of education is seen as a status symbol and way of making the family "look good" within the community. To parents, their children's schooling is a reflection on their parenting as well as a status indicator.

Alternatively, though pursuing what is deemed a prestigious field, Lucky challenged perceptions that many parents in the Sikh community are focused on positions leading to affluence. He felt that things were changing and that parents were becoming more "Westernized" in supporting the individual goals and happiness of their children. He explained,

> I think with a lot of families, parents are starting to understand more that it's not about becoming doctors, lawyers and engineers. They're starting to understand it's more about living your life. You might have the financial means to send your kid out to become a doctor or whatever, but if they're not happy with it then they kind of understand you know that it's not worth it at the end of day anymore. So I think a lot of families are starting to understand that and now a lot of parents are supporting whatever their children decide to do. (July 2011, p. 8)

Lucky's parents defined success as "being happy." Like Dalvir pursuing a law degree, Lucky suggested he did not feel pressure to pursue a specific degree, but to simply pursue his passions:

> They [my parents] define success as being happy. So if I was happy with going to college getting a two year diploma and finding employment in my respective field then they were happy with it. If they felt I wanted to pursue my bachelors, my law degree and my masters equally they were happy with it. Getting an education wasn't something they've been pushing on top of me but nevertheless now that I've decided the field I'm going to go in, they've been very supportive. (July 2011, p. 7)

It is ironic that Dalvir and Lucky pledge that their parents emphasis is on being content and secure rather than a specific occupation, though they have both chosen to pursue a field that is often cited by Sikh parents as one that is held in high esteem and has the potential to be extremely financially rewarding. It is clear that their parents are pleased with the progress of their studies, even though they will be overseas for a period of time. It is possible that their parents seemed open to whatever academic discipline they wished to pursue because they were on the path to the career their parents wished for them.

Baljit recognized the common perception that Sikh families advocate certain professions, but felt that his pursuit of a software engineering degree meant that his parents were fortunate to not have to intervene in terms of his choices. He maintained that he was able to pursue his interest in engineering without pressure from his parents:

> My parents, they never intervened in what I wanted to become. However, I guess because I was interested in software already and engineering, they never really had to intervene, because it's a good choice, I guess, for them. If there's a cliché…where it's like, all Indian people want their son or daughter to become an engineer, a doctor, something like that. And, I guess, luckily it worked out for them. That's why I guess they never really intervened. But, even before that, my dad really stressed that anything you do, want to become, we're behind you, and we won't really force you; because he's seen from his peers, that they've always stressed, oh, become a doctor, become an engineer; and at the end of the day, their son or daughter has rebelled and it hasn't really worked out. (May 2011, p. 13)

Interestingly, it came up in the interview with Baljit that these notable professions – doctor, lawyer,

engineer, and accountant – were referred to by parents because they were not always aware of the wide array of occupations available to today's youth:

> I don't think they know the in-depth details of every occupation that they see that people are in. For example, um, they always stress, like, engineer, doctor, and um, like lawyer. But, it…I guess those things seem really big, and so they think that that's like the best occupation. (May 2011, p. 10)

Baljit acknowledged that there are certain occupations within the Sikh community that are seen to have prestige and status. According to the participants, their parents thought that upward social mobility would be achieved if their children moved beyond manual labour, into "office jobs," particularly those with significant remuneration. It is clear from his account, however, that many parents are not simply satisfied with their children going to university. Status and perception in the community carries a significant worth when assessing a child's educational level and occupational prospects. In essence, it appears as though parents are pressured by community standards, and in turn, children may be pressured by parents to meet these standards.

Jinder suggested his family realized that certain occupations in Canada required a corresponding education, particularly in what was deemed superior in terms of perceived power and influence. While having a university education can be considered positive, considerable accolades are reserved for those who work in the esteemed occupations:

> Over here people are just based on their education. Like, if you don't have enough education…you can't get certain jobs. You're limited if you have, let's say you have high school degree, you're limited to what you can do. And if you go get a bachelor's degree you're considered a little bit more than that. For success in the future, I think [parents] think that education has a major role…that without education…if you want big success then let's say you want to have a high end job such as a doctor or lawyer, accountant, or to be an investment banker you need a really high education and that's what they think you should have (August 2011).

It is clear that the youth in this study are highly cognizant of the family and community expectations around education. While my respondents downplayed these pressures as well as the

hopes of their parents in the types of degrees pursued, it is important to note the area of study for each participant. Two are in law school, three are in notable business programs, one is studying engineering, and another aspires to law school upon completing his undergraduate degree. While expressing their own independence and choice of study, they still manage to fulfill parental and community standards for education. Considering that some of their parents did have university degrees, none of the parents were able to exclusively utilize their education upon migration to Canada. Some of their parents had educational opportunities back home in India, but chose to prioritize what they felt was more important – their children's education and enhancing the family's status. It is clear from the participant accounts that obtaining a certain level of education is not always enough to satisfy those around them, particularly elders. These youth are aware of the familial and community expectations to achieve certain degrees and occupations that are deemed prestigious. While they indicate that parents want them to be "happy" and reach their individual potential, there remain higher hopes.

Discussions amongst the youth revealed that the emphasis and value on education takes many forms in the Sikh Canadian household. The younger generation is mindful of struggles faced by the older generations and realizes why there is a high standard placed on their schooling. However, it is also evident that parents tend to have specific degrees and jobs in mind for their children, and youth are cognizant of these implicit and sometimes explicit expectations.

These young men appear to have fulfilled their parents' expectations although they present their specific educational pathways as based on their own volition. Negotiating their career aspirations illustrates the challenge faced by Sikh youth as they navigate educational and occupational choices in Canada within the household setting. While education is very much purpose-oriented for these Sikh families, young people are acutely aware that certain degrees and

occupations are considered more prestigious than others and there are specific university programs

that lead to occupations which will bring honour and recognition to the family.

4.1.4 Negotiating Opportunities for Daughters

"Whatever program she wants to do, wherever she wants to study…but they want her to stay

closer to home"

When discussion with participants focused on the treatment of males and females within

families, all indicated that their sisters were given equal opportunities in terms of education.

However, they did state that this might not be the case in other Sikh households. This is consistent

with J. Gill's (2007) findings amongst Sikh youth in the Greater Toronto Area:

> Educational gender expectations were not as pronounced among members of the sample as
> the current literature has suggested. In fact, none of the respondents said that there were
> any differences between themselves and a sibling of the opposite sex, in terms of the
> expectations of them regarding their academic aspirations and performance. However,
> some of the youth noted that, while gender differences were not evident in their own family,
> such differences may be prevalent amongst other Punjabi-Sikh families, something some
> of them had seen in their extended families. (pp. 38–39)

However, it was clear from this research as well as Ghuman (1994) that while educational

opportunities may be equal, the same did not hold true when it came to freedom within the social

sphere: "It seems to be that Hindu and Sikh parents are increasingly giving more educational

opportunities to their daughters, but still are more protective in the social sphere. For instance,

most parents would like their daughters to pursue higher education, but in the home area where

they can keep an eye on their personal and social life" (p. 62).

This caveat was noted in dialogue with Gagan. While he spoke proudly about parents

offering his sister equal opportunities in terms of attending university, he also pointed out that

there was also a necessary condition in place:

> Definitely, whatever program she wants to do, wherever she wants to study. I guess
> …being a girl…safety wise, I guess they would say you want [her] to stay closer or [not]

by yourself and that's obvious. It is just not our culture. It is in every culture, every community. You look after the ladies a bit more. So, in a way, I would say that if she wanted to go to Ottawa, yeah, Kingston or wherever she wanted to go, she would go but there would be more of a watchful eye on her than it would be on me….Just because of safety. Nothing else because of being a female, [it] is nothing like that. (August 2011, pp. 17–18)

This quote demonstrates that Gagan's family has more restrictions on his sister in terms of where she could attend university. It appears that cultural standards were different for females as compared with males. Gagan contradicted himself by trying to say that his family's outlook has nothing to do his sister being a female, when it is apparent they are concerned about her safety as a young woman on campus away from home. He also indicated that his sister would be subjected to a level of scrutiny that he would not receive.

Other participants stated that university was an equal expectation for sons and daughters. Some of their sisters had freedom to choose their program of study, and parents would permit them to study away from home if they had to. According to Lucky, "They wanted all three of us to stay at home, but having said that one of my sisters was looking at going to McMaster as well. Just thinking about that, they were very supportive they said 'if that's what you want to do we will ensure that you have our support and energy'" (July 2011, p. 9). Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, Dalvir's father was fine with his older sister studying law overseas. These examples seem to indicate that families generally preferred to have daughters close to home, commuting to university, unless it was for an esteemed program.

Baljit noted that in his family, there is a modern outlook when it comes to females getting an education particularly as compared with previous generations. It was seen as a way for daughters to achieve independence and have autonomy in their future occupation:

In the modern world, even females, a lot of females get jobs, whereas, where they came from, as in India, the females would not study as long. They would study for a little while, but then, come back home and start learning how to take care of the house. Whereas now

they see that, for example, there are older cousins, and now my sister, they always know that they can get jobs outside in the world, and become independent women (May 2011, p. 12).

Baljit believes that his generation of relatives, his cousins and his sister, have the same opportunities as males in the family.

Mandeep articulated that his sister "had her choice to go to whichever university she wanted to and to proceed in any degree she wanted to" (May 2011, p.10). Yet, he implicitly suggested that for his family, it would be important for the sister to have a good education so that she could be more attractive to potential suitors when it came to finding a marriage partner: "You want them to be well educated, doing house chores so they can meet a good, wealthy person and I think that's the main reason" (p. 5).

The discussion with participants revealed that, to some extent, they buy into the patriarchal modes of what they themselves called "Indian mentality." There is an acute awareness that as sons, they are sometimes living by different rules compared to their sisters. Education for daughters is very important for Sikh families, yet cultural standards may result in certain restrictions or conditions being implemented.

4.2 Parental Strategies

There are a number of mechanisms utilized by Sikh parents as they consistently emphasize the merits of education with children in hopes that the latter attend university and work in a financially rewarding career. For Sikh parents, there is the challenge of reinforcing expectations with respect to educational and occupational choices while giving a sense of individual freedom to their Canadian children. The positive orientation to schooling of Sikh families is reflected in how parents utilize "respect for elders" to maintain their decision-making role in children's schooling: "Young people are expected to be loyal to the family, to be obedient to their parents

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and to give due respect to their elders. The choice of education of young people is to be left in the hands of their parents who are considered to know best the interests of the child and his/her future" (Ghuman, 1999, p. 30).

4.2.1 Participants' Emphasis on Autonomy in Educational Decision-Making

"I usually make my own decisions and I listen to my parents"

Research often alludes to the collective orientation of various Indian communities, particularly in the diaspora (R. Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993; Netting, 2006; N. Singh, 1994). Children are expected to defer to adults or to make decisions with their elders in mind. Sikhs living in the diaspora are often referred to as a "model minority" because of their socio-economic successes (Gibson, 1988). Education is one significant realm where parents are thought to have considerable input with respect to program of study, post-secondary institution, and career orientation. The common stereotype of Sikh Canadian immigrants is that they wish their children to pursue careers in affluent, high profile fields such as medicine, law, engineering, and business. However, youth raised in Western nations often want to pursue individual interests. As noted by Sandhu and Nayar (2008), Sikh youth have to negotiate the tensions that emerge from "the traditional norm of fulfilling one's duty for the benefit of the collective group and the western value of exploring one's abilities and interests in order to achieve one's full potential" (p. 36).

Sunny felt that he had some semblance of choice when choosing both his university and program. While perhaps appearing contradictory, given that his parents outlined which university degrees were acceptable and which were not, Sunny states, "I actually had a big say…like, they pretty much just want me to do what I want to do…just like it. But they want me to be good at it too. So I've pretty much chosen everything. Like I chose the program and the school" (July 2011, p. 9). This example prompts one to examine the chosen university programs and career pathways

of these youth and question whether they did not realize the subtle and indirect pressures at home because of where they are now situated.

Participants in this study often downplayed parental input. While all acknowledged that parents were helping to subsidize their education, they felt that they had final say over their educational pursuits. This assertion is reflected in the work of Nayar and Sandhu (2006) who argue that Western schooling may sway youth towards more of an individual as opposed to collective orientation in their decision-making. Yet it is important to note that Sikh youth in this study agreed that a consultative process occurred with their parents regarding the university program they selected. Perhaps while "telling" their parents the school and program of choice, they were tacitly seeking approval. Correspondingly, parents chose to give their sons a certain degree of choice, though they ensured that overarching goals and expectations were clear.

Having done his undergraduate degree in the GTA while commuting from home, Lucky is now pursuing his law degree overseas. He maintains that he has had final decision-making power over his schooling: "I've had total say in both my choice of program and university. Having said that, my parents, I knew they wanted me to stay close to home and I took that into consideration when making my final decision" (July 2011, p 8). Likewise, Mandeep said, "I usually make my own decisions, and I listen to my parents." He stated that while his parents have always wanted him to go to university, once they knew he was going "they basically gave me the option to pick what university I want to go to and they gave me the option to pick what program I want to go to. I had more freedom with choosing my own path as I grew older, and older in high school" (May 2011, p. 10). Gagan felt that he had majority say in his educational pursuits, conceding that his parents had "25% input":

> I had 75% say, and again, I always take my family's ideas into consideration. So, I chose political science because of our family's political involvement. I can understand the process

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a bit more, the theory behind it and later on, I do have plans when I am a bit older to run in politics, so this was again a mutual decision between my family and I. But again, I had my say on why I want to take the course, what course I want to take with it, my electives what I want to do, where I want to go, why I wanted to go there. So, for me, it was my say. (July 2011, p. 17)

While Gagan emphasizes that the decision in terms of program and location of study was mostly his, the fact that he chose to pursue a degree in political science because of his family's political ties indicates that he is likely underestimating the impact of family in his choices. In addition, he chose to study in a city that is a major hub of political activity in Canada where one of his close family members is working as a Member of Parliament.

Some parents like to point out and compare the accomplishments of other established Sikh youth to their own as a means of motivation: "Equally important is the exposure that young Punjabis are given by parents to professionals to motivate them to get educated.....Families who do not have educated individuals amongst them nearly always have access to them" (Bhachu, 1985, p. 14). In a study of Sikh youth in the Greater Toronto Area, K. Singh (2000) asserts that "parents constantly and openly compare their children with other children. Their announced purpose is to provide examples, but such comparison often discourages the children. Sometimes these comparisons are to 'badly behaved' children and sometimes to 'smart' children" (p. 21). This can impact how Sikh youth see their accomplishments or lack thereof and in turn act in motivating, humbling, or degrading them. Parents see youth as having the same starting point and the one who works harder will achieve higher standing.

Youth discussions with parents provide an example of how the level of education amongst a similarly aged relative or peer can be used to exert subtle pressure. For instance, Baljit mentioned how other community members disclose their children's academic achievements to one another.

He rationalized how these accounts can be exaggerated to his own parents, who in turn make

mention of it with him, not always understanding the full context:

> When people say they [son or daughter] are going into medical school [while doing an undergraduate degree]. They don't know that a person needs to do another degree before that, to get into medical school. So, if they were told that, "oh, he's doing this degree," but they don't know that he's still going to medical school. That kind of changes things. For example, one of my friends, he's doing life sciences, and if my parents were told that, oh, he's just doing life sciences, they'd be like: Oh, okay. They don't know that that kind of is like a first step to med school. But if they were told he was going to medical school, then they feel that that's a really good thing. (May 2011, p. 14)

Baljit's account reiterates the additional pressures that Sikh youth sometimes endure as parents

and community members regularly talk to one another about their children's academic

achievements and educational status. As he points out, going to medical school is held in extremely

high regard by parents who might not understand the prerequisites for a medical degree. Hence in

discussions with one another, parents will sometimes project what their son or daughter will end

up being as opposed to the current realities in order to maintain a certain image amongst their

peers. Subsequently, other parents may use this information as a motivational tactic for their own

children.

4.2.2 Parental Involvement in Children's Education

"My mom was really involved, especially in the early years of my education"

Researchers often cite the overt and subtle pressures placed by immigrant families on their

children with respect to education (Fleming, 1995; J. Gill, 2007; Johal, 2002; N. Singh, 1994).

Bhachu's (1985) study of Sikh parents in Britain classified some as the overtly involved

"interventionists" and others – the perhaps less educated, unlikely to question the school – "non-

interventionists." Both groups, however, maintained high expectations and valued education as

paramount. The Sikh youth in this study indicated varying levels of involvement in schooling

amongst their parents though the same elevated standards existed. Some families were actively

involved in the schooling life of youth, participating in parent-teacher interviews and regularly

attending school events as well as meetings. Parents often afforded their children extra tutoring in

subjects where assistance was necessary. Regardless of their own financial situation, some parents

saw the additional expenses as required investment to ensure the achievement of high marks

needed to attend university.

Participants disclosed that parents were engaged and actively involved in the schooling

process, particularly parent-teacher interviews. Lucky indicated some ambivalence about his

mother's visits to school when he was younger. However, as he got older these visits dissipated:

"My mom was there every single year, like literally, right from the start and obviously I don't want

to go, especially in high school, especially in Grades 9, 10, and 11. [In] Grade 12, I stepped it up

a little bit on my own. But, she was right there pushing me and making sure that I understood the

significance of school and that I should be doing well" (August 2011, p. 15). Mandeep also

expressed disappointment that his parents wanted to meet his teachers, even when he perceived

himself as doing well at school:

> My parents went to my interviews until elementary school was over, so until Grade 8, and
> then, even when the teachers didn't want a parent interview, because sometimes they would
> only interview a parent of a child in need of special attention. My parents would be like
> "book an interview, we still want to go." But then, when it came to high school I think they
> see my marks, they were pretty good, and then, they were like, "okay, there's no point of
> going in anymore." So I think in high school, they kind of like said, "okay, he's going on
> the right path, there's no need to go in." But I think until elementary school, I think when
> I was still young, they still wanted to go and see my teachers. (August 2011, p. 15)

Mandeep deemed his parents' visits unnecessary and thought teachers only wanted to interview

parents of students who required "special" attention because of poor grades or misbehaviour. He

considered his strong achievement and good conduct reason enough for his parents not to visit.

Similarly, Sunny's mother was very involved interacting with the school during his early years at

school: "My parents…my mom, she took part in, like, when I was younger, she came to all the

meetings and she took part in the bake sales and everything. She was on that committee with all the parents, so, my mom was really involved, especially in the early years of my education" (August 2011, p. 16).

Youth in this study also challenged perceptions of the strong, discipline-oriented Sikh household and how high educational standards were stressed at home. Lucky stated that tutoring and extra help were provided if he was not performing well in a subject and not achieving his potential. He described leisure time as being something that parents felt needed to be sacrificed in order to focus on studies. They didn't want him "to sit on the computer or watch TV or play video games all day. So without a doubt they have always told me pick up your books, stop watching TV, and go study but they never really took the remote out of my hands and turned it off. Having said that, equally I've understood that I needed to study so I went on about that" (July 2011 p. 8). In a similar fashion, Baljit spoke about his parents' willingness to provide resources in whatever way to ensure that he did not deviate from his studies:

> They know that when we go to school, we get homework, and so…they know that we shouldn't be bothered when we have homework. If it involves school, for example, if we need books, if we need anything school related, it's a priority, and that's it. If we need any books, internet, or anything like that, access to any resource they'll basically go out of their way to get that resource for us. (May 2011, p. 12)

Respect for authority figures, notably teachers, was highlighted by Jinder's parents as being very important. As parents who were busy with work and not always engaged with the school, they expected him "to be a good student and respect my teachers because the teacher is everything for you when you're growing up" (August 2011, p. 13).

4.2.3 Taking Advantage of Parents' Limited Knowledge of the Education System

"I started playing with the system"

There are Sikh families in which parents still hold a high standard for educational pursuits amongst their children, but are less likely to get involved in day-to-day schooling activities. Termed "non-interventionists," these parents may have minimal knowledge of the education system in Western countries, rarely visit the community schools unless there is a discipline issue, and are less likely to monitor the day-to-day school work of their children (Bhachu, 1985; Bhatti, 1999; Gibson, 1988). As noted by Ghuman (1994), "This lack of active participation in young people's education was attributed to poor knowledge of English, lack of confidence and experience and in some cases too much attention being paid to making money" (p. 129). Minimal participation of parents may result in youth navigating the education system on their own and potentially compromising their own pursuits.

Examining Sikh youth in the Vancouver suburb of Surrey, Frost (2010b) maintains that "sons have failed to offset their parents' deficit by not educating them about such issues as the workings of the Canadian public school system and the requirements for college or university admission, and Indo-Canadian parents are not finding out for themselves" (p. 173). Some youth recognize that while their parents value education, the "non-interventionist" approach in their daily schooling may be advantageous for them.

For example, in the group interview, Dalvir and Gagan explained how they were able to avoid the additional scrutiny that some of their peers endured because their parents were unlikely to go to the school to check on their status. Dalvir stated, "My parents were too busy working, so, if there was parent-teacher interview…rarely would they go…so I got away with that much!" Dalvir mentioned that his parents did not always feel comfortable going into the school, as they

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did not want to be perceived as "challenging" teacher authority. While this was beneficial in terms of escaping discipline at home, Dalvir believed that his own achievement was compromised until he started taking school more "seriously" towards the end of high school when it was time to apply for university.

Similarly, Gagan outlined how his mother worked from home at one point so that she could pick her children up from school and check their work. This occurred during the time when he was at middle school. However, he also recognized that his parents were "busy working and had zero education." As they were not familiar with the education system, Gagan was able to manipulate them as he explained in the group interview:

> Yeah, because they didn't know, right? It was like, "What is this paper we're getting?" I would explain to them, like, the first year of high school that there was a mistake if something came in the mail. When I get to high school it's like I started playing with the system: "Oh, you know, our report cards are not here yet." I don't know, "maybe something went wrong with the teacher." They don't know the system, until they start hearing from other parents. (August 2011, p. 16)

Like Dalvir, Gagan was both able to take advantage of his parents' lack of knowledge of the Canadian school system and their discomfort with coming into the school to meet with teachers. Gagan now realizes that "playing with the system" cost him an extra year of high school, as his initial Grade 12 marks were not strong enough to get into a university program. As a result, he had to return for an additional year to upgrade his courses.

Gagan admitted that until the end of high school, he lacked motivation when it came to education. This was a common trait that he shared with members of his peer group who had parents who might also be considered "non-interventionists." He enjoyed the social aspects of going to class, but was not able to work to his full potential, partly as a result of his peer group affiliation:

> My peers, now I look at it, never helped me. For them I knew it was a ride. They would never say, "go do your homework." Tomorrow you have an assignment you better go home and finish your homework, read over or help someone else, or go to the library; that was

our parents doing that for us. So my peers, that's zero influence on my studies. The only influence they had was to bring me down from my studies, pull me away. There were similarities between my friends and I. They were looking for the same thing. Have some fun, go to class, get the attendance but talk, have a good time type of thing. You know, whatever happens, happens. When test comes, they do the test so that's how it was. They never ever told me, "Oh we've got to go study for a test tomorrow" (July 2011, p.21-22)

Returning to high school for an additional year was what Gagan deemed the motivating factor to separate from these friends – he now termed them "acquaintances."

For these Sikh youth, the peer group generally was able to reinforce parents' expectations around education, particularly when the parents were "interventionists" and were actively involved in their children's education. When peers had a negative orientation towards schooling, these youth were, for the most part, still able to maintain credibility through shared interests such as sports and hobbies. Many of their high school peers had similar familial values around schooling, which have supported them through to their post-secondary programs.

