TENSE MISALIGNMENTS: RE-IMAGINING COLONIAL BINARIES IN UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEEN SIKHI AND ALCOHOL

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship that second-generation Sikh-Canadians have with alcohol. Predominant understandings of alcohol in the community argue that Panjabi culture promotes the consumption of alcohol while Sikhi prohibits it yet culture and religion cannot easily be separated or understood in such monolithic ways. Problems with alcohol are often relegated to a Panjabi issue stemming from a hypermasculine culture that emphasizes overconsumption. Simply blaming "the culture" misses the heterogeneity of the community and the impacts of intergenerational trauma and contemporary formations of masculinity, culture, and religion that are rooted in colonialism. Furthermore, stating that Sikhi is vehemently anti-alcohol fails to engage with the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the lived reality. The central thesis of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, *IkOankar* (1-Ness), advocates against binaries, moving away from normative and simplistic understandings of good and bad or prohibited and accepted. This is not to argue that Sikhi promotes alcohol consumption rather, depicting alcohol consumption in reductive and binary terms is against the *IkOankar* paradigm and fails to engage lived Sikhi. Although in mainstream understandings of Sikhi, alcohol is prohibited, this is not always what is practiced. Moving beyond simple prohibition or acceptance, alcohol consumption can be understood through the dynamic ways in which Sikh-Canadians engage with the substance.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"Let us decide not to imitate Europe and let us tense our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us endeavour to invent a man in full, something which Europe has been incapable of achieving." Franz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth[1]

My research uses interviews to investigate problems with alcohol in contemporary Sikh-Canadian communities. In its attempt to understand problems with drinking within the Sikh-Canadian community, my research rests at the intersection of perceptions of alcohol, hypermasculinity, colonialism, and the historical imprint of the Partition of India, as well as the 1984 Sikh genocide. My work aims to move beyond analyses of religious texts in order to place primacy on the lived realities of under-studied communities in Canada. My work contributes to a limited but growing field that explores alcohol consumption in the Sikh community.

Alcohol consumption in Sikh communities is particularly noteworthy given that in Britain, home to the largest Sikh population outside of India, alcohol consumption among Sikhs is higher than any other South Asian group and tends to manifest along intergenerational vectors.[2] In a study conducted by psychologists Asesha Morjaria-Keval and Harshad Keval, with the exception of Sikh men—who had the second highest levels of heavy drinking—abstention from alcohol is generally reported among younger Asian respondents,[3] revealing the intergenerational persistence of problem drinking in the Sikh community. A Canadian study carried out among Panjabi-Canadians as a whole—a group often conflated with Sikhs— revealed that 70% of the community believed that problems

[1] Fanon, Frantz. *Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1961.
[2] Morjaria-Keval, A. and Keval, H. (2015), "Reconstructing sikh spirituality in recovery from alcohol addiction", Religions, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 122-38.
[3] Ibid Keval

with alcohol were widespread in their community.[4] My work aims to explore the particular role culture and religion plays in this phenomenon.

The primary questions underpinning my research include: How does the second-generation of Sikh-Canadians perceive alcohol consumption in their community? What role does Sikhi, Panjabi cultural identity, and Canadian identity play in perceptions of alcohol use in the community? Arguing against the normative understanding that Panjabi "culture" is to blame for problems with drinking and that Sikh doctrine is stringently anti-alcohol, my work reveals how religion and culture are actually in conversation with one another.

While second-generation Sikhs in Canada have become a point of analysis through identity formation theory,[5] researchers have yet to consider the cultural mores surrounding alcohol in the Sikh community, largely due to the scholarly privileging of religious text over social realities. As such, the current definition of "Sikhism"—understood as the normative Khalsa identity—fails to sufficiently capture the various ethnic, cultural, and religious practices that are witnessed in Sikh communities, communities that are understudied yet growing rapidly in Canada. These practices are informed by both historical and contemporary phenomena.

Chapter One details the background information relevant to this work. The purpose of this chapter is to give detail on the historical, political, and social locations of Sikhs in Canada, and to outline why problems with alcohol exist among second-

[4] Kunz, Jean L., & Norman Giesbrecht. "Gender, perceptions of harm, and other social predictors of alcohol use in a Punjabi community in the Toronto area." *Substance Use and Misuse, 34* (3):403–419, 1999.
[5] Nayar, K.E. 2004. The Sikh diaspora in Vancouver: Three generations amid tradition, modernity, and multiculturalism. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

generation Sikh-Canadians. In doing so, this chapter will detail Sikh understandings of alcohol consumption and explore the roles caste, gender, and intergenerational trauma play in the consumption of alcohol in the community. These themes will engage with Sikhi's central thesis of *IkOankar* (1-Ness) as the guiding principle for Sikhs. The religious, cultural, and contemporary contexts in which Sikh-Canadians locate themselves will provide a nuanced understanding of the historical and socio-political contexts from which this problem stems.

In the second chapter, I will directly engage with the text, lived Sikhi, and the constructs of religion and culture. This chapter will illuminate popular understandings of alcohol in the community, focusing on how alcohol is understood through Sikhi and in Panjabi culture. Through an analysis of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Divine Sikh anthology and living Guru, I will unpack what is written in the text about the consumption of alcohol and the lived reality. Furthermore, through an analysis of the terms "religion" and "culture," I will argue against the normative and simplistic understanding that Panjabi culture is to blame for problems with alcohol and that Sikhi is its antithesis. Instead, I will show how culture is in dialogue with religion through an analysis of the homogenization of the terms religion and culture. Religion and culture are not monolithic terms. Although at times they may appear to be used as such both by myself and my interviewees, this usage speaks to how the categories are defined and negotiated continuously by each individual who uses the terms. In my own writing I use them as heuristic terms for language purposes but I am not taking them as given. For some interviewees they are a given part of their everyday vernacular. Lastly, this chapter will illuminate how former colonies reproduce these monolithic understandings and how

these colonial constructs are passed on generationally, resulting in the contemporary persistence of problems with alcohol in the Sikh-Canadian community.

My final chapter will support my argument in chapter two with interviews that reveal the complex lived realities of Sikh-Canadians. By putting the contextual framework into conversation with the ethnographic themes, I will connect theory to lived experience. My interviewees reside all over Canada, belong to the second-generation, and self-identify as Sikh. Level of religiosity was not an influencer in who was eligible to participate; interviewees simply had to self-identify as Sikh. Questions revolved around the influences of drinking in the home, culture and religion, and how patterns of drinking have manifested intergenerationally in the diaspora. I conducted sixteen interviews with second-generation Panjabi Sikhs residing in Canada. The diversity of understanding, lived experience, and social location of my interviewees gives insight into the complexities of the community.

Understanding the past that shapes us helps us to better understand the present we occupy and the future we will pave. Particular to the history of many minority communities is the shared violence of colonialism. As Franz Fanon depicts in his book *Wretched of the Earth*, through the perverted logic of colonial rulers, one can understand the goal to distort, disfigure, and destroy the past of colonized people. As the colonized attempts to crawl out of this displacement, Fanon depicts the phases of development in the works of colonized writers. The first stage is full assimilation, "the colonized intellectual proves he has assimilated the colonizer's culture. His work corresponds point by point with those of his metropolitan counterparts."[6] In the second stage, the colonized writer has his convictions shaken and he attempts to immerse himself in native writing

[6] Fanon, p. 158.

but "since the colonized writer is not integrated with his people, since he maintains an outsider's relationship to them…old childhood memories will surface, old legends be reinterpreted on the basis of a borrowed aesthetic, and a concept of the world discovered under other skies."[7] Finally, in the third stage, a combat stage, the colonized writer "after having tried to lose himself among the people, with the people, will rouse the people…he turns into a galvanizer of the people. Combat literature, revolutionary literature, national literature emerges."[8]

I place my own writing somewhere between the second and third stage. As someone who grew up in predominantly white spaces, away from the Panjabi-Sikh community, this work served to bring me back to a group I never fully felt I belonged within. Through this research I was able to better understand not only my community but also myself. As Mandeep Mucina writes, "I have come to this research and writing from a personal place that has been made political through my navigation in the world."[9] As someone who exists within the community, who has witnessed and experienced problems with drinking, these experiences inform how I approach this research. This work was not a privilege although I frequently painted it as such. Delving deep into the heart of my communities past, reading and listening stories that I could only understand as those of my kin, their trauma imbued into my psyche forever, this decolonial intervention was difficult but for it I have much gratitude.

Although I am approaching this work as a community insider, I do not use personalized language such as 'us,' 'we,' and 'our.' Rather I allow interviewees to reveal

[7] Ibid., p. 159
[8] Ibid.
[9] Mucina, Mandeep. *Transgressing boundaries of izzat: Voices of Punjabi women surviving and transgressing "honour" related violence in Canada* (unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Toronto, Toronto, 2015.

and shape "religion" and "culture" as their emic categories. Allowing interviewees to shape the categories does not negate my relationship to the community and the insider position I occupy. A complete removal from the work is not possible. In attempting to avoid making assumptions about my own community, I went into this work ready to have all of my preconceived notions challenged and nullified. As many individuals within the community reminded me, this work does not aim to paint the community as a group of problem drinkers. Rather, I hope this work illuminates the particular ways in which problems with alcohol manifest in the community. Problems with alcohol are not particular to any one community but contextualizing the problems allows for a non-essentialist understanding.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my positionality as a researcher and the inherent power imbalance that is created between interviewer and interviewee. I would like to acknowledge my class and caste privilege. My family is from the *Jat*-Sikh caste, historically landowners and farmers who hold a great deal of power in Panjab as well as influence over defining what is considered Panjabi "culture" and defining Sikhi. As a member of the diaspora, it is important for me to acknowledge the class and economic privilege over those "back home," recognizing the means my family has had to migrate. The realities of the homeland are not analogous or transferable to the diaspora. This thesis is a small contribution to a continuing and growing conversation around problems with alcohol in the community, and I hope this work propels further study and critique.

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

According to followers of Sikhi[10] it is widely understood that alcohol consumption is prohibited. Followers are to move away from the path of the *Manmukh*, the ego-oriented person who inhabits the existential nature of human suffering, and towards the path of the *Gurmukh*, the Guru[11]-oriented person. Although alcohol consumption is strongly discouraged in Sikh texts, this does not always translate into practice. Alcohol plays a significant role both in the homeland of the Sikhs, the Indian province of Panjab[12] and in the diaspora, primarily the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Outlining rules and prohibitions is not the goal of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Divine Sikh anthology and living Guru. Rather it works as a guide that may be interpreted in myriad ways by followers to aid them on their journeys towards the path of the *Gurmukh*. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is perfect wisdom, a mentor that Sikhs revere. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is not a book of rules, or laws. Nowhere in the text are Sikhs told "what to do." The Sikh paradigm consists of the path of the *Manmukh* and the path of the *Gurmukh*. The former focuses on the exterior and is dominated by the ego and its impulsive desire for pleasure. The latter focuses on the interior and is a path "of personal

[10] I choose to use the term Sikhi as opposed to the more commonly used term Sikhism as the latter is the name given to the tradition by colonial bodies and the former is what the community refers to themselves as. Furthermore, referring to the tradition as Sikhi is an attempt to illuminate the ways in which it does not fall into Judeo-Christian understandings of religion, a concept elaborated on in Chapter Two.

[11] Guru generally refers to a teacher or guide. Here, it is referring to the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Divine Sikh anthology and living Guru. To be Guru-oriented means to orient yourself towards oneness through the guidance of the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

[12] Although it is important and necessary to keep the role of Panjab in mind when speaking of Sikh history, it is also vital to remember that Panjab's history is not Sikh history and Sikh history is not Panjab's history as the two are often conflated. This conflation is particularly pertinent in the diaspora where the two terms are essentially used interchangeably with many individuals not understanding that one can be Panjabi and Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Jain, or Buddhist.

integration followed by the Sikh who devotes [their] life to the Guru's *Shabad*, the hymns contained in the *Guru Granth Sahib*…according to the Sikh worldview, the *Shabad* is believed to resonate with the primordial essence manifest in all existence, and is referred to as *IkOankar* [1-Ness[13]]. For the *Gurmukh*, unity with *IkOankar* is the ultimate goal, and the *Shabad* is the means to achieving this goal."[14] *IkOankar* (1-Ness) is the central thesis of the Sikh faith. 1-Ness means there is no "Other," therefore any attempt to construct One is an inherent fallacy. To put it simply, the Divine in Sikhi is formless, infinite, and beyond total comprehension, while still present in each of us, therefore we can only describe IkOankar by showcasing a wide range of experiences with the 1-Ness of Creation and Creator.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline why problems with alcohol exist among second-generation Sikh-Canadians. In doing so, this chapter will outline Sikh understandings of alcohol consumption and explore the roles caste, gender, and intergenerational trauma play in the consumption of alcohol in the community.

I use the term Panjabi-Sikh to refer to those who self-identify as Sikh and understand Panjab to be the cultural and spiritual homeland of Sikhi. This does not imply a birth-origin correlation. Often Panjabi-Sikhs are raised to identify with their Panjabi culture and view it as part of their Sikh religious heritage.[15] Although the roots of Sikhi are in Panjab, the origins of many Sikhs are vast, including Afghanistan and those with

[13] 1-Ness is a better literal transcreation because IkOankar, as written in Gurmukhi, builds off of the digit 1. According to the Sikh Research Institute, "a fundamental difference between these two terms is that "oneness" is an attribute, or a quality, whereas 1-Ness is a state of reality, based on a tangible structure, that of the "1." This "1" is what we invoke when we speak of the Guru, the Divine, the Creator, and so on. Usually, when the word "oneness" is used, we are instructed to find this common attribute between all of us. A soft quality that we all share in one degree or another. We must recognize the oneness in each other, humanity, etc."

[14] Sandhu, J. S. A Sikh perspective on alcohol and drugs: implications for the treatment of Punjabi-Sikh patients. *Sikh Formations*, 5 (2), 23-37, 2009.

[15] Ibid., p. 34.

Sindhi, an ethno-linguistic group who are native to the Sindh province of Pakistan, ancestry. Panjab refers to geography and Panjabi characterizes the people and the language. Panjabi is often understood as the language of the Sikhs, the "language was uprooted from the ground-level and tied to religion rather than to the varied people who spoke it, or the tract where it was spoken,"[16] contributing to the conflation of the two.

I have chosen the terms "problems with alcohol" or "problem drinking" in order to distinguish using alcohol in a way that can negatively impact your health and your life but does not necessarily include physical dependenc,e as is the case with alcoholism. Lastly, hypermasculinity in this context is understood as the exaggeration of stereotypically masculine characteristics such as violence and regarding any display of emotion as feminine, opting instead for stoicism or emotional silence.[17]

Before outlining Sikh understandings around alcohol consumption, this chapter will provide a brief historical overview of the use of alcohol in India, Panjab, and the Panjabi diaspora.

1.1 Historical Overview of Alcohol Use in India, Panjab, and the Diaspora

In "A History of Alcohol and Drugs in Modern South Asia," Tschureney argues, "contrary to popular perceptions, alcohol consumption is (and has been for centuries) a regular if problematic feature of the country's social life."[18] Efforts have been made by India's governing bodies to make India appear to be a country of teetotalers; "the positive

[16] Gandhi, Rajmohan. *Punjab: A History From Aurangzeb to Mountbatten*. Punjab (India): Aleph Book Company, 2013.
[17] Scheff, Thomas. "Hypermasculinity and Violence as a Social System." Toronto, 2006.
[18] Fischer-Tine, Haraold, and Jana Tschurenev, *A History of Alcohol and Drugs in Modern South Asia*. New York: Routeledge ,2014

antithesis of a debauched western civilization."[19] Tschureney argues that drinking and problems associated with it have been understood in reductionist terms: as problems due to western influence. By drawing on "religious rhetoric to argue that alcohol consumption in general and excessive drinking in particular was a part of the "shallow materialism" that allegedly prevailed in the rapidly modernizing and secularizing countries of the west and had no moorings in "spiritual" India,"[20] the image of India as an "abstinent culture allowed for the nationalist elite's assertion of moral superiority against the intemperate colonizers,"[21] imposing upper caste norms.