4.2.4 Prioritizing Parental Demands Over Peer Demands

"I really don't get influenced by peers a lot"

Living in northeast Brampton, participants in this study indicated that, for the most part, their peer group was predominantly Punjabi-Sikh. Their discussions about living in Brampton were characterized by observations about going to school with students from very similar backgrounds, although some of their peers did not value education in the same manner. Lucky mentioned that when "I wanted to study, there are other friends I have out there who didn't really value education as much. They valued going out there and getting a job. So equally they are doing very well right now but I felt that getting an education was more beneficial to me in the long term than getting a job right now is" (July 2011, p. 11).

Mandeep, who believed that he could maintain close peer relationships yet still commit to school, echoed this refrain. Some of his friends did not share the same commitment. He noted,

I really don't get influenced by peers a lot. But, I've seen some of my friends who weren't doing much…weren't doing all that great in school before. And now that they're not going to university…I think that influenced me in a positive way.

It was also mentioned by Mandeep that his older brother's peers influenced him. They were of the same ethnic and religious background, but ended up involved in criminal activity committing robberies and assaults. There has been significant research on South Asian and Sikh youth regarding conflicting expectations of parents and peers. Recent literature demonstrates that young Sikh males in Western Canada are challenging the "model minority" construct because of their increasing involvement in gang activity (Frost, 2010b; Sandhu and Nayar, 2008). In Surrey, for instance, some youths' are prioritizing peer expectations over those of parents, resulting in disengagement from school. As Frost (2010b) reveals, "Though education is generally valued within Surrey's Punjabi community and its young people are encouraged to do well in high school and go on to receive post-secondary credentials, for certain young men who are unable or unmotivated to attend college or university, the gang or criminal lifestyle is appealing in that it represents an alternative mobile strategy and a means for earning the community's respect" (p. 206). While parents still want their children to go on to university and move into financially rewarding occupations, some Sikh youth are opting out of this strategy.

For Mandeep, this further reinforced his commitment to education and helped dissuade him from following friends who might have had a negative orientation to school: "I think that the biggest influence was my brother and his friends, rather than my friends alone. Because when I used to see them, most of them used to end up in jail. And then, they always used to tell me not to go in the same path as them, and always stay in education…always be enrolled in school, always do your work. I think they usually influence me, rather than my peers (May 2011, p. 14).

Mandeep went on to elaborate and speak to the pragmatic benefits of schooling in terms of job prospects. In saying this, he echoed what he has learned and internalized from his parents. Mandeep found that some of his friends who were less committed to education are now having difficulty finding employment:

> I look at my peer group now...now I see them…they're not doing as much without education. It's hard for them to get, even find, jobs. And when they do find jobs is…not as high paying as you expect them to be. So that influences me. If I don't go to school right now, I'll be like them, I'll be trying to get these low paying, factory working jobs that are really hard. So, it influences me to stay in school and graduate, so I can get a really good job in the future (May 2011, p. 14)

Mandeep saw his friends who have not been committed to schooling as falling more into the independence orientation of Western societies, where "Canadian culture" and a sense of freedom have made them less willing to follow their families' emphasis on schooling:

> They probably got more into the Canadian culture, and I think they stopped following the values of the parents of going to university, and going to school, and stuff. So, I think they got more focused in the Canadian culture, and they're probably more about freedom…so much freedom that you can get in Canada, and probably partying, and like, doing other things, rather than studying, and actually devoting yourself to getting an education. So, I think it's mostly Canadianized. (May 2011, p. 28)

For these Sikh youth, their peer groups by and large were able to reinforce parents' expectations around education. They were able to either surround themselves with peers who had a similar orientation to schooling as their own families, or conform to their parents' expectations over those of their friends. If peers had a negative orientation towards schooling, these youth were, for the most part, still able to maintain credibility through shared interests such as sports and hobbies.

4.3 Canada as a Meritocracy

Education is seen amongst first generation Sikhs as a way of combating racism and discrimination. Many of these immigrants had to face hurdles with respect to accreditation of their own education or felt that they were not afforded job opportunities because of their ethnic and

religious background. The arduous road that many of their parents took was not lost on the Sikh youth in this study. The participants recognized that times were "tougher back then" and that the immigrant generation generally faced many more obstacles in comparison to themselves.

4.3.1 Obstacles Faced By First Generation Parents

"My parents had quite a rough time here when they came"

Jinder discussed how his parents' education was not recognized in Canada. He believed that discrimination played a role in obtaining employment in manual labour:

> Even though my mother has a bachelor's, but I don't think she has, like, done anything with it over here and…it hasn't counted on her resume, I guess. I don't think she's getting credit for it. When my dad first came here, he used to have a turban, right? And then, eventually he cut his hair because I think he probably had challenges getting jobs. (August 2011, p. 5)

Recognizing that his mother had to settle for a "blue collar" job, as her credentials from India were not fully recognized by Canadian employers, Jinder sees firsthand the sacrifices made by his parents' generation. However, Jinder's own experiences to date have led him to believe that this is more a reflection of a previous time, where immigrants encountered greater difficulties in employment. As a turban-wearing Sikh himself, Jinder believes that because he is able to demonstrate his intellectual ability, it will be easier for him to gain employment – something he considers a reflection of how Canada has changed to be much more accepting.

Dalvir realized from discussions with his parents that when they arrived in Canada, it was challenging to obtain steady employment. In addition, Dalvir noted that because the Sikh community was much smaller, there was less of a support system available for immigrants compared to now:

> From what I was told from my parents, it was quite difficult to get…land, stable jobs and especially in that area as well, late 70s, 80s where you don't see a lot of South Asians as well, and so they started off umm…from what I know, they started off on some farm, farm land in Hamilton and then my dad worked his way through milk farms, butcher shops to

when he landed a job. Once he landed this, he got to save a little bit of money and started to go into business and owned a mattress company and then from there he got a stable job with Chrysler. By what they told me, it was very difficult for them to even land jobs and the only support that they had was their friends their close little communities they had of like 10–15 people and that was their support system. (May 2011, p. 4)

Dalvir did not raise the issue of race, as he believed that his parents achieved social mobility through their hard work. Gagan referred to his parents' extended work hours and having to take on additional jobs to support the family:

My parents had quite a rough time here when they came. My dad worked three shifts, slept in between the shifts and moved on to the next one because we had a rough time and no money; and my mom, she also worked two shifts at a time. They didn't get an education here so they had to work cash jobs here and cash jobs there so there wasn't much of an opportunity to expand in any way. (July 2011, p. 4)

Hence, it appears from these discussions that their parents' lack of employment opportunities upon settlement in Canada had to do with a combination of their Indian formal education and qualifications not being recognized. As a consequence, their parents had to work at labour intensive jobs to provide immediately for their families and discrimination appeared to be much more profound in the 1970s and 1980s. It is clear that these youth have internalized their parents' experiences and challenges in Canada as they focus on their own educational opportunities. Parents see education as opening up possibilities and opportunities – a way of "getting ahead" and into what is deemed a "successful" occupation.

4.3.2 Young Sikh Males' Confidence in a Meritocratic Society

"Canada was a different place compared to now"

Individual and group discussions with the Sikh youth disclosed an appreciation for what their parents' generation had endured in terms of dealing with racial discrimination and establishing themselves in Canadian society. It also has created a great deal of optimism amongst this group of Sikh males who are committed to capitalizing on their own educational opportunities.

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When this topic was addressed in the group interview, there was agreement that race was much

more an issue for their parents' generation than it is now:

> Lucky: My dad came here and even though he was educated back in India, he didn't really
> have time to you know get his degree accredited in the field he studied, so he started
> working and supported the household. Now I have my responsibility right now just to
> study, go to school and they are supporting me. So in that sense, I think it is easier.

> Mandeep: Oh yeah…yes, since my dad was the first generation to come here I think it was
> hard but for them to get established into Canada and also when he was in India, he used to
> study a certain subject and when he came here he had to get a job that was totally not related
> to what he studied. So I think it is harder to adapt to the work field where he went into and
> also just to raise us and make sure that our lives are easier, he had to sacrifice his time and
> everything.

> Interviewer: So, all of you kind of mentioned the necessity they have to come and work,
> do you feel that race and discrimination was a lot more of a factor for them than is it for
> your generation?

> Lucky: Definitely, I think so.

> Baljit: I think racism was a big factor then.

> Lucky: I think in general 20 years ago, Canada was a different place compared to now.
> You had a limited number of visible minorities whereas as time went on, we are very
> multicultural now but if we look back in the past, that's not really the case.

With respect to racism, Lucky feels as though the government has programs in place to protect

visible minorities: "I don't see my background compromising any opportunities. Having said that

there are a lot of government policies in place that just because you're a racial minority there are

programs that target these groups. Just because you're a racial minority you might be selected for

a job compared to someone that's not" (May 2011, p. 20).

Sunny finds that the current generation will not have as "rough" a time as the previous

generations. He does not believe that his ethnic or religious background will be an impediment to

job opportunities:

> There's always racism but just in general…not just Sikh related. I think any old generation
> got it harder than we did and…there is always some racism but other than that…Uh, maybe

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some challenges but I don't think so. I think that especially in the future…the pattern going right now is, people are more lenient towards and understand that….you know…there's other cultures and especially in Canada there's a lot of Indian people and…it's pretty common now. We are a lot more accepted. There will always be challenges but just going back to the previous generation, I feel that they always had it more rough than we did. Now that there is more acceptance…I think… there will still be challenges but, um, it may not be as big or even Sikh related (July 2011, pp. 20–21).

Gagan agrees with the other non-turbaned males, and draws a comparison to the United States when discussing obstacles in Canada. He sees Canada as a cultural mosaic, a place where opportunities exist for anyone who works hard and is committed to education: "I don't think there are major hurdles in Canada…the States…huge hurdle…but, in Canada…we're so multicultural now that I think that it's minimal to zero now" (July 2011, p. 32).

These findings are similar to those of Ali (2008) who found that second-generation youth growing up in low-income neighbourhoods of Toronto were "highly ambitious [and] wanted higher status careers, higher levels of education, and higher incomes than their parents in order to acquire the consumer goods they coveted" (p. 104). Much like the participants from Brampton, these youth appreciate the inclusivity of Canada's multicultural approach and are cautiously optimistic about their own aspirations. However, they were starting to realize some of the challenges faced by minorities as they had more interactions with dominant society.

Amongst the turban-wearing males, there is optimism that they will be able to challenge any issues regarding race and discrimination because of their educational background. Dalvir believes that a positive attitude will help him as he looks for jobs after law school, though there is a touch of ambivalence in his words:

If somebody can't hire me, just because of the way I look, it's something that they're going to lose out on. Maybe they'll lose out on me, maybe not, but…it's something that I just need to strive on to do the best in whatever I can. If that hinders somebody else's perspective, then that's going to be their loss. As long as I keep taking on a positive vibe on everything, everything will just come into place. If there's any discrimination, it's just going to be something that…it's going to be blown out of proportion.

Dalvir believes that when he contextualizes Canadian history, he has seen significant strides made

by Sikhs in terms of social mobility and that gives him optimism:

> Let's say if they wanted to run for MP in 1970s they would not win because of what they
> look like. But, right now I'm proud to see someone that's in a turban or a beard in
> parliament and the principal posts, in a law firm, or a doctor…like I see Sikhs in all types
> of fields….It doesn't matter if they're working on an assembly line or anywhere, I'm kind
> of proud to see that. Like this is the community I grew up in, I can see people progressing
> in their lives. (May 2011, pp. 29–30)

Baljit cited similar examples of seeing prominent Sikhs in positions of power and believes that

while there might be some barriers, it is not something he is overly concerned with. He noted that

"If a lot of us are already up there or already in positions where people, like, already talk to

you…and they see that there are a lot of Sikh people and that would expose people like us…people

with turbans. At that point that barrier would be destroyed….right? Because then they're more

exposed to those type of people" (May 2011, p. 27). However, he is concerned that if younger

Sikhs do not capitalize on their educational opportunities, the Sikh community will not continue

to progress in Canadian society:

> I feel that right now from what I see…as I said before – education. A lot of my friends are
> getting an education and a lot of them aren't getting an education. I went to Hamilton and
> there's not much of a brown population in Hamilton or Sikh population in Hamilton, right?
> Maybe that's only in the University, but I'm not sure the whole Hamilton population, but
> as you go...out of Brampton….out of even the GTA…you won't see much of the Sikh
> population…and I feel that if…even losing a certain percentage of kids that don't get an
> education, will affect how we are perceived in the next 10 years. How…will we be exposed
> more than the last 30 years that we've been here? Will it change? Will we change anything
> if that same amount of percentage is not getting an education? Are we going to actually
> progress as a Sikh community or are we going to stay the same? The majority of the [Sikh]
> population needs to get an education, be in positions where they can actually expose the
> Sikh identity. Only then will the Sikh community progress and let their presence be felt
> within the Canadian society.

Jinder also sees racism as something that can be overcome on an individual basis. When applying for jobs after university, he believes that he will be able to make personal impressions within an interview environment that will afford him opportunities:

> For me, I don't worry too much about it. What they do is look at your resume, right? They're going to call you in based on that. I think…originally that the person will look at you differently, but I guess when the interview progresses they'll know that this is a good person. So, I think it's like, they'll get to know me, and then, they'll think differently. (August 2011, p. 27)

Turban-wearing Sikhs such as Jinder, Baljit, and Dalvir believe that they have what it takes to confront racism. However, it is important to note that they see racism and discrimination at the personal level – none of the participants in the individual interviews alluded to systemic barriers – or thought that any barriers that exist could be struck down by policies or programs that are in place. However, in the group interview, discussion did revolve around job prospects and "who you know" as something that may either assist or hinder them regarding certain jobs. Dalvir and Baljit articulated these sentiments.

> Dalvir: I think the only time where I felt excluded is when I apply for positions in places of firms, especially in top end firms. It's even our teachers like when we were growing up, our teacher was like get a good education and get high marks. That's good…do your best, but I realize that if you don't know anybody working in a place or in a position of high power, you won't get that position.

> Baljit: Exactly and as they say, it's not what you know but who you know nowadays right? A lot of people from other cities maybe not they don't feel comfortable being part of the Sikh identity or whatever right? If they do in fact, then it's because…it would be I think because there's not a person like an influential person in a position or any other high position right that we can look up to as a role model. You get what I am saying?

It is clear that there is some ambivalence as these Sikh youth seem unsure about what awaits them once they have completed university. Nevertheless, they remain optimistic that having been raised in Canada and received a solid education, they have accumulated enough cultural capital for them to be able to meet challenges head-on.

4.4 Summary

There are a number of tensions and contradictions as one examines how education is valued among these youth and their Sikh families. As they negotiate their school and occupational goals, they sometimes have difficulty differentiating between parental expectations and their own. A key contradiction is their articulation of independent thinking and choice, where it is clear that they are very much influenced by their parents to not deviate from an educational plan.

The Sikh youth in this study demonstrate a heightened awareness of parental, peer, and community expectations around education. There appears to be some ambivalence about their own decision-making ability with respect to educational pursuits. While each articulated a sense of independence and assertiveness with regard to selecting their university program, it is also apparent that these Sikh youth give a significant amount of credence to their parents' perspectives. While parents seemingly offer unconditional support with respect to encouragement, extra tutoring, and financial assistance for university, there are clear expectations, spoken and unspoken, about following a specific university and occupational pathway. Participants appear to have an innate desire to please their parents, often shown by their unstated willingness to discuss choices about their university program of study with their parents. Parents themselves see the value of education in the community, particularly for certain types of degrees and occupations, and impress these views upon their children.

This connectedness to their families is further evident from the fact that six of the seven studied in an undergraduate program within a one hour commute from home, while Gagan is living with a close family relative in Ottawa. Studying abroad, both Lucky and Dalvir agree that it was with their parents' support that they made the decision to pursue a law degree overseas. It would not be inaccurate to suggest that studying law is something that met their parents' approval.

While these youth outline the approval as well as the support of their parents in decisions about what university to attend and what to study, the young men appear to underestimate the implicit expectations that have led them all to fields that are held in high regard within their community. Discussions revealed that while there might be disagreement about "competition" versus "enhancing reputation," there are clear standards in their community about what occupations increase social standing. They have heard or been a part of comparisons with the children of other family members and neighbours, which leads to acknowledgement that their educational as well as occupational pursuits are a reflection of their parents' child-rearing efforts. Not only do they want to make their parents proud, but they also want their parents to look good, particularly given their appreciation for the trials and tribulations of these first generation Canadians.

Concerning female siblings' educational opportunities, some admitted that females were subjected to additional scrutiny from parents. In some families, it was preferred that daughters stay closer to home for their studies, unless it was a specialized program that was unavailable at a school near the community. It was also discerned that educational opportunities for females in some families were commensurate to marital standards within the community – that an educated female is more likely to find a spouse that is also well educated and from a good family.

In addition, many of these youth have seen their parents afford themselves a middle class lifestyle through working class means. Having capitalized on working in the manufacturing sector, shrewd real estate investments, running their own business, and/or living in an extended family network, parents have achieved social mobility through sheer determination and smart financial planning. As the participants recall humble beginnings, their families live in what they perceive as superior communities and homes as compared to when they first arrived in Canada. Participants

have therefore seen the fruits of their parents' labour. It is assumed that as young Canadians they will have the added benefit of schooling to go along with a strong work ethic instilled by the family. Consequently, these youth believe that a commitment to the right educational program and corresponding occupation will lead to heightened social mobility for their generation.

These young Sikh males also downplayed negative peer influences, suggesting that they often made the "choice" to disengage or stay at an arm's-length distance from friends that could potentially lead them astray. Some, such as Mandeep, indicated that being talented in sports allowed him to maintain credibility with peers who may not have shared his orientation to education. However, he did also indicate an ability to prioritize family over peer obligations. A strong connection to family plays a significant role in convincing these youth to either choose the "right peers" or limit their activities with the "wrong crowd." Amongst most participants, it was obvious that family expectations took precedence when it came to education.

There are some clear contradictions in the way these youth approach their own futures. While understanding the challenges faced by their parents in terms of racial discrimination, on the one hand, they believe that Canada is a place where the merits of their education will carry forth to a stable, prosperous occupation. Non-turban-wearing youth such as Lucky and Mandeep are aware of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, employment equity, and human rights legislation, believing that these are mechanisms that will protect them if they face any barriers. Others, such as Gagan and Sunny, have bought into multicultural notions of Canada, believing that racism is almost non-existent as a result of the changing demographics of society. Simultaneously, the turbaned Sikhs see these barriers on an individual level, believing that they will be able to convince specific people of their merits and "win them over." They see present-day examples of others who look like them and are successful in politics, business, and other high profile positions.

There is little recognition amongst the participants of structural forms of racism and discrimination that may present obstacles as they move into occupational life. The egalitarian nature of their public schools along with living in an ethnic enclave have perhaps insulated them from the harsh realities that their parents endured and given them a false sense of security about the occupational world that awaits them. Parents' stories about the hardships they endured also reinforce the hope amongst these youth that they will not similarly be victims because of the significant emotional and financial investment families have made in their education. Meanwhile, parents have a better understanding of racial discrimination and emphasize that Canada is a "meritocracy," where education will help combat racism and offer opportunities for their children that they themselves never had. Parents, it would appear, are trying to shield youth from the harsh realities that still permeate Canadian society.

Each of the youth in this study has high aspirations when it comes to their education and occupational goals. As much emphasis as they place on parents wanting them to simply "be happy," none seem content on simply earning a university degree and "getting by," merely providing the basics for their own families in the future. A number of them have already started or plan to take a postgraduate degree to enhance their prospects. Through discussions with parents, they are all aware of positive role models in their family and community that have earned significant academic achievement and prosperous work lives. As a result, these youth have goals and ambitions to be financially successful while being recognized for their efforts by their parents as well as the community in which they live.

Finally, participating in the study led by a researcher of the same ethno-religious background might have influenced these youth in wanting their family to appear in a positive light. When discussing how parents enforced rules, monitored homework, and reiterated expectations,

these youth explained that they understood "where parents were coming from." Some of the youth were reluctant to disclose or articulate specific instances of conflict or tension at home or with peers by speaking in more general, holistic terms. While many were aware of strict Sikh families that embraced high educational standards for future occupational prestige and status, they clearly identified that it was "other" families, not their own, in our discussions about education. At the same time, participants were keen to assert that their families were progressive in promoting independence and choice when it came to education and occupational aspirations.

CHAPTER 5

RELIGIOSITY OF SIKH YOUTH

Though a religious minority in India, Sikhs have carved out a distinctive identity for themselves in Canada. Presently, there are upwards of 30 million Sikhs worldwide, and it is estimated the number of Sikhs in Canada at approximately 455,000 (Barooah, 2012; Siddiqui, 2013). The religion originated in the Punjab state of India, which was subjected to partition when Pakistan was borne out of India in 1947. Guru Nanak, considered the founder of the religion, advocated for love, equality, tolerance, and the rejection of caste (Basran and Bolaria, 2003). Sikh principles are considered peaceful, progressive, and egalitarian.

In terms of practice, "an ideal Sikh is expected to work honestly, share wealth by giving one-tenth for good causes, recite a set of sacred verses from the Guru Granth, and join the Sikh congregation regularly at the Gurdwara, the place of community worship" (Tatla, 1999). Globally, the turban is known as a symbol of the religion, often considered an indication of a devout follower. Additionally, it is important to consider that pious Sikhs are to eat a vegetarian diet, refrain from smoking drugs and drinking alcohol, and take *amrit* (ground sugar and water mixture). To become a member of the Khalsa (the pure ones), one must maintain the 5 Ks: *kes* (hair to represent simplicity of life), *kangha* (comb to keep hair tidy and to signify physical and mental cleanliness), *kara* (steel bracelet to remind of ethics and not to misuse hands and commit sin), *kaccha* (shorts to remind of sexual morality and fidelity), and *kirpan* (signifying the sovereign power of God), making them *Amritdhari*, a baptized Sikh (Basran & Bolaria, 2003; Nayar, 2008; N. Singh, 1994). However, not all men who wear turbans are baptized Sikhs and members of the Khalsa. As with other religions, Sikhs may have varying beliefs, practices, and customs. Consequently, many members living in India and abroad are not baptized yet still identify as Sikhs.

The Sikh youth in this study divulge a myriad of challenges and contradictions in the way that they see themselves in light of their religious upbringing. They must negotiate the varying messages within their own community about religion, in addition to navigating broader Canadian society. At the same time, they demonstrate various levels of religious adherence and have an abundance of ideas about how their Gurdwaras can better engage young people.

This chapter examines a variety of themes with respect to religiosity amongst Sikh youth: (a) how family and language influence their own religious practice; (b) how youth see the role of their local Gurdwaras in serving the community; (c) how they debate the functionality of Gurdwaras amid recent conflict and charges of corruption; and (d) how youth identify themselves in light of their comprehension of Sikh ideals and principles.

5.1 Influence of Language and Culture on Religiosity

When reviewing literature of Sikh settlement in Canada, the United States, and Britain, it is evident there is concern that the religion might be lost amongst younger generations. The thinking is that, generally, elders are familiar with religion in a different context – in the homeland of Punjab, India. It is commonly thought that tensions may emerge amongst youth who see themselves differently growing up in the "West," experiencing a different reality from their parents and grandparents. For example, it has been commonly stated that youth are expected to conform to the norms, traditions, and conventions of the family through religious adherence (A. James, 1974; N. Singh, 1994). Knowledge of the Punjabi language is considered to also be the main conduit of religion and culture within families. As a result, there are fears that loss of the Punjabi language will lead more youth to stray away from the religious teachings they learn at home. For example, Singh (in J. Gill, 2007) argues, "Without an adequate knowledge of Punjabi, the language of the Guru Granth Sahib, the new generation of Sikhs is in danger of being theologically illiterate"

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(p. 19). Retention of the Punjabi language and regular attendance at Gurdwaras are both seen as key to upholding the religion outside of Punjab.