In some texts, intoxicating drink is presented negatively and in others it is praised. Brahamanical texts and Islamic law prohibits the consumption of alcohol while epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata indicate that drinking was common in Kshatriya milieus. The Vedas, the earliest surviving textual sources for South Asia, reference "what is evidently a fermented and intoxicating drinking called *sura.*"[22]

In the fourteenth century there was a system of regulating the production and sale of alcohol.[23] Wine drinking was common in Mughals courts and social drinking was (and still is) an essential part of rural life.[24] The most popular of rural drinks was country liquor and toddy, which "was used to aid digestion and a substitute for both food and water in times of economic hardship."[25]

[19] Ibid., p. 1.
[20] Ibid., p. 2.
[21] Ibid., p. 5.
[22] McHugh, James, "Alcohol in pre-modern South Asia." New York: Routeledge, 2014.
[23] Fischer-Tine and Tschurenev, *A History of Alcohol and Drugs in Modern South Asia*, p. 4.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Fischer-Tine and Tschurenev, *A History of Alcohol and Drugs in Modern South Asia*, p. 5.

Alcohol was a major source of revenue for the colonial government,[26] which promoted its purchase and consumption. Under colonial rule, the consumption of alcohol increased with the first commercial distillery established in India in 1805. The name "Indian Pale Ale" came to be the special brew that dominated beer drinking in India. Alcohol drinking by Indian soldiers in the two World Wars also played a large role in the increased consumption of the substance because subsidized alcohol was available in armed forces' canteens. Here, alcohol again played a dual role: as a status symbol for the upper class and as a way to self-medicate for the working class.

In the nineteenth century as the movement for independence from colonial rule grew stronger, "there were increasing demands from political activists to boycott British-made goods as part of the mounting campaign against the colonial government's policies of repression and taxation…Increasingly, use of commercially distributed alcohol was viewed as an unpopular imposition of English rule" and drinking was seen as an English vice. As calls against increased alcohol consumption continued, the British established an Excise Committee (1905) to control alcohol consumption through taxation where manufacturing of alcoholic beverages was restricted to licensed government distilleries. This "led to some replacement of traditional low-alcohol content beverages by mass-produced, factory-made products, with greater alcohol content."[27]

The perceived link between alcohol consumption and "white violence" was also regarded as one of the main reasons for the colonial government to regulate the alcohol

[26] Bhattacharyal, Nandini. "The Problem of Alcohol in Colonial India." Studies in History , vol 33 , no. 2 , pp. 187-212, 2017.
[27] Sharma H.K., B.M. Tripathi, and Pertti J. Pelto, "The Evolution of Alcohol use in India." *Aids and Behaviour* 14 Suppl 1 (Augusts): S8-17, 2010.

consumption of certain segments of the European population in British India.[28] The drinking habits of "low-Europeans" could debunk the myth of British moral superiority. In particular, "efficacy of the armed forces was perceived as vital for the survival of the Indian dominion. Since alcoholism was undeniably a serious problem in the 'white' detachments, the colonial state felt a pressure to control and curtail the soldiers' access to alcoholic beverages in order to safeguard the most fundamental imperial interests…the containment of alcohol abuse by Europeans in general was regarded as central to the maintenance of power in Britain's most important colony."[29]

Prohibition and liquor boycotts became a part of the nationalist movement with a statement in favour of prohibition (Article 47 of the Directive Principle) eventually being incorporated into the constitution after India attained independence in 1947. However, another part of the Constitution included that the liquor industry and all aspects related to it were to be governed by individual states. Few states have been successful in implementing prohibition. However, due to economic factors and the manufacturing of illicit and home-brewed liquor, most states have been forced to remove their prohibition laws.

In contemporary Panjab, opium, alcohol, and cannabis are particularly popular. The "soft border" that exists between the Middle East and Panjab acts as a space for easy transportation and access to such substances. As Panjab is an agricultural province, there is an increase in use of opium during harvesting months as it is thought that it allows for more productive work. In regards to alcohol, landowners "display their prosperity by

[28] Fischer-Tine and Tschurenev, *A History of Alcohol and Drugs in Modern South Asia*, p. 16.
[29] Fischer-Tine, Harald. "Liquid boundaries: Race, class, and alcohol in Colonial India." The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 40:3, 383-408, 2012.

entertaining guests with alcohol."[30] Liquor functions as a status symbol for the upper class and as a way to self-medicate the pain from agricultural work for the working class. "Homemade alcohol has remained and the increased availability of commercially produced alcohol has been grafted onto it."[31] It has been estimated that over 40% of total alcohol consumption in India is produced and distributed in the informal or unorganized sector, a sector "consisting of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale or production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers."[32]

The ambivalent and various ways in which different facets of Indian society engage with alcohol consumption points to "why concepts of moderate social drinking have found very little place in Indian drinking patterns. Instead, that minority of Indians (mostly males) who use alcohol have relatively high frequencies of excessive, hazardous drinking."[33] It is evident that rural and urban individuals in India have been using distilled alcoholic drinks (particularly arrack) for a very long time. The use of strong, distilled alcoholic beverages is deeply embedded in the cultural patterns among tribal and non-tribal rural people in practically all regions of India. The overall preference for strong (high alcohol content) drinks is partly due to the complex history of governmental programs and alcohol manufacturing policies during the colonial and post-colonial periods.

The anti-alcohol sentiments in some sectors of the population (especially among women) are offset by strong motivations of state governments to increase tax revenues

[30] Sandhu, A Sikh perspective on alcohol and drugs: implications for the treatment of Punjabi-Sikh patients, p. 25.
[31] Sharma H.K., B.M. Tripathi, and Pertti J. Pelto, "The Evolution of Alcohol use in India," p. 13
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., p. 15.

through expanded alcohol sales, as well as through the licensing of increased numbers of wine shops and sales outlets along national highways, places of tourism, and other commercial locations. Thus in many parts of the country the increases in alcohol consumption are driven not only by the spread of "modern lifestyles," but also through the revenue needs of individual state governments. The available statistics all show a steady increase in alcohol production, supply, availability and consumption from 1990 onwards.

In Panjab, a primarily agricultural and rural province, consumption of *desi daru* (previously referred to as arrack or country liquor) occurs. *Desi daru* is liquor that is made in the countryside and is the primary and most popular alcoholic beverage in India's villages as it is cheap. *Desi daru* includes both legally and illegally made local alcohol, sometimes categorized as moonshine alcohol. It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of the alcohol consumed in India is *desi daru. Desi daru* can also be more hazardous than other kinds of alcohol as it does not undergo a multiple distillation process, leaving harmful impurities. As it is considered a "bootleg alcohol," it is poorly regulated. Although alcohol consumption is generally accepted in Panjabi culture, this acceptance is in direct conflation with the strong discouragement against alcohol in Sikhi, the majority religion of the Panjab province.

1.2 Sikh Understanding of Alcohol

Alcohol prohibition is only detailed in non-canonical texts for *amritdhari* (baptized) Sikhs. The *Guru Granth Sahib*, the sacred scriptural text of the Sikhs, also referred to as

Gurbani or Bani, does not function as a rulebook and therefore is not in the business of providing prohibitions. Engaging with *Bani* as a rulebook is heavily influenced by western conceptions of definitions of religion, an idea that I will elaborate on in chapter two. Through analysis of *rahitnamas* (ethical codes), hymns from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and an interrogation of contemporary understandings of religion, this section will illuminate diverse attitudes towards alcohol in the Sikh tradition.

The *Janamsakhis* and *Rahitnamas* are important non-canonical texts in Sikhi. They do not hold the same status as the *Guru Granth Sahib* as an infallible text but are important in the historical shaping of contemporary Sikh identity and practice. The *Janamsakhis* contain the life story of Guru Nanak, the founder and first Guru of Sikhi, and the *Rahitnamas* outlines the code of conduct for the Khalsa way of life as said to be practiced by the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. The authorship of these texts is not attributed to any of the ten Gurus. The *Rahitnamas* also form the historical basis for the Sikh *Rahit Maryada* (code of discipline) that is currently in use. They include various codes of discipline including the *Chaupa Singh Rahitnama* that prohibits the consumption of intoxicants. Some scholars have argued that the Sikh *Rahit Maryada* "were merely a political maneuver used by the Sikhs to construct, and assert, a distinct religious identity during the tumultuous colonial period"[34] while others have argued that because the earlier, pre-colonial ethical codes also prohibit intoxicants, this nullifies the aforementioned argument.[35]

[34] Oberoi, H.S. The construction of religious boundaries: Culture, identity, and diversity in the Sikh tradition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994; McLeod, H.W. Sikhs of the Khalsa: A history of the Rahit Maryada. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[35] Sandhu, A Sikh perspective on alcohol and drugs: implications for the treatment of Punjabi-Sikh patients, p. 28.

There is no direct reference to the prohibition of alcohol in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Individuals on either side of this debate derive arguments from *Gurbani* but as the interpretations are quite ambiguous and diverse, no clear decision can be made. There are many metaphorical references to alcohol in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. For example, "Do not drink the false alcohol at all, as far as it lies in your power" and "One person brings a full bottle, and another fills his cup. Drinking which, his intelligence departs, and madness enters his mind; he cannot distinguish between his own and others, and he is pushed away by his Lord and Master."[36] Of course while these hymns can be interpreted as advocating against the consumption of alcohol, they are not strict prohibitions.

Moving beyond the ideas of actions as strictly permitted or prohibited, the Sikh paradigm of *IkOankar* (1Ness) invites followers to engage with *Gurbani* as a guide as opposed to a stringent rulebook, engaging with the myriad and diverse journeys followers are on, illuminating and tending to all paths. Understanding religious texts as rulebooks a product of contemporary understandings and definitions of religion that have influenced the ways in which individuals engage with Sikhi.

1.3 The Politics of Religion Making and Translation

Articulated best by Sikh scholar Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh in "Translating Sikh Scripture," translations of the *Guru Granth Sahib* "impose dualisms and divisions, and reduce and distort the original as though it were in an entirely alien tongue."[37] Of note is the particularly detrimental use of the terms God, Lord, and Soul. These terms are

[36] Ibid.

[37] Singh, Nikky Guninder Kaur. "Translating Sikh Scripture." *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* 3 (1): 33-49, 2007.

inappropriate for the Sikh context as they are laden with Jewish-Christian connotations.[38] Similarly, in Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair's *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translations*, he unweaves normative definitions of religion to argue that Sikhi does not fit into Christian-centric understandings of religion. He critiques "the idea that religion is something that exists in all cultures and the idea that it does so because religion as a concept is generally translatable. There is, in others words, an indissociable link between religion and translatability."[39] Here it appears that Mandair is borrowing from Talal Asad's "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category," which argues that normative definitions of religion are removed from power and that there can be no universal definition of religion, "not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes."[40] The endeavor of defining religion has itself been constructed through a particular history of knowledge and power through which the modern world has been constructed. Asad focuses on how power creates truth or what we believe to be true. He argues, "it was not the mind that moved spontaneously to religious truth, but power that created the conditions for experiencing that truth."[41] Asad is attempting to shift our attention away from universal definitions. He is not arguing that the "other" is irrationally different but that it is important to acknowledge differences, as they have tangible and real-life consequences. Placing all traditions into universal categories

[38] Ibi.
[39] Mandair, Arvind. *Religion and the specter of the West: Sikhism, India, postcoloniality, and the politics of translation.* New York : Columbia University Press, 2009.
[40] Asad, Talal. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
[41] Ibid., 119.

obscures attempts to understand other ideologies of engaging with the world, serving as a form of violence against those who do not subscribe to normative, western understandings of how the world operates.

In Asad's "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology," he discusses the inequality of languages. Good translations seek to reproduce the structure of an alien language within the translator's own language. Translation requires harmonization, not mechanical reproduction. Because the languages of third world societies are seen as weaker in relation to western languages (especially to English), they are more likely to submit to forcible transformation in the translation process. This transformation happens because of the unequal political-economic relationships and because western languages produce and deploy desired knowledge more readily. This hierarchy reminds us that industrial capitalism transforms not only modes of production but also kinds of knowledge and styles of life in the third world and with them, forms of language.

Asad then goes on to discuss the tendency to read the implicit in alien cultures. To translate culture the anthropologist must first read and then re-inscribe the implicit meanings that lie beneath/within/beyond situated speech. But no one member of the society is necessarily aware of the whole pattern, any more than speakers are able to be explicit about the linguistic patterns they employ. If the anthropological translator has final authority in determining the subject's meaning, it is then the translator who becomes *the real author* of the subject. In this view, cultural translation is a matter of determining implicit meaning, not the meanings the native speaker actually acknowledges in his speech. The subject comes to resemble the author, giving the author the power to create

meanings for a subject through the notion of the implicit or of the unconscious. In modern and modernizing societies, inscribed records have a greater power to shape and reform selves and institutions than folk memories do and can become the social authority. In summary, Asad is saying that the process of cultural translation is inevitably enmeshed in conditions of power and among these conditions, the ethnographer should (a) present the coherence of culturally distinctive discourses as the integration of self-contained social systems and (b) uncover the implicit meanings of subordinated cultural discourses.

Religion as a distinct, conceptual category emerged during the nineteenth century in European thought and prior to encounters with European thought, no exact equivalent for the term religion existed.[42] After European thought became hegemonic and internalized by British colonies, the term religion took on a character "as if it had been part and parcel of their traditions of *longue durée*, it has become a matter of historical fact that "Indian religions" have [always] existed."[43] Therefore what we contemporarily understand as Sikhi has been heavily influenced by European understandings of religion. This is most evident in the commissioning of an official translation of the *Guru Granth Sahib* by the colonial administration of Panjab by German Indologist, Ernest Trumpp in 1877. An overt disdain towards the Sikh faith and its practitioners is present throughout this translation. In Trumpp's interpretation and commentary understandings of key terms are distorted. These terms were forever changed, which is why learning about these influences and shifts is of utmost important in the project of unlearning western systems that were not created by individuals from within the traditions and therefore do not include or benefit anyone outside of the west. By creating an "official translation," what

[42] Mandair, p. 8.
[43] Ibid.

is regarded as true and real shifted. Mandair argues that "by relocating our investigation to the intersections between Indology and the political history of European ideas it is possible to provide a more realistic explanation of how terms such as "Sikh theology" have come to be regarded as native categories when neither Sikh experience nor the broader Indic culture from which it is derived can claim to possess a word for religion as signifying either a mystical or theological core or a unified faith community."[44]

Mandair also invokes the works of later native elite reformist scholars such as Bhāī Vīr Singh and Dr. Bhāī Jodh Singh who adopt rhetoric similar to colonial translators, using these devices to "demonstrate that their work "naturally" conformed to the larger master narrative of colonialism, and at the same time represented the continuity of indigenous tradition."[45] Such inheritance illuminates the intergenerational perpetuation and dissemination of colonial narratives.

Understanding contemporary Sikh identity also requires an understanding that in Panjab, "classifying and counting people as Hindus, Muslims, or Sikhs was a British idea to begin with. Before British officials started to record a Panjabi's religion, the latter did not necessarily or primarily think of [them]selves as a Muslim, Hindu, or Sikh. If asked who or what [they were], [they] might have mentioned [their] *zaat* or village before speaking of his religion."[46]

Furthermore, traumatic and divisive events such as the Partition of 1947 and the 1984 Sikh Genocide forced those within minority groups to cling to their identities, which had been influenced by colonialism and, therefore, perpetuated colonial narratives. When the existence of already vulnerable minorities is further threatened, clinging to

[44] Ibid., p. 32.
[45] Ibid., p. 29.
[46] Gandhi, *Punjab: A History From Aurangzeb to Mountbatten*, p. 29

complex identities that have been subject to myriad historical, political, and social influences becomes imperative and critiques of these identities are not always welcome. Here I am not arguing that Sikhi is a construct but rather that the lived expression of Sikhi is not a fixed entity, but is influenced by many political and historical events, an idea I will elaborate on later in this chapter.

States such as Canada claim to be secular when in actuality they are deeply rooted in and founded on Christian beliefs. Secularism here is used as a tool to perpetuate white supremacy through Christian-centered systems. Simply declaring that a state is secular does not remove and uproot all of the systems that are already deeply imbedded in non-secular thought. In Canada, unlike the explicit separation of church and state in the United States, there is the Multiculturalism Act. This act stipulates that every individual "has the freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression, peaceful assemble and association."[47] This outward expression of the freedom to express religion implicitly favors those who adhere to Canadian definitions of religion. The role that colonialism and the former colonies play in constructing and maintaining contemporary understandings of certain facets of life is further illuminated in what gets counted as culture.