In addition to parents, grandparents are perceived as quite important to the maintenance of the language and religious practices within Sikh families (Smythe & Toohey, 2009). It was noted by a number of the Sikh youth that they felt a strong connection to grandparents who lived in the home. For some, grandparents lived with them permanently, while for others, grandparents rotated between the homes of family members. Grandparents are also seen as a source of wisdom, providing the foundation for language, culture, and religion within the home while also helping raise the children. As noted by a grandfather in Nayar's (2004) study, "I support the extended family…a nuclear family suffers when both parents work and inexperienced babysitters watch children….The extended family has privileges. They have the most experienced babysitters and coaches in the family to coach the younger generation" (p. 91). As a result, it is expected that Sikh youth who have grandparents in the household have further reinforcement of cultural and religious practices in the home.

5.1.1 Language Maintenance and Religious Commitment

"We listen to Punjabi radio and TV channels that broadcast Sikh prayers"

Participants in this study understand that religion is important to their parents, grandparents, and within the community. Yet, there are varying levels of engagement and participation amongst them. When examining the non-turbaned Sikhs, a majority indicated that they were influenced at some point by grandparents living in the home, imparting religious knowledge and speaking Punjabi. Lucky, Gagan, and Mandeep all continue to speak some Punjabi at home, usually with elders. This maintenance of the Punjabi language has and continues to have a significant effect on Lucky's religious awareness:

My grandmother and mother, they pray on a daily basis. My grandfather used to pray in

the mornings and the evenings every single day. We listen to Punjabi radio and TV channels that broadcast Sikh prayers. So there has never been a day where the radio, the TV, my grandmother…where there hasn't been somebody praying in my house. When we [children] were younger, we all had the time to go to the Gurdwara. Now, from time to time, maybe my grandmother wants to go, so I'll take her as well (July 2011, pp. 3-4).

Lucky saw going to the Gurdwara as a "duty to fulfill" and occasionally spend time with his family. He reiterated that going to the temple is not really emphasized by his parents, yet religious practice occurs regularly in the home environment.

Gagan does not consider himself a "practising" Sikh as "I don't wear a turban and keep my beard…but I do believe in God and I do believe in some aspects of our religion" (July 2011, p. 30). However, from our discussion it appears as though his interest in going to the temple and engaging with the community in a religious setting is tied to supporting a temple where his family has financial connections, and, like Lucky, to support his grandmother who lives with the family occasionally:

> We don't practise much. In our family, we do keep a bit of a tradition every Sunday go to Gurdwara and do your thing pretty much to keep whatever culture we have left in society, keep it a bit alive…donations to Gurdwara and attend cultural events. We try to attend every Sunday of the month just because…we have a little bit of religion in our lives. Now I'm not going to say that I don't believe in religion….I do believe in a God and you know….some of the things are accomplished once we do associate with God you know…some of our luck. So Sunday we try and make an effort to take my grandma as well….You know…for us, it's a bit of an outing too…you know…taking grandma (July 2011).

Gagan did not provide a religious motivation for him or his family to go to the Gurdwara. Unlike Lucky, the religion is not practised in the home. It appears as though Gagan's family is involved in the Gurdwara for optics – a family that has been financially and politically successful is still active with the religion and engaged with the local temple. He does want to maintain involvement with the Gurdwara as he gets older:

> I definitely want to maintain [where I am at]. I definitely want to sponsor….I think that's a huge thing…and sometimes if we can't attend whatever sponsorship we can do or whatever volunteer work you can do to make other people attend, give them a taste…let

them get the opportunity to attend. These temples are a way to bring kids in and help them out.

This statement illustrates Gagan's idea of giving back to the community and his inner knowledge about politics, including how maintaining ties to the Gurdwara can be beneficial to his family.

Sunny stated that English is the main language at home, with little Punjabi spoken. He appeared to be the least religious in terms of going to the Gurdwara, and does not consider himself a practising Sikh:

> Because I'm lazy…not just laziness, but I don't know. With religion, I'm not too much into it. I respect it, but I don't want to be fully involved. My parents regularly go….just little holidays like Diwali and those kinds of things. My sister just got married, so the whole wedding was Sikh related. We're not too hardcore or anything, just simple stuff (pp. 4–5).

Sunny admitted that his family generally goes for major events, like holidays or commitments such as weddings or when an extended family member holds prayers. Sunny and his sisters, however, do not go on a regular basis, which he believes is because his parents never forced them to go. At the same time, he would like to maintain some semblance of a religious identity: "I want to maintain it just where I am right now, like when I have a family, I want them to know what their religion is. I don't want them to be too far away from it. I want them to understand what it is because I still call it my religion" (p. 17). It is an interesting dichotomy in that Sunny would like to carry forth the religion as he gets older while he considers himself "lazy" and "not too into" the religion, almost seeing it exclusively as an ascribed aspect of his identity. In addition, it is important to note that, unlike Lucky and Gagan, Sunny did not have a grandparent living at home.

Amongst the non-turbaned Sikhs, their level of involvement with religion seems to be very much "duty-based." Going to the Gurdwara is seen as a show of respect and duty to their parents. They attend when they need to for weddings, cultural events, and to support elder family members such as grandparents. In some ways, it appears as though they are paying back grandparents by going to the Gurdwara with them. While they state that parents do not force or request them to

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attend regularly, they will go to the Gurdwara when it is "expected," reinforcing their desire to appease parents. Speaking Punjabi with elders is a trans-generational communicative tool, which allows these young men to communicate with grandparents and other older adults in their families. However, it does not clearly reinforce a heightened sense of religious adherence amongst these youth.

5.1.2 Elders Role in Cultural Maintenance and Religiosity

"I was inspired watching my grandfather, because he's a baptized Sikh"

Discussions with the turban-wearing Sikhs reveal a strong attachment to family ideals that have been framed around religion. According to respondents, there was a consistent message amongst their parents to learn about Sikhism and the Punjabi language in order to maintain their identity. Jinder stated that he "wasn't forced dictatorship style," but that his parents reinforced the importance of knowing one's own heritage:

> For me, it's always been…[parents] telling us…and eventually…after you get older, they put you in…Sikh camps and everything, and there you learn more about it, and then you realize that it's your identity and you want to keep going with it, and it's like something regular for us. And they never really, like, pressured us, they've always, like, said, "Yeah, this is where we came from," gave us history lessons, history stories, and…the most, I think, they've ever pressured us is to learn how to read and write Punjabi. (August 2011, p. 8)

Growing up in an extended family household, Jinder indicated that the importance of religion was reinforced from a young age. His grandfather influenced Jinder's decision to become a baptized Sikh:

> When I was a little kid we grew up around Sikhism and all the beliefs. When I was little, I was inspired watching my grandfather, because he's a baptized Sikh. And then, I guess I got inspired by him and then…when I was…around Grade 3, I also said that I wanted to get baptized, even though parents were like: "You may not be able to keep it when you're older." I guess, and then…and then I took it upon myself to get it done. (August 2011, pp. 6–7).

Within his family, it is only Jinder and his grandparents who are baptized Sikhs. He believes that he has been able to maintain his identity because of his closeness with his grandfather.

Baljit also took an interesting path to becoming a baptized Sikh. It was only up until a few years ago that his family chose to take the path to becoming "Amritdhari." It was upon moving to Brampton that, through interactions with another family, Baljit and his parents chose to become baptized Sikhs. Until that point, he considered their knowledge of Sikhism limited. To Baljit, it was important that they learn the actual practice of the religion:

> Before that point, we actually did not – I personally did not – know as much as I do now and I feel that neither did my parents – they only knew it was basically inherited. So their religion…they knew bits and pieces but they didn't know like the actual practice of their religion and now we shower in morning and do *path* (daily prayers). Basically you live a lifestyle of a Sikh as it's supposed to be. (May 2011, pp. 5–6)

Baljit's younger sister did not yet become baptized, but he stated that his parents would like her to take some time to think about it because "it's a hard path to take."

As with Jinder, there was a similar emphasis on speaking Punjabi, to maintain the culture and religion. Baljit's parents were concerned about the exposure to "Canadian culture" and their children potentially losing their own heritage:

> They want us to speak our language especially in our home. They feel we speak English everywhere else so we should speak Punjabi in the home so we can actually keep it, rather than losing that connection to basically our background and what we're exposed to in Canada. We do speak Punjabi in our home and we listen to bhat [prayers] and we do bhat. (May 2011, p. 6)

Baljit's family does not regularly go to the Gurdwara. Instead, his family and neighbouring families rotate prayers on a weekly basis in their homes.

Dalvir is the only one out of three siblings to be baptized. He chose to keep a beard and turban like his father. He attends the Gurdwara once a week, engaging in *seva* (service) to support

the temple. Dalvir has also learned from his parents to engage in daily prayers at home. At home he speaks English with his siblings and some Punjabi with his parents.

Amongst the baptized Sikhs, there are older role models, a father or grandfather, who for them, can be cited as an example of a turban-wearing Sikh male. In addition, there is more of an emphasis on speaking Punjabi at home, because parents reason, that their children have plenty of opportunities to speak English outside of the home. Compared with the non-turbaned youth, these turban-wearing Sikhs each demonstrate an innate desire to follow the values and conventions of the Sikh religion.

Thus, learning about religion is something that occurs primarily at home through parents and other family elders. As noted by N. Singh (1994), "Religious observances continue to play a fairly important part in the life of Sikh parents, who exert considerable influence on their children…religious duty is seen as the duty of the family, who pass on the reservoir of information" (p. 100). However, these religious teachings do not occur in isolation in the home environment. It is necessary to consider the influence of peers as well as the community, within and beyond the Gurdwara.

5.2 Role of the Gurdwara

Gurdwaras are the focal religious institution for Sikhs; the hub of religious and social activities for the community. Kant (1987) writes, "The Gurdwara is the centre of not only religious but also social and cultural activity. The role of the Sikh temple in guiding the lives of the Sikhs is even greater than the role of the family" (p. 9). Older and younger generations lament that many youth seem to be disengaged, though do not always agree on the reasons why this is occurring. For instance, A. James (1974) rationalized that young Sikhs in Britain would not conform to the community expectations because they had been exposed to "British ways." Similarly, Nayar

(2004) argues that older Sikhs are frustrated with the individualistic orientation of many youth who struggle to balance "Indian" values espoused at home and "Canadian" values learned at school and through the media:

> The modern values of personal choice, self-orientation, and success by merit conflict with the traditional values of respect and duty…[this impacts the younger] generation's changing approach toward religion and is causing confusion between culture and religion, alienation from inquiry into Sikhism, and the desire for religion to be a personal choice. (p. 141)

Hence, there is a belief that youth are too "selfish" and not considerate of the duty to attend. This was somewhat dispelled earlier in this chapter by the rationale of non-turbaned participants in terms of their attendance. One could argue that they understood the need to show respect and attend out of duty, but did not necessarily "engage" in terms of following the teachings at the Gurdwara.

5.2.1 Disconnect Between Youth and Gurdwara

"Going to the Gurdwara makes no sense if you're just sitting there zoned out"

J. Gill's (2007) study made reference to "many youth [who] expressed a degree of frustration and disappointment with the lack of involvement that members of the Gurdwara committee had taken in the education of Sikh youth" (p. 28). This refrain was echoed by the young Sikh males who were interviewed. They felt that communication issues and lack of outreach by the temples contributed to disengagement amongst some of them as well as their peers. For example, while having many friends of Sikh background, Lucky felt that many young people fail to identify with the language spoken at Gurdwaras, even if they do have a working knowledge of Punjabi:

> I think there may be a communication gap. Even me, I speak Punjabi, I can read Punjabi, and I can write Punjabi because I've gone to Punjabi school. But when I go to the Gurdwara and they are singing the hymns and what not, I can put together some parts of it but for the most part I might not understand. So having said that, we are just sitting there [not understanding]. So I feel if they made more of an effort to kind of help those that don't

understand what they are talking about and communicate more effectively you may have more people following it. (July 2011, p. 16)

Lucky differentiated between Punjabi that is learned through International Languages programming offered by the local school board, as well as his own Punjabi knowledge base learned at home, from the Punjabi that is spoken at the Gurdwara. He believes that is a primary reason why many are disengaged:

> They need to start communicating *gurbani* [Gurus' words] in a form that is understandable. So I think it's a point to kind of get the teachings across to the youth. I think going to the Gurdwara makes no sense if you're just sitting there zoned out thinking about what you are going to do when you get out of there because you don't understand….You're like you don't understand and what can I do about it? I don't feel engaged at all. (August 2011, p. 34)

Similarly, while a regular attendee himself, Jinder indicated that his friends do not go to the Gurdwara because they do not feel it is a productive use of their time: "You always hear your friends saying, 'Oh, it's boring, I don't want to go,' or 'I don't want to sit there for so long, and I get tired.' These are the main reasons; they don't want to stay when their parents want them to stay there longer. So, to avoid those situations they sometimes just don't go" (August 2011, pp. 23–24). Based on these accounts, it appears as though these youth not only are disengaged, but also feel that they do not have a place to articulate their thoughts and perhaps questions that they may have. For them, going to the Gurdwara means sitting and listening, "being preached to." As noted by Nayar (2004) in a discussion with an elder Sikh male, "The kids don't like the preacher telling stories, which are not logical. The kids are educated here. They will not accept the illogical stories. The kids like to ask questions and get answers. The Gurdwara does not have a modern approach….The younger generation should learn through Internet or scholars, where they can ask questions" (p. 140).

These sentiments are consistent with the findings of Jakobsh's (2006) study of Sikhism in the 21st century. An instructor in Sikhism at an Ontario university, the author found that many Sikh youth have difficulty relating to the *granthis* who read the scriptures at Gurdwaras:

> Where do students turn who are disaffected by the status quo? Perhaps the most obvious answer would appear to lie within local Gurdwaras and their respective leadership. But this only spawns new questions concerning the specific training necessary for *granthis*, many lacking basic English language skills. English is, needless to say, the language of choice and even necessity for many students born and raised in Canada. This is not to belittle the position of *granthis* within the diaspora. They are the custodians of Gurdwaras as well as being responsible for the carrying out of the religious service, one that has as its focus on the recitation and singing of hymns from the *Adi Granth*. Yet according to my students, few youths could relate to them. (p. 25)

Other participants believed Gurdwaras were trying to make an attempt to be more inclusive to youth and disagreed with Lucky. The group interview demonstrated some variances about whether the issue is lack of engagement due to lack of interest or responsibility of the Gurdwara:

> Mandeep: I think they already started to engage the youth because when I went to Dixie they use to have that projector screen and they use to translate the bhat happening right? And then also, they also have schools and stuff for like Khalsa schools and stuff like that right? In the institutions in the Gurdwara, they have…other recreational sports. Like OKD, Ontario Khalsa Darbar right? Now for soccer and for basketball and then they join tournaments and stuff like that. They are gaining the youth in that many ways, helping them translate, engaging them to school, and other sports and recreational.

> Sunny: But I think that if you don't want to be engaged like nothing will happen…you know what I mean? Like you have to want to learn this religion in order to believe in it.

> Mandeep: Well that is entirely up to you. You can't force someone to do anything. You just got to…if they have the opportunities…then it's up to them if you want to take…

> Interviewer: So is it up to the youth or is it up to the…

> Sunny: It's up to the youth totally…

> Lucky: I don't think so. I think it's up to the Gurdwara to provide the youth with that option. Whether they decide to take it up or not.

> Interviewer: Do you think they are doing it? The Gurdwaras?

Mandeep: They are doing it…I think they are trying to do a good job trying to get the kids to get engaged.

Lucky: Like you said projectors right? I've only seen it at Dixie Gurdwara sometimes and Malton Gurdwara.

Gagan: I don't know if you guys been to Scarborough Gurdwara…anyone been to Scarborough? I think they are doing an amazing job down there. They opened a media centre and what not and that's been there for about 2 or 3 years now.

Lucky: So implementing something like that Ontario wide, Canada wide, just across North America. I think that would play a big role in terms of youth engagement….The ones that are actually…starting to further engage in that, right? Right now they may just go there, sit around, and come back home with their parents. Maybe next time they go they may be like oh wow, this is what he's talking about.

It was notable that this exchange occurred primarily between the non-turbaned participants. Some of them were advocating for projectors to translate Sikh scriptures into English and believed it was the responsibility of the Gurdwara to do what it could to engage youth. However, in Canada, many Gurdwara leaders are resistant to these requests. For youth in Vancouver, appeals for more services in English are met with demands that the youth need to learn Punjabi (Nayar, 2004, p. 146). Also, it was interesting to note Mandeep's thought that social engagement, through the introduction of sports teams and competitive tournaments, was a good step to take. Conversations with these participants also revealed that while they all had a number of friends of Sikh background, going to the Gurdwara is not reinforced by the peer group.

Baljit and Dalvir had a different experience with their peer group, as both indicated they have supportive Sikh peers through formal and informal university associations. For instance, Dalvir discussed the level of conversations that would occur regarding how to work together within the Gurdwara and in the community at large:

We talk about how we can get more organized in the sense of helping the community out. Like in the sense of Gurdwaras, how can they all become a unit instead of having different arguments all the time that we always hear about…how can we progress? I noticed that since we're second generation Sikhs, it's time we started off like when our parents came

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here and they worked. They already set the foundation type of thing so now it's our time to become more organized…if that makes sense…like in education wise, so it becomes much better in our community, environment where you can become more organized in the sense of helping your community strive further. (May 2011, p. 19)

Dalvir spoke proudly about the initiative that he is taking with his other Sikh peers to effect positive change. He wants them to build upon what has been established by elders and create more cohesiveness.

Dalvir's logic challenges the thoughts expressed by the non-turbaned Sikhs who believe that language is a significant barrier to their understanding of what is going on in the Gurdwara. This finding is reiterated in literature from Vancouver that surmises youth have many questions about the religion that cannot always be answered: "Lack of interest in the religion is believed to be the fact that the teachings and prayers in the Gurdwara are in Punjabi and thus difficult for them to understand. However, the really crucial factor seems to be that grandparents are simply unable to answer young people's questions" (Nayar, 2004, p. 133). Dalvir described how he is able to discuss issues with his friends about supporting the community and Gurdwaras. In essence, his friends provide an alternative to the elders who run the temples, a group with whom he feels comfortable speaking. With this consideration, perhaps in addition to language, the peer group plays a role in the non-turbaned Sikhs detachment from the Gurdwara.

While Baljit indicated that his family engaged in Sikhism predominantly at home, Jinder and Dalvir demonstrated a stronger connection to the Gurdwara than the non-turbaned Sikhs. They seemed willing not only to attend, but also to engage with other community members. Living the religion through daily practice as it is espoused in Sikh scriptures allows them to identify closely with the teachings. Compared to their non-turbaned peers, they engage at a different level in terms of their religiosity.

5.2.2 Youth Perceptions of "Gurdwara Politics"

"The Gurdwara is just sort of a business and you see the corruption happening everywhere"

There are Sikhs who believe that attendance at Gurdwaras is declining because of power struggles and mismanagement of donated funds. As detailed in conversations with Sikh grandparents living in Vancouver, Nayar (2004) discusses their disillusionment with Gurdwaras in Canada compared to Punjab. In terms of those who run the temples in British Columbia, the belief is that "the people collect money and fight" (p. 132). According to other scholars, this is a phenomenon that occurs throughout the Sikh diaspora. Kalsi (in Jakobsh, 2006) observes that intimidation and threats are used by certain members of the temple to ensure specific people are in control, even when a democratic vote is held: "Different factions of Sikhs make every effort to control the Gurdwaras through these annual elections. In the case of disagreement, use of physical force is frequently employed; the local police are invited to intervene in the fights and disputes are taken to the courts" (p. 26). As a result, many in Sikh communities, young and old, have become disenchanted with what is often referred to as "Gurdwara politics."

The youth in this study articulated significant concerns about Gurdwara corruption. For them, this was a primary reason why they and their families were no longer attending the Gurdwara. A year preceding the interview with participants, there had been two violent incidents at two separate Gurdwaras in Brampton. In the first incident, a man was stabbed with a kirpan by another Sikh for bringing an excommunicated preacher to speak at the temple (Paperny, 2010). Less than three weeks later, there was a major dispute at another Brampton Gurdwara over control of the temple. The well-publicized fight involved hammer, machetes, and construction knives (Aulakh, 2010). These events had a major impact on how Sikhs saw themselves, and they were very concerned about the image it was projecting to others. For instance, Gagan said,

Temples…are a big issue…some people believe in one thing and some people don't; and then there are clashes, stabbings….police has to get involved and it becomes a highlight on the 6 o'clock news and all it's doing is bringing down our community again. We don't support that…and we don't support the people that commit these acts.

Gagan and Mandeep were two of the youth who, ironically, thought that Gurdwaras were doing a good job of engaging youth through sports events. It was clear, though, that violence occurring at Sikh religious institutions was compromising any positive developments that were being made.

Mandeep agreed with his parents that it was better to avoid going to the temple as they felt these issues were rampant throughout the local area:

I usually used to go every Tuesday about a year ago, but I currently stopped going. I've just seen a change….At the Gurdwara, things are starting to change. It's becoming more than before, it used to be all focused on religion and the culture. Now, I believe, it's just sort of a business and you see the corruption happening everywhere, at a lot of Gurdwaras…and a lot of violence and stuff. It's just kind of changed my perspective. So what my mom did, we made a religious room in our house so we usually do our prayers there because I just don't feel like going to the temple because of all the negative vibe that's going on right now, with all the scandals and what's going on. (May 2011, p. 4)

It's interesting to note that religion in some respects is now sought and practised within the home, as opposed to the Gurdwara, as exemplified by Mandeep's family. Mandeep further explained that religious leaders were using temple events to pursue their own agendas, which was highlighted by the recent violence. He believed that Sikh politicians who were aligned with specific Gurdwaras hijacked the annual Nagar Kirtan, an annual parade held in the spring to commemorate the establishment of the Khalsa:

I have a very negative view on them. I think that when you're looking at the violence of the Gurdwara, for example, you see our wisemen; you see our spiritual leaders, our gurus…[these leaders of the Gurdwaras] are supposed to set an example to practise our religion and culture, follow our values. But, if they are pursuing violence against each other, then this is…not only a negative effect against us, the Sikh younger generation, but also into other cultures, and other religions seeing that these are supposed to be their spiritual leaders, their wisemen and this is what they're doing. So, imagine what the younger generation's going to learn. So, I think that they're putting up a very bad image.

And even when you look at the ceremonial walk, the Nagar Kirtan, I believe that it's starting to change its purpose. Before it used to be mostly based on religious events and…we walk, we sing…we do our prayers while we're walking. Now I think politicians are looking at it more as a campaign event. So now you see more Sikh politicians looking at it as a campaign tool. So they come there and then they advertise and you see like children wearing shirts saying: "Elect this person", "elect that person." So, I think it's starting to change the value of what we stand for, what that tradition was supposed to mean.

Mandeep thought that there was too much competition between Gurdwaras and a lot of infighting within many of these temples. Along with Lucky, both cited the change in route of the Nagar Kirtan, as it no longer goes from Malton Gurdwara (a community located just south of Brampton in northeast Mississauga close to the airport) to Dixie Gurdwara (located by the Brampton/Mississauga border). Because of disagreements between the leaders of these two temples, the Nagar Kirtan now occurs between Malton Gurdwara and Rexdale Gurdwara (located by the Brampton/west Toronto border).