1.4 Causes for Problems with Alcohol in the Panjabi-Sikh Community

In studies conducted in the United Kingdom, Sikhs were the most regular drinkers and reported more alcohol-related problems than the white men and Hindu men who

[47] Canada. 1990. *The Canadian Multiculturalism Act: a guide for Canadians*. Ottawa, Ont: Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada

were defined as regular drinkers.[48] Research has also suggested that Sikh men drink on average more spirits than any other ethnic group and are more likely to drink alone and at home.[49] A survey of second-generation individuals found that Sikhs are the most regular drinkers and have more alcohol-related problems.[50] With the exception of Sikh men, there were high levels of abstinence reported among younger Asian people (Sikh men had the second highest levels of heavy drinking). Among South Asian religious groups, it is generally more acceptable and commonplace for Sikh men to drink than any other South Asian religious group.

Panjabi women are often "expected to stay sober and take care of their intoxicated husbands."[51] However, there is a sense that "female drinking is on the rise, especially among young women raised in Canada."[52] A 2011 study conducted in Ontario reported that to avoid stigmatization, women tend to endure their husbands' abuse and suffer in silence.[53] Panjabi women stressed their unequal position in the family and their inability to influence change in their husbands' drinking habits. Two women started crying while talking about helplessness, one proclaiming "it is a disgraceful life to live with an alcoholic."[54] In a 1999 study on alcohol consumption in a Panjabi community in the Toronto area, a majority of the men interviewed did not see alcohol as an issue in the community but over half of the women interviewed considered alcohol problems to be very widespread in their community. It is possible that women are more likely than men

[48] Morjaria-Keval, A. and Keval, H. (2015), "Reconstructing sikh spirituality in recovery from alcohol addiction", Religions, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 122-38.
[49] Ibid., 125.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Agic, B., Mann, R., & Kobus-Matthews, M. "Alcohol use in seven ethnic communities in Ontario: A qualitative investigation." *Drugs: Education, Prevention, and Policy*, 18 (2), 116-123, 2011.
[52] Ibid., p. 119.
[53] Ibid., p. 120.
[54] Ibid.

to be the victims of alcohol misuse and more likely to witness than participate in excessive drinking.[55]

In understanding why problems with drinking persist in the second-generation in Canada, research has pointed to the liberal attitudes towards alcohol consumption in the countries that Panjabi-Sikhs re-locate to coupled with the already acceptable status alcohol has in Panjab. Stress related to acculturation has also been delineated as a potential reason. The move from a "collective-traditional society to an individualistic-modern society often results in a breakdown of traditional forms of social control, such as the collective nature of village Punjab being replaced by greater anonymity in an egalitarian host country"[56].

In investigating the second-generation in particular, it has been noted that members of the community "may resort to alcohol and drugs to cope with the tension that they may experience as a result of being overwhelmed by living in two disparate cultures"[57]. Furthermore, both in Panjab and in the diaspora, alcohol plays a vital role "in the socialization of Panjabi males, they internalize the cultural belief that alcohol consumption is indeed an aspect of their masculinity."[58] Alcohol consumption as a part of Panjabi culture and masculinity can be seen most overtly through *bhangra* music, with songs that glorify alcohol consumption along with violence and the *jat*, upper caste Panjabi, lifestyle. Before moving into an analysis of Panjabi masculinity, in order to

[55] Kunz, Jean L., & Norman Giesbrecht. "Gender, perceptions of harm, and other social predictors of alcohol use in a Punjabi community in the Toronto area." *Substance Use and Misuse, 34* (3):403–419, 1999.
[56] Sandhu, A Sikh perspective on alcohol and drugs: implications for the treatment of Punjabi-Sikh patients., p. 27.
[57] Nayar, K.E. 2004. The Sikh diaspora in Vancouver: Three generations amid tradition, modernity, and multiculturalism. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
[58] Sandhu, A Sikh perspective on alcohol and drugs: implications for the treatment of Punjabi-Sikh patients., p. 26.

understand why problems with alcohol persist in the Panjabi-Sikh diaspora it is important to understand conceptions of caste and gender in this context.

1.5 Caste[59]

Sikhi is a tradition for the liberation of the oppressed and has been referred to as a reform movement. Jagjit Singh, in *The Sikh Revolution*, states, "The abolition of caste was not the only goal of the Sikh movement. It was also to fight the religious and political oppression of the rulers. In fact, the pursuit of this objective became more urgent especially when the Mughal rulers launched a frontal attack to convert the Hindus to Islam."[60] Sikh respect for all faiths remains strong and the conversion of others to Sikhi is not advocated in the text. However, caste divisions still remain, evidenced by the few inter-caste marriages within the community, revealing the discrepancy between text and lived reality. During the British Raj, "census-takers required people to record their religious allegiance and also their caste…The British must take responsibility for hardening caste divisions (as well as a rural-urban divide) as a result of the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 and the Punjab Pre-Emption Act of 1913, as these Acts prohibited the transfer of land from land-owners to the 'non-agricultural' classes."[61]

Here it is important to interrogate the noted differences between Panjab, the land, Panjabi, the language and people, and Panjabiyat, or Panjabiness/Panjabihood. With focus on one's Panjabiyat (which includes Jat identity) it is important to note that this is

[59] As noted by B.R. Ambedkar, the division of labour that the caste system implements is not spontaneous or based on natural aptitudes. Social and individual efficiency requires us to develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and make his own career, a principle violated in the caste system where tasks are appointed to individuals in advance selected based on the social status of the parents.
[60] Singh, Jagjit. *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*. New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1981.
[61] Nesbitt, Eleanor. *Sikhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018.

not an all-encompassing or universal essence intrinsic to all who are a part of the Panjabi community, but rather those attributes that have been detailed as dominant to Panjabi identity and can be weaponized in dangerous ways. To outline what counts as "authentic" Panjabiyat is not the goal of this project but it is to illuminate and problematize norms that allow for the perpetuation of problems with alcohol.

The agricultural upper caste of Panjab is the *Jats*. In Panjab they are Sikhs, in fact most Sikhs are *Jats*.[62] As the dominant caste in the diaspora, *Jat* norms are transferred to the Canadian diaspora, making them an important group for this discussion. Members of the *Jat* caste have historically been farmers and loyal soldiers. It has been argued that between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries the *Jats* converted from pastoralism to agriculture.[63] While the *Jats* became settled peasants in some parts of Panjab, in others they remained partially or wholly pastoral.[64] The *Jats* were "one of those tribes, which had largely become sedentary and merged with the dominant socio-economic system in Panjab."[65] They saw great upward social mobility during the seventeenth century. Their loyalty as soldiers was rewarded by the British with the passing of the aforementioned Land Alienation Act which made it nearly impossible to buy or sell land in the Panjab region if you were not in what the British had marked an "agricultural tribe." This act prevented nonagricultural communities from buying and occupying lands causing the low caste Dalits of Panjab to suffer the most.

Dalits of Panjab joined Sikhi in great numbers in the seventeenth century and found dignity and equality within its egalitarian fold. Currently, there is no work on Sikh history

[62] Bal, Gurpreet. "Entrepreneurship among Diasporic Communities: A Comparative Examination of Patidars of Gujarat and Jats of Punjab." *The Journal of Entrepreneurship* 15, no. 2 (2006): 181-203.
[63] Singh, Chetan. *Region and Empire: Panjab in the Seventeenth Century*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1991.
[64] Ibid., p. 265.
[65] Ibid.

and tradition in English that has been produced from the perspective of Dalit history. Dalit-Sikhs have played important roles throughout Sikh history, particularly in Guru Gobind Singh's army, Ranjit Singh's army, and throughout creative and literary domains.[66]

Dominant understandings of what it means to be *Jat* are displayed in Panjabi music, where *Jat* identity and pride are strongly tied to consuming alcohol and, in turn, help shape ideals of Panjabi masculinity. *Bhangra* music privileges a *Jat*-centric hierarchy of caste, gender, and ethnicity. *Bhangra* lyrics "articulate masculine and even hypermasculine values: labour, industry and self-sufficiency in agriculture; loyalty, independence and bravery in political and military endeavours; the development and expression of virility, vigour, and honour; the machismo of *sharāb* and *glassies*, and at times gangsters and guns; and an appreciation of the—objectified—beauty of Punjabi and especially *Jat* women." As an example, the widely popular *Mundian To Bach Ke* illuminates the gendered differences in Panjabi music where "its lyrics caution young women to learn the *sharam* or moral and sexual propriety that is appropriate to their gender, reiterating the forms of male dominance, surveillance, and control that comprise the honour- shame paradigm, and particularly the centrality of *izzat* or male reputation to caste and community."

These songs are not the reasons for problems with alcohol in the community, but they promote and glorify its consumption and speak to hegemonic representations of Panjabi masculinity. Although not thoroughly explored here, the particular ways in which problems with alcohol manifest in those who belong to the lower castes of Panjabi

[66] Hans, Raj Kumar. "Making Sense of Dalit Sikh History." Duke University Press, 2016.

society warrants exploration. Understanding the impacts of non-dominant intersecting identities illuminates the myriad ways problems with alcohol manifest in the community.

1.6 Gender

It is widely understood that Sikhi encourages followers to respect all, regardless of their sex, caste, or religious label. Sikhi challenges *sati*, the view of childbirth as polluting, and it has been argued by Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh that the very fact that in Panjabi the noun *bani,*[67] the utterance of the Gurus, is feminine valorizes the feminine principle.[68] However, in other images women appear as part of *maya*, worldly illusions,[69] a distraction from *mukti,* liberation. English translations, as previously discussed, have changed and masculinized much of the text.

Many of the *rahitnamas* include instructions for men and women in regards to how they should behave towards one another. For example, "men should treat all women other than their own wives as if they were their daughters or their mothers," women are permitted to read the Guru Granth Sahib but not in public, they are to be modest and devout.[70] However, more recent Sikh Rahit Maryada portrays the two as equal.

In Sikh history "as retold by the Singh Sabha reformers and subsequent writers, individual women played a strikingly heroic role."[71] It is important to note that this

[67] *Gurbani*, or *bani*, refers to a compilation of transcendent poetry, writing, and reflections of Sikh Gurus and other mystics to reflect the universality of Oneness, often refers to the hymns of the *Guru Granth Sahib*
[68] Singh, Nikky-Guninder Kaur. *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
[69] Sikhi explains that everything in this world is an illusion (*maya*), and that the only true reality is *Waheguru*, the divine. *Maya* is assumed to stand between man and reality, producing error and illusion in the human mind, and creating difficulties in the individual's progress to a state of knowledge and bliss.
[70] Nesbitt, p. 109.
[71] Nesbitt, p. 110.

interpretation of history is what forms contemporary Sikh understandings. However, like other societies, there are explicit and implicit gender roles. Many roles in the Gurdwara are only taken by men and the picture of Sikhi remains the "strikingly masculine image of the turbaned male *keshdhari* Sikh."[72] There is also large discrepancy between the number of girls and boys in Panjabi-Sikh society, as daughters are understood as a burden to many parents. In order to avoid the "shame of being wife-givers rather than bride receivers, some *Khatri* and *Jat* families for generations ensured that most surviving children were male."[73] The concern with maintaining *izzat* (honour), and practicing sex-selective abortion, clearly works against the religious prohibition of female infanticide, as enshrined in the Sikh Rahit Maryada.

In colonial India, notions of womanhood were used as a way to differentiate and maintain the superiority of white women over Indian women. The former represented everything the latter did not, the two positioned in binaries of east/west and backward/modern among others. Understandings of femininity "marked the boundaries of national and cultural identity…traced back to colonial India…for the British, rescuing women became part of the civilization mission."[74] Certain behaviour, therefore, was associated with being Indian and other as being un-Indian. This demarcation is still present in the diaspora. The diaspora's process of understanding oneself often rests between understanding themselves in a binary of identifying with their nationality, Canadian (read: white) or culturally, Panjabi-Sikh.

[72] Nesbitt, p. 115.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Handa, Amrita. *Of Silk Saris and Mini Skirts: South Asian Girls Walk the Tightrope of Culture.* Toronto: Women's Press, 2003.

In the diaspora, women are sometimes identified as the producers of community, maintainers of Sikh identity (martial and male dominated), and transmitters of cultural tradition in the diaspora. Since women are literally the reproducers of the community, the preservation of "Sikhness" falls primarily on them. Although not commonly practiced presently, many Sikh Panjabi parents in the diaspora would marry their child (usually a son) to a spouse from India to maintain a link with the homeland and transmit cultural values, tradition, and language within the diaspora.[75] However, various discrepancies often led to incompatibility, strife, and violence. In Purnima Mankekar's "India Shopping: Indian Grocery Stores and Transnational Configurations of Belonging" she seeks to investigate how representations of India shape the lives of the members of the diasporic community.[76] She highlights the ways in which gender offers an important lens to examine the kinds of social practices facilitated by Indian grocery stores. These stores are complex social spaces, in which the food sold "acquires a distinctive valence, and a distinctively gendered valence in diasporic and migrant communities,"[77] in which women are the maintainers of culture through food. For a woman, "cooking Indian food was integral to their roles in the family." A "suitable" woman is well versed in food preparation, with some women storeowners revealing "their efforts to teach younger and second-generation Indian American women how to cook Indian food," intrinsically perpetuating the notion that women are the maintainers of culture in the diaspora.

In Amita Handa's *Of Silk Saris and Mini Skirts: South Asian Girls Walk the Tightrope of Culture*, she argues that "women and youth have become symbols of the sets

[75] Thandi, Shinder S. "Sikh Diaspora." In *"shady Character, Hidden Designs, and Masked Faces": Reflections on 'vilayati' Sikh Marriages and Discourses of Abuse*, 231-59. Netherlands: Brill, 2013, 2013.
[76] Mankekar, Purnima. 'India Shopping': Indian Grocery Stores and Transnational Configurations of Belonging, Ethnos, 67:1, 75-97. 2002.
[77] Ibid., p 83.

of values that are seen to be in need of protection from the process of modern social progress…certain notions of women and youth are mobilized in order to maintain and assert specific notions of identity and belonging. South Asian cultural identity relies on particular definitions of womanhood in order to assert a distinct Eastern identity vis-à-vis the West.[78]

In Panjabi-Sikh history, colonial British rule was central to the construction of the Sikh man as militant and hypermasculine. The British aligned themselves with the Sikhs, as they saw them as a manly race like themselves, in direct contrast with the Hindu man who was seen as effeminate. The Sikhs were declared as an organically militant people, of Aryan ancestry. Particularly, the turban was used as a symbol of masculinity and militancy, a notion that pervades today. As they were deemed to be the most masculine of the Indians, they were disproportionately recruited into the British army, contributing to the perpetuation of their hypermasculine identity.

Although female infanticide was practiced before British arrival in India, the legislation they enacted allowed for its perpetuation and increased its severity and commonality. When colonial powers "assigned Punjabi men specific property rights, omitted traditional female entitlements to familial lands and masculinized the economy in a way that increased preference for sons…their rigid taxation system, which emphasized the size of the parcel of land rather than its fruits, forced many peasants in years of bad harvest into poverty."[79] This masculinization of the economy made sons more desirable. Timely payments of revenue forced the peasants to take loans and in the event of crop failure, they sunk into indebtedness. However, this is not to say that son preference was a

[78] Handa, p. 19.
[79] Stoker, Valerie. *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 10, no. 1: 117-18, 2006.

colonial-era invention, as its practice can be seen in pre-colonial texts and practices, but that such codifications allowed for the increased perpetuation of son preference. The codification of custom into textual law and its implementation in the new courts in Panjab gravely influenced the preference of sons. Specifically with the creation of male individual property rights in land and the governments demand for revenue even in a bad year, chronic indebtedness was generated. Often this generated pressure to "deploy women's resources—jewelry or cash—to rescue or enhance a family's holdings."[80] The increased preference for sons ignited by this shift in inheritance legislation in an increasingly competitive economy contributed to the lowering of women's social status. Boys were also given preference, as they were able to till the land and "provide supplementary income by opening new areas for farming, working abroad, or enlisting in colonial armies."[81]

Patriarchal practices do not operate "evenly across places or even within places and cultures,"[82] often developing in combination with other social relations such as in conjunction with the caste system in India. Implicit to patriarchy is the idea that the father or male member of the family is the head of the family with descent being traced through the male figure. Therefore, in order for the familial line to continue, the birth of a male is essential. The power held by men in such a system was amplified by the transformation of property laws under British rule, rewarding masculinity.