Discussing Gurdwara politics and allegations of corruption was a very passionate topic amongst the youth in a group setting. Gagan, for example, cited his family's political involvement and his views of other religious communities in the Toronto area to rationalize what is occurring with Sikh temples:

> Gagan: I think it's become a business now for a lot of the Gurdwaras, but, we also got to look at that situation too….It's not just with our community, it's with every community and being involved in politics right and experiencing different things.…I've experienced the Greek community and they have a similar thing going on to where their Greek Orthodox churches are popping out just like our Gurdwaras….A lot of them are doing it for business and they are having similar issues to our issues but, I think the Gurdwaras have become more of a business and more of a…you know what, "you support us, you give us money and we'll support you" type of thing.

Agreeing with Gagan, Lucky cited the location of new Gurdwaras, which were now situated in community plazas, unlike older temples that were stand-alone buildings built on empty lots:

> Lucky: There have been cases…where I've heard things and I think "wow, they've turned it into a business model." You have a Gurdwara in a strip mall right? They do that because

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they don't have to pay taxes on the whole property because you have a religious institution. Whether it's a factor or not, I don't know, but that is something that I have heard.

It was interesting to note that while the non-turbaned Sikhs looked to justify their perspective that Gurdwaras had become moneymaking enterprises, they also wanted to highlight positive developments that were being led by some of the temple associations. Meanwhile, turbaned youth like Dalvir and Baljit sought to defend the Gurdwaras as demonstrated in the following exchange:

> Interviewer: So what is the current climate in Sikh temples? Do you think the Gurdwaras are reaching out to youth? Do you think that you as young people have a voice at the Gurdwara?
>
> Gagan: I think it's not the Gurdwaras but the organizations, the committees like Guru Gobind Ji Children's Foundation.…I think it's a wonderful association cause they involve the youth and they do a lot of events so I think it's not the Gurdwara, I think the organization stemming from the Gurdwaras that are making a big impact on our community because the Gurdwaras are there, not all, but some of them are helping us, creating media centres and branching out to communities.
>
> Baljit: I think externally they might, they do look like businesses. Obviously like people [on the] outside say they look like business but we don't know what is going on inside. I'm not supporting their actions always…maybe [it's not always what] they say in the news. There are lots of rumours, right? And a lot of things can be interpreted in different ways. But if you look at all the programs, all the *prashad* (sacred pudding given out at prayers) and everything that's going on…when people say it's a business they should also take into account all the exposure of *gurbani* and things they are also giving out to the community, right?
>
> Lucky: Look at the Nagar Kirtan [back when it went from] Malton Gurdwara to Dixie Gurdwara, probably one of the best Nagar Kirtans I've ever been to. And for some reason, from what I've heard, the two [organizing] committees don't get along anymore so now they are going from Malton to Rexdale…it's a long walk from there….just because two committees can't get along with one another?
>
> Dalvir: But some of the Gurdwara committee guys, I know a few of them, they work, they have 9-5 jobs some of them work 12 hour shifts and they work in factories. It's not like they go to the Gurdwaras just to steal people's money right?
>
> Gagan: But, how do you interpret a Range Rover and an X5 taken out under a Gurdwara?
>
> Baljit: Somebody bought it for the Gurdwara?

Gagan: This was an article, I think from two years back. I don't want to name the Gurdwara but they had taken out a Range Rover one year and the next year they had taken out an X5 brand new.

Dalvir: There could be an instance like that. Like what I've noticed is that a lot of these splits that come into our Gurdwara politics is because individuals will take advantage and if that bad apple goes away and these individuals who are actually good will exclude him, this individual will start a little conspiracy and bring his buddies and open up another Gurdwara whereas, these guys…the good ones…let's say these guys that are actually doing something productive, will get tainted with stealing. But it's actually these individuals who secretly will be running it under the guise of a Sikh Gurdwara.

Interviewer: When we talk about things like Indian or Punjabi mentality and we talk about corruption, is it corruption for financial gain or is it corruption for power?

Dalvir: I think it's for power. I don't think these people even steal any money from the Gurdwara….It's just the fact that they want to have some sort of power. It's ridiculous. It makes no sense.

Lucky: There is so much hearsay. What we've all said is kind of hearsay or I think that might have happened….

This last quote by Lucky signifies the considerable rumours and innuendo that encompass Gurdwaras and their administration. Baljit and Dalvir, however, want to dispel the gossip that the others speak of by insisting that these perceptions are based on a few examples and not indicative of the majority of those who run the temples.

It is important to note that in J. Gill's (2007) study of Sikh youth in Toronto, the same questions about how Gurdwaras allocated and spent their money were a chief concern. Participants felt that while charity and donations were very important for Gurdwara maintenance, the millions of dollars donated throughout a given year were not effectively used to accommodate the needs of youth (p. 28). As J. Gill writes,

They felt that charity and donations were very important for the maintenance and operation of the Gurdwaras, but the Gurdwaras also were responsible for the use of the up-to millions of dollars that were donated throughout the year. Many youth felt that this money was not being used effectively, and some of it could be allocated differently to accommodate their needs. (p. 28)

In this study, participants believed that the substantial money youth donated to Gurdwaras was not

utilized to support youth beyond token programming. As one participant in J. Gill's (2007) study

noted,

> I don't think the Gurdwara is helping a lot – in terms of teaching our youth about Sikhism.
> And language, yeah, I mean they have *Gurmukhi* [script used by Sikhs for writing Punjabi]
> classes every now and then, I think they have a camp for that…. Actually, I can't really say
> that, because I've never actually seen it. I haven't heard about it, right? So, if I haven't
> heard about it, how many people are they actually reaching out to. Sort of thing, you know?
> But yeah, I really think they need to sort out their ways. (p. 29)

Gagan referred to what is happening at the Gurdwaras as a community problem, in that

divisions exist between members of the Sikh community that prevent them from opening

Gurdwaras that the youth feel are needed. He brought up an example of a temple that is to be

constructed in the local community with much promise and grandeur, but in the end, little that

differentiates it from ones that already exist:

> Gagan: They put up a board saying "sandalwood worship centre" you know…is going to
> have a museum and this and that. It's going to have this audiovisual area and all of a sudden
> you see, it's just a square building put up and just putting paath in it…and *langar* [food
> provided for those who attend service]...and the same thing is opening over and over again.

> Lucky: It needs to be done effectively right?

> Gagan: Done effectively yeah, like no one is doing….Like Dixie has been on the same
> project for like how many years now? That's the community problem because we don't
> want to band together and do something right because working with the party, I get to go
> out to different things and see different things and go to Gore Road and go to temples,
> Hindu Mandhirs, and everything...and I see that, like Gore Mandhir that thing was built in
> 5 years. They said this a project, this is what we want to do, raise the money and do it…and
> this isn't what I see with our community. I don't want to criticize our community.

> Baljit: The thing is, that in every religion there are people against each other, like…you
> said, the Mandhir right? One of my friends, her dad is very involved in that community
> and she talked about how a lot of people in their committees are doing the same thing.
> There are disputes within those committees and now he's extracted from it; and just
> because we are not that involved in the community. We don't know.

> Lucky: Just talking about that, that's just one of the areas I see our community as
> fragmented right? We got 2 to 3 to 4 different small little Gurdwaras and literally five to

ten minutes of driving distance from one another. Let's put our funds together and build a beautiful Gurdwara. Why not do that?

Gagan: This happened when our community flourished right? Whatever is happening now.…But like, what my parents tell me, people that came before in the 80s , 60s , 70s , and 80s …when the Scarborough Gurdwara went up, how beautiful of a Gurdwara it was. It was one of the first main big Gurdwaras in what's now called the GTA and how they had raised the funds and built it. See when I think the committee is smaller, it's easier to band together, easier to make decisions, easier to get the funds, like in San Jose, there is a beautiful Gurdwara they have up there like…it's a small community, but they achieved it. Here I think they have too many….It's a huge community and there is becoming sub-communities so it's making it harder.

Lucky: Competition. One person against the other and I want to do this, I want to have it this way.

Gagan: These smaller communities in the States, like San Jose, they're achieving much more because they are smaller. They make decisions faster. They raise the funds faster, and they do it. And I think we are such a big community that we can't do it anymore.

The participants made reference to the local Hindu community and what is considered a majestic *Mandhir* that was built not far from where they live. They are impressed, perhaps envious of the accolades it has received as an architectural wonder as well as with how efficiently the project was completed. Baljit argued that based on his knowledge from a friend, that the same issues occur within the local Hindu community, possibly justifying his stance that Gurdwaras may endure some internal discord. Meanwhile, to these youth, the era of when their parents arrived in Canada is somewhat romanticized as a time when the vision for Sikh Gurdwaras was cohesive and harmonious, not filled with internal struggles.

5.3 Identifying as Sikh

The youth in this study have varying definitions of what it means to be a Sikh, and suggest that wearing a turban is not necessarily the main indication of religiosity. This is reinforced by Nayar's (2008) assertion "that traditionally there has also been recognition accorded to Sikhs ("learners") who are not baptized….The Sikhs who do not follow the chief requirement but still

believe in the spiritual teachings of the gurus are called *Sahajdharis* (gradual adopters)" (p. 21). This was a consistent theme in the discussions with participants. For instance, among those who did not wear turbans, all identified themselves primarily as "being Sikh," even though they knew they did not follow a number of the chief tenets of the religion. Interestingly, when asked to identify core Sikh principles and values, the non-turbaned youth often talked about what they "were not allowed to do," yet still purported that they can identify themselves with the religion.

5.3.1 Varying Interpretations of Sikhism

"I consider myself a Sikh but I drink and eat meat"

Identifying as a Sikh Canadian, Sunny believed being a Sikh meant to "keep your hair and don't shave or anything. Don't eat meat. That's pretty much the only core values I know besides practising it. No drinking….just being good to religion…just being clean in general" (August 2011, p. 17). Like Sunny, Lucky emphasized that he identifies as being Sikh, despite the fact he eats meat and drinks alcohol. In the one-on-one interview, Lucky cited regular daily prayer as a way of defining his allegiance to Sikhism, inferring that this compensates for his not following all of the other "rules." In the group interview, Lucky stated emphatically "I consider myself a Sikh but I drink and I eat meat, but I would consider myself a moderate Sikh" (August 2011, p. 46).

Introducing the concept of being what Lucky calls a "moderate Sikh" is analogous to what has been termed a "Reconstructionist" viewpoint in diasporic Jewish communities. Pianko (2006) summarizes Mordecai Kaplan's definition of Judaism as more than just a religious conception but "one that includes the totality of social interactions, cultural attributes, and religious folkways that Jews share" (p. 40). In addition, notions of transnationalism refer to a reconstruction of place, which takes into consideration the emerging cultural transformations that occur within immigrant populations. Participants refer to an evolving concept of what it means to be Sikh, indicating that

it is okay to eat meat and drink alcohol provided that they occasionally attend the Gurdwara, engage in prayer, or uphold other values espoused by the religion. Gagan believes that practising "core values such as honesty, giving back to the community, and not committing a crime…pretty much not committing a sin" allow him to identify as a Sikh. These youth are searching for a more relevant construction of their religion as they attempt to redefine what it means to be a Sikh in current times and circumstances living as part of the northeast Brampton community.

Mandeep recounted that as a child, he wore a turban, but as he got older in primary school, his parents agreed that he would no longer wear it:

> Personally, I used to have a turban when I was small, but I had no choice, like, I was a little kid, and then I just had a turban. And then, I think when you're looking at Canada…it's more modernized, all Canadianized, and then, I think you adapt to this culture more. So then, you perhaps want to cut your hair, [remove your] turban, and be clean shaven…probably fit in with the rest of the society.

Mandeep's parents thought that as he got older, it would help their son fit into mainstream Canadian society if he no longer had his turban. However, Mandeep, believed that it was not necessarily appearance that made someone a Sikh, it was how they lived their life. Like the others who did not follow some of the main principles of the religion, Mandeep states that having good morals and being a good person makes him a respectable Sikh, by "telling the truth, being honest, good mannered, and, not having a negative attitude towards other people, and obviously not, yelling at, or putting down other people" (May 2011, p. 24).

These "modern" and "moderate" youth feel that others, both inside and outside of the religion, may see them as not being as religious as those who wear turbans. According to Sunny, people who are not Sikh

> would see me to be not too religious, just because I don't have a turban or anything. I think they just see me like a regular person.…I like to think that. [Other Sikhs] would immediately know that I am not religious or anything and from there they may know that

my parents didn't force it on me. Like you can tell a lot about a person just by that…they could probably know that I don't practise the religion as much. (August 2011, pp. 18–19)

By not wearing a turban or having other religious identifiers, Sunny suggested, he is accepted by mainstream Canadian society, while being somewhat ambivalent about how those within the Sikh community see him. He equates not wearing a turban with being a "regular person" in Canada, that by still engaging in some religious functions he can freely navigate being both Sikh and Canadian. There appears to be tempered enthusiasm that he can be accepted by those belonging to his community and those who are not.

Gagan believes that the community does not differentiate too much between those who wear turbans and those who do not, unless youth engage in misbehaviour at the Gurdwara:

When you're at the temple and you're fooling around, and you're not being respectful of the surroundings around…people are going to assume that you know "this guy doesn't care, this guy doesn't care about anything." And you know what you can say? "He doesn't care about it, he has no values, principles, or what not." Otherwise, I don't think our community sees us that way. I guess the guy with the turban is an orthodox…more of a hard-core…takes his religion a bit more seriously than I do.…But otherwise from an educational perspective, financial perspective…nothing is different. (August 2011, pp. 31–32)

In keeping with his family's political and charitable connections with the Gurdwara, it is clear that despite not wearing a turban, Gagan very much considers himself Sikh. Like his other non-turban-wearing peers, however, Gagan did allude to the perception that those with turbans are sometimes seen as being more devout with respect to Sikhism.

It was clear from discussions with the non-turbaned youth that there were some significant contradictions in terms of how they identified with Sikhism and lived their lives. It was reasoned that while the religion may have some explicit expectations of which they were all aware, they were not subjected to all of the rules because they were not Khalsa Sikhs. To them, Sikhism was an open, accepting religion and if they maintained a certain level of religiosity, they could still

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engage in activities prohibited by the more orthodox and consider themselves Sikh. As Gagan

noted, "There are many levels of being religious right? I think like there is more orthodox Sikhs

and there is more like us you could say" (August 2011, p. 45).

5.3.2 How Turbaned Sikhs See Themselves

"Just because I have a turban does not mean that I know a lot about my religion"

Discussions with the turban-wearing youth were rather detail-oriented as they recounted

their perspectives of the Sikh religion. Their definitions of Sikhism were quite specific and

descriptive. To them, it was a routine on embarking on a religious journey each and every day. For

instance, as Baljit discussed,

> I feel that core Sikh principles are that you wake up in the morning, you do your part….You
> remember basically what we were told as in the Guru Granth Sahib. You respect them and
> what they say is like basically we try to achieve one thing, that is remembering God. As
> you get up from your sleep, anywhere you go, that our goal is to basically purify ourselves
> in a sense….You know the expression when they say the grass looks greener on the other
> side? Try to remove that looking at other people and what they have but try to understand
> what you are given and be satisfied with that. Thank God for that. (May 2011, p. 24)

Baljit cited the challenges that Sikhs encounter each day in terms of anger, temptation, and gossip.

To be a Sikh meant to make good decisions not only for himself but for others as well.

Similarly, Dalvir indicated that being a Sikh meant being humble and continuously

engaging in self-reflection:

> What is Sikhism about? In my own opinion, what it means is, I need to become a better
> person in every sense. Like if I'm going to school, I need to do really good in school. If
> I'm going to work, I need to do good at work….Like just becoming an ideal human being
> type of thing. Like your striving…everybody's not perfect but your striving to become
> good. You have to do your meditation, you have to do what feels comfortable with you and
> your relationship with God pretty much. So once you have that established with you, then
> you can branch out and do what's necessary in your life right now. (May 2011, p. 26)

Turbaned Sikhs such as Dalvir and Baljit seemed to have a very positive orientation towards their

religion. In contrast to the non-turbaned Sikhs who saw the religion in terms of what they "could

not" or "were not allowed" to do, Dalvir and Baljit saw the religion in a different light by guiding

their daily routines.

However, it was interesting to note that these youth, compared to their non-turbaned peers,

were more likely to define themselves simply as "Canadian." As Dalvir noted,

> The first instinct that I have is, I am Canadian. Like a lot of people I know, will say "Oh I am Indian." But you are not Indian. You are born here, like what's your relationship with India? It's kind of bizarre when people say that outright. A lot of people say that they're Indian….Like I'm Indian or Punjabi or something. But….that would make sense if I say I'm going around Canada, I'm Ontarian, you know what I mean? Like, I never say I'm Punjabi or Indian. It's either Canadian or Sikh because if you want to go back into like…if you want to look at it, you're not Punjabi, you're Indian….It doesn't make sense. You might have some background roots their but, it just doesn't make sense for you now because if you're born here, by definition…you have a passport here, you're Canadian right? You're here, you're Canadian, and there's nothing else about it. (May 2011, pp. 19–27)

The confidence in Dalvir's response illustrated that despite his religious markings, he was proud

to be Canadian and identify as such. Growing up in diverse communities, where the ideology of

multiculturalism is promoted and often celebrated, likely had an impact on how Dalvir felt about

his identity both as a Sikh and as a Canadian.

Ironically, these youth challenged the perception that wearing a turban was an indication

of profound religious knowledge or even commitment. The non-turbaned youth indicated to some

extent that by not wearing a turban, they were "moderate" and perhaps "not as into" the Sikh

religion. Baljit argued that wearing the turban itself did not equate with being knowledgeable about

the religion:

> Just because I have a turban they would say that I'm more religious. For example, at university, where people are less educated about my religion, they would say, "he seems like he is practising more than the other people." Where maybe that might not be true…right? I know a lot of friends that do ten times more *bhat* than me and they don't have turbans. Over here in Brampton, you realize that kids know more about Sikhism and the Punjabi culture, and they can see that just because I have a turban does not mean that I know a lot about my religion or I follow my religion a lot because they've been exposed to people that have turbans that don't do the same thing. (May 2011, p. 25)

Baljit used the example of other Sikhs who wear turbans, but do not practise the religion the way he does. In his community of Brampton, he believes that wearing a turban does not carry any additional status within the community in terms of Sikh awareness. This is an important distinction to be made in that the local Sikh community is one of the largest in Canada. Hence because of the high population, it is very common to see both turbaned and non-turbaned Sikhs.

As a result, there are varying examples for youth to draw upon in terms of measuring their own religiosity within the local community. According to Jinder, those without turbans can most certainly be considered Sikh:

> Even your peers, they'll think that you're very religious.…[But] you may be, you may not be. It doesn't depend on if you have a turban, that's what I think….If you want to be a religious person, you can be a religious person, without a turban. You don't necessarily have to have a turban. I know a lot of good people that don't have a turban, but they're very into Sikhism as well, and they respect it a lot. But, in regular society, I think if you have a turban you're pretty much recognized as a religious person. (August 2011, p. 25)

It is clear that Jinder notes a difference in how the turban is sometimes seen differently within the community compared to broader Canadian society. In his opinion, "regular society" is likely to see a turban-wearing Sikh as being religious.

5.3.3 What It Means to Wear the Turban

"This is something I feel comfortable in – this is who I am"

When asked about how they perceive non-turbaned Sikhs, specifically those that choose to cut their hair and no longer wear a turban, there was some variance of opinion amongst the three turbaned youth. Jinder and Dalvir thought it was a matter of personal choice – that one cannot be forced to keep their hair and turban if they do not want to. They felt that in some cases, if a youth no longer wanted to be Amritdhari, it was a personal choice that they should be able to make. For instance, Dalvir stated,

This is something I feel comfortable in – this is who I am. If somebody doesn't feel comfortable with who they are, then whatever they need to do to become comfortable, let them. So it's like a family forcing someone to follow a faith….It doesn't make, like you can't be forced to do prayers or meditate. You can't be forced to love somebody. You know what I mean? So if somebody needs to cut their hair, what have you, it's something on their own individual basis. If they feel comfortable with whatever they do, then let them. (May 2011, p. 28)

Baljit, on the other hand, did not quite agree. As someone who initially did not wear a turban, he used the example of a friend who chose to remove his turban. Baljit could not quite understand what would lead his friend to do this:

One of my friends, he had a turban throughout his whole life. When I met him in, like Grade 10, you could see that he had his turban for his whole life and he told me. But he decided to cut his hair in Grade 12 and that changed everything….I guess that was probably because, the type of people he started talking to and the type of people I started talking to helped me understand that I'm actually proud of my religion. But he cut his hair and just the way, I guess, he adapted with his friends….I kind of find it difficult to comprehend….I don't know. I feel I need to ask the question: "Why is that happening?" Right? That's the main question, maybe because of his parents forced him and he didn't really, wasn't really, proud of it. That changes everything – like I changed from being that way to becoming a Sikh and having a turban, but he did the opposite. And I don't find it really weird, but I just ask the question: "Why is that happening?" That's the main concern that I have….It's like, "why?" (May 2011, p. 25)

Baljit knew the answer to the question he posed – the peer group was quite influential. His friend had chosen to be with peers that did not put the same, positive emphasis on maintaining the Sikh form that Baljit's peer group had. It is intriguing to note that Baljit seemed more bothered by this than Dalvir or Jinder, the reason being that the latter two likely had more peers who were non-turbaned. Their response in terms of "choice" and "personal freedom" is a way of defending their non-turbaned friends.

Given the recent political climate in local Gurdwaras, Jinder thought wearing a turban could have a negative connotation outside of the community, by people who would potentially view them with prejudice. This point was echoed by Dalvir, who believes that the media have

contributed to the misperception of turbaned Sikhs, though he generally has very positive experiences when dealing with new people: "Media-wise, having beard and turban it's not an ideal thing. That's from the media's perspective and it's unfortunate, but you're always compared to terrorism, which doesn't make sense" (May 2011, p. 27). Similar points were made by made by J. Gill (2007) as well as Chanda and Ford (2010) who indicate that many Sikhs living in the diaspora have taken it upon themselves to educate the misinformed about their religion, particularly post-9/11, when some have been mistaken for Muslims.

Their non-turbaned peers agreed that there are negative stereotypes about turban-wearing Sikhs. For instance, Lucky asserted, "especially because of the events of 9/11, there has been an association with Sikhs and Muslims that's played a key role in terms of the perception others have of Sikhs with turbans and beards" (July 2011, p. 18). However, at the same time, Lucky provided an example about the Nagar Kirtan and spoke of how non-Sikhs would come up to those in the procession, showing an interest in learning more about his faith.

Despite the potential for prejudice and discrimination, particularly for those with turbans, Gagan believes that all Sikh youth benefit from living in Canada. The basis of this argument is his differentiation between Canada as a "cultural mosaic" and the United States as a "melting pot":

> I think the only negative perspective of a turbaned male would be a negative thing that happened in this country, like the Air India bombings…[and people have] that picture. Otherwise, the beautiful thing about our country is that everyone's an immigrant. It's not like the States where, you know, they see themselves where no one has their own culture. But here it's mixed, you know, it's a stew [where] everyone's mixed together. Everyone's like interacting with their religions, their cultures. I think that is the beautiful thing about Canada, each community invites each other in. (August 2011, pp. 31–32)

It appears as though living in the enclave has provided a sense of security for the youth, in that it is very common for them to see people like themselves in everyday life. For Amritdharis such as

Baljit and Jinder, they do not appear to be too concerned about prejudice or discrimination, whether at home in Brampton or at university within Southern Ontario.

For Dalvir, he has had to endure somewhat of an adjustment moving to Australia for his law program. No longer is he in an area where there were many others that look like him:

> In Australia, it was kind of different whereas you don't have any people that wear turbans or have a beard there, so you're just looked upon. You're obviously stared at. But…after you start engaging with other people, the person sitting beside you, you interact more and it becomes easier but, since high school, just being in a South Asian dominant area, you're just not looking at yourself differently. (May 2011, p. 13)

It is clear that it has been an adjustment for Dalvir, being away from the comforts of the Greater Toronto Area. While he does not refer to any mistreatment, it has given him a varying perspective on what it is to be a turbaned Sikh male in a context far different from that of Brampton.

5.3.4 Debating the Kirpan Issue

"When you look at the kirpan, you can't really blame others that say we can't wear it"

Amongst the respondents, there was conflicting debate over the issue of Sikhs wearing kirpans. Non-turbaned youth suggested that religious and cultural pride is a significant feature of their community, however, they were unsure about how the kirpan influenced perceptions about Sikh Canadians. The non-turbaned participants were quite anxious about how their community is perceived by broader society, indicating their concern about "fitting in" as Canadians.

Mandeep, for example, alluded to some of the recent violence at Gurdwaras in Brampton. He recognizes that many Sikhs in Canada fought long and hard to have the right to wear a kirpan, but "I think now when you see them use it in ways that it shouldn't be used, that's going to obviously put fear in other people too. So when you see them use it, as a defensive tool, or as a weapon, people are going to get scared, and they're going to not give us the rights to actually wear the kirpan" (May 2011, p.22). Gagan, perhaps influenced by his own family's political views,

agreed with this sentiment: "The kirpan issue I was not happy with. In a public school system we should be neutral to everyone. Unless you have a religious Sikh school, it applies there, but you know we are running a public school, where you should be acceptant of all communities. It should be fair and equal rules for all" (August 2011, p. 32).

During the group interview, participants disclosed that when the kirpan was being used inappropriately, it was tarnishing the reputation of all in the Sikh community:

> Mandeep: Like when you look at the kirpan, you can't really blame others that say we can't wear it because no one has a problem with it if you use it properly, if you wear it right. But, if you use it for other reasons then we are causing our own problem right? And we are ruining it for others in our own culture and obviously they are going to have to enforce rules then. That's on us, that's not on them. They're not saying, "oh you guys are using it for this." If we do something, an incident where we actually use it, then yeah they are going to enforce rules and they are going to challenge us about the kirpan. That's not their fault, that should be more our problem.

> Lucky: I think that if we are in a position when we are walking down the sidewalk with our kid and we see somebody else with a sword, naturally we are going to be scared, right? We kind of have a sense of understanding in terms of the kirpan and the significance it served way back when. But there are so many people out there that have no idea of what it is and the purpose behind it. So if they are walking down the street with their kid and you see some guy with a sword you are going to be like, you know, "honey watch out!"

> Interviewer: So you are thinking of it from the perspective of someone who is non-Sikh?

> Lucky: Yes. We understand the significance of it and there's really…other than [what's happened at the local Gurdwara], I haven't heard of an instance where somebody pulled out their Sikh kirpan and stabbed somebody with it for a violent purpose. If I was to hear that in the news and then I saw the same guy two days later again with the kirpan I would be like, you know, "let's run."

> Dalvir: I think they are waiting for us to make a mistake, because once that mistake happens, it's like, "We were right"…the media was right…or the perceived perception other people had of our community would make them say, "you know, we were right."

> Gagan: I totally agree with you on that point because, like you see the CBC…almost every one or two months they have to play that Air India documentary over and over again. I understand you guys play a documentary, but play something else...because pretty much you bring that negativity back into people's minds so it's like they are trying to find a mistake amongst us. I totally agree because once they find it they're going to be like, "they can't do this, and they can't do that"…and try to like suppress us you know?

It is clear that these youth take great pride in their community, particularly with respect to what Sikhs have accomplished and how they are seen by other Canadians. As much as these youth demonstrate and profess that Canadian and Sikh values are intertwined, they are very much concerned about how "outsiders" see their community. There is concern about how the community is able to regulate itself with respect to kirpans. However, the thinking that permeates this dialogue exemplifies that young Sikhs are subconsciously aware of the minority status they have in Canadian society, where the transgressions of a few extend to the entire community.

5.4 Summary

Discussion with these seven young Sikh participants revealed numerous questions and concerns regarding their religious interactions at home and in the Gurdwara. Family upbringing, particularly with respect to the presence of grandparents or other extended relatives, can influence maintenance of the Punjabi language and level of engagement with Sikhism. In terms of being a baptized Sikh, it was clear that having an older male role model was extremely persuasive in youth believing that they could choose to live as an Amritdhari. There was much debate amongst participants about whether youth were disengaged from the Gurdwara or whether it was the religious institution that was alienating young people through an outdated leadership model. Further discussion focused on the power structure of Gurdwaras and questions about how pervasive corruption was in their local temples. Finally, how youth identified themselves proved to be rather enlightening, as it was the non-turbaned males who identified themselves primarily as Sikh, and the turbaned males who identified themselves primarily as Canadian. This is likely due to the fact that turbaned Sikhs have visible identifiers that signify their faith, while non-turbaned youth choose to assert their "Sikhism" verbally, as their physical appearance simply denotes "South Asian-ness" in Canadian society.

The youth who regularly speak Punjabi, particularly with an older family member, are more likely to have a better understanding of the language used in Gurdwaras. There is common agreement that the form of Punjabi spoken in Gurdwaras is different from how it is spoken at home. This can likely be attributed to the reading of abstract scriptures as well as the fact that many of these youth are speaking a mix of Punjabi and English at home.

A family's outlook regarding community temples will have an influence on their children. There appears to be a level of disengagement amongst youth who do not attend the Gurdwara beyond major events such as a wedding, family prayer, or funeral. There also appears to be a further disconnect where families have chosen to follow the religion at home, and avoid attending the Gurdwara. This home-based religious practice may negatively affect the children of these families who become further disenchanted with the role of Gurdwaras in their community. Some youth are demanding that there be more outreach by the temples, whether in the form of funding for programs or increasing the amount of English used within services.

The peer group also has a significant effect on the level of attendance and engagement among youth. From the discussion, young turbaned Sikhs are more likely to seek others who are like themselves, who have a keen interest in Sikh discourse. Some of the non-turban-wearing youth reiterated that, while they had friends of the same religious background, these peers tended to have a similar, indifferent attitude towards the Gurdwara, often based on the reasons outlined above. However, having a peer group that has a strong predisposition to Sikhism allows youth to construct a safe forum where they can ask questions and support one another.

Regarding the sanctity of Gurdwaras, the turbaned Sikhs tended to be more defensive against charges of corruption. They seemed to be more willing to give religious leaders the benefit of the doubt as compared with their non-turbaned peers. Even those who did not regularly attend

the Gurdwara were quite attuned with the rumours about mismanagement and strife within leadership committees. This likely has to do with having a large Sikh community in Brampton where there is regular communication between families as well as through local community newspapers and radio programs. The youth often brought up what they knew or heard through community discussions about other religious groups and their institutions in comparison to the perceived shortcomings of their own temples. There is a yearning for a time when their parents arrived decades ago and the Sikh community was perceived as cohesive, with well-run Gurdwaras.

There are varying interpretations with respect to how young Sikhs see themselves and their religion. Some of the non-turbaned participants talked about being "moderate" in their religious practice which is reflective of an emerging definition of what it means to be Sikh. At the same time, turban-wearing participants discussed the fact that wearing the turban does not always represent religiosity amongst their peers. Ironically, they are the ones who are quite comfortable identifying themselves as "Canadian." This can be attributed to the fact that they have the religious markers of being an Amritdhari Sikh – hence people in the diverse Greater Toronto Area can already tell who they are because of the familiarity of Sikhs in local communities. Finally, the participants view the kirpan issue through an introspective lens, unsure as to whether their community's long-standing struggle for the right to wear this religious identifier will be compromised by its misuse in isolated incidents. They are acutely aware that as a religious minority, their community's reputation could be negatively affected by the misdeeds of a few.

CHAPTER 6

"INDIAN MENTALITY" IN A CANADIAN CONTEXT

Throughout the individual and group interviews, participants referred to the notion of "being Indian" as a way of thinking that informs much of their behaviours and family and community lives, as well as their outcomes. Statements from these youth appeared to indicate their struggles in reconciling "Indian" and "Punjabi" cultural expectations espoused by parents and community members in relation to perceived notions of the Sikh religion. "Indian mentality" was a term that regularly came up in the individual and group interviews. It was clear that these youth used this framework to make sense of the world around them, as they attribute much of what they see and experience living in northeast Brampton as "Indian mentality."

Looking at the construction of this term, *Indian* refers to the geographic area and borders of India, the source of migration. "Indian mentality" is tightly associated with life in the Punjab – that it is very much a reflection on how older generations were raised "back home" which still has an effect on family life here in Canada. As Dalvir stated, "I think it is just an Indian mentality that's brought over here as well…it's just instilled in people's minds and so that's brought on to their kids. It's not just Punjabis, it's the entire India that has this [Indian] mentality" (May 2011, pp. 6–7). In essence, the respondents define "Indian mentality" as being dutiful to the family, taking pride in the Sikh community, and focusing on continued social mobility.

"Indian mentality" creates an astute awareness amongst young Sikhs of their familial and community loyalties. Participants often espoused the limitations of this way of thinking, notably, gender differentiations, as much more prevalent amongst recent immigrants from Punjab; their rationale being that they have "just arrived" in Canada and have yet to be influenced by Western attitudes and values. Although "Indian mentality" may still inform their parents' cultural outlook,

these youth contend that it has been diffused because their families have lived in Canada for over 25 years. However, participant interviews also demonstrate that "Indian mentality" is renewed, maintained, and changing through the interactions of younger, Canadian-born Sikhs.

Literature on Sikhs and other South Asian groups indicates that "honour" and "shame" play a significant role in how families utilize what these participants referred to as "Indian mentality" to raise their children, as they strive to maintain norms and values according to community standards. Researchers in the United States and England have found that in Sikh families, honour is like reputation – it can be enhanced through actions deemed commendable by the community, and must be protected or regained if lost. The poor behaviour and misdeeds of children may detract from a family's honour in the eyes of the community (Gibson, 1988; Helweg, 1986). Consequently, a family's honour, termed "*izzat*" in South Asian cultures, may serve as a mechanism of social control over Sikh youth (Nayar, 2004). Through their expression of "Indian mentality," families do not want to "lose face" or experience "shame" within the community.

Based on participants' accounts, this chapter explores a number of themes that pertain to how the "Indian" way of doing things is largely framed by nationality, ethnicity, religion, and gender differences. What is termed "Indian mentality" is allegedly shaped by the patriarchal system of their parents' Indian homeland as well as the Canadian society in which they live. This chapter explores: (a) how youth express loyalty to the family through their conceptualization of marriage, through a review of how "Indian mentality" is rooted in the patriarchal nature of their homes; (b) the importance of community, in terms of how it establishes a setting that is conducive to the promotion, regulation, and reinforcement of cultural norms and values through "Indian mentality"; (c) how these "Indian" modes of thinking influence the family and community's ideation of social mobility; (d) the limits of "Indian mentality" as identified by the participants;

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and (e) issues of dissent between these Sikh youth, in relation to perceived community ideals. This chapter also identifies differences between the perspectives of turbaned and non-turbaned participants, to the extent that they exist.

6.1 Family Dynamics and Expectations

The participants revealed that a family expectation upon completing their university studies and embarking on occupational life was marriage. While emphasizing their personal freedom with respect to finding a potential spouse, youth perceive their parents as always having their best interests in mind with regard to marriage, mirroring the earlier dialogue surrounding education and career aspirations. Just as they previously indicated they had freedom of choice with education, but were generally steered towards specific degrees and programs, their freedom to choose a spouse is also limited to specific and established parameters that is informed by "Indian mentality." Basically, while many suggested that there were not "too many restrictions" and no pressure for an arranged marriage, it was clear that being compliant with family expectations meant finding a partner who shared the same ethnic and religious background. Complying to the requests of elders is considered synonymous with honouring and respecting the family.

6.1.1 Importance of Endogamous Relationships

"I think I would be better suited with someone of the same background"

Nayar (2004) suggests that having "choice" while simultaneously appeasing parents and conforming to community expectations is a new type of "semi-arranged marriage," where young Sikhs may find their own partner yet still require the approval of the family, to ensure *izzat* is preserved by having a friend or community member bring the families together (pp. 72–73). How the young males in Brampton described the marriage process aligns with Nayar's (2004) definition of a semi-arranged marriage. They have the freedom to find someone yet patriarchal influences

and *izzat*, in the form of family and community expectations, are clearly understood. For instance, it was interesting to observe in the one-on-one interviews that the participants often downplay their parents' demands in terms of what qualities a potential spouse should have, yet are acutely aware of *who* they should be marrying. Choice to them meant being able to find someone on their own, even though that person would still have to measure up to certain standards in terms of ethnic background, religion, education, and class.

Each of the seven participants revealed that it was important to find a partner that was of a similar ethno-religious background in order to "fit in with the family." Amongst the non-turbaned youth, it was often inferred that finding someone who was Sikh would just make things easier. The influence of "Indian mentality," in terms of youth wanting to appease their parents and community through endogamy, is notable. As Lucky said, "I'd marry a girl that is Sikh and Punjabi. It's both my preference and also I think it would be easier on my family by just interacting with one another, the traditions and what not. I think it would be easier in that sense" (July 2011, p. 6). Mandeep was clear that he wanted to adhere to his parents' expectations when it came to "finding a girl," especially now that he is in university and his parents have given him approval to meet somebody: "Personally, I am following my parents' traditions and all the community traditions. I will marry someone that's the same race as me, same class as me, and someone that is educated or same level as I am. I would marry someone with the same religion – that would be my parents' expectation" (May 2011, p. 6).

For the turbaned Sikhs, it was evident that finding a spouse who could blend into their specific lifestyle and communicate in Punjabi was important. According to Baljit, "I would want someone in the Sikh religion, who speaks Punjabi, so that there wouldn't be any barriers between my parents and her parents. Also, just the lifestyle that we live within our homes, for example, just

the way we live every day, and I feel that it would be similar " (May 2011, p. 9). It is obvious that Baljit's choice of the word "lifestyle" is tantamount to wanting to find a partner that his family would be pleased with. Likewise, Jinder stated, "I don't have that many criteria that a person needs to fall under. As long as she is an understanding person who is willing to stay with me and willing to accept my beliefs, that will be the most important thing. I think I would be better suited with someone who has the same background" (August 2011, p. 10). This speaks to the endearing allegiance that these Sikh youth have to their families and the desire to ensure that parents are happy. When selecting a marriage partner, it is apparent that these youth are aware of overt and subtle expectations. Just like educational and occupational pursuits, who they will marry is very much influenced by the family. Participants believe they have agency and control in selecting their partners, yet are very much approaching this process through the lens and framework established by their parents.

In addition, the endogamous process that influences selection of a marriage partner speaks to the continuity and renewal of "Indian mentality" within these Sikh families. By finding a spouse who fits the preferred profile, youth and their parents are continuing to work on a trajectory where responsibility to the collective takes precedence over the individual, even when being presented by participants as a personal freedom.

6.1.2 Father as Decision-Maker in the Sikh Family

"My father has more education than my mother so he tells us what to do"

When discussing family structures and practices, "Indian mentality" was frequently brought up in one-on-one interviews as well as in the group discussion. In this study, respondents indicated that their fathers exercised control in the household. Mandeep, whose family has been in Canada since 1983, stated, "My father has more education than my mother so he tells us what to

do" (August 2011, p. 12). His father has an engineering degree from India but works as an assembly worker in an auto-manufacturing plant in the Greater Toronto Area. Meanwhile, his mother had completed the equivalent of Grade 10 in India and is currently unemployed. According to Mandeep,

> My father tells us what to do and what we're really not to do. He knows, pretty much, a lot about the country, [more] than, probably, my mom does. So she kind of listens to him and then supports whatever he has to say to us about education and occupation and work. I think that's why he has more priority, just because he's more educated, he knows more. But when it comes to the household, they're equally the same. But it's just when it comes to life lectures and stuff, then I think my dad has more priority. (August 2011, p. 12)

Mandeep's notion of equality, specifically in relation to gender roles, leads to questions of what he means by "equally the same" since in his situation, his father is an authoritative figure while his mother's role is relegated to within the home. Despite his parents having immigrated together and in the country for the same period of time, it is likely that Mandeep attributes his father's control to educational differences between his parents.

However, as opposed to education, it can be suggested that this is more a reflection of cultural nuances or "Indian mentality," which results in his father having household influence. It seems as though Mandeep's father operates from a position that is familiar from his own experiences growing up in India. Historically, Sikh families have been considered authoritarian and patriarchal (Frost, 2010b; Ghuman, 1994; A. James, 1974: N. Singh, 1994). Fathers were seen as the breadwinners, and while women often ran the household in terms of child-rearing and day-to-day chores, the authoritarian male made major decisions. Consequently, decisions pertaining to financial matters, children's education, and social freedom, were vetted through the father.

While Baljit suggested that his parents were considered "equal" in terms of structure and discipline within the family, his account of the household suggests his father is the chief decision-maker:

Personally [in] my household, they're pretty much the same page. Like, sometimes you'll go to your dad, and be like, "I want this," and then, he'll say "no," and then you go to your mom, and…they kind of like join together, you know, in a way. Marriage obviously, they're on the same page, but in terms of life lessons, whenever they explain something, my dad has more experience, as in, he's been here longer. So he's seen more here and sometimes he'll be like, "Don't go here, don't go there," and there's a reason, and so, at that point, my mom would never interject or, like, say: "Oh, no, they should be able to go there." But, whenever they make a certain big decision they always work together. (August 2011, p. 13)

Recognizing that his mother possessed limited decision-making power in the home, Baljit also admitted to avoiding combative talks with his father, who ran what he termed a "dictatorship." Thus, while Baljit contends that his parents are equal, it is clear that his mother is delegated to a supportive role behind his father in the household. Similar to Mandeep, Baljit is attempting to justify why his father has more power in the home by referring to the fact he has been in the country for a longer period of time.

The thought process of youth such as Baljit and Mandeep is very much marked by their knowledge of the Canadian value system. Attempting to explain the concept of equality between fathers and mothers, they invoke acceptable patriarchal notions that exist in Canada, where much of the unpaid work of women is taken for granted. A recent study noted that Canadian women engage in 100 more minutes of unpaid work per day than men (Taylor, 2011). In addition, reference is made to education and longevity in the country to justify their father's dominance within the family hierarchy. In essence, this demonstrates the convergence of Indian and Canadian cultural values that are both rooted in patriarchal traditions that continue today.

It is evident that the influence of "Indian mentality" through an authoritarian, patriarchal figure is very much cultivated and normalized in Sikh families that have been well established in Canada. Participant accounts revealed that an authoritarian, patriarchal family was very much

common in their own households. This finding also challenges the perception that this type of household is common only amongst recent immigrants.

6.2 Loyalty to the Community

To gain respect and honour, it is necessary to cultivate positive relations with other members of the community. These Sikh youth are acutely aware of how their actions reflect on the family and its standing within the ethnic enclave of northeast Brampton. The way in which they approach education, peer relationships, occupational life, and even marriage partners can be heavily scrutinized by others. Participants understand that behavioural norms which reflect positively on the family are honoured, while misbehaviour and indiscretions can lead to the family being "shamed" and slighted. "Indian mentality" allows individual and collective successes to be celebrated and further encouraged in the form of "role modelling" within the tight-knit community. Persons and families that are deemed "successful" by community standards are often cited as positive examples and role models, particularly for youth.

6.2.1 Sikh Males' Connection to Local Community

"Everyone's so inviting in Brampton"

For Dalvir, Mandeep, and Sunny, living in Brampton was similar to their experience of growing up in Malton, where there is a large population of Sikhs. According to some of the respondents, many families moved from Malton to northeast Brampton so that they could remain in a Sikh enclave. For instance, Mandeep stated, "Pretty much everyone that moved from Malton came to Brampton, so I think they just wanted to be around people with the same cultures, same religion, just feel more comfortable, feel able to fit in" (May 2011, p. 15). As a result, "Indian mentality" can be reinforced and nurtured within a suburban Canadian setting that in some ways replicates life "back home."

This was noted by others such as Gagan, who grew up in Scarborough, and Baljit, who grew up in Downsview. Their new community was not as ethnically diverse as what they had been accustomed to. However, northeast Brampton was an enticing locale for their families because of the considerable Sikh population in the area. As Baljit noted,

> Downsview was a bit more diverse. There were a lot of white people, there were a lot of Chinese people, and it was diverse there. The houses, by the way, in Downsview were decently sized and weren't too big. When I moved to Brampton, we lived in a bigger house, we lived around people sharing our cultural and religious views. For example, Sikhism, the Punjabi culture, even, like Hindu culture. We saw something, more like India I guess, or, where our parents came from. (May 2011, p. 16)

A chief draw of the new neighbourhood is the capability to establish kinship relations between families of the same ethno-cultural background. This setting in Brampton is a conducive environment for family members, particularly elders, in terms of being taken care of.

For example, Lucky cited Brampton as being an area where elders felt comfortable and were provided with the opportunity to congregate in what is often considered a desolate suburban lifestyle: "I think it's best for my grandmother because she can't speak English. [But] given that most of my street is Punjabi, she has friends all over the street. They're able to converse in Punjabi, they're able to just take it easy, to crack jokes with one another, so in that sense I think it's definitely beneficial for my grandmother" (July 2011, p. 12). A participant in Frost's (2010b) study noted that in Surrey, BC, "you can go anywhere and not have to speak English" (p. 198). A similar setting appears to have been established in northeast Brampton with a considerable Punjabi-speaking Sikh population.

Youth cited community support as being a central reward for living in this area of Brampton – that people "looked out for one another" in a way that would not have occurred if they lived in a more ethnically diverse setting. According to Gagan, Brampton is a much more supportive environment than Scarborough:

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Coming to Brampton, for example, everyone eats *parathay* (Indian flatbread) for breakfast. You know, go to someone's house and you have *cha* (tea). Everyone's so inviting in Brampton. Scarborough's mostly like you stick to your own home, you go to your own home, don't go to neighbours, and don't talk to neighbours. You walk around Brampton, it's a whole community. You meet the *babba* [grandfathers] and the *babba* talk to you. Someone's hurt on the ground, someone will come and help. It's not like that in Scarborough. In Scarborough you were trying to survive for yourself....Everyone's well knit here. It's like "oh you're from that *pind* [village], this area...yes my cousin or someone's married to another person from that area." So everyone, in some way or another, is connected to each other. One thing great about our culture is how inviting we are to each other's homes. If it's 11:30 at night you're still going to call the guy in and say, "you want to have a shot or a cup of *cha*?" (August 2011, pp. 23–24).

Gagan's use of words such as *inviting* and *connected* indicate the comfort level that exists within the enclave among Sikh residents that enables people to be able to rely on each other because of their shared experiences and background. This is what also makes the area attractive to newer Sikh immigrants.

6.2.2 Sikh Males' Connection to Parents' Homeland

"Respect Punjab and what came out of Punjab...the ideal community, traditions, the values"

The ethnic enclave in which these youth live could be seen as a small-scale Punjabi village in Canada. Through the emergence of this enclave, there is an ability for the community and families living in northeast Brampton to cement and foster an imagined construct of Punjab within a Canadian context. The accounts of elders and the participants' visits to India lead to a romanticized view of Punjab amongst these youth and their families. In addition to the norms and values expressed while respondents are living in Brampton, it is through "Indian mentality" that the imagined construct of Punjab informs community pride. In essence, these youth are living a hybrid culture, informed by the realities of being Sikh, Canadian, and Punjabi.