In the diaspora, many men took to cutting their hair in order to acculturate while others maintain their distinct identity. At the end of the twentieth century, "it was

[80] Oldenberg, Veena-Talwar, *Dowry* Murder, Oxford; New York: Oxford University, 2002.
[81] Ibid., p 501.
[82] Walton-Roberts, Margaret, and Geraldine Pratt. "Mobile Modernities: A South Asian Family Negotiates Immigration, Gender and Class in Canada." *Gender, Place & Culture* 12, no. 2 (2005): 173-95. (Ibid., p 175.)

Hinduism that looked set to erode Sikhi but it was actually religious apathy and compulsive consumerism as many young men in Panjab opted for a more Western look…yet, at the same time, the alacrity of young diaspora Sikhs identifying themselves as Sikh as well as Canadian, regardless of their degree of religiosity continued undiminished."[83] After June 1984, many Sikhs "bonded in a new unity, as many males asserted their identity by growing their hair and beards, and donning the turban."[84] Many organizations also emerged in the diaspora in support of Sikhs in Panjab, sending money back home and Gurdwaras served as community centers and included small libraries, children's classes, and worship.

1.6.1 Historicizing Panjabi-Sikh Masculinity

Consumption of alcohol as intrinsic to what it means to be a Panjabi man has been identified as one of the reasons for why problems with alcohol continue in the community. Those who identify as male believe that alcohol consumption is a core component of their identity. Alcohol is understood as a vital component of Panjabi masculinity and male socialization. In understanding how Panjabi-Sikh masculinity came to be understood as it is today, it is important to historicize it.

As early as the time of the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind (1606-45), Sikhi appears to have assumed a more martial form. Miri-Piri day marks the culmination of Miri, political commander, and Piri, the spiritual authority, in the Sikh faith. This politicization of Sikhi, primarily in response to Mughal tyranny, points to the equal emphasis on the

[83] Nesbitt, p. 129.
[84] Nesbitt, p. 99.

development of physical and spiritual abilities in the faith. The sixteenth and seventeenth century saw the community becoming increasingly distinct and fighting in battle, adapting the saint solider or holy warrior title. The eighteenth century was a century of armed resistance against oppression. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last guru, with the inauguration of the Khalsa, transformed the Sikh community into a military brotherhood. Particular to the inauguration of the Khalsa, was the invocation of the couplet '*Raj Karega Khalsa*' (the Khalsa shall rule), calling Khalsa Sikhs to bear arms and fight every day. This couplet is contained in the The *Nasihatnam* (also called the *Tankhanam*), the Sikh Manual of Instructions or the "Manuscript on the Khalsa Way of Life." Scholars date the text to 1718. However, its religious, social, and political content suggests it was penned between 1699-1708.

The eighteenth century can be understood as a time period where the Sikhs rose to power over the Mughal Empire. It has been argued that the phrase '*Raj Karega Khalsa'* held particular importance in this rise to power as the Sikhs "struggle was a consequence of their conviction that the Khalsa created by the tenth Guru in 1699 was ordained to rule."[85] This phrase grew in popularity during the tenth Gurus lifetime. After the execution of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur in 1645, Guru Gobind's response consisted of the institution of the Khalsa. His followers were "transformed into a political community that derived its inspiration from religious ideology for pursuing political power."[86] Prior to the death of the tenth Guru, authority was transferred to the collective Khalsa, the Guru Granth Sahib was to be their guide, and their goal was "*raj karega Khalsa*". Although the

[85] Malhotra, *The Eighteenth Century in Sikh History*, 20.
[86] Ibid., 52.

army of the Khalsa was not successful at first, "the ideal survived,"[87] rooted in the principle of sovereignty. After their defeat in 1710, they reorganized themselves in 1716 and were able to become a threat to the Mughals. Malhotra argues that the "survival of the Khalsa as a political entity was made possible essentially by their ideology and institutions."[88]

Throughout history the couplet has also been understood by outsiders as a nationalist cry with the British banning its recitation at Sikh gatherings and the continued ban by majority Hindu governments who saw it as advocating for a Sikh separate state, a ban that is still in effect at Sri Harimandar Sahib. Understood through the Sikh doctrine of *Miri-Piri*, the couplet works to outline the political aspiration of the Sikhs to establish a sovereign rule, serving as complementary to Sikh spirituality; political power as necessary for social change. With colonialism, the understanding of the couplet and the doctrine of Miri-Piri was forever transformed to serve imperialist goals as opposed to the idea of resistance from which it was born, a concept that will be further explored later in this section.

After the death of the tenth Guru, bands of locally based fighting men formed *misls* to defend Panjab against Afghan invaders. Previously, these various Sikh *misls* fought each other for land and power but eventually came together to form a collective, the Dal Khalsa, under the rule of Ranjit Singh, taking control over the Panjab region after the Mughals in 1801. However, by 1849 the British had ended Sikh rule in Panjab.

After the loss of control over the Panjab region to the British, the Sikhs became the British's' "most loyal subjects…the young Maharaja (King) Dalip Singh was exiled to

[87] Ibid., 20.
[88] Ibid.

England [where] he became a well-known symbol of Sikh identity," while his mother, Maharani Jind Kaur, an outspoken critic of British rule, was asked by the British to go into purdah, the act of living in a separate room or behind a curtain in order to stay out of the sight of men or strangers.[89] Even the British queen was enamored by the image of Sikh masculinity "and her subjects naturally adopted this 'manly' impression of Sikh identity in their own minds."[90] This juxtaposition of the Sikh male as warrior and the Sikh woman as removed from view contributed to the preservation of the colonial stereotype of what Sikhs should be.

Colonial British rule was also central to the construction of the Sikh man as militant and hypermasculine. As a war zone, the Panjab region was a popular recruiting ground for soldiers. Historian Veena Talwar-Oldenburg argues, "the defense of land, rather than its tilling, made the presence of strong defenders critical to the survival of the community,"[91] the defenders often being martial Sikhs.

The British aligned themselves with the Sikhs, as they saw them as a manly race like themselves, in direct contrast with the Hindu man who was constructed as effeminate. The Sikhs were declared an organically militant people, using the practice of Sikh initiation, and the maintenance of the five articles of the body as proof.[92] Particularly the turban was used as a symbol of masculinity and militancy, a notion that pervades today. The fetishization of Sikh masculinity also served political agendas. The British disproportionately recruited Sikh men to serve in the British army. The Sikhs both resented and helped British rule. They helped the British army claim victory against a

[89] Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, 284.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Oldenburg, *Dowry Muder,*, p 36.
[92]

"mutiny of Hindu and Muslim soldiers [and] for that loyalty, British encouraged Khalsa tradition to continue in the army."[93] It was declared that service in Sikh regiments required soldiers to conform to Khalsa discipline.

As M. Jaqu Alexander and Chandra Mohanty argue, militarized masculinity played a strategic function in the reproduction of colonization. If white masculinity was used to articulate racial dominance, British authorities' racialization of Sikh men as martial, ideal, virile soldiers raise complex and contradictory questions. On the one hand, British official viewed Sikhs as fitting into their own ideals of masculinity and valuable in protecting British interests and power across India. British officials believed that under their guidance, Sikhs could be molded into 'an efficient fighting machine.' If however, Sikh masculinity was expressed through anti-British revolution, it was a dangerous threat requiring immediate repression.[94] However, these static understandings of male Panjabi-Sikh identity reproduces "stereotypic images of the Sikh community: male violence becomes the principality of Panjabi/Sikh men."[95]

Patriarchy is not only harmful to women but hurts men too, "it teaches them to feel shame when they do not live up to expectations of masculinity, to deny their feelings to repress all emotions except fear and rage…if patriarchy were truly rewarding to men, the violence and addiction in family life that is so all-pervasive would not exist."[96] Considering queer bodies, a frequently forgotten endeavor in Sikh studies, Jasbir Puar's "Queer Diasporas and Practices of Profiling" argues, "male turbaned Sikh bodies are read

[93] Nesbitt, p. 71
[94] Sohi, Seema. Sites of 'Sedition', Sites of Liberation: Gurdwaras, The Ghadar Party, and Anticolonial Mobilization, Sikh Formations,10:1, 5-22, 2014.
[95] Handa, p.151.
[96] hooks, b. (n.d). Understanding patriarchy. Retrieved from: http://imaginenoborders.org/pdf/zines/UnderstandingPatriarchy-imposed.pdf

as patriarchal by queer diasporic logics because they challenge the limits of queer diasporic identity that balks at the non-normativity of turbaned bodies,"[97] speaking to the idea of the inherent hypermasculinity of the male Sikh body.

These notions of masculinity are performed and maintained through alcohol consumption. The internalization of the cultural belief that alcohol consumption is an aspect of masculinity is influenced by these colonial notions of Panjabi-Sikh masculinity and have been transported into the diaspora.

1.7 Intergenerational Trauma

From colonial India, Partition, to 1984 and the displacement that occured because of immigration, the trauma being passed on through generations will be detailed in this section. Not only are these major events in Panjabi-Sikh history and memory, but they also reveal Sikh relations with the state. I argue that unaddressed trauma from Jallianwala Bagh, the Partition of 1947, the events of 1984, and immigration is passed down through generations, manifesting as problems with alcohol. Included in trauma related to immigration is pre-migration trauma, circumstances leading to migration, trauma that occurred during the immigration process, and post migration factors such as loss of social status, social support, separation from family, difficulty integrating into a new culture, and lack of employment. Those who are witness to these events are traumatized, unable to heal, with some turning to alcohol to cope or forget. My interviews indicated that these unaddressed traumas and coping mechanism are then passed on through generations.

[97] Puar, Jasbir. "The Turban is Not a Hat: Queer Diasporas and Practices of Profiling," Duke University Presss, 2017.

1.7.1 Jallianwala Bagh/ Vaisakhi 1919

Significant to both the history of colonization in India and the Sikh community is Vaisakhi 1919. Prior to the 1919 massacre, "Panjab was already seething with resentment… the Great War (World War I) which lasted from 1914-1918 had taken a terrible toll on the state…Panjabi soldiers comprised as much as two-thirds of the Indian army's cavalry, 87% of the artillery, and 45% of the infantry."[98] Many of those who died were Panjabi. Although some joined the army willingly, coercion was common. The salary, pension, honour, and respect attached to the uniform were enticing. This can be likened to the contemporary mass immigration of Panjabis to Canada.[99] The loss of manpower from the war combined with the plague of 1915, the flu epidemic in Panjab, and the monsoons failing in 1918, which led to poor harvests and an increase in food prices, added to the resentment. Furthermore, the Defense of India Act of 1915 also virtually outlawed any form of dissent or protest.

After the First World War, instead of implementing the economic and political reforms they promised, the imperial government used limited disturbances (including the Ghadhar movement, an international political movement led by Sikhs founded by expatriate Indians with the goal of overthrowing British rule in India) to rationalize passing the Rowlatt Bills as law. Concerned about the impacts of the laws, several local community members organized peaceful protests to "show Hindu-Muslim unity… Hindus and Muslims drinking out of the same water vessels in Amritsar." However, the

[98] Singh, Nanak and Navdeep Singh Suri. *Khooni Vaisakhi: A poem from the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, 1919.* India: HarperCollins, 2018.
[99] Nesbitt, p. 90.

British "saw it as a breach of caste…strange, ominous, unprecedented."[100] The imperial government saw "that they were using religious organizations to serve political ends, which always in the long run means mischief,"[101] resulting in the arrest of the leaders.

As protesters gathered to demand their release, the rulers were "determined to prevent protestors from crossing the bridge that led to the Hall Bazaar. Armed force was sent by the administration that soon started firing to disperse the crowd leaving around thirty people killed and many wounded…angered by the violence, a section of the leaderless crowd went on a rampage through Hall Bazaar"[102] where five Europeans were killed and three others were severely injured including Marcia Sherwood, a missionary. Gatherings of more than four people were deemed unlawful and liable to dispersal by use of force, curfew was implemented and no resident was allowed to leave the city without a permit.

On April 1919, associates of those jailed gathered to make speeches and crowds gathered along with those who had come to celebrate the Hindu and Sikh festival of Vaisakhi. General Dyer opened fire on this crowd of reportedly 10,000 to 20,000 people; no warnings were issued and the firing continued for 10 minutes with a total of 1,650 rounds fired. An estimate of 379 to 1200 were wounded, 400 to 500 dead while other reports place deaths closer to 1000.[103]

Martial Law was implemented "giving Dyer and others like him the latitude to mete out a set of outrageous punishments with the singular objective of teaching the natives a lesson."[104] Perhaps the most demeaning of these punishments "was the infamous 'crawling order' that was imposed by Dyer in the Kaurianwali Gali, the 150-metre long

[100] Singh and Suri, *Khooni Vaisakhi* p. 90.
[101] Ibid., p. 91.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., p. 98.

lane where Marcia Sherwood was assaulted. Dyer decreed that any Indian passing between the two police pickets placed at either end of the street would have to crawl on all fours…for hundreds of families living on the crowded street – many of them reputed and affluent merchants – the trauma was beyond description…Water and electricity were cut off for days and collective punishment of the worst kind was imposed on a prosperous city of 150,000."[105]

Martial Law and the Rowlatt Act ensured that whatever happened in Panjab stayed within Panjab. It took several weeks for the rest of the country to hear of the terror. The British Raj used the policy of 'divide and rule' because of which Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims were divided into sects, generating a sense of religious disharmony.

Jallianwala Bagh was not an isolated incident. The injustices inflicted upon the Panjabi-Sikh community when they rightfully asked for, and later demanded, reform from their governments is an ongoing theme in their history, as we will see later in this chapter. War service was used as a tool to "salvage racial honour" and was "constructed as a point of national honour."[106] No province "registered the war as intensely as Panjab, which contributed more than half the total number of Indian combatants… Of the over one million Indians who served abroad, some 480,000 came from Panjab."[107] The mass recruitment came to be known as the 'militarization of Panjab' and the 'Panjabisation of the Indian army.'[108] Panjab was an ideal recruiting ground because of its frontier location in relation to Afghanistan and the display of Panjabi loyalty during the Sepoy Uprising of 1857. Of the 282,170 combatants recruited from Panjab from 1915 to 1918, some

[105] Ibid., p. 98-99.
[106] Das, Santatnu. *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images, and Songs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
[107] Ibid., p. 23.
[108] Ibid., p. 76.

156,300 were Muslims, some 63,900 were Hindus and 61,970 were Sikhs, though the last religious group – the Sikhs – comprised only 12% of the population.[109]

After World War II, Britain's economic condition "coupled with the environment of extreme communal unrest in India, made it quite clear that independence was in the foreseeable future."[110] Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the all-India Muslim league "listed concretely the inherent differences between two peoples [Hindus and Muslims] as the basis of the demand for the country of Pakistan."

It was declared that on August 15th 1947 India would be free from British rule but it was not prepared for the divide that was to come. It was decided that British India would be divided into present day Pakistan and India. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the architect of the new border primarily concerning Panjab and Bengal, arrived in India on July 8th for the first time. His lack of knowledge and supposed neutrality were understood as positives. As religious disparities increased, dividing British India appeared to be the only solution. As Muslims made their way to Pakistan and Sikhs and Hindus navigated their way to India, violence and bloodshed resulted.

1.7.2 Partition

After Independence was won from British rule, in the Partition of 1947, British India was separated into present day India and Pakistan. "12 million people were displaced as a result of partition, nearly 1 million died, some 75,000 women were raped, kidnapped, abducted, forcibly impregnated by men of the 'other' religion, thousands of families were

[109] Ibid., p. 80.
[110] Malhotra, Aanchal. *Remnant of A Separation: A History of the Partition Through Material Memory*. India: HarperCollins, 2017.

split apart, homes burnt down and destroyed, villages abandoned."[111] The violence and abuse forever changed what it means to be "Indian" or "Pakistani" or "Muslim" or "Sikh".

The Partition of India was not simply a physical displacement but a traumatic mental displacement, "a sudden uprootedness, an unlearning and relearning of identity."[112] Few people who have had to endure Partition have actually verbalized their feelings or shared their stories. Often Hindu and Sikh narratives are converged, obstructing and obscuring specific research from occurring. However, what was in many ways a shared experience was the "threat of displacement from the environment which had been a part of their lives, and indeed formed their identity, meant a loss of meaning in life, leading to collective hopelessness and helplessness…displacement of this family from a home they lived in, or of a community of people for the construction of a dam (among many others at the altar of 'progress'), or of political refugees are all examples of the emotional impact of uprooting."[113]

Although it is important to understand this shared experience, it is also vital to avoid homogenization while keeping in mind the collective nature of this trauma. It is also important to not see Partition as an isolated event but as a product of its historical and political time. Individuals "found themselves on the wrong side of the Radcliffe line and were categorized as refugees in their native land…the new homeland challenged the refugees' received notions of culture and language."[114]

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[111] Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.
[112] Malhotra, p. 7.
[113] Jain, Sanjeev and Alok Sarin. *The Psycholoogical Impact of the Parition of India*. New Delhi: Sage, 2019.
[114] Ibid., p. 112-118.

After the Partition, despite the disproportionate efforts by the Sikhs in the British army, no Sikh state was granted. The Sikhs were now more geographically concentrated than ever before. One hundred forty Sikh shrines were lost in this Partition, creating a profound sense of cultural alienation. In 1966, Panjab was further divided into the majority Hindi-speaking states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, and the present-day Panjabi-speaking (and majority Sikh) Indian state of Panjab.

1.7.3 1984 Sikh Genocide

The events of 1984 and the aftermath, which lasted for over a decade, are often remembered around the army attack on the Sri Harimandar Sahib and Akal Takht Sahib, Operation Blue Star, as it was named by the Indian Government. The events of 1984 are etched into Sikh memory as a Ghallughara, the Sikh term for a large-scale massacre, carnage, or genocide connoting aggression and persecution.[115] Ghallughara is "an integral part of the Sikh psyche and folklore."[116]

The army surrounded and took control over the complex and, on June 3rd, a holy day for the Sikhs honouring the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Sahib drawing thousands of pilgrims to the site, announced a complete curfew, sealing all exits around the complex, trapping everyone inside followed by attack and gunfire. For five days, Panjab was cut off from the rest of the world under a 24-hour curfew with no foreigners allowed to enter, all Indian journalists expelled, and the pilgrims within the complex detained and later charged under various terrorist laws.

[115] Singh, Harinder. "June 1984 Ghallughara Lies List Light," New Jersey: Sikh Research Institute, 2017. https://www.sikhri.org/june_1984_ghallughara_lies_list_light.
[116] Ibid.

The government accounts of the events leading up to and occurring during the first week of June are detailed in the White Paper of Punjab Agitation. It outlines the government's rationale as "controlling extremist, terrorist, and communal violence in Panjab, providing security to the people and restoring normalcy." This "violence" was led by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the leader of the Damdami Taksal, a centre of traditional Sikh study, teaching correct expression of the Guru Granth Sahib. Furthermore, the grounds given for the 1984 invasion were (a) 'the consequences of this determined assault on society cannot be measured simply in terms of the number of people killed and injured' and (b) 'the whole thrust of extremist violence was to fragment the people of Punjab and destroy their common culture.'[117] However, many government insiders believe "that the White Paper is the white cover to conceal all the failures of the government to bring about settlement of the Panjab problem."[118]

Further rationale for why 1984 occurred included: "Rulers in Delhi were angry at Sikhs; feud since 1947 left Sikhs feeling they had been wronged in India; organized Sikh response against Indira Gandhi's dictatorial Emergency; Sikh sense of betrayal culminated in solidified *Dharam Yudh Morcha* in 1982; and perhaps calculated lies by India to gain little but harmed the Sikhs more;"[119] and the lack of response from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Congress government to demands from Sikh leadership as articulated in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973.

The thoroughly planned operation was deemed a failure as the "Akal Takht was damaged beyond recognition even before Bhindranwale and his followers were killed or captured; major collateral damage was caused to the Temple complex and there were a

[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.

large number of civilian casualties as a result of assault…It is intriguing that if the police (and the government) really believed that the militants had only two hundred to two-fifty weapons – the majority of which were 12 Bore guns and 303 rifles – where was the need to call in the Army?"[120]

Although the White Paper details 83 troops killed, 249 troops wounded, 493 civilians/terrorists killed, 86 terrorists/others injured, and 592 civilians/terrorists apprehended, eyewitness accounts describe thousands killed. Civilians and pilgrims visiting the complex to commemorate the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Sahib were not warned, resulting in intentionally high casualties. There is no single document created by Indian Army officials that outlines how many people were killed during the Ghallughara. Pettigrew states, "the Army went into Darbar Sahib not to eliminate a political figure or a political movement but to suppress the culture of a people, to attack their heart, to strike a blow at their spirit and self-confidence."[121]

Three months later, in November 1984 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her two Sikh guards, leading to violence and the continued genocide of the Sikh population in New Delhi and Panjab. The assassination was retaliated by organized, state-backed massacred of Sikhs in New Delhi and other parts of India. The events of June 1984 led to at least a decade of state-sanctioned extrajudicial killings, disappearances, atrocities, and torture in Panjab forcing many to seek refuge in the diaspora.

[120] Ibid.
[121] Pettigrew, Joyce. *The Sikhs of the Punjab: Unheard Voices of State and Guerrilla Violence*, London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J. : Zed Books, 1995.

1.7.4 Sikh Immigration

In the contemporary diaspora, Sikhs have primarily settled in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. Reasons for the immigration of Sikhs include finding economics and political refuge in the aftermath of 1984. Sikhs began to move outside of South Asia towards the end of the last decade of the nineteenth century. Migration primarily occurred to Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, and Thailand. The first Sikhs arrived in Singapore in the 1850s as political prisoners after the second Sikh war and some moved to Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda for construction skills in the 1890s. It is estimated that over 50% of Sikhs outside India now live in North America. The first migrations occurred in 1887 with Sikhs moving to British Columbia.

From 1903 to 1908 the number of Sikhs in B.C. increased from 300 to 5,000. Sikhs began settling in California around 1899. In 1907 there was a noticeable halt to migration as anti-Hindu rhetoric spread through North America. In 1914 the infamous Komagata Maru incident occurred: a ship that sailed from India to the port of Vancouver sat for 62 days, prohibited from taking food on board apart from that supplied by Musqueam paddlers who canoed out across the inlet to feed the passengers on the board. The ship was eventually forced to sail back. The ship's 376 passengers, many of whom were Sikh, were refused entry into Canada on the grounds of the threat of contagious disease. Upon return to India, many of the surviving passengers were arrested and interned under the orders of the British colonial rulers. Due to the work of Black Americans and the Civil Rights Movement, immigrant laws loosened and the 1970s and 1980s saw a large influx of migration from India.

Primarily the first Sikh migrants in the U.K. were from less privileged backgrounds (often *Bhatras*) and later a significant number of Sikh men from the *Jat* caste, the peasant-land-owning class of rural Panjab. Unlike the *Bhatra* women, *Jat* wives entered the workforce. The third substantial Sikh migration to the UK was around 1970 from the newly independent countries of East Africa. By the end of the twentieth century, many British Sikhs had migrated to North America and Afghan Sikhs had arrived in the UK and Germany, seeking asylum from Taliban regime in the 1990s. Re-locating to a new country comes with the stresses of acculturation for the first generation and the anxieties of living between two disparate cultures for the second generation. Three important reasons have been identified as to why Sikh Panjabi's have immigrated: "land, house, and marriage," with education being recently added[122]. Prominently they have become the source for unskilled wage labor.[123]

Pre-immigration trauma, the process of immigration itself, and post-immigration trauma all act as experiences that impact the Sikh psyche and get passed down through generations. Events occurring prior to migration or those that force an individual to leave their homeland are related to pre-immigration trauma. As outlined above, the events of 1984 forced many Sikhs out of India due to fear of persecution. The very journey of immigration itself can be traumatic—the in-between space that many immigrants and refugees occupy as they await permanent citizenship within their new host country. Post-immigration trauma relates to events that occur in the host country. The loss of social status, social support, separation from family, difficulty integrating into a new culture, and lack of employment are just some of those factors. Furthermore, in a post-9/11

[122] Bal, Gurpreet. "Entrepreneurship among Diasporic Communities: A Comparative Examination of Patidars of Gujarat and Jats of Punjab," p 193.
[123] Ibid. p 201.

landscape, a re-traumatization occurred. As Muslims became victims of hate crimes, Sikhs did as well. The first post-9/11 hate-crime was carried out against a Sikh-American gas station owner named Balbir Singh Sodhi and was followed by the vandalization, looting, and burning of *gurudwaras*. This rise in hate-crimes rearticulated the violent, traumatic memories and fear of persecution associated with the events of 1984. Particular to Canada, the 2018 Public Report on the Terrorism Threat to Canada listed Sikh extremism for the first time as one of the top five extremist threats in Canada, an equation of the entire religion as opposed to a particular group. After much effort by the community, instead of "Sikh extremism," future reports would, if appropriate, discuss threats posed by "extremists who support violent means to establish an independent state within India." Such incidences point to the on-going trauma to which immigrants are subject to.

Conclusion

The historical overview of alcohol in the subcontinent and diaspora, the Sikh understanding of alcohol, and the varied reasons and intersections for why problems with alcohol exist in the community form the background for topics interviewees addressed in our conversations. As we will see in chapter two, I directly engage with ideas about definitions of religion and culture that interact with these understandings and reasons. The historical, political, and scriptural backgrounds help to lend nuance to understanding why problems with alcohol cannot simply be understood as a Panjabi cultural issue. chapter two will directly engage with the *Guru Granth Sahib*, lived Sikhi, and the

constructs of religion and culture. Understanding how religion and culture can be used in detrimental ways helps to formulate a more intersectional understanding of why problems with alcohol occur in the community. Engagement with historical trauma, caste, and gender, among other factors, shapes Panjabi-Sikh identity in Canada. This identity takes many forms and is certainly a component of the pride- and ego-based drinking that is talked about in chapter three. This overview sets up the main themes in chapter three but before delving into those, we need to explore the theoretical implications of this study.

CHAPTER TWO: MY ARGUMENT

This chapter will illuminate popular understandings of alcohol in the community, focusing on how it is understood through Sikhi and in Panjabi culture. Through an analysis of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Divine Sikh anthology and living Guru, I unpack what is written in the text about the consumption of alcohol and the lived reality of the communities I am studying. My work aims to move beyond the analysis of religious texts in order to place primacy on individuals' lived realities. In order to obtain a thorough understanding of lived Sikhi, understanding the influence of Panjabi culture is vital. Arguing against the normative understanding that Panjabi culture is to blame for problems with alcohol and Sikhi as its antithesis is stringently anti-alcohol, I will show how lived Sikhi is in dialogue with culture. I will map out how culture has been used as a colonial tool, evidenced through historical moments that create a single discourse that depicts Panjabi-Sikhs as a monolithic group. I argue against the notion of Panjabi-Sikhs as a homogenous group by illuminating the heterogeneity of culture and how it works with, not separately, from religion. Lastly, I will illuminate how those living in former colonies reproduce the image of cultural homogeneity and how these colonial constructs are passed on generationally, resulting in the contemporary persistence of problems with alcohol in the Sikh-Canadian community.

2.1 Sikhi in the Text, Lived Sikhi

Although it is widely accepted that Sikhi advocates against the consumption of alcohol, the lived reality does not reflect this understanding, speaking to the discrepancy between discourse and what is practiced. Sikhi is not static and adherents fluctuate in how they engage in practice. Although the canon may be fixed, the ways in which individuals practice is in constant flux. The interviewees with whom I engaged separate the general understanding of how alcohol is viewed in the community into "cultural" and "religious," Panjabi culture promotes the consumption of alcohol while Sikhi prohibits it.

As many were not familiar with the texts and had not directly engaged with them, my interlocutors assumed that the texts prohibited alcohol consumption. This assumption was often based on what family members had taught them and was removed from direct engagement with the text. So what do Sikh texts actually say about alcohol consumption?

As outlined in chapter one, the *Guru Granth Sahib* is not a prescriptive text because it does not explicitly outline rules and laws. Therefore its goal is not to state what is and is not allowed but is to serve as a guide or teacher, a *Guru*. In Jaswinder Singh Sandhu's "A Sikh Perspective on Alcohol and Drugs: Implications for the Treatment of Punjabi-Sikh Patients," he states that Sikhi strictly prohibits alcohol consumption, as outlined in "various *rehtnamas* (ethical codes), hymns from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and the Sikh religious world-view."[124]

The *rehtnamas* are included in a large text referred to as the Sikh *Rahit Maryada* (code of discipline). The code was approved in 1945 in Amritsar by a Sikh organizing

[124] Sandhu, J. S. (2009). A Sikh perspective on alcohol and drugs: implications for the treatment of Punjabi-Sikh patients. *Sikh Formations*, 5 (2), 23-37.

body (Shrimoni Gurdwara Parbandak Committee) and is currently in use today. It includes various codes of discipline, including *the Chaupa Singh Rahitnama* that prohibits the consumption of intoxicants. Some scholars have argued that the Sikh *Rahit Maryada* "were merely a political maneuver used by the Sikhs to construct, and assert, a distinct religious identity during the tumultuous colonial period."[125] Others have argued that because the earlier, pre-colonial ethical codes also prohibit intoxicants, this nullifies the aforementioned argument.[126] Outlining both of these understandings illuminates the complexity of alcohol consumption.

When engaging with the *Guru Granth Sahib*, "the most authoritative text of the Sikh tradition,"[127] Sandhu focuses on two hymns. The first provides an example of banned substances:

ਕਬੀਰ ਭਾਂਗ ਮਾਛੁਲੀ ਸੁਰਾ ਪਾਨਿ
ਜੋ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਖਾਂਹਿ ॥
ਤੀਰਥ ਬਰਤ ਨੇਮ ਕੀਏ ਤੇ ਸਭੈ
ਰਸਾਤਲਿ ਜਾਂਹਿ ॥੨੩੩॥

> Kabir: Those who consume cannabis, fish, liquor, and betel leaf; Lose the merit of pilgrimages, fasts, and rituals, and suffer in hell [rebirth] (Bhagat Kabir, GGS, 1377)[128]

[125] McLeod, H.W. Sikhs of the Khalsa: A history of the Rahit Maryada. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003 and Oberoi, H.S. The construction of religious boundaries: Culture, identity, and diversity in the Sikh tradition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
[126] Sandhu, p. 28.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

Gurbani[129] can be interpreted both in literal and metaphorical ways, and this excerpt must be dealt with in a similar manner. From one angle, this passage could be interpreted as an outward prohibition, a worldly description of what may happen if one consumes these substances, but metaphorically it is a call to cultivate the inner self as opposed to *only* performatively engaging in external endeavours.

Prominent Sikh academic Professor Sahib Singh's interpretation illuminates a very different understanding by urging individuals to consider the whole context. In his interpretation of the verse he states:

> But there is a strange game going on in the world. People come to the shrine in the morning, fasting and performing various other rituals. However, these are accompanied by disorders. Kabir Ji says here that joining the *Sangat* of a "*Sadhu*" does not mean that as long as you sit in the *Satsang*, as long as you do *Ram Ram*, you can come from there and take part in the vices as well. These pilgrimages [and] fasts are all in vain if a human being does not return from a vicious life.[130]

This hymn is not saying that these substances specifically are *prohibited*, but rather those who externally perform rituals (e.g. pilgrimage) and present as outwardly devoted individuals are sometimes the same individuals who engage in misdeeds and contradict themselves later. "Pilgrims [and] fasts are all in vain if a human being does not return from a vicious life." As alcohol consumption is outlined as one of the activities that renders external endeavours moot, I am not arguing that this text is advocating for the consumption of alcohol, but rather that it is important to keep in mind the metaphorical interpretation and the context of these lines.