According to Dalvir, it is important to "respect Punjab and what came out of Punjab, like the ideal community, traditions, the values which I respect to the fullest" (August 2011, p. 40). "Indian mentality" is maintained and bolstered through community interactions. Youth have a

strong cultural and religious attachment that is influenced more by their local community than visits to India. In addition to respecting the Punjab, a hallmark of the "Indian mentality" that exists in northeast Brampton is pride in community accomplishments. Whether a practising Sikh or an ascribed Sikh who is not engaged in religious practice, this pride was evident amongst all the respondents.

For example, Lucky was very pleased about the significant number of Sikhs working as Members of Parliament. Dalvir believed that the Sikh community had come a long way since when his parents first migrated to Canada: "To think about how far our community has come, to pretty much integrate themselves in society [is impressive]. Like I'm proud that our Sikh community is very progressive…like whatever we do, we do a good job" (August 2011, p. 50). Gagan also cited his parents' generation as an indication of how far the Sikh community has progressed:

> I'm quite happy with a lot of the accomplishments…especially looking back at my parents, going job to job and being called "Paki" or "you immigrants, I'm not hiring you guys." Looking at our community now, it's so much different. We are here, we are in numbers and we have an identity in Canada…and these types of things help our case. Take away the image of Air India bombing…we are a peaceful community, we are a welcoming community and these types of things help out. (August 2011, pp. 32–34)

For these youth, the elder generation endured many trials and tribulations when they first arrived to Canada. They believe that their generation has the benefit of not having to fight for many of the rights and freedoms that have since been acquired.

The concept of transnationalism applies to the seven Sikh youth in Brampton, who exist in a dynamic space. On the one hand, they have a greater appreciation and sense of being Canadian. On the other hand, their physical location and dwelling result in their active participation in a Sikh enclave where cultural norms and values are regularly practised and promoted. Part of their "Indian mentality" is pride in being able to successfully integrate into Canadian society by maintaining important elements of their Sikh identity while living as proud Canadians. They take pleasure in

recognizing the accomplishments of their peoples despite the trials and tribulations that older generations had to endure when first migrating to Canada.

6.3 Family and Community Emphasis on Social Mobility and Status

While parents have migrated to ensure better educational opportunities for children, it is also through their own work ethic that they strive for social mobility. Consequently, participants have seen their families move from humble beginnings to more opulent settings in terms of the communities and homes in which they live. This is reflective of transnational notions of "moving with purpose." Immigrant Sikh parents are very much attuned to the fact that their relative "success" in Canada is often measured by others according to the size of their homes, cars they drive, as well as the weddings they orchestrate for children.

6.3.1 Moving to a Better Community

"In Brampton, it's more middle-class income and much larger houses"

According to respondents, part of the "Indian mentality" is for parents to espouse the importance of working hard in order to be successful, where success is tied to material wealth and directly correlates to reputation and standing within the community. As Baljit stated, people in the community take note if a young person "has a successful office job as a lawyer or accountant, or if they work as a doctor or engineer. They seem to be leading a luxurious life" (May 2011, p. 10). The immigrant parents of the respondents see their family's social standing tied directly to the schooling and occupational choices of their sons. While a larger, newer home in Brampton is a signifier of success, it was important for these Sikh youth to continue moving the family on a path of upward mobility.

Dalvir's and Mandeep's families made the move northward to Brampton because of the bigger homes and middle-class lifestyle available there. Areas such as Malton, Rexdale, and

Scarborough were considered to be a stepping stone, particularly for new immigrants. Sunny's family moved from Malton to an exclusive area of estate residences in Brampton. He referred to the house in Malton as being "smaller" and referred to his parents wanting "a bigger space" (July 2011, p. 11). Talking with Sunny and others in the group interview revealed some illuminating perspectives on how wealth in Punjab is seen in comparison to wealth in Canada. Prosperity "back home" is determined by how much land a family owned, whereas in suburban Toronto, some of these youth believed that the size of one's home was an indicator of family affluence.

When evaluating the education and occupational aspirations of Sikh youth, the influence of community ethos and how wealth is perceived under the guise of "Indian mentality" must be taken into account. My respondents each demonstrated significant pride in how their families achieved social mobility in the form of living in a newer community with large homes.

6.3.2 Correlation Between Material Wealth and Community Status

"Owning a 3,000-square-foot home would be a huge thing, with a Mercedes in the driveway"

When discussing the movement of Sikhs from Malton to Brampton, there was conflict amongst the group about whether it has become a signifier of social mobility *and* an opportunity to showcase wealth through the purchase of large homes and expensive cars:

> Mandeep: With cars and houses, I don't think there is competition in our community. I think it's probably in other cultures and stuff. Like I've never heard of anyone competing for who has a better looking car. Maybe the younger generation like us, we compete, but I think our parents' generation doesn't really compete for who has a bigger house and who has more cars and etc…
>
> Lucky: I'm going to disagree because I kind of feel like a lot of our community has kind of gone from Malton to Springdale, and they are going to bigger places and it's kind of like "he bought a bigger house so we can do it too"...
>
> Mandeep: I think people moving from Malton to Brampton and to Springdale has to do more with saying, "okay, our community's moving there, we should move there too"... being together. I think that's why they're really moving. It's not because they want a bigger

house and it's not competition. I think it's just being comfortable, going where others are going.

Dalvir: I sort of disagree. I know a lot of people in our community have a lot of businesses and within those people, there's that set drive of, "this individual has this certain car, so I'm going to get this other, better car" just for the sake of getting it.

Mandeep: Yeah, I know what you mean. But I think that's more with the younger generation than I think with our parents' generation perhaps…

Dalvir: Well, I think even now compared to, 20 or 30 years ago, when our parents first arrived. I think it's become more of a materialistic drive right now, whereas before it was just coming to a different country and getting settled.

From this exchange, there is debate about whether the idea of social mobility as expressed through "Indian mentality" now results in families being fixated on showing wealth. Youth question whether materialism is now overshadowing industriousness within their community. It is clear that social mobility is not just measured by education and occupational status: a large home and luxury cars are also considered markers of success:

Baljit: I see it in our community, even our family, that it's always like we need to try and get the bigger house...but I always talk to them about it. Why do we need the bigger house? Personally, they clean for days and days and then it's like "finally, we're done." And then you have to clean again, right? Four people live in a household but they have huge houses. There's not a need, but they just want to have…

Lucky: Luxury…

Gagan: But, you know if you go down to our roots, like, our parents' roots…if the guy has money or land, it's a show of wealth. So I think they do bring some of that aspect from the old home to our country. For example, someone will say, "okay, he's got a Mercedes in the driveway" and it shows that you have wealth. They could be good with a Honda Accord or a Honda Civic, but no, get the Mercedes. Show wealth, right? Definitely there is lots of competition over lots of things. You know, we want it…we want that house, it's our goal. You come from India, and for my parents it was pretty much a hut and two families were living in it. So for them just owning a 3,000-square- foot home would be a huge thing, with a Mercedes in the driveway.

Gagan defined wealth as a key component of social mobility, which creates competition within the community as families try to outdo one another. He suggests that living in Canada, material

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possessions have replaced land as the indication of social standing. As social mobility is a key component of "Indian mentality," this is one way that the community determines whether a family has achieved success.

Assertions from the participants correspond with findings from Frost's (2010b) study of young Sikh males in Surrey, where power and prestige were equated with "monster homes." One interviewee said that "prior to the 1970s there was nobody [within the Indo-Canadian community] that had a new home. No one had a new house. It was just an older home that you could barely afford. And that was it. The people that come now, the first thing they want is a humongous house […] and that's their focus. Got to have the big house because everybody else has a big house." Meanwhile, a Sikh teacher suggests that "in Surrey and Vancouver when a lot of Indian people started moving here and getting real estate, they'd just build a bigger house than the person next door. And they drive the car. I mean they will spend all their time and money getting the car that looks better. So there is that – 'we're better than you'" (p. 203).

It is clear that the seven Brampton youth express ambivalence about the manner in which some community members value material success, particularly in terms of houses and cars. It was obvious to some of these youth that certain members in the community were becoming more "money-conscious" and "flashy" in terms of flaunting their wealth. Some questioned the emergent emphasis on materialism that is occurring in Brampton, which they did not think existed when their parents first arrived in Canada. There is a sense amongst these youth that people in their community were much more self-effacing and modest when their parents and other Sikh migrants arrived in Canada during the 1970s and 1980s.

6.3.3 Enhancing Family's Status Through Marriage

"You're 25, 30 years old, what the hell are you doing at home? Go out and find somebody"

Amongst the respondents, it was clear that a chief component of "Indian mentality" was the possibility of enhancing the family's status and achieving greater social mobility through the selection of an appropriate marriage partner. For these young Sikh males, many indicated that parents were not in favour of their sons having relationships while in high school. Dating is seen as a possible impediment to social mobility, in that it may negatively affect a young man's educational and occupational pursuits.

The participants discussed the trials and tribulations of being told not to date throughout high school, but then being advised in university that they need to "find someone" to marry. Mandeep surmised that parents were against dating in high school but okay with it in university, provided it led to marriage. In his opinion, parents advocated for finding a match in university because the other person would be educated and therefore a "good person":

> They didn't approve of it for me or my sister, or my brother….But when [me and my sister] got to university they kind of got away from the old tradition of getting arranged marriage and they are like, "since you guys are in Canada, you go to university and you might find a guy or a girl that is studying the same field like you. So they're like "this is the appropriate place to date because you guys are in university and this is how you are going to find your husband or wife because they are probably getting the same education. The girls and the guys back in high school, not all of them are good." Some of them were bad and some of them weren't, and then now when we get to university they think that everyone is good, and is good to date and they are trying to encourage us to go find someone right now at university (May 2011, p. 7).

It is clear that Mandeep's parents were essentially trying to protect him by discouraging any type of courtship prior to university. In essence, their son is seen as a valuable investment who cannot afford to be derailed by dating, particularly if it was with someone in high school that did not have the same orientation and ambition with respect to schooling. Mandeep's parents see "someone

good" as a female who has at least the same education level as their son, and can assist the family with moving on the upward path of social mobility.

This message seems to contradict earlier household discussions in high school where parents indicated that dating would distract their sons from their studies. Lucky noted that "when you're young, they don't want you to go "fool around" cause you're too young. But then you reach a certain point where they want you go out there and start dating…they're like "you know what…you're 25, 30 years old, what the hell are you doing at home? Go out and find somebody" (August 2011, p. 7). In parents' minds, to "fool around" while in high school could compromise their sons educational and occupational pursuits, which could potentially stall upward mobility for the family. At the same time, it is important for young men to start vetting potential marriage partners while in university so that parents are not burdened by an unmarried professional who fails to contribute to the family's social standing within the community.

In this study, there was little variance amongst the turbaned and non-turbaned males when it came to their parents' approach to dating. Generally, their families hoped that they could find a prospective partner soon after completing their university education. It would appear, however, there was greater chance of the non-turbaned youth dating females as they spoke more about keeping such relationships discreet. There was consensus amongst all participants that pressure to get married would mount as they finish university and start working. At the same time, the patriarchal nature of their families made it okay to "find someone" as long as their educational pursuits were well managed and the prospective partner met parents' approved criteria in terms of education and social class.

6.4 Community Norms and Expectations

In addition to recognizing that "Indian mentality" is focused on being supportive of one's family and community while continuing to improve socio-economic status, the term was also used by participants to contextualize an outdated and sometimes backwards type of thinking. They articulated specific limitations with respect to how "Indian mentality" works within their families and community. These youth attribute prescribed gender differences, secrecy around dating, and gossip as ways that established community norms and values work to constrain individual freedom through the workings of *izzat*.

6.4.1 How the Community Delineates Gender Roles

"The Indian mentality is limitations…women stay at home and they cook and clean"

It was interesting to note the "us" versus "them" tone as these Canadian-born Sikhs described how they believe certain aspects of "Indian mentality" survive in northeast Brampton because of the families of newer Sikh immigrants. For instance, when sharing his family's perspectives on raising males and females, Lucky cited his parents' background and upbringing in India as a reason why his family structure and decision-making varied from others. He believed that "other" families might be different because they lacked his parents' education and progressive background. In Lucky's opinion, the differential treatment of sons and daughters was directly related to the traditional customs of these other families, generally those from rural backgrounds in Punjab who have recently immigrated to Canada.

Gagan believes that Indian mentality was pervasive in his family, given his father's upbringing. He surmised,

> The Indian mentality is limitations. The female should always stay separate because the guys are doing their own thing...females should be separate. It's just you know…women stay at home and they cook and clean. You don't let them out of the house, because something might happen to them. If there's something wrong [people will say the] husband

has no control over the wife. It should not be that way and I guess that's what I personally see as the Indian mentality.

Detailing the restrictions his father would place on his aunt when they first came to Canada, Gagan was insistent that these same restrictions are no longer in place for his sister:

> I think things are improving because my dad's sister came here quite early in her childhood. So she was high school Grade 10 and my dad was working already. So in between his shifts, he used to go to school. He would check on her and make sure he knew who she came back home with. He wanted to know when she left the house and how she was dressed. My dad was the father figure of the family. Now with my sister, none of that happens. It's like you know what, you go to school, if you go to school. Whatever you want to wear you, you wear. So I think it is improving because I see that now the men are realizing the women can make their own decisions now and they are strong enough to take a stand. Whenever my dad's sister would say she wanted to go to a mall, my dad would decide when she would go, who she would go with…because of that mentality, that Indian mentality was still there. (August 2011, pp. 10–19)

Gagan later suggested that because his father has been in Canada for over 25 years now, Indian culture has "fused" with Canadian culture, making him less restrictive with his daughter. He added, "I think those old habits from India are kind of wearing out because they know it is not going to work here" (pp. 10–11). Here, Gagan seemed to identify "Indian mentality" as being rooted in patriarchal values from Punjab, while Canada is idealized as a country where gender differences are less pronounced. He intimates that females such as his own sister are less scrutinized because the patriarchal nature of his family has been diluted as a result of their establishment in Canada.

Gagan offered the suggestion that it was the more recent immigrants who were struggling with balancing Indian and Canadian values: "These guys that just immigrate now they have money, sold their land, nice big houses, you know…drive trucks….Their mentality stays the same….I guess when they spend about 20 years here they have to adapt to the culture" (p. 29). He contends that the continued arrival of newer Sikh migrants is working against "Canadian values" to preserve the patriarchal nature of the community. Some of the Brampton youth are insistent that fixed gender differences which limit females are due to the type of "Indian mentality" that is exercised

by new arrivals to the enclave. Meanwhile to be more established in Canada and to have integrated "Canadian values" is considered more liberal and equitable.

Mandeep implied that "Indian mentality" was common for people like his parents, who grew up in India. He also said that it was prevalent with newer immigrants, and did not really exist amongst families who had been established in Canada for a number of years: "I believe it comes down to the parents. If parents lived in Canada for quite some time, and so, they lived here for perhaps, say, 10 years and then had children, I think their expectations are more modern" (May 2011, p. 4).

Yet while his religion espouses equality of the sexes, youth such as Mandeep reveal the patriarchal nature of their households. In many of their families, there are prescribed gender roles that are reflected in social freedom and household tasks. Although there is recognition that the Sikh religion is built upon egalitarianism, Indian and Canadian cultural realities dictate that females are often treated differently from males. These contradictions were apparent during discussions with participants. While males promote their own families as being modern and Canadianized, female siblings were often subjected to double standards under the guise of "Indian mentality." Sisters are in need of "protection" as families value the "reputation" of their daughters.

It appears as though "Indian mentality" is very much renewed and fostered by established Sikh Canadian families such as Mandeep's. Mandeep indicated that his own sister is treated differently at home. While contending that newer Sikh immigrants may have more restrictions on their children, Mandeep recognized the privileges he and his brother had at home compared to his sister: "I believe [that] in my family, my brother and I get a lot more freedom. We get to go to our friends' houses and attend parties. But with my sister, my parents are a lot more strict, telling her she should stay home, focus on school, do house chores. So I think that there's a lot more freedom

for me and my brother than for my sister" (May 2011, pp. 4–5). The fact that Mandeep and his brother can go out and party is in line with the underlying principles of hegemonic and "cool" masculinities in North American society, where men are not only permitted but also encouraged to engage in certain social freedoms that many females are not. This also demonstrates the contradiction in Mandeep's perception that his family is more modern, as Indian and Canadian cultural restrictions for females are limiting his sister's autonomy. As the preceding example shows, males and females are part of a complex family and community dynamic that combines "Indian" and "Canadian" cultural contexts of patriarchy.

This is also reflected in household responsibilities that are considered the domain of females. In the group interview, Mandeep admitted that his sister has more to do around the house than her brothers, something he attributes to the cultural upbringing of his parents in India:

> I think [my parents] get those traditions from back home from India where the girls mostly do the laundry, the ironing, and the cooking and I think that it came down to Canada too. Tradition still follows here and I think that they still have those responsibilities…like I see my mom, she is always making *roti* and *sabjee*. I don't see my dad making that and then my sister is too…making roti and learning how to make [food]….I mean the girls have those chores and I think that's how it is. But when it comes to education I think it's equal. I don't think they say that "you're a girl you don't have to get an education. You're my son you can go get an education or work, it's up to you." I think that [we all] have equal opportunity to get an education and [we] are forced pretty much to get an education. Parents don't favour one or the other when it comes to education (August 2011, p. 7).

Mandeep recognizes and accepts the additional responsibilities placed on his sister as a cultural norm. He has internalized the gender differences backed by "Indian mentality" through "traditions" that work in his favour. Mandeep also omits the important detail expressed earlier in his interview that parents are okay with his older brother working without pursuing higher education, likely because he is making good money working in the manufacturing sector. In addition, when attempting to legitimize and reinforce the idea that equality exists, he points to the educational expectations for males and females, as if this is far more important than the way chores

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are divided up in the household. It is apparent that tradition and what is familiar to parents outweighs the notion that length of time in Canada will diminish this limitation of "Indian mentality."

Baljit minimized the fact that he gets more freedom than his sister. He cited educational opportunities as being equal and felt that there were similar parental expectations in place for both of them: "As far as my sister, they [parents] have similar expectations for both of us. They don't treat us any different. They feel that if one person can do it, the other person can do it. I feel, though, my sister…she doesn't get to go out as much. So, maybe her opportunities are a bit restrained there, but, other than that, everything's the same" (May 2011, pp. 11–12). Like the others, Baljit tends to play down the additional freedom that he gets to go out and socialize by reinforcing equal education opportunities. There is a clear contradiction in stating that there is no differential treatment on the one hand and then revealing that there are different standards in place. Baljit is implicitly aware that the convergence of family, community, and societal expectations works in his favour yet is eager to promote the household in an extremely positive light.

However, the contradiction is clear as youth such as Baljit recognize that his sister has more restrictions in terms of socializing and is expected to contribute more to household maintenance. As much as Baljit and the others endeavour to prove that "Indian mentality" is diminished in their own families because they have been in Canada for decades, it is clear that patriarchal norms and values of both India and Canada are still very much in play. A recent study indicates that women spend twice as much time on care of household children than men and one and a half times the amount of time on domestic work (Milan, Keown, & Urquijo, 2011, pp. 20–21). It is clear that participants fail to recognize patriarchal notions that persist in Canada, by simply attributing these gender differences to "Indian mentality."

6.4.2 Family Reputation Contingent on Actions of Daughters

"You want your daughter to have a good reputation"

These Sikh youth identify the importance of reputation and standing yet also divulge how

"Indian mentality" is used to further limit the freedom of females within a community context. For

instance, while Gagan stated that his parents treat him and his sister equally, he admitted that it is

likely he has more freedom. This is exemplified in the double standard that he recounted, which

illustrates "Indian mentality" at work:

> On my 18th birthday we had a party and obviously my dad was drunk and we are all having
> a party and what not. The first thing when my dad said when he comes to sit beside me is
> like, "Have safe sex." That's all he said to me. I'm 18. I'm like, "okay," and kind of walked
> away. And then you think about it and you know, they know what's going on….When they
> see you on the phone or the way you are behaving. They were kids too, but they did it in a
> different way, but they know right? So…it's like…you think you're hiding it from them
> but they know everything. It doesn't matter how far you are, how close you are they know.
> They are your parents. (August 2011, p. 6)

However, when it came to his sister potentially dating, Gagan said that the family would be much

more involved. As an older brother, it is also suggested that he would have a significant say in the

process:

> We are not telling her to go date and get pregnant by a guy. We want them to go meet a
> nice guy, so we know who it is, type of thing. Like if my sister wanted to go out…and
> obviously first I would say "no," then I would ask, "who is it?" Do I know him and what
> not…do a whole, you know, police background check type of thing. Then you want to say,
> "okay, this guy is good for you." Again, I'm not steering her in a negative direction but
> yeah, I want her to be safe. (August 2011, pp. 6–7)

This example demonstrates the influence of "Indian mentality" in the current context of a Sikh

family. While Gagan differentiated between himself and his sister's abilities to engage in sexual

activities, he also implies that his sister cannot make her own decisions. It is up to the family to

ensure that she is not "steered in a negative direction" and to keep her "safe." In addition, this

quote demonstrates the lack of agency and power given to Gagan's sister as she is to be protected,

to ensure a certain image within the community.

Baljit suggested that his sister is considered somewhat naïve, and that she needed to be protected from being "too trustful" of others. He felt that "that my dad would be a bit more restrained telling my sister the same thing he's told me," attributing this to the fact "there's more protection, I guess, of the females in our family" (p. 9). This last statement by Baljit demonstrates the commonly held belief in Sikh families that females are in need of protecting because they are too innocent or gullible to make sound decisions in a social environment. Furthermore, he does not question his father's reasoning; instead he readily accepts it as a reasonable cultural expectation.

Not surprisingly, Gagan was one of the most outspoken in the group interview when it came to discussions around sisters and protecting their honour as well as the family's reputation within the community. Ironically, Gagan exhibited the same aspect of "Indian mentality" that he earlier contended was diminishing in his own home. In the group interview, Gagan's reflections on female clothing validated the influence of a patriarchal household as he debated this topic with Lucky:

Gagan: [Clothing] is a huge issue.

Interviewer: In what way?

Gagan: You don't want them to dress revealingly…and go out. They are representing you and your family right? So, is this just relating to our culture….or what kind of….

Interviewer: Like within your families and amongst your peers?

Gagan: You wouldn't want your sister going out there…dressing…

Lucky: Well I think it's one of those things where at home you're like…don't wear this, don't wear that, and she goes to high school and changes clothes and she's on her way. So, I think kind of forcing something on somebody whether it's culture, religion, language, is just going to push them away. If there's open dialogue and you work through it, you kind

of have this sense of understanding. I think you are more likely to accept whatever it is they are trying to get out of it.

Gagan: I don't think push things [in terms of clothing] in a way....I think if you…

Lucky: Well if you tell them don't wear a skirt, she's going to say ok…well…

Gagan: Well yeah, don't wear a skirt and this is why we don't want you wearing a skirt…

Lucky: She's going to say "okay," come to school, and change into a skirt.

Gagan: No, but if she respects and understands her family...

It is clear from this dialogue that Gagan was quite concerned about the attire of his sister, despite previously stating that his sister could wear whatever she wanted. This gendered limitation of "Indian mentality" and subsequent influence on young males is apparent in terms of how Gagan framed his perspective. In his opinion, female peers should "respect and understand" how their family is seen within the community by doing what is expected of them, all the while accepting these standards as a cultural norm.