[129] Compilation of transcendent poetry, writing, and reflections of Sikh Gurus and other mystics to reflect the universality of Oneness, often refers to the hymns of the *Guru Granth Sahib*
[130] Singh, Sahib. "Punjabi Translation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib along with Commentary and Word Meanings," http://www.gurugranthdarpan.net/1377.html

The second hymn elaborates on the adverse impact of liquor:

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਃ ੩ ॥
ਮਾਣਸੁ ਭਰਿਆ ਆਣਿਆ ਮਾਣਸੁ
ਭਰਿਆ ਆਇ ॥
ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਮਤਿ ਦੂਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਬਰਲੁ
ਪਵੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਇ ॥
ਆਪਣਾ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨ ਪਛਾਣਈ
ਖਸਮਹੁ ਧਕੇ ਖਾਇ ॥
ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਦਰਗਹ
ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥
ਝੂਠਾ ਮਦੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਪੀਚਈ ਜੇ ਕਾ
ਪਾਰਿ ਵਸਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਸਚੁ ਮਦੁ ਪਾਈਐ
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਆਇ ॥
ਸਦਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੈ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਹੈ ਮਹਲੀ
ਪਾਵੈ ਥਾਉ ॥੧॥

One has a full bottle, and another fills the cup. By drinking [liquor], intelligence departs and madness enters the mind. One cannot distinguish between oneself and others, and endures suffering. By drinking, one forgets the Beloved, and is punished in the heavenly court. If it is within your power, do not consume the false intoxicant. Nanak: The one who meets the True Guru, attains the Eternal intoxicant. (Guru Amar Das, GGS, 554)[131]

Liquor is used metaphorically here to describe the many intoxicants that can influence how one engages in day-to-day life. The false intoxicant here is understood as a substance or liquid to be drunk that causes intelligence to depart and madness to enter. The *true* intoxicant is the Divine. Although this is not a direct prohibition against alcohol, the role of consuming alcohol (or any such substance) to the extent that it inhibits an individual from meeting the "True Guru" is cautioned against.

Sandhu also takes into account the two paths of human existence, as described in

[131] Sandhu, p. 28.

the Sikh worldview, the path of the *Manmukh* and *Gurmukh*. The former is the understanding of the existential nature of human suffering and the latter elaborates on how to alleviate the suffering one endures as part of human existence. The *Manmukh* is focused on the ego and its thirst for satisfaction is blocked from experiencing fulfillment primarily through the five thieves. Alcohol is understood as a "lustful indulgence."[132]

> Within this body are hid five thieves; Lust, anger, greed, attachment, and the ego. They steal [the awareness of] the inner nectar; But in ego we know not and no one hears our grief. (Guru Amar Das, GGS, 600)[133]

Sandhu argues, "The path of the *Manmukh* ultimately results in the five thieves becoming ingrained in the psyche. In effect, the *Manmukh* functions habitually, rather than insightfully. For example, the *Manmukh* may develop a habituated response to self-medicate with alcohol or drugs in order to cope with her/his suffering, resulting in an addiction."[134] He understands the path of the *Manmukh* "as the Sikh perspective on the root cause of addiction (self-medicating to alleviate existential suffering), whereas the path of the *Gurmukh* can be viewed as the Sikh perspective on its cure (personal integration through self-realization)."[135] Although Sandhu's argument in relation to addiction makes sense, his goal of presenting the Sikh view of alcohol consumption, not addiction, is not accomplished. In relation to alcohol consumption specifically, he is simply stating that *lustful* consumption is advocated against.

In the entirety of his argument, it appears that Sandhu is claiming that any alcohol consumption is prohibited and bad and non-consumption is good. The simple solution

[132] Ibid., p. 29.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid., p. 30.

that could be drawn from his work is that individuals who have problems with alcohol are not adhering correctly to Sikhi as opposed to those who do not consume alcohol and are thus adhering correctly. However, the central thesis of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, *IkOankar* (1-Ness), advocates against binaries, moving away from normative and simplistic understandings of good and bad. It is important to reiterate again that this is not t argue that Sikhi promotes alcohol consumption, but is advocating for a more nuanced and in-depth analysis that moves beyond simple prohibition. This is simply another way of understanding and engaging with alcohol in the text, revealing that understanding problems with alcohol are not as simplistic as the good/bad or prohibited/acceptable binary may lead us to believe. By focusing only on the text, Sandhu fails to engage with lived Sikhi.

Although Sandhu has provided an interpretation for understanding the relationship between alcohol and Sikhi, this is a moment to think about who is being considered in this interpretation. Although textual references are made, lived Sikhi is left out of the conversation. According to the Sikh Research Institute's 2017 study, "Who is a Sikh?," out of the almost nine hundred individuals surveyed, in a "check all that apply" question, 84.53% of individuals stated that a Sikh was simply "an adherent of the Sikh faith" while only 42.89% stated that a Sikh is an initiated member,[136] illuminating the varyied understandings of how to define who is a Sikh. It is best to understand Sikh identity as not solely text-based but rather as falling on a "circular spectrum…the western influence and desire for limiting definitions has created a non-holistic interpretation and we must break away from the desire to pursue a black-and-white interpretation of

[136] Singh, Harinder and Parveen Kaur. "Who is a Sikh? State of the Panth, Report 1." The Sikh Research Institute: New Jersey, 2017.

something that is as unique as the individual."[137]

If individuals do not adhere to the standards of what "counts" as a Sikh, much of the population is left out of the conversation. Such individuals are represented in my interviews, individuals who may not outwardly appear Sikh or have a full understanding of the history and texts but identify with the faith, have inherited its history, and have grown up immersed in the faith in unique ways. Sikhi is not practiced in a vacuum. Taking the impact of their lived reality into consideration is crucial to understanding the community's relationship with alcohol.

2.2 *Dukh Daru Sukh Rog Bhaiya*

Religion and culture are not separate entities but are fluid categories that engage with each other. A mode of engaging with understandings of Sikhi in the text and lived Sikhi is looking to instances in which alcohol is mentioned in less overt ways apart from what has already been outlined. In Panjabi the words most commonly used for alcohol are *sharaab*, deriving from the Persian, roughly translating to "the water of mischief," and *daru*, which can be translated as "remedy" or "medicine." In everyday parlance, alcohol is referred to as *daru* and was the only word used by my interviewees when speaking about alcohol in Panjabi but the term also plays a role in Sikh texts. The *Asa Ki Var*, a collection of 24 *pauris* (stanzas) written by *Guru Nanak* in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, refers to *daru* (medicine) in the following *pauri* (stanza) (12):

[137] Ibid., p. 27.

ਸਲੋਕੁ ਮਃ ੧ ॥
ਦੁਖ ਦਾਰੂ ਸੁਖੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਭਇਆ ਜਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਤਾਮਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥
ਤੂੰ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣਾ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਾ ਹਉ ਕਰੀ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥੧॥
ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ ॥
ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਜਾਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਤਾ ਅਕਲ ਕਲਾ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ॥
ਤੂੰ ਸਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸੁਆਲਿਉ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੋ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਇਆ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੀਆ ਬਾਤਾ ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰਣਾ ਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ॥੨॥

Suffering has become medicine and comfort the disease, (because) when there is comfort then (Creator's remembrance is) not there.
You are all-capable Creator, I am not. When I do something (on my own), it does not happen.
I adore! (You, the One) pervading in the creation! Your end cannot be known.
In the creation is (Your) light (and) in (Your) light is the creation; (You) are all-pervading as a constant power.
You are the true Owner, (Your) praise is most beautiful; whoever did (praise, that individual) reached across.
Nanak's statement: Accounts of the Creator (are unfathomable); whatever is to be done, (the Creator) continues to do that. [138]

Here Guru Nanak says that suffering has become the medicine, or remedy, and happiness, or comfort, a disease. Suffering as detailed in this verse refers to various spiritual ailments including psychological, mental, and emotional suffering. Suffering from painful spiritual ailments is stated to be the cure for the ailments themselves. "When there is too much pleasure or sense indulgence, or even just a sense of security and comfort, these things can actually become maladies, because when we are comfortable or when we have been swallowed by those sense indulgences, there is no longing for connection with *IkOankar*. Guru Nanak says this suffering or pain is the cure because it allows us to reflect, it lifts us out of our indulgence and into introspection."[139] The pain is

[138] Singh, Harinder et al. "The Guru Granth Sahib Project." New Jersey: The Sikh Research Institute, 2020.
[139] Ibid.

then contextualized to be located within the expansive nature of the transcendental Creator, making our pain appear small, "situating all of us not within our suffering, but within *all* of creation as a whole, within the Vastness of the Divine."[140] This is an illumination of the awe that is present even in destruction.

This stanza speaks to the 1-Ness of *dukh* and *sukh,*[141] one cannot exist without the other. They are not in opposition or a binary but are one. Although these terms can be understood as oppositional, ultimately, according to the Sikh paradigm of 1-Ness, they are all a part of the same grand makeup. *Sukh* allows us to forget that we are a part of the vastness but from *dukh* lessons are learned, allowing individuals the time and space to undergo the process of self-realization towards the path of the *Gurmukh*.

The varied understanding of the term *daru*, both as alcohol and as a remedy, speaks to the changing understanding of the term in the Panjabi-Sikh context. It is important to note that the intoxicant here is not being referred to as the remedy but suffering is seen as the intoxicant (*dukh daru* = suffering is the remedy; *dukh daru* = suffering is the intoxicant). In both cases suffering is something that one must be liberated from and, once liberation is attained, one can become closer to 1-Ness. This is not to say that consumption of alcohol is the remedy but rather speaks to the manipulation of the term from text to lived Sikhi, illuminating the engagement between religion and culture.

These varied understandings perfectly reveal the discrepancy between what is written in the text versus what is practiced, the intimate tie between religion and culture, as opposed to the strict oppositional binary the two are thought of occupying, particularly

[140] Ibid.
[141] *Sukh* is not to be confused with *Chardi Kala*, which can be understood as having an ascendant spirit as opposed to "eternal optimism" as it is popularly translated as the latter fails to take into account the process to attain the optimism. It should also not be confused with *Anand* (bliss).

when discussing the status of alcohol in the community. In order to unpack the oppositional and monolithic understandings of these terms, we must also unpack how culture has come to be understood in such a way as well.

2.3 The Construct of Religion & Culture

Religion and culture are commonly understood as fixed, natural categories. By analysing problems with alcohol within the Sikh-Canadian community, my research critiques the notion that Panjabi culture is to blame and is in opposition to what Sikhi advocates. A tendency to blame the culture prevents a discursive discussion around the lived realities of racialized communities.

As evidenced from studies in the diaspora,[142] problem drinking continues to be an issue within the Panjabi-Sikh community. Although problem drinking is not particular to one community, what is shared among its members is a collective history. The colonial influence on defining and understanding both Panjabi-Sikh culture as static and uniform is perpetuated in a myriad of ways in the diaspora. Although problems with alcohol existed before the arrival of the British, the influence of colonial rule on the colonies has left a lasting imprint. Investigating the façade of culture and the ways in which these normative understandings pervade the contemporary context allows a deeper understanding of how problem drinking within the community occurs in different forms.

In understanding why problems with drinking persist among the second-generation in Canada, research has pointed to the liberal attitudes towards alcohol consumption in the

[142] Morjaria-Keval, A. and Keval, H., 2015; Agic, Branka and Robert E. Mann, and Marianne Kobus-Matthews, 2011; Kunz, Jean Lock and Norman Giesbrecht, 1999; Cochrane, Raymond and Sukhwant Bal, 1990.

countries that Panjabi-Sikhs re-locate to and the fact that some "may resort to alcohol and drugs to cope with the tension that they may experience as a result of being overwhelmed by living in two disparate cultures."[143] However, what is particularly interesting is the transportation of "culture" or "norms" from Panjab to the diaspora. Notions such as: alcohol allows a man to work harder and longer; social drinking as a part of male bonding culture; and the endorsement of alcohol use as part of Panjabi-Sikh masculinity. Alcohol plays a vital role "in the socialization of Punjabi males, they internalize the cultural belief that alcohol consumption is indeed an aspect of their masculinity."[144] The ways in which contemporary understandings of masculinity have been formed in the Panjabi-Sikh context was explored in chapter one but deserves further emphasis here. Understanding alcohol consumption as a part of Panjabi male culture and the emphasis on culture and gender warrants further investigation into how homogenous definitions came to be known.

In understanding how the term "culture" can be defined, we can look to Bruce Lincoln's "Culture" in the "Guide to the Study of Religion" anthology. Lincoln grapples with culture as a product of human activity and, simultaneously, a (re)-producer of "the other." Individuals with a "specific collective identity make distinctive items of culture which are transmitted to successive generations, imbue more people with the same identity, and they in turn make more items of a similar sort, which they transmit to further generations, in a cycle of symbiotic co-production that has neither clear beginning nor foreseeable end."[145]

[143] Nayar, K.E. The Sikh diaspora in Vancouver: Three generations amid tradition, modernity, and multiculturalism. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Lincoln, Bruce, "Culture" in *Guide to the Study of Religion*. London: Cassell, 2000.

Understandings of culture "emerge from processes in which people are slowly educated by those around them to make judgments the group considers appropriate about a great host of things, and to make meta-judgements about the relative value of their own and others' judgements." [146] With each judgment, what is deemed correct or good is evaluated and defined. Those whose judgments are outside of what the group understands as normative are considered outsiders.

Lincoln argues that culture consists of aesthetics (all practice and discourse concerned with "taste," that is, "the evaluation of sensory experience and all matters of form and style") and ethics ("abstract discussion of moral tenets, concrete practice and casuistic evaluations regarding specific behaviours performed by and upon specific categories of person").[147] There is also a third category: the religious, a concern with that which transcends the human, but Lincoln hesitates to concretely include religion because the role of religion varies over time, space, and social stratum. "In certain historical instances, it has been displaced and relegated to a subordinate, even marginal position."[148] What religion does "is to invest specific human preferences with transcendent status by misrepresenting them as revealed truths, primordial traditions, divine commandments and so forth. In this way, it insulates them against most forms of debate and critique, assisting their transmission from one generation to another as part of sacred canon."[149] However, it is important to note that "it is not religious difference that leads to conflict and barbarism, but the attempt of state and church to enforce religion unanimity and to use religion as a central instrument for the consolidation of their power

[146] Ibid., p. 410.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid., p. 416.
[149] Ibid.

that does so."[150] With the Enlightenment period and secularism taking over many institutions, Lincoln asks, what happens when religion is no longer able to protect hegemonic preferences by cloaking them in a fictive transcendence? Religion can promote transcendent truths by misrepresenting contingent human preferences, particularly in conjunction with a number of modifiers "family values," "traditional values" "time-honoured," or eternal values." However, giving primacy to culture over religion does not put an end to conflict but simply ensures that a culture's conflicts with religion will assume an ethical or aesthetic character rather than a religious one.

The singular definition and understanding of religion is exemplified in Jaswinder Singh Sandhu's work on a Sikh perspective on alcohol and drugs. He argues that Sikhi strictly prohibits alcohol consumption. Such an understanding not only paints the *Guru Granth Sahib* as a rulebook but also privileges a monolithic, singular definition of how to practice Sikhi.

In attempting to understand who decides what gets counted as belonging to categories of religion and culture, we look to how these terms have been influenced by history. Understanding the role colonialism, the struggle for independence, and the subsequent re-colonization that occurs in the homeland and diaspora illuminates how colonial bodies shape definitions and how these definitions are passed down.

To understand how colonialism has influenced the definition of culture, we examine how colonial powers created popular narratives depicting communities as inherently backwards or traditional, placing them in opposition to the advanced colonial way of life. However, this assignment of certain communal characteristics as natural or inherent has been contested by Himani Bannerji who argues that there is "nothing natural

[150] Ibid., p. 418.

or primordial about cultural identities, religious or otherwise."[151] Using "culture" as an explanation benefits colonial systems as it allows for forgetting social relations and political identities that are complex and never fixed. Communities are then understood as unified, naturally existing groups rather than a product of different political forces interacting over time.

Pre-colonial societies were not governed by a single authority. Often the existence of age groups, clans, women's groups, chiefs, etc. was present.[152] Colonizers deemed which individuals or groups held collective authority and authorized their version of custom as "genuine" and "sought to construct native custom as unchanging and singular."[153] However, the groups that were often deemed to be the collective authority represented a privileged subgroup of the community. Through attempts to gain independence, colonized communities embraced these constructed versions of culture, custom, and tradition. Independence was viewed as a chance to go back to the 'way things were' before colonization, to their authentic culture and values. However, the culture of such a large group of people cannot be reduced to a single entity. The notion of a unified culture did not exist, rather, only those practices which were given authority over others, those which best held power relations in place.

The embrace and romanticization of the past, by both colonial governments and colonized bodies continues in the diaspora. Bannerji argues that there is a re-colonization that occurs when people of former colonies immigrate to the west. "We put ourselves

[151] Bannerji, H. *The dark side of the nation: Essays on multiculturalism, nationalism and gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000.
[152] Mamdani, M. (2001). Beyond settler and native as political identities: Overcoming the political legacy of colonialism. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 43 (4), 651-664.
[153] Ibid., p. 655.

back into socio-political spaces closely resembling a colony."[154] By resisting assimilation and attempting to gain power within the limited space allotted, the colonized adopt the cultural differences the state uses to 'other' them and use them to create a collective identity, one that is often in opposition to western culture in order to seek legitimacy. This situating of other cultures in opposition to western cultures perpetuates ideas that the former colonies are traditional while the west is portrayed as modern. Bannerji suggests that "the social spaces of countries they migrate from or flee as refugees become a state of mind rather than a place in history"[155] and the complex historical struggles are reduced to merely the static traditions of a backwards people.

In perpetuating the discourse of supposedly backwards culture of formerly colonized bodies, post-colonial scholar Sherene Razack suggests that the concepts of culture that are promoted may not be accurate and are frequently the norms of privileged and elite members of minority communities.[156] Such recognition allows for a space in which members of minority communities can "rethink notions of what it is to 'be at home' in a 'culture' [or nation] and to redefine notions of 'cultural loyalty, betrayal, and 'respect' in ways that do not privilege the experiences of men."[157] Furthermore, as members of these communities are positioned as "native informants," the culture they understand to be pervasive amongst all their people may be particular to certain individuals' experiences but is universalized, as they believe their experience encapsulate *all* experiences within their community. This argument is not a call to omit discussions of culture when

[154] Bannerji, p.157.
[155] Bannerji, p. 167.
[156] Razack, S. A violent culture or culturalized violence? Feminist narratives of sexual violence against South Asian women. *Studies in Practical Philosophy*, 3(1), 80-104, 2003.
[157] Narayan, U. *Dislocating cultures: Identities, traditions and Third World feminism*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

discussing social ills such as problem drinking, it is an attempt to understand the problematic ways in which culture is demonized, how social and political contexts are forgotten, particularly in their influence on the contemporary context.

In the contemporary Canadian context, culture has been used as a replacement for arguments that were previously rooted in racial differences. Razack's discourse on the "culturalization of racism" illuminates ways in which racism is perpetuated through the discussion of culture. Instead of speaking of a racialized individual's race, the focus is placed on their culture. Racialized individuals are understood as socially inadequate or culturally underdeveloped. Although this shift is assumed to be well-intentioned shift, the discourse that accompanies it remains the same. In the diaspora, concepts such as "multiculturalism" and "diversity," function in such a manner. As Razack argues, "The official discourse on multiculturalism intended as a way of managing cultural diversity has in essence constructed a fragmented identity for Canada, one that is hierarchically organized, producing insiders, and outsiders."[158] It is important to remember that the two dominant cultures in Canada are French and English. White ethnicity is therefore deemed normative and has the privilege of being invisible. As culture is understood by the state as static, one internalizes this homogeneity and binary. Therefore, in the process of self-definition, one understands everything outside of being "typical" to their culture as Canadian. When reform is demanded by a marginalized group, reducing these demands to "cultural demands" functions as a defense mechanism against the real demands that empowered minorities could make in such a "democratic" system. The aforementioned (and continued) view of the colonized people as participating in an unchanging "culture"

[158] Razack, 2003.

in contrast to the dynamic western culture functions to perpetuate the discourse of the colonized body as backwards.

South Asian diaspora scholar Amrita Handa argues that through the discourse of apparent tolerance we learn that, although minority groups are "permitted" to retain their cultural identity, they must only do so as long as it does not conflict with the dominant social and legal order. Ultimately, minority communities must accept and internalize the norms and values of the dominant group. Handa "maintains that most of such discussion are formulated on the basis of a reductionist notion of culture whereby culture is taken to mean values, beliefs, knowledge and customs, all of which exist in a timeless vacuum outside of patriarchy, racism, imperialism and colonialism."[159] Differing identities such as Sikh-Canadian are understood as "contrasting and oppositional categories. These oppositions are seen to be mutually exclusive."[160]

I am not arguing that alcohol consumption is not a part of Panjabi culture, but rather that it is important to understand what narratives individuals are engaging with and perpetuating when they simply blame "the culture" for why problems with alcohol exist. Through the historical background elaborated on in chapter one, we can point to key events that have contributed to forming contemporary Panjabi-Sikh identity and how this history is intergenerationally passed down in the diaspora. Although there exists a uniformly understood religion and culture binary around understandings of alcohol where the former is normatively understood to prohibit it and the latter promotes it, the

[159] Handa, Amrita. *Of Silk Saris and Mini Skirts: South Asian Girls Walk the Tightrope of Culture.* Toronto: Women's Press, 2003.
[160] Puar, J.K. "Resituating Discouorses of 'Whiteness' and 'Asianness' in Northern England." *Socialist Review* 24, no 1/2: 21-53, 1994.

touchstones of the idea of a unified, monolithic culture are deeply connected to the intergenerational trauma of the events laid out in chapter one.

2.4 Intergenerational Inheritance of Constructs

In Shruti Devgan's "A Haunted Generation Remembers," she speaks to second-generation Sikhs about their understandings and the lasting effects of the events of 1984 and its aftermath. The second-generation is "haunted…living in ever-present traces of the violent events of the past…second-generation Sikhs carry "postmemories" of 1984, literary scholar Marianne Hirsch's term for describing the experiences of descendants of trauma who "remember" only by means of stories, often fragmented and half-told, as well as the images and behaviors with which they grew up."[161] One of Devgan's interviewees stated that although "he grew up in a Sikh context doing *paath* (reading from the Sikh Holy Scripture) and *kirtan* (singing of hymns)…it was the knowledge of 1984 that led him into a journey of emotional connection to the Sikh faith."[162] Doing the work of remembering functions "as a pathway to understand their [own] community's long history of persecution and alienation in both national and diasporic contexts."[163] In the in-between space that the diaspora occupies as both part of Panjab and the new country, remembering functions to construct "a more differentiated, nuanced, and diffuse set of memories of 1984 than dominant representations."[164]

Similarly, in Aanchal Malhotra's "Remnants of a Separation: A History of the

[161] Devgan, Shruti. "A Haunted Generation Remembers." *Contexts*, 17, no. 4, p. 36–41, 2018.
[162] Ibid., p. 40.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.

Partition Through Material Memory," she speaks to the collective nature of familial memories. These memories are "resting between fact and fiction: this is the kind of memory passed down through one's genealogy, a generational memory that I – and many others, being descendants of those men and women who witnessed the Partition – have inherited…and though I was simply a listener, it left in my heart a sadness that didn't really belong to me. How was I able to feel an emotion created by an incident I did not witness, how had it transferred to me, how could I have made it mine?"[165]

These memories and traumas are intimately part of the descendant's makeup, inherited through generations. The methods by which ancestors have understood and coped with these traumas are learned and inherited as well, in some cases passively and at other times actively. The intergenerational inheritance of memory, trauma, and coping mechanisms is evident through conversation with the second-generation, a group displaced from the homeland but intimately tied to it.

Conclusion

Simply blaming a culture as the rationale for why problems with alcohol occur in the community prevents discursive conversations rooted in the influences of history. Understanding that religion and culture are not fixed entities that exist separate from each other takes into account the lived entanglement between the two. Considering the role history and politics have played in creating what we contemporarily know as Panjabi-Sikh identity allows us to understand its multi-faceted nature. Moving beyond Sikhi as

[165] Malhotra, Aanchal. *Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition Through Material Memory*. London: Hurst Publishers, 2017.

simply advocating for the prohibition of alcohol and understanding the metaphorical nature of the *Guru Granth Sahib* allows for a more nuanced engagement with the text. Moving from text to lived experience, understanding how popular cultural terms are used in the religious texts, and how meanings change in lived contexts, allows us to engage with the lived reality of religion, speaking to the relationship between religion and culture, two categories that can not be so easily separated.

Disrupting the culture-religion binary also requires a breakdown of the construct of culture rooted in colonialism to understand how it is transmitted in the diaspora. The cultural identity that individuals place on Panjab is largely formed out of historical events shaped by hypermasculinity, colonialism, and the traumas of immigration that are passed down to individuals encountering these concepts in their own ways. Interviewees illuminate the ways in which culture and religion are not static through how they each forge their own paths. Sikhi and Panjabi culture are not monolithic entities that are simply anti- or pro-alcohol, but are heuristic categories. Although interviewees at times fall into the trap of separating religion and culture, they also inadvertently illuminate the intricate tie between the two.

CHAPTER THREE: INTERVIEWS

Over the course of two months, I conducted sixteen open-ended interviews with twelve females and four male second-generation Panjabi Sikhs residing in Canada. Interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to two hours. Although each interviewee was asked the same questions, other questions were sometimes prompted based on conversation. Interviewees were recruited through community networks that I had already established since moving to Ontario in 2018. These networks primarily included grassroots, non-profit organizations and snowball sampling from these individuals. Ages varied from twenty-two to thirty four, encapsulating multigenerational voices. The majority of interviewees reside in urban communities in Ontario and the remainder are from Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia.

The diversity of understanding, lived experience, and social location of my interviewees gives insight into the complexities of the community. However, it is important to note that all but two of the interviewees belong to upper caste *Jat* (typically farmers and landowners) families and all had or were in the process of obtaining a University degree, speaking to the caste and social privileges the interviewees possess.

Interviewees were all born in Canada and have parents immigrated to Canada. Their arrival in Canada took place between 1975 and 1996. All of the 16 interviewees indicated that their parents were born in India. Half of them, without prompting, indicated that they were specifically from Panjab, speaking to the rupture between Indian and Panjabi identity. In some cases, interviewees began by only saying Panjab but later clarified the country of origin. One interviewee's parents resided on the border of Panjab

and Northern Rajasthan and one interviewee's parents were born in India but grew up in Kenya and later immigrated to Canada.

When asked why their parents chose to move to Canada, almost all responded: "for the same reason all parents do, for a better life…a better future…for their kids." Marriage, familial ties, and employment were other reasons given. Often these reasons were combined, for example, for a better life and because other family members were already here. Another common answer revolved around the events that transpired in 1984. The 1984 Sikh Genocide forced many to flee their homes and seek refuge abroad. Those who I interviewed said their parents, often fathers, left because of "what was going on back home… the turmoil of persecution, what they had seen…people being killed, murdered, raped. They're not too open about it." One interviewee, whose father was afraid of being "disappeared" by the Indian government, spoke in vague, abstract terms when describing his father's relationship with his Canadian identity:

> He was part of like, you know, *those* days. So, he had to leave [Panjab] at one point because the threat was coming to his family. I mean they still presume that he's alive, wanted somewhere. So he's hiding… essentially he has not openly spoken about it…I mean he went through a CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) interview and they cleared him, but he has that paranoia in the back of the head, which is not unfounded because they *have* shown up at the door randomly when like my dad's having a conversation with someone and suddenly CSIS shows up (Manmohan).

Although his father is a citizen of Canada, he still remains in unknown territory, permanently under investigation by the land he now calls home due to his allegedly extremist ties,[166] and unable to set foot in the land he once called home.

[166] A label that some have argued is used to silence Sikh advocacy. For more resources on anti-Sikh violence in 1980s India, as well as its aftereffects on the diaspora, see: R. Chopra, "Commemorating Hurt:

As opposed to attempting to homogenize and categorize participants' answers into themes, I have chosen to focus on five interviews that paint differing experiences of second-generation Sikh-Canadians. The ways in which they engage with their Sikhi, Panjabi identity, and their worldviews illuminate complex ways of understanding problems with alcohol within the community.

3.1 Understandings of Sikhi & Panjabi Identity

When asked "what does being Sikh mean to you," participants spoke widely about equality, getting rid of the caste system, *seva* (selfless service), 1-Ness, being a student/learning and going to the *Gurdwara* (the Sikh place of community, learning, and worship) every Sunday. Notably, many interviewees wrestled with ideas around Sikhi as a religion, culture, and source of spirituality. Some interviewees did not place importance on following the "rules," knowing the historical stories, or having read the text in its entirety, but rather saw Sikhi as being instrumental in shaping their values and providing guidance.

When asked if they self-identify as Sikhs, 15 of 16 of the interviewees said yes. The level to which interviewees identified with their Sikhi varied from 2 out of 10 to 7 to 8 out of 10. In the recruitment process the only requirements for interviewees were that

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Memorializing Operation Blue Star," *Sikh Formations* 6, no. 2 (2010): 119–152.; Cynthia Keppley Mahmood, *Fighting for Faith and Nation Dialogues with Sikh Militants* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Ravleen Kaur, "Reliving the 1984 Sikh Killings: What the Media Couldn't Tell You 33 Years Ago," *Youth Ki Avaaz*, June 7, 2015, https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2015/06/1984- sikh-massacre/; Amarjit Singh Walia, "I Lived through the Sikh Riots – And 30 Years Later, I'm Not Ready to Forgive or Forget," *Quartz*, October 30, 2014, https://qz.com/india/289671/ i-lived-through-the-sikh-riots-and-30-years-later-im-not-ready-to-forgive-or-forget/ ; Stewart Bell, "'Match. Denied': Secret Documents Show Why CSIS Put 2 Canadians on No-Fly List," July 8, 2020, https://globalnews.ca/news/7147226/secret-documents-csis-canadians-on-no-fly-list/.

individuals must be Canadian, at least 18 years of age, belong to the second-generation (individuals born in Canada with at least one parent born outside of Canada), and they had to self-identify as Sikh. Level of adherence or religiosity was not a priority, rather, participants simply had to have grown up in a Sikh household. The individual who did not identify as Sikh grew up in a Sikh household but was taken away from her family and grew up in foster care and self-identified as more spiritual than Sikh.

Understandings of Sikhi and Panjabi culture varied among participants. Some understood Sikhi as adhering to the rules, some understood Sikhi as informing their values, and others understood Sikhi through engaging with the primary text, and its metaphorical nature. Panjabi culture is understood through rituals, language, and social relations. Caste, the Panjabi music industry, pride, and ego were also invoked, particularly when speaking about problems with alcohol. Moving beyond the relationship between alcohol and Sikh and Panjabi identity, individuals began to peel back the layers of what influences these categories and how they are defined. Religion and culture were spoken about in conjunction with each other when history, politics, and intergenerational trauma were discussed, speaking to their entanglement. Definitions of Sikhi and Panjabi culture differed among participants, blurring the boundaries of what fits into either category and challenging how these definitions have changed over time and how they are currently understood.

3.2 Sangtar[167]

Early childhood experiences and familial influence played a significant role in how interviewees engaged with both their faith and their relationship with alcohol. The family's relationship to Sikhi and their consumption and understanding of the status of alcohol influenced how their children engaged with the two. As the children moved away from home to university, their experiences broadened, including some being directly exposed to alcohol for the first time. This experience with alcohol consumption provided them with insight into why the individuals in their community may drink, including to the normalization of alcohol consumption, the desire to fit in, and coping with stressful situations.

A young university student from Brampton, Sangtar was baptized[168] when he was eight years old and has been a practicing Sikh since. He pointed to his *sangat*, his community, the Gurdwara, and his parents as having a strong influence on his understanding of Sikhi. Reddit and SikhiWiki were noted as his prime secondary resources. When asked what being Sikh means to him, he focused on the "rules" as a large component of his Sikh identity.

[167] Names of interviewees have been changed.

[168] As described by Harleen Kaur in "Making Citizenship, Becoming Citizens: How Sikh Punjabi's Shaped the Exclusionary Politics of Belonging," to be baptized in Sikhi refers those who have pledged themselves to Sikh ideology and sovereignty through Khande ki Pahul or Amrit Sanchaar, the initiation into the order of the Khalsa, or sovereign Sikhs. Receiving Amrit requires the maintenance of a visible Sikh identity (*kes*, unshorn hair to respect natural and divine life; *kanga*, comb to maintain *kes; kara*, an iron bracelet historically used as a weapon in battle; *kirpaan*, sword to protect the Sikh tradition of physical readiness and promote radical notions of people-driven justice; and *kachhera*, long underwear to maintain modesty and discipline) and the daily practice of Sikh philosophy through meditation, service, and a commitment to realizing Oneness through practice of Gurbani.