Mandeep believed that these cultural expectations were in place to ensure that females find an appropriate match for marriage. He makes an explicit link between the social mobility aspect of "Indian mentality" and reputation of the family in the community: "I believe that it comes from the culture because you want your daughter to have a good reputation, so you can get married to a wealthy family, perhaps an educated person (May 2011, p. 5). Based on Mandeep's suggestion, it appears as though the chances of a young female "marrying up" and the opportunity for her own family to enhance its social status can be augmented if the daughter is protected and shielded from outside influences.

Cultural norms result in a great deal of pressure amongst females who believe that they are held to an unjustifiable standard compared to their male peers. Sikh females find that these cultural expectations contradict the standards of gender equity professed by Sikhism. Arora's (in Panesar,

2009) study of Sikh women found that while they were open to certain topics because of the equality expressed by their religion, "it was felt that the social and cultural conventions followed by Sikh families make it impossible for Sikh women to enjoy equal rights and opportunities" (p. 3).

"Indian mentality" and *izzat* are very much tied together as young Sikhs learn about familial and communal responsibility. However, as indicated previously, these responsibilities and standards are more strictly enforced among women. Researchers such as Netting (2006) and Kalsi (2003) found that double standards exist in many households, where sons are accorded more freedom than daughters. They are able to date and socialize while their sisters assume chores and duties at home. Females are seen as being in need of "protection" so as to preserve a family's honour and reputation in the community. As noted by a Sikh male participant in J. Gill's (2007) study, "different stuff is expected from a son than from a daughter. People view the daughter as the pride of the family. She can't really go out late, she can't really do a lot of stuff that a guy can do. And, like, she's expected to help out at home – help around the kitchen, whereas the guy doesn't have as many responsibilities" (pp. 38–39).

6.4.3 Pervasiveness of Community Gossip

"In our community, nothing is hard to find out because everyone talks"

Another aspect of "Indian mentality" identified by the respondents is the tendency for people to, as Sunny described, "know one another's business." Rumours, gossip, and innuendo spread quickly between families, a fact which is not lost upon the youth in this study. Gagan reiterated that youth need to be careful about "messing around" because "things do get around." He spoke candidly of the drawbacks related to extensive community gossip in the enclave:

> If you do something negative within the community, everyone knows because it's so well connected that word travels fast. I think that's one of the reasons for our success and some

of the reason for the downfall of our community too....In our community, nothing is hard to find out because everyone talks, you know. Your neighbour bought a new car, pretty much the whole community will know by the third or fourth day that you bought a new car. [And] things happen between families because there's always differences. There's a domestic dispute or something occurs in your family that's not so great and it still gets around because we talk so much…so well knit….it can be the downfall…rumours get out there and people talk, things get mixed around…that's one of the downfalls. (August 2011, p. 26)

It is apparent from Gagan's account that in northeast Brampton, *izzat* shapes and informs how "Indian mentality" is maintained through family and community interactions. Adults and youth alike are aware of the community ties that lead to a tight-knit network which works to regulate social norms and behaviours. Using Gagan's example, it is obvious that while successes are shared and discussed within the community, so too are indiscretions or "bad news." Residents are conscious of "saving face" and preserving the family's honour and reputation as they do not want to be associated with negative gossip that can permeate the community.

Similarly, Nayar (2004) discusses the drawbacks of the ethnic enclave in Vancouver, specifically the "Punjabi bubble" which refers to the physical segregation of the Sikh community, divisions within the community based on geographic origin from the Punjab, and the limited interaction with other ethno-religious groups (p. 208). There are obvious cultural benefits to both elders and youth living in this type of environment; however, there are also concerns about the limited opportunities to integrate with "mainstream" society and the work of *izzat* in such a setting:

A 22-year-old Sikh man talked about life inside the bubble: "The Punjabi bubble encourages kids to be in the community. Kids like the bubble to a certain extent. It gives them a sense of community. One can with ease be friends of one's own kind. But there comes a point when they get sick of it; when they realize everyone behaves for izzat [in order to save face]. It is so strong within the bubble. Parents like the bubble because it is their community and they are not comfortable in any other than their own." (p. 209)

Frost (2010b) refers to this network as "intergenerational closure," where parents within a community tend to know one another, providing each of them "with a very useful form of social

capital – the reinforcement of norms and expectations and the effective monitoring and sanctioning of their children's behavior outside of the home" (p. 195).

Given the collectivist orientation of many Sikh families, youth are constantly reminded that their actions must reflect well on the family as they navigate the community, their schooling, and Western society. They are attuned to the fact that "gossip spreads rapidly and works as a powerful force to maintain community standards for appropriate behaviour" (Gibson & Bhachu, 1991, p. 77). It appears as though "Indian mentality" and *izzat* are intertwined as young Sikhs learn about familial and communal responsibility, with one of the dominant controlling features being community gossip.

6.4.4 Maintaining Discreet Relationships

"Who tells their parents that they are going to go date someone?"

To navigate the limitation of "Indian mentality" with respect to community gossip, it is usually beneficial to keep parents in the dark about their social lives, so as to avoid further questioning and maintain good ties. Lucky's rationale concerning disclosure of potential dating to parents is somewhat flawed. While indicating that he would not tell parents about his dating practices, it was essential to utilize this practice of deception so as to "earn trust" when he is older. Deceit was necessary for Lucky to demonstrate that he was following parental expectations but also shrewdly engaging in what would be considered normal youthful behaviour in Canada. If one was able to maintain this façade, they could "earn trust" later on by having made what would be perceived as the "right choices." Lucky stated, "I think what the parents want is just to have that trust between them and the kid, so like I was saying before, who tells their parents that they are going to go date someone, you know? I think it's kind of a timing thing too" (August 2011, p. 7). This shows how youth may approach a Western practice which is not fully accepted in their

community. Knowing that they cannot afford to allow the family to look bad, particularly when in high school, they keep their dating rituals hidden so as to circumvent the sphere of community gossip.

Literature reveals a common pattern amongst Sikh youth in terms of not fully disclosing their activities to parents. As Netting (2006) realized with her participants, "date, don't tell" was a common mantra (p. 138). In a study of Sikh youth in the Greater Toronto Area, J. Gill (2007) noted that the practice of "white lies" was persistent; however, it was females, not males, who divulged that they engaged in this routine: "When asked to discuss rebellion and defiance, many Sikh teenagers discussed "white lies" that they would use to stay behind after school, to socialize with their friends, since their parents would not approve of this" (p. 36).

However, data uncover that young Sikh males also engage in the practice of deception when it comes to choosing whether or not to disclose information to parents. As noted in Frost's (2010b) study of Punjabi Sikhs in Surrey, boys often chose not to tell their parents if they had a girlfriend or drank alcohol. It was noted that for these youth, "keeping secrets and concealing aspects of their more 'western' lives from their families is an integral strategy for maintaining good ties with their parents, giving them the impression that they are adhering to cultural norms and protecting the family's honour outside of the home" (p. 184). While family honour and reputation is considered important, deception is sometimes necessary for young males to counter "Indian mentality" and maintain a certain image within the community.

6.5 Summary

It is clear from the accounts of these Sikh youth that there are significant cultural nuances involved in being a Canadian of Indian/Punjabi background, and living in Brampton as a Sikh male. Family and community are two major institutions that work together to promote "Indian

mentality" – a set of beliefs and values that promote deference to elders, instill community pride, and encourage social mobility, yet also contradict religious norms. The participants' use of the term *Indian mentality* is their attempt to capture practices, ideas, and values of their parents and the community in which they live. They aim to please their parents knowing that if they continue to be loyal and dutiful, it will uphold the family's status and reputation in the community.

The accounts and details that they provide are very much expressed within a Canadian context. In essence, what has emerged is a clear example of a hybrid culture, where these youth navigate and live a Sikh Canadian reality. Referring to "Indian mentality" facilitates how these youth reconcile the variances between Sikh religious values and Indian/Punjabi norms and attitudes. It facilitates their understanding of why things are done or seen in a particular way within their families and tight-knit local community. One of the main benefits from living in northeast Brampton is the communal lifestyle afforded to elders, particularly grandparents who are able to interact and converse in Punjabi on a regular basis. Parents, according to the participants, also enjoy having an established social network within their neighbourhood, living amongst other Sikhs. *Izzat* and the emphasis on honour works with the prevailing "Indian mentality" to further highlight community expectations that steer the actions of group members based on a framework of established norms and customs from Punjab and India.

How social institutions such as the family and community idealize social mobility is largely influenced by these "Indian" ways of thinking. Though a family may have humble beginnings because of a variety of factors (i.e., minimal education, little money, lack of job qualifications or "Canadian experience"), a significant part of the Sikh mindset when settling in a new country is a highly-driven motivation to achieve upward mobility through hard work, determination, and education of children. Youth are seen as beacons of hope as parents encourage them to capitalize

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on educational opportunities in Canada in order to work in occupations that elevate the status of the family. It is clear that there are specific attributes, particularly socio-economic, that are important to these youth and their families as they continue to seek upward mobility in Canada. Meanwhile, the predominantly Sikh community in which they live works to regulate and reinforce the norms and values around selecting a spouse. To these youth, their eventual marriage partner will contribute to their social standing.

There are aspects of "Indian mentality" that are seen as being particularly strict and controlling of females within the community. There are pronounced gender roles in most families, though these expectations tend to be subtly exerted through the collective orientation of Sikh households, where *izzat* is often measured by the actions of youth, particularly females. As such, daughters and sisters are seen as needing to be protected, so as to preserve their honour and the family's reputation. It is commonly accepted that females have more household chores and less freedom, and that young males will find a potential marriage partner with her reputation intact.

Another perceived drawback of "Indian mentality" is the idle conversation and chatter that occurs within the Sikh enclave. For instance, these youth often discuss how people tend to know one another's "business" within their neighbourhoods. As a group, however, they are unsure as to whether this is a reflection of a tight-knit community or the result of people trying to undermine others through a competitive culture increasingly focused on materialism. Gossip is seen as a form of social control, particularly of youth who are acutely aware of how they are regularly compared with their peers by their parents.

Participants debated whether "Indian mentality" was transforming the way families view social mobility. According to some, a family's wealth or lack thereof is often measured within the community by the size of one's home and the luxury cars in the driveway. The youth expressed

concern about whether materialism is becoming more pronounced and valued in their community than the humble work ethic that often characterized Sikh Canadians in previous decades. Drawing from discussions with the participants, "Indian mentality" appears to be a rather complex notion based on being Punjabi and Sikh living in Brampton. This mindset is linked directly to family honour and reputation and building positive relationships within the community as it is crucial to support one's own family as well as the area in which they live. The essence of this way of thinking is *izzat*, as the young Sikhs from Brampton attempt to capture practices, ideas, and values of their parents and community. As a result, "Indian mentality" has as much to do with the inner workings of the family as it does with outward appearances that are projected to the rest of the community.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the challenges and contradictions experienced by second generation Sikh youth living in suburban Toronto. At the outset of this study, a number of key research questions and themes guided my inquiry into the realities facing these young men growing up in contemporary Canadian society. One of the guiding questions of this study was to ascertain how family and peer influences affect the educational and occupational pursuits of second generation Sikh males. Another question of this study was to explore the influence of community, family, peers, and social institutions on how Sikh males negotiate and construct their identities within Canadian society. The final guiding question focused on notions of masculinity that Sikh males live out in urban Canada, where the "traditional" male is often defined as one with a beard and turban who also has a greater attachment to culture, while the "modern" male is considered to be one who is clean-shaven.

What differentiates this study on young Sikhs in the diaspora is the focus on living in an ethnic enclave setting, the experience of second generation males, as well as examining the varied experiences of turbaned and non-turbaned youth. Through the utilization of a qualitative research methodology, I sought to give voice to a demographic that has been relatively absent from research. In order to unearth the complexity of participants' lived experiences within the context of examining their northeast Brampton setting, the study employed three theoretical constructs – transnationalism, hybrid identities, and masculinity. This theoretical framework provided the basis to examine the realities of second generation males living within an area that is predominantly Sikh. At the same time, it is important to consider how these theoretical constructs intersect with notions of race, ethnicity, religion, class, and gender within an emerging, dynamic geographic space that is part of Canada's largest metropolitan area.

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Notions of transnationalism are abound when exploring the realities of young Sikhs in suburban areas such as Brampton. The events of 1984 and the community's resiliency to push the margins of multiculturalism through the right to wear turbans in the RCMP and wear the kirpan have further defined the Sikh experience in Canada. Given the emerging population dynamics of the Greater Toronto Area, it is clear that there are communities where the Sikh population is well established, whether recent immigrants or those who have been in Canada since the 1970s. In addition, Vertovec's (2009) overlapping "clusters", notably the reconstruction of place or locality, is particularly relevant when examining Sikh experiences in the newer subdivisions of northeast Brampton. In essence, a transnational space has been created with a structure to support the familial and communal values of Sikh Canadians.

To determine how participants construct their identity through interactions within a community where familial, economic, social, religious, and political relations transcend national borders, it was appropriate to consider the effect of transnationalism. It was also important to consider generational differences with respect to Castles and Miller's (in Atari, 2013) claim of how immigrants' transnational identities are influenced by the host country. In light of the establishment of Canadian multiculturalism since 1971, it is worth noting if many children of immigrants endure less overt racism and discrimination than their parents, particularly as urban areas continue to become much more diverse. This was a key point in studying how second generation Sikh youth viewed their educational and occupational prospects inside and outside of their local community.

In terms of a negotiated or hybrid identity, discussions with the participants revealed experiences that were consistent with established literature, and there were others that are particularly distinctive to their realities living in northeast Brampton. For instance, researchers

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(Nodwell, 1993) have referred to "situational ethnicity" as being common amongst second generation South Asians, in that their outward behaviour may change based on different situations. Additionally, J. Gill's (2007) study found that second generation Sikhs living in Toronto sometimes have difficulty locating "space" as they negotiate competing expectations of their family, friends, and broader society while simultaneously navigating their own culture, religion, and community influences. Much of the existing research focuses on second generation South Asian and Sikh youth. They indicate that the youth are "conflicted" between Eastern and Western values – in essence, they are "caught between cultures" (Ghuman, 1994, 1999; N. Singh, 1994). In addition, existing findings also suggest that generational conflict is common as young Sikhs have difficulty reconciling parental and peer expectations (Nayar & Sandhu, 2006). These recurring themes have been commonly expressed in research that takes place in Great Britain, the United States, and Canada.

The young Sikhs who participated in this study challenge these perceptions with the manner in which they engaged their hybrid identity. They appeared to benefit from residing in a Sikh enclave while living in a Canadian society that promotes multiculturalism. The geographic and cultural nature of their local community bridges the gap between "two worlds" and "two cultures" that many other immigrant families have to negotiate. For instance, based on participant accounts, it appears as though the community, parents, and peers are assuming what some may consider the responsibilities of schools, in terms of educating youth about their heritage, identity, and religion. These youth indicated that the additive multicultural approach still seems to be pervasive in schools as they discuss events such as multicultural and Vaisakhi shows. Despite this, it is clear that they are very secure in their hybrid Sikh Canadian identity because it is reinforced at home, in the community, and by their peer group. Participants clearly articulated that they see

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themselves as being both Sikh and Canadian, which is facilitated by their employment of "Indian mentality" within the geographic and cultural setting of the ethnic enclave.

How masculinity is played out within this locale is of key significance, particularly when reviewing gender roles within participants' families. In addition, it is important to compare the experiences of turbaned and non-turbaned youth. Factors such as race, class, ethnicity, and geographic location must be considered when examining the experiences of Sikh males who are generally considered to be visible minorities in broader Canadian society. There are varying perceptions of Sikhs males in Canada, from being considered a "model minority" to engaging in criminal gang activity (Basran & Bolaria, 2003; N. Singh, 1999; Sandhu and Nayar, 2008). Therefore a critical element of the study was to determine the relevance and applicability of protest, cool, and hegemonic masculinities to the participant group.

The influence of "Indian mentality" on gender relations within Sikh families living in the ethnic enclave is another consideration. This is reflected in the social freedoms accorded to sons in comparison to their female siblings. As noted by H. Gill (2012), how young Sikh males internalize transnational notions of social mobility as well as loyalty to their families are central to any discussion of masculinity. In addition, how masculinity is expressed through physical markers such as the turban or engagement with the Punjabi language and religious practice demonstrates the complexity of Sikh male experiences.

The key themes of this study are centred on the work of "Indian mentality" within the secure, protective boundaries of the ethnic enclave, the complexity of Sikh masculinities, as well as some of the divergent experiences of turbaned and non-turbaned youth. Participant accounts revealed challenges and contradictions living a hybrid identity as Sikh Canadians in an ethnic enclave, resulting in three significant findings. First of all, living in the diaspora, these youth

negotiate a hybridity that is unique to the geographic setting in which they find themselves, where transnational links to their parents' homeland are very apparent and promoted through "Indian mentality". Whereas other second generation immigrants may experience more overt tensions and struggles reconciling Canadian values with those of their parents' homeland, the young men from northeast Brampton tend to be sheltered from racism and discrimination as they were immersed within a community that is overwhelmingly Sikh. Secondly, how these youth negotiated masculinity demonstrates the complex nature of what it means to be a Sikh male, which is influenced by a number of factors, notably the practice of "Indian mentality" and an emphasis on social mobility and loyalty to the family. This is evident in how participants navigate and rationalize educational opportunities as well as how they foresaw their lives once settled in a career. Finally, there are obvious similarities and differences when examining the experiences of both turbaned and non-turbaned Sikh youth. These can be seen in how they optimistically view their aspirations as well as through religiosity and their engagement with the Punjabi language. Given the underlying research questions and theoretical framework, this final chapter reviews the main findings from the study, provides direction for future research, and concludes with summative remarks.

The majority of the participants were born and initially grew up in areas that were more diverse than the northeast Brampton community where they now resided. In addition, all but two participants had attended high schools with a large proportion of Sikh students. As a result, it is clear that many of these youth were able to reflect upon the specific realities and dynamics of living in this relatively new, emerging community. Although their day-to-day interactions with family, community, peers, and social institutions are influenced by their immigrant parents' experiences, it is necessary to consider the location of this distinctive setting in terms of time and

space. While recognizing the shifting demographics of the Greater Toronto Area and Brampton in particular, it is important to note the changing political and economic landscape of Canada since the participants' families immigrated here.

7.1 Construction of Experience in the Ethnic Enclave

When revisiting Vertovec's (2009) concept of transnationalism, it is clear that type of consciousness, site of political engagement, and reconstruction of place are very applicable to the Sikh participants living in northeast Brampton. This transnational identity, while clearly influenced by their parents' own attachment to Punjab, is very much rooted in the socio-political context of living in a Canadian community that is very much Sikh. Brampton is unquestionably their "home away from home" when considering how the city continues to attract Sikhs from other areas of Toronto and abroad. In addition, most of these youth have some tangible connection with Punjab based on occasional travel to India. This is where they were able to conceptualize the origin of the cultural nuances that exist in their Canadian community. How participants construct their parents' homeland influences the way they see "Indian mentality" at work in northeast Brampton.

Youth and their families were well acquainted with current political events in Punjab and how those issues are contested in the Greater Toronto Area. It was through local ethnic media, television programming, and interactions at the Gurdwara that they were able to maintain connections to what was happening abroad. The politics of India and Punjab carried over to the diaspora, particularly in areas such as Brampton where there is a significant South Asian and Sikh population. International politics sometimes fuse with local politics which can lead to significant discussions and debates amongst community members.

The emergence of northeast Brampton as a geographic site where "Indian mentality" has grown and thrived is analogous to established areas of other metropolitan North American cities

that are home to ethnic minorities. This ethnic enclave is similar to the Mexican *barrios* and Jewish *shtetls*, which Singer (2008) describes as having positive and negative connotations. However, unlike some of these areas which are considered isolated with low-quality housing or having transformed already existing neighbourhoods, northeast Brampton is a relatively new site of emerging subdivisions that offer plenty of support and familiarity to Sikhs who move into the community.

"Indian mentality" operates in the community through the expression of norms which are reinforced by the family to ensure that youth "fall in line" by respecting authority figures and doing what is expected of them. If they were unable to do this, participants were aware of how easily gossip and innuendo can spread within the community to negatively impact their family's reputation. These youth were mindful of such standards as they navigated life as Sikh Canadians, where "Indian mentality" is rooted in the cultural nuances of Punjab but also reinforced and practised here in Brampton. As such, this aspect of hybrid culture informs the community's orientation towards family honour, household structure, gender roles, and social mobility.

The underlying power dynamics between dominant and minority cultures is concealed within northeast Brampton given the high number of Sikh residents. The participants' hybrid identity does not appear to "shift" or have to be "negotiated" as much as other minority youth who may live in a different type of setting. This again is likely due to the security of the enclave where they have seen their own parents attain social mobility and they continue to internalize messages about Canada being a merit-based society.

In the setting of northeast Brampton, these Sikh youth were shielded from contemporary racism although they were aware of the hardships endured by parents. Their families' settlement in the ethnic enclave provides additional physical, social, and emotional security for these youth.

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Racism is seen as being "personal" and "individual" as opposed to systemic or structural. Parents have influenced these youth to readily accept the discourse that Canada is a meritocracy. Racism and discrimination is seen as being more of an issue amongst their parents' generation. Living in an ethnic enclave and now attending school outside of the local community, the participants in this study were able to live as both "Sikh" and "Canadian." Given the significant number of Sikhs and extensive use of Punjabi in their community, these youth are very comfortable expressing their family's cultural background and proud of their heritage, regardless of where they are physically situated. They are comfortable going to school outside the local community knowing that for the time being they will continue to come home to the cultural comfort of the enclave. The local Brampton community has become a site where "place" has been reconstructed as new practices and meanings emerge. As indicated by participants, "Indian mentality" flourishes within a geographic space where community members see themselves reflected in local social, commercial, and religious institutions. Though their discussion about school curriculum indicates that they are not always exposed to their own cultural and religious identities, this is compensated by the setting in which they live.

The role of the Gurdwara appears to be somewhat diminished for a number of the participants and their families. It was clear from all youth that there are concerns about the role of their local Gurdwaras in terms of supporting a cohesive Sikh community. They had varying perceptions about corruption at local Gurdwaras, also noting that there seem to be many new temples opening and following a "business" model. In addition, youth were concerned about the recent spate of violence that had also been occurring at local Brampton temples. They worried about the perceptions mainstream Canadian society held of the Sikh community. Some of this disillusionment with Gurdwaras originated within their own families. Several participants

disclosed that prayers generally take place at home because family elders would rather not attend the Gurdwara. It is therefore interesting to note the movement of religious practice from the Gurdwara to the household setting for some of these families in northeast Brampton.

It can be concluded that within the site of the ethnic enclave, community, family, and the peer group are able to reinforce the Sikh aspect of the participants' identities. At the same time, "Indian mentality" works to maintain the status quo within the enclave setting as these Sikh Canadian youth attempt to justify varying norms within the household, local area, and broader society. Meanwhile, it should be noted that youth in this study often employed the term *us* when discussing community issues, signifying a positive orientation to their residential area. Participants generally indicated that dealing with Gurdwara politics and community gossip are mere annoyances that are far outweighed by the benefits of support and cultural familiarity from living in northeast Brampton.

7.2 Expressions of Masculinity in Northeast Brampton

It is clear that the setting of northeast Brampton cultivates a form of hegemonic masculinity, where young Sikh men reap what Connell (1995) terms the "patriarchal dividend", without necessarily exercising the hypermasculinity typified by overt, aggressive, dominating behaviour. Rather, masculinity amongst the Sikh participants is shaped by patriarchal structures in the household and community. As males, they have certain liberties and freedoms that are not afforded to their female siblings. It was clear that hegemonic masculinity within the enclave was still evident, as these youth benefited greatly from cultural and gendered expectations promoted by their families and community through "Indian mentality". In addition, their outlook of a meritocratic society, influenced largely by their parents' orientation to schooling and occupational

success, led them to believe that they are on equal footing with other males, notwithstanding their Sikh heritage and minority status in Canada.

The Sikh youth from Brampton did not identify inter-generational tension and family conflict as a major topic. Participants in this study use the term "Indian mentality" to reconcile the divergent values that are expressed within their families and local community as they see themselves as established Canadians. The ethnic enclave is a site where patriarchy, endogamy, defined gender roles, and differentiated expectations for sons and daughters are rationalized by "Indian mentality". The pervasiveness of this thinking, which youth attributed to elders but also engaged with themselves, essentializes the status quo and works to silence debate and conjecture. As young men who are not only loyal to their families but also benefit from the "patriarchal dividend", they accept the community ethos that is regularly played out within their household settings.

The masculinity expressed is in line with what H. Gill (2012) discerned from a study of males in Punjab, where transnational notions of success are a reflection of being a "successful man." These youth buy into the social mobility model advocated by their parents and community as evidenced by their educational goals and occupational aspirations. For these respondents, to "make it" as a Sikh male in Canada means to continue on an upwardly mobile trajectory that brings further honour to the household unit and enhances the collective reputation of the family in the community. Consequently, loyalty to family is a significant component of the masculinity expressed by the participants.

The young Sikh men from Brampton readily accepted the caveats set forth by their parents, whether they have to do with education, occupation, or selecting a marriage partner who meets family expectations. Generational conflict does not appear to be as pronounced amongst these

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participants, though it was clear that certain topics such as dating and sex are taboo discussion points at home. Family expectations are prioritized over the expectations of their peers as the Brampton youth are committed to the parameters set by *izzat* to guide their social interactions.

Based on the experiences of these participants, it is clear that there are a number of factors that influenced their aspirations as they prepare for occupational life as young men. The study reveals that family has a significant influence on participants' educational and occupational aspirations. Youth in this study indicated that children's educational prospects were a chief pull factor for their parents as they migrated to Canada. While many of their parents were not formally educated, they saw Canada as a land of opportunity where children would be afforded unparalleled educational opportunities. Sikh youth indicated that their families wanted them to pursue pragmatic university degrees that would lead to a sound occupation.

At the same time, however, they disclosed that certain degrees and professions were seen as more prestigious within the community, enhancing the family's reputation. Respondents learn from parents that Canada is considered a meritocracy where hard work and commitment to schooling will be rewarded with occupational as well as financial success. While the young men were insistent that they were pursuing academic interests of their own volition, it was evident that they worked hard to please their parents and meet family expectations. Being dutiful to the family is a key component of Sikh maleness in northeast Brampton amongst these youth.

These young men grew up and went to school with many peers of the same background. As such, they were often surrounded by friends who had similar experiences and expectations at home. The participants indicated that although some had friends who were not as academically inclined as they were, there was minimal difficulty managing peer relationships and still being able to "fit in" as teenagers. Even if their friends were more focused on socializing or working

rather than school, these youth were very much attuned to their parents' expectations, which were prioritized over peer expectations.

As participants reflected upon life after school and hoped to soon establish themselves in a profession, they recognized that marriage is the next expectation to be fulfilled as dutiful young men. Now that they are in university, it is acceptable to date as long as it leads to finding a marital partner with a similar level of education. In keeping with transnational notions of becoming successful men, the participants were aware of the importance of marrying someone who will augment the family's social status within the community. In addition, they consented to the implicit demands of their parents to marry someone of the same ethno-religious background despite some of the participants' declaration that they could marry whomever they wanted.

Frost's (2010b) study reveals that the perception of young Sikhs in Surrey is that they lack motivation, are "lazy," and do not have the will to succeed academically (pp. 225–226). The young participants in this British Columbia study tended to have similar familial backgrounds to the youth in Brampton, and likewise lived in an ethnic enclave. As a result, it is interesting to note that apart from one participant, all the other youth from Brampton appeared to be quite motivated in terms of education and pursuing occupational goals. This motivation was further evident in the fact that six of the seven participants were also attending university and studying in programs leading to occupational pathways that are held in high esteem within Sikh communities.

Unlike their counterparts in Surrey, the Brampton youth appear to fit into the "model minority" stereotype of immigrant Asian men focused on achieving social mobility. This is likely due to their ability to prioritize family and community expectations over negative peer influences. The seven youth in this study did not demonstrate many characteristics of the "cool" masculinities as described by researchers (Epstein, 2001; Haywood & Ghaill, 2001; C. Jackson & Dempster,

2009). This may have to do with the fact that they did not discuss in detail activities such as dating and drinking alcohol. Nor was there any evidence that they engaged in any type of criminal activity such as had been described by other researchers of young Sikh males (Frost, 2010b; Sandhu & Nayar, 2008; Sidhu, 2012).

Contradictions that are apparent tend to be masked in the setting of the enclave, where the Sikh population is quite pronounced and "Indian mentality" is pervasive. While participants talked about their perceptions of equality between men and women as well as the freedom they had to choose their own partners, the dichotomy was apparent in their lived experiences and how they engaged in hypothetical reasoning. If the participants were living in an area other than the enclave setting of northeast Brampton, it would likely be much more challenging for them to simply excuse divergent family and community values as "old school" ways of thinking among their parents or grandparents. Due to their geographic setting and placement in a detached suburban space, the participants present a somewhat reticent hybrid identity due to the workings of "Indian mentality" within their families and the local community.

7.3 Turbaned and Non-Turbaned Perspectives in Suburban Toronto

The construct of a "Sikh male" in Canadian society varies according to the construct within the community. Outside the community, a Sikh male is generally seen as wearing a turban and having a beard, while inside the community the clean-shaven, non-turbaned male is quite prevalent but also seen as "being Sikh." This study explored notions of masculinity that Sikh males live out in urban Canada, where the traditional male construct is often defined as one with a beard and turban who also has a greater attachment to culture. None of the participants expressed a belief that one had to wear a turban in order to be considered Sikh. Non-turbaned youth were more likely to label turbaned Sikhs as "hardcore", "religious," and "traditional." Despite this, some of the

turbaned youth believed that they should be seen as "modern" as they saw their faith as being an indication of their own open-mindedness. To one participant in particular, being modern equated to being a progressive Canadian. However, there was consensus amongst participants that society in general is more likely to abruptly label males with turbans as being more "fundamentalist." This is in part due to recent incidents of Gurdwara violence that have occurred in Toronto-area temples. Turbaned participants considered subsequent media portrayals to be shallow and unjust representations of their faith.

How participants identified themselves was becoming more salient as they attended post-secondary institutions. Having spent their formative adolescent years living in northeast Brampton, with the majority of them at high schools with a large Sikh population, they were now in settings that were more multicultural in nature. Ironically, the turbaned Sikhs all identified themselves primarily as "Canadian," noting that their religious symbols denoted their faith to others. To them, being Sikh was a way of life, but they were very proud to call themselves Canadian. While these youth identified Punjab and India as an important place in terms of their parents' homeland and birthplace of their religion, Canada was seen as *their* home. Conversely, the non-turbaned participants tended to identify as Sikhs, given their lack of visible markings that would differentiate them from others of South Asian background. This is a particularly notable finding in that assumptions are often made about the significant attachment that turbaned Sikhs may have to their religion and culture, with the inference being that their attachment to Canadian nationality is negligible. Discussions with the turbaned participants consistently demonstrated a strong connection and appreciation of Canada.

It was noteworthy to observe the relationship between maintenance of the Punjabi language and religious practice. The non-turbaned participants were more apt to speak English or a blend of

English/Punjabi at home compared to the turbaned participants. This was also influenced by the presence of grandparents in the family home. For youth who had access to a grandparent, there was a greater likelihood of speaking Punjabi with the family, which also inspired religious practice. All participants were focused on a future spouse being able to blend into the family, which is assumed to be an individual who is of Sikh background. However, additional requirements for the turbaned Sikh respondents include a potential marriage partner being well versed in the Punjabi language and committed to religious practice.

Some of the non-turbaned respondents were disengaged from religious institutions such as the Gurdwara because they were not as familiar with the Punjabi language when compared to their turbaned peers. It was evident that turbaned youth tend to be more engaged with religious practice and therefore more likely to be involved with the Gurdwara. In addition, the peer group can also be influential in terms of religiosity, which was noted by the turbaned participants. Some of the non-turbaned youth criticized the temple for not doing enough community outreach with younger Sikhs yet considered themselves "not very religious" or non-attendees, except for major functions. All the youth agreed that there can be more efforts made by Gurdwaras to engage their demographic in a more positive way. These assertions corroborate previous research which outlines frustration and disenchantment with Gurdwaras that may not communicate Sikh scriptures in a recognizable form to youth (J. Gill, 2007; Jakobsh, 2006; Nayar, 2004).

Youth did not talk at great length about the role of the school in terms of influencing their identities. However, when reflecting upon their education prior to university, it was interesting to note some of the variations in how these youth saw the school curriculum. One point they all agreed on was that there was minimal representation of Sikh experiences beyond what many would term the 3 F's of multiculturalism – food, festivals, and famous men, an offset of the U.K.

experience which Houlton (in Selby, 1993) refers to as the "3-S syndrome – sarees, samosas, and steel bands" (p. 66). Turbaned Sikhs expressed frustration that schools did not do enough to present their religion in day-to-day instruction with one specifically stating that he was disappointed that some of the Sikh Canadian history he learned in university was not part of the Grade 10 history course he took in high school. Similarly, another turbaned participant articulated that apart from learning about Sikhism for a week and a half as part of a Grade 11 World Religions course, there was very limited exposure to the religion, something he deemed inequitable given the makeup of the local community.

Non-turbaned participants did not value representation of the Sikh experience in the same manner. One believed that the curriculum was "neutral" and "fair" in its current format and there was no real need to have Sikhism more integrated within the school program. Others non-turbaned Sikhs were quite pleased that schools had Vaisakhi shows and cultural events that were commemorated as part of commemorative events such as Asian Heritage Month. Unlike their turbaned peers, they did not seem to feel that anything was "missing" in terms of the school curriculum.

Participants' accounts revealed varied constructs of what it means to be Sikh. When defining Sikhism, the turbaned Sikhs provided specific principles associated with the religion, while non-turbaned Sikhs chose to define the religion by what they were not permitted to do, such as drinking alcohol and eating meat. Based on this study, it was clear that the visible, turbaned Sikh were much more attached to Sikh culture, and were well versed in the religion, Punjabi language, as well as related political events. Turbaned and non-turbaned respondents agreed that "being Sikh" was not dependent on having specific visible markers associated with Sikhism; nor was it contingent on specific expectations regarding a daily regimen or regular attendance at the

Gurdwara. There was a common understanding of the different levels of spirituality and religiosity within their community. In essence, these youth accepted varying forms of Sikhism, which is akin to reconstructionist notions of religious expression.

7.4 Future Research

Centred on the revelations of these participants, there are a number of topics that would provide a strong foundation for future research. For instance, how would the experiences of young Sikhs growing up in today's society outside of the enclave compare with those of the seven participants in northeast Brampton? Are such youth able to maintain the religious and cultural values of Sikhism and being Punjabi? Are they able to develop a strong hybrid Sikh Canadian identity in the same way? Is there less communal pressure in terms of the "Indian mentality" that may be expressed? Also, how would the experiences of these Sikh youth in Toronto and its suburbs compare to other metropolitan areas in Canada? Given the relative emergence of the Sikh populace in the Greater Toronto Area since the 1970s, how are their experiences similar or different from the Vancouver community, where Sikhs have been established for over a century?

Next, it would be revealing to ascertain how Sikh parents idealize the future for their sons and daughters in contemporary Canadian society. Specifically, in an emerging 21st-century economy where the occupational realities are dynamic, can success be achieved by following non-traditional job pathways? What is the decision-making process of parents who choose to live in the Sikh enclave as compared with those who do not?

In addition, it would be worthy to explore how the experiences vary for young Sikhs who are pursuing a college or workplace pathway as opposed to a university one. Is there a relationship between those who do not pursue a university education and potential deviancy in the form of drug and alcohol abuse as well as criminal activity? While there has been some research into criminal

activity amongst second and third generation Sikh males, it would be fascinating to explore the lives of these youth in more detail, particularly when considering the family and community expectations that are in place.

Finally, further research on the experience and aspirations of Sikh females would be particularly insightful, especially comparing the realities of those who live in urban and suburban areas of major cities such as Toronto and Vancouver to those who live in more rural or small town settings. Such studies would provide a valuable comparative perspective in relation to the findings asserted in this study.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

This research is significant for a number of practical reasons. First, this study examines how youth navigate intra-group tensions, as well as intergenerational and gender issues that continue to permeate Sikh communities across Canada. Given the continued establishment and growth of the Sikh population in Canadian society, this work promotes further understanding and appreciation of the complexities within and amongst this ethno-cultural group. Secondly, given the changing population dynamics of metropolitan areas in Canada, it is necessary to explore the realities facing the children of immigrants with due consideration to the environment in which they live and interact. Consequently, this research has the potential to be valuable to other ethnic communities who are facing similar issues in urban centres across the Western world. Thirdly, this study can be of significance to those who work with Sikh families and youth in particular, such as educators, counsellors, youth and social workers, health professionals, and policymakers working at various levels of government. By promoting continuous dialogue and communication amongst stakeholders, this work can support youth who may have emotional, social, and/or educational needs otherwise not addressed by social institutions. Finally, investigating the experiences of

young Sikhs in urban areas such as Toronto and its suburbs can build on existing research around South Asians in Canada's multicultural communities.

However, based on the selected criteria of participants in this study, there was uniformity with respect to some of the findings. While controlling for a number of variables, the selection of only participants who were on a university pathway in addition to coming from a working middle-class family that had been well established in Canada resulted in many common, shared experiences. Consequently, youth selected for this study were more likely to respect and conform to family as well as community expectations based on their educational and occupational aspirations. The respondents, for the most part, were not likely to challenge the system or cultural ethos established within the social institutions with which they engage. This could vary from the approach taken by at-risk or disadvantaged youth from a similar ethno-religious background who might contest a similar set of circumstances or issues very differently from the participants.

This dissertation has provided a new insight into the realities of young Sikhs living in suburban Canada. It has been found that second generation Sikh males growing up in northeast Brampton face a variety of challenges and reveal many contradictions in the way in which they formulate their aspirations. However, the seven respondents demonstrated an ability to live proudly as both Sikh and Canadian by living in an ethnic enclave where their identities are positively reinforced by the family and community.

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List of Interview Questions

1. Demographics
a) Name of individual participating in interview (include spelling)
b) Names and ages of each resident in home
c) Current address and phone #
d) Generational birthplaces – participant, siblings, parents – when and where?
e) Year of parents' marriage.
f) Year of arrival in Canada – who from the family migrated?
g) Places of residence since arriving in Canada?
h) Education and occupation of parents?

2. Family Relations
a) Do you have any siblings? Brothers? Sisters?
b) Have other family members ever lived with you? If so, whom and when?
c) What language(s) is/are spoken at home?
d) How would you compare some of your experiences growing up in Canada to those of your parents, who came here as adults? Consider educational, schooling, peer, and work experiences.
e) Describe the education and occupational opportunities that you have compared with those that your parents had growing up.
f) How does your family consider notions of class in Canada compared with India?
g) What aspects of the Sikh religion has your family actively practised?
h) How much emphasis does your family put on maintaining a distinctive Sikh identity (i.e. religion, culture, language)?
i) In terms of your own family or extended family, do you notice differences in the way sons and daughters/brothers and sisters are treated?
j) Do you notice any differences between how sons/daughters are treated amongst your peers?
k) Why might there be similar or different treatment of males and females? Has this changed over time?
l) How have you negotiated peer expectations which may sometimes conflict with those of your family?
m) Do you or your family want an arranged marriage? Who would you marry? How does this differ from females of a similar age in your family or extended family?

3. Schooling and Education
a) As you were growing up, how did your family see the role of the school?
b) How does your family see the role of education in achieving future success?
c) How does your family define success in terms of education and occupation?
d) What expectations does your family have of you as a student? Are these expectations similar for your siblings?
e) Considering family and peers, are educational and schooling expectations similar for Sikh males and females? Why/why not?
f) What expectations do you have of yourself as a student? Has this changed over time (i.e. middle school, high school)?

g) How much say have you had in your educational pursuits (i.e. choice of college/university, choice of program)? Is this the same for your siblings?
h) Considering family and peers, how much say do Sikh females have in their educational pursuits?
i) Compare your educational progress to other males and females in your family and peer group.
j) How would you describe your peer group as you went through school (i.e. ethnicity, religion, class, interests)?
k) Did you ever see yourself as being different from your classmates? How were you different? When did you notice this?
l) How much pressure did you feel at school to fit in with peers?
m) How has your peer group influenced your approach to education and your occupational aspirations?
n) Do you feel that the school curriculum was reflective of your experiences as a Sikh male?

4. Community and Social Network
a) Where have you lived previously? How does it differ from where you live now?
b) How would you describe your community (i.e. how does it look, who lives here)?
c) Why did your family choose to live here?
d) Do you feel at home in your community? Why/why not?
e) Are you able to demonstrate both Canadian and Sikh aspects of your identity in your community? How does this occur?
f) Does your family interact with a lot of extended family and friends in the community in which you live?
g) Does your family talk about Sikh politics in India? What impact has this had on you?
h) Do you talk about Sikh politics with family and/or peers? Which peers? What kind of topics do you discuss?
i) How would you define the expectations of males compared to females in the broader Sikh community? Consider both younger and elder generations.
j) What is your perspective on some of the recent events in Canada (i.e. parade in Surrey, threats against "moderate" Sikh Canadian politicians, Gurdwara violence)?
k) Would you consider the Sikh community in Canada to be cohesive? Why/why not?

5. Identity and Cultural Maintenance
a) Does your family routinely attend the Gurdwara? Do you routinely attend? Why/why not?
b) Are you a practising Sikh?
c) What would you consider to be core Sikh principles and values?
d) Do you want to maintain or move away from the Sikh culture?
e) How did you define yourself in terms of ethnicity/nationality/culture growing up in Canada?
f) As a visible/non-visible Sikh, how do you think others see you in terms of your identity, religiosity, and cultural practices?
g) Has your identity as a Sikh student impacted your schooling experiences – your perceptions?
h) What role has the peer group played in developing your sense of identity?
i) Is it possible for Sikh youth to maintain a distinct and proud identity while feeling a sense of belonging to Canadian society?

APPENDIX B

<u>Description of Second Generation Sikh Youth</u>

Participant	Birthplace	Language at Home	Parents' Education & Occupation	Family Structure	Schooling & Career Aspirations
Lucky, 22 (non-turbaned)	Etobicoke, ON	English/Punjabi	Father (BA – businessman) Mother (BSc – homemaker)	Parents, 2 sisters, and grandmother	1st year law school overseas & lawyer
Jinder, 20 (turbaned)	Rexdale, ON	Punjabi (English w/siblings)	Father (BA – labourer) Mother (BA – labourer)	Parents, brother, 2 uncles/aunts, 4 cousins, and paternal grandparents	3rd year BBA in GTA & accountant
Baljit, 18 (turbaned)	Downsview, ON	Punjabi (English w/sibling)	Father (Gr 9 equiv – construction) Mother (BSc – labourer)	Parents and sister	1st year engineering & engineer
Dalvir, 21 (turbaned)	Etobicoke, ON	English/Punjabi	Father (high school – retired) Mother (high school – labourer)	Parents, sister, and brother	2nd year law school overseas & lawyer
Gagan, 19 (non-turbaned)	Scarborough, ON	Punjabi (English w/sibling)	Father (Grade 6 equiv – self-employed) Mother (high school – self-employed)	Parents and sister	Entering 1st year political science in Ontario & to be determined
Mandeep, 19 (non-turbaned)	Malton, ON	English/Punjabi	Father (BSc – assembly worker) Mother (Gr 10 equiv – homemaker)	Parents, sister, and brother	2nd year business in GTA & business-related field
Sunny, 20 (non-turbaned)	Malton, ON	English	Father (high school – self-employed) Mother (high school – self-employed)	Parents and 3 sisters (all live out of the house)	3rd year actuarial science in GTA & business-related field

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant:

I am a Vice Principal with the Peel District School Board. In my work at school, I interact with many students of Sikh heritage.

I am currently enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy program at York University as a graduate student. The contact address is York University, Faculty of Education, Winters College, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, M3J 1P3. One of the requirements of this degree is to complete a dissertation on a particular area of interest. My focus of study is the present realities and experiences of second generation Sikh youths in the Greater Toronto Area.

Youth face a number of challenges and pressures growing up in today's society. Minority youth in particular face an exceptional set of conditions. They often have to deal with conflicting expectations amongst peers, parents, and teachers. Growing up as a Sikh Canadian I have personally experienced some of these problems and continue to meet many young people who face these challenges on a daily basis. From my own experiences as a student, teacher, and administrator, I have developed a keen interest in studying the experiences of second generation Sikh youth and would like to promote a better understanding of the realties faced by these students. My hope is to foster an awareness of these experiences and present them to the community, parents, as well as teachers and other educators.

I anticipate that we will need a two hour one-on-one session and then one, possibly two, one hour focused group sessions, to hear your experiences in detail. The tone of the individual session will be conversational and open-ended. The second and third sessions will focus mostly on follow-ups on the issues related to the previous sessions. As a result, the interview protocol for these focus group sessions will explore the significant themes that are discussed in the individual interviews.

You were chosen for this project on the basis that you are a second generation Sikh male growing up in the Greater Toronto Area and are able to participate in a one-on-one and focused group discussions.

It is my intention that in the first session, participants will discuss and share their experiences in a one-on-one interview session. The discussion will be in the form of a conversation based on a general set of informal questions. In the second and third session (if needed), the participants will be asked some follow up questions. They will be asked to clarify certain ideas if possible. I will audio tape and transcribe these sessions in order to look for recurring themes from the discussions. I will possess these audio tapes and no one else will be able to listen to them. The audio tapes will be destroyed after the study is complete. Your participation will remain anonymous and the information you provide will remain confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to replace names of people and places to ensure this confidentiality. The report will be shared with you on an individual basis before making it public or submitting it to the university and you will be invited to contribute your ideas. You will receive your own personal copy to comment on. The research will then be presented and reported in the final dissertation.

As a participant, you will be asked to discuss your personal stories, such as problems or issues with your parents, in a small group with people other than the investigator. This is the only possible risk that you are taking by participating in this study. As mentioned above, your information will remain confidential. However, as this is a group discussion, all of the participants need to respect the confidentiality of the other participants. It is imperative that the participants not talk about the issues brought up in the discussion group after the discussion group is over with anyone.

Please understand that your participation is voluntary and that you may discontinue your participation at any time during the whole process for any reason. You do not have to explain the reasons for discontinuing your participation. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with York University, either now, or in the future. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. You may choose not to respond to some questions that are brought up in the discussion. When sharing your experiences in a group setting, you may wish not to contribute to the discussion if you are uncomfortable. You may also contact the Graduate Program in Education office for answers to questions about the fieldwork. This office can be contacted by phone at 416-736-5002 or by emailing gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca.

The research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-council Research Ethics Guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University (telephone: 416-736-5914 or email: acollins@yorku.ca).

Please read and sign below.

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks that may be incurred. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

I hereby agree to participate in this project.
I agree to the confidentiality of other participants in the group.

Sincerely,

Ravinder S. Johal

_____   _____
Researcher's Signature   Participant's Signature

Date_____   Date_____