> Making sure that everything you do is for the right reasons and following the religious, I wouldn't say rules, but the foundation that's been set…so like I was baptized when I was eight years old. So ever since then, like I've been practicing the religion and following like everything the right way.

When prompted to explain what he meant by the "right way," he stated,

> A lot of, I don't know how to describe them, but like, second-generation Sikhs, so people born in Canada or the States or anywhere out West, they start twisting the rules of Sikhi. Like one of the main things that we say is things like, you shouldn't have sexual partners before marriage or you shouldn't be eating meat and eggs and all that stuff. But then I know quite a few people who bend those rules because they say like, for example if a cookie or something has an egg in it, they would be like, I didn't eat an egg. Technically it was just part of the ingredients so I can do that. And then in terms of like, relationships and stuff, there's a lot of people that will have like a girlfriend or a boyfriend before getting married, which is cool but like, I think from my understanding of Sikhi like you're not supposed to unless you have the intent of getting married to that person.

Although at first Sangtar does not directly associate being a Sikh as someone who adheres to the "rules," he goes on to list what one can and cannot do if they are a follower and does eventually describe "the right way" of being a Sikh as someone who follows the rules. However, he is careful to always state that this is simply *his* understanding of Sikhi, indicating his awareness of the myriad of ways of practicing and understanding the tradition while still clearly outlining what he understands as the right way to practice Sikhi.

In relation to what the tradition says about alcohol consumption, he believes that Sikhi strictly prohibits it:

> For myself, I would say as a Sikh you should be following what the Gurus laid out for us. So I don't think you should be drinking or eating meat and

> stuff, but then there's a lot of people who think that, I don't know their exact thought process, but they have their reasons for like not following it and then they think it's okay. I don't want to say like, if you're a Sikh, you shouldn't drink but I think you should sit down and see how serious you are about your religion. I guess if you're following like a few things of the religion, but then you're doing all these other things like drinking, eating meat and stuff, then like you have to really think like what's the point of following a *part* of it? Like you should follow the full thing to get the full benefit. Right?[169]

Again, Sangtar outlines what he believes are the *rules* of Sikhi, clearly stating what one can and cannot do in order to receive the benefits. Although he states that, in his understanding of Sikhi, alcohol consumption is not allowed, he said that consumption is "definitely growing in the Sikh community" and equated people's move away from Sikhi as the reason behind the problem. Young Sikhs "don't know why we do things. They don't know why we're keeping our hair, why we don't eat, meat, why we don't drink alcohol." He believes that when young Sikhs start questioning these practices, they begin to experiment and do not understand why engaging in those activities is frowned upon in Sikhi. They also see examples of other individuals in the community who engage in similar behavior and rationalize their behaviour that way.

Sangtar sees this shift to increased alcohol consumption as a departure from his understanding of traditional Sikhi. When young individuals within the community are unaware of why their faith tells them to follow certain practices and they see others within the faith breaking those rules, they find justifications to break the rules themselves. This shift away from rule-based Sikhi towards finding spaces in which individuals can still engage in activities that others may consider prohibited speaks to the myriad of ways Sikhi is lived. Sangtar is unintentionally playing into a binary of what is

[169] I have intentionally kept the "likes" used by my interviewees, capturing their authentic voice and pointing to the generation they belong to.

and is not considered Sikh. Simply attributing increases in problems with alcohol as "incorrectly" following Sikhi fails to consider the social situations of those individuals. As outlined in chapter two, when we forget that individuals do not live in a vacuum devoid of engagement with history and politics, we fall into the trap of simply blaming categories we understand as static, such as religion and culture, or in this case, a failure to adhere to a certain way of practicing religion.

Along with a shift away from Sikhi, he pointed to two other main factors: drinking to fit in and drinking to cope with stress.

> One is like, going to events where everybody's drinking and then you feel out of place. That's a huge thing. People don't want to feel judged. That's with anything…And then the second is just like forgetting about their problems...So like obviously as a university student you don't have like *huge* life problems but you still have stress from like school or like if you went through a breakup or something like that...Also if there's like home stress. So like one of my friends once, he was like fighting with his parents and stuff. He hadn't gone home for like two months, whereas like before that he'd go every couple of weeks. So that was like really affecting him. And then on the weekends he was here [at University]. So there was a combination of both, like having stress from somewhere else in your life and also being on campus on the weekend where there's like social events that people are drinking at.

Sangtar's secondary factors add nuance to his primary understanding of problems with alcohol stemming from an individual's inability to follow Sikhi the right way. However, his understanding of Sikhi as "by the rules" pushes him into a binary. Those who follow the rules are deemed good and those who do not follow his understanding of the rules are bad.

Sangtar did not grow up in an alcohol-laden environment. Alcohol did not play a large role in his childhood as his immediate and extended family does not drink. The only

time alcohol was present in his childhood was at weddings. Now, in a university environment, he is exposed to it far more frequently, a fact which plays an active role in how he understands other's engagement with the substance. When asked about his parent's generation's relationship with alcohol, he said that a problem definitely exists but because adults have responsibilities towards their children, they are more controlled in their alcohol consumption. However, as his exposure was primarily to the drinking habits of second-generation individuals, this understanding was starkly different from other interviewees, as we will see later on.

Sangtar believes that his community has a problem with drinking because of their inability to follow the rules. As someone who did not grow up in an environment where alcohol was regularly consumed he had less insight into the lived reality of alcohol consumption in the home. His interactions with the substance were primarily observational and based on second-hand experiences from his friends. He sees this problem as not only influenced by the confusion of what Sikhi *says* and why it says so, but also the normalized by the alcohol consumption he sees taking place around him. He says individuals gravitate to alcohol so they do not feel judged or left out or to relieve and cope with stress related to a variety of personal issues.

3.3 Surinder

Analysing the various ways in which second-generation Canadians engage with Sikhi illuminates the diverse relationships they have with the tradition. Whether they are describing what they understand to be the religious, cultural, or spiritual aspects of Sikhi,

there is a shift among interviewees away from defining the tradition as focused on rules and towards understanding it as a guide for forming lived values. When the rules become the prime determinant for what falls into the category of being Sikh, those who understand Sikhi as a guide and do not follow the "rules" are seen as bad Sikhs. Understanding individuals who do not follow Sikhi through the "rules" as simply bad Sikhs or rule breakers obscures the various ways in which social problems exist.

In elaborating on her understanding of Sikhi, 25-year-old law student Surinder separated Panjabi and Sikh identity in the following way: "Sikhi brings a moral aspect to it and then being Panjabi is like, this is me culturally and this is what the fun aspect of me is." She described herself as a 7 or 8 out of 10 in terms of her religiosity.

When asked about social problems within the community, Surinder pointed to the role gatekeeping for determining what counts as authentic Sikhi, stating that some will "take one piece and claim that one piece is the entirety of Sikhi." Individuals who outwardly and physically present as Sikh sometimes take on this role of gatekeepers. Surinder recalls a story of a turban-wearing classmate, who claimed that she could not get married in a Gurdwara because she drinks and eats meat,

> This guy just told me I can't get married in a Gurdwara whereas I find the Gurdwara to be such a…like when I go to a Gurdwara that's where I feel at home…[and] this is the same guy that would go and like check out a girl's ass and comment on a girl's ass…and he's also the one that's fully told me, admitted to me, I'm jat, like *typical* jat for life, jat this, jat that, but then how are you Sikh?

It appears, for Surinder, that authority is granted to those who outwardly present as "true" Sikhs according to monolithic mainstream understandings, allowing these

individuals to implement those "rules" without following them themselves. These individuals may label themselves as native informants or those who have the best understanding of "true" Sikhi because they adhere to hegemonic representations of what a Sikh looks like. This is not to create a negative image of *all* who outwardly present as Sikh. Those individuals are also often the targets of hate from outsiders. Rather, it is to highlight that adhering to mainstream ideas of what a Sikh looks like does not always equate to having access to "correct" understandings of Sikhi.

Furthermore, Surinder invokes caste pride as something that is outwardly against what constitutes someone as a Sikh. Someone who claims that because she consumes alcohol and eats meat cannot get married at the Gurdwara but clings to their upper caste, *Jat* identity in a prideful manner cannot hold both those values. Here Surinder is illuminating that if one is truly to claim to be an authority of authentic Sikhi then they must adhere to both the prohibitions and the basic principles. Discriminating against one's caste goes against the basic tenets of Sikhi.

For Surinder, before her undergraduate studies, Sikhi was simply going to the Gurdwara on Sundays, something she passively did with her parents. But as she grew older, her relationship with Sikhi grew stronger as it brought her calm and helped with her anxiety.

> I think in the beginning of my life, I guess up until I was, um, before undergrad it was, it was more so my parents are Sikh, I go to the Gurdwara, that's how Sikhism is to me. But after, especially living alone, I think I really realized how important Sikhism is to me, in regards to feeling calm at the Gurdwara, feeling calm and listening to *paath*[170] and like how that makes me feel…so it's gotten better.

[170] Readings or recitations of the compositions of the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

In speaking about the conflation of Sikhi and Panjabi culture, Surinder finds it "interesting that alcohol is more of a cultural thing, like when we talk about alcohol, it's all cultural, but I guess maybe because of the fact that it's kind of moot when you're talking about it in Sikhi." Here Surinder is illuminating the understanding of alcohol as prohibited in Sikhi, which fails to engage the lived reality of the community's engagement with alcohol.

Surinder argued that having a drink "doesn't make [her] any less of a Sikh than someone who doesn't drink," and related it back to the gatekeepers who decide the "right way" of following Sikhi. In regards to her personal stance on alcohol consumption, she believes it is okay as long as consumption is controlled. "I think drinking alcohol is okay as long as it doesn't get out of hand." She described her personal relationship to alcohol as the same as any other millennial, relating it to stress and how alcohol can sometimes be used to cope. "I think, for me, it used to be let's have fun, let's drink, let's party. When I'm partying, I equate it with alcohol, like drinking…Recently I've found myself because of like the environment I'm in, like the stress and stuff I will gravitate to needing to go have a drink with friends." However, she is very conscious of this gravitation towards alcohol because she has family members who are addicted to alcohol and she does not want to go down that path.

Surinder describes how she is afraid of slipping into the same patterns as her *Fufar* (father's sister's husband) who has problems with alcohol. When speaking about the first-generation's relationship with alcohol she pointed to "people in [her] family…who will drink just to cope for certain things versus having fun. And then when our generation sees that we become comfortable in the presence of drinking because

we've seen some people do it in our families," a comment on the intergenerational impacts of problems with alcohol.

She was also afraid to embarrass herself or her family, stating that she thinks "that just comes from being in a Panjabi household. Like you're just ingrained to always think about others." Not only is she afraid of becoming dependent on alcohol but she is also worried about how such an issue would make her family look, speaking to the shame that is brought upon the family when an individual has a problem with alcohol. Currently, Surinder does not drink in front of her parents. They know she drinks but they do not talk about it. "So like it's happening in our household, but we're not going to talk about it because girls aren't supposed to drink."

Surinder highlights gendered differences in alcohol consumption in the community, the secret, unspoken, and often controlled engagement with alcohol of second-generation women compared to the dangerous binge drinking that second-generation men engage in. She says this gendered difference exists because "mothers protect their sons so much more than they would protect their daughters in regards to getting in trouble about anything or whatever so they [sons] don't have that fear because they always have someone having their back…boys binge drink more because they're not as scared of what might happen if they binge drink and their parents found out. I think girls are more scared of like getting caught drinking."

The lived reality in which alcohol consumption occurs moves beyond understanding associated problems as simply Panjabi issues. Understanding how someone is influenced by their familial situations and the social structures in which we are all situated, illuminates the intersections within which individuals live. Relegating

gendered differences as only Panjabi issues also obscures the immense misogyny of the West.

Although Surinder is not arguing that Sikhi advocates for the consumption of alcohol, she believes the consumption of the substance does not make her a bad Sikh or any less of a Sikh than someone who does not consume alcohol. Her understanding of Sikhi moves beyond prohibitions and permissions, illuminating a middle space that Sikhs can occupy. She defines her Sikhi through understanding and lived values. Her engagement with problems caused by alcohol moves beyond blaming Panjabi culture to engaging familial and gendered experiences.

3.4 Manmohan

As discussed in chapter two, religious and cultural beliefs and practices cannot easily be separated and are always engaging with and influencing each other. While caste is explicitly advocated against in Sikhi, it is still practiced by individuals in the community. Although often understood as a Panjabi practice, one's Sikh identity does not negate the practice of caste. As many Sikhs belong to the *jat* caste, caste does play a role in Sikh identity in many ways. Simply stating that Sikhi advocates against the practice of caste prevents conversations around the lived reality and influence of caste in the community.

The idea that to be Panjabi and belong to the *jat* caste means consuming alcohol is perpetuated through generations, a concept highlighted by Mahmohan, a 25-year-old Sikh-Canadian residing in Ontario. In explaining his relationship with Sikhi, Manmohan

focused on how it does not fit into what he believes are normative understandings of religion in the western sense.

> Each faith has a different focus, one of them focuses on like the body, like you have to cultivate the body to get to this point. Another one would be like, Oh, you have to control your mind. And another one is like you have to control your soul but Sikhi doesn't care about all of those. Those are just like little parlor tricks in the bigger scheme of things rather Sikhi is *prem* (love). Love is not good enough to describe what *prem* is, *prem* is something you feel, you can't describe it. And *Gurbani*[171] goes into length about that.

He believes that Sikhi is not simply something that is lived but is felt, engaging both the external and internal. He goes on to describe the principle of *IkOankar* (1-Ness) as something, like *prem,* which cannot fully be described "because then I'd be putting a limit on it but it's something without duality. There's no good or bad. There's no righteous or evil. There's only *Ik*, for me that is Sikhi."

Manmohan describes the second-generation's inability to maintain Sikh ethics as a reason for why problems with alcohol occur in the community. When individuals are younger their parents force them to practice Sikhi "when they don't understand anything, when they didn't choose the guru, amrit shako [take *amrit*[172]]." As these individuals get older, they remain unaware of why they practice Sikhi and thus fail to maintain its ethics. "And that's where these troubles come from in my opinion." Manmohan himself has never consumed alcohol but he did not think that Sikhi advocates against its consumption, simply stating that it is the perverse use of the substance that is the problem. As opposed to Sangtar, who focused on the rules, Manmohan is referring to the

[171] Compilation of transcendent poetry, writing, and reflections of Sikh Gurus and other mystics to reflect the universality of Oneness, often refers to the hymns of the *Guru Granth Sahib*.
[172] Elaborated on extensively in footnote 3.

internal, *IkOankar* and *prem,* and engaging with these principles directly through *Gurbani*, speaking to how varying understandings of Sikhi can occur.

In addition to not understanding or maintaining Sikh ethics, Mahmohan speaks about caste. Most Sikhs belong to the upper *jat* caste of farmers and landowners.

> So some of the older people, what I've seen essentially is the *Jat* mentality is that if someone tells me it's this way, I will a hundred percent stubbornly defend this way and tell you any other way is wrong. So kind of the stubbornness or this agitation of not having this open mindedness when it comes to *Gurbani*, because it's putting a limitation on things…That's where you get the imbalance between male and female kind of stuff. I mean all the practices that we kind of see now are just extensions of *Jat* culture.

Again invoking engagement with *Gurbani*, Manmohan argues that individuals who have engaged with and believe Sikhi to be correctly practiced one way are unable to understand any other interpretation. Manmohan attributes this stubbornness to "*Jattvaad*" (*Jatness*) and links it to ego. Individuals "don't reach out for help because of ego." Ego serves not only to encourage excessive drinking but also prevents individuals from reaching out for help and being authentic about their struggles.

Growing up, Manmohan saw what he described as both sides of the relationship with alcohol in the community. Because his paternal grandfather had a problem with alcohol, Manmohan's father did not drink but he describes his mother's side of the family as "proper *Jat,*" engaging in excessive alcohol consumption. There was a sentiment that to be Panjabi and to express one's "*Jatness*" means to excessively drink, which was strongly tied to expressing the *correct* kind of masculinity. Manmohan blamed "*Jattvaad*" for everything that is astray in the Panjabi-Sikh community.

In understanding the intergenerational influence of problems with alcohol, Manmohan spoke of how the first generation's relationship impacts the second-generation. He explained that the first generation consumes alcohol in a way that "makes you stupid…and if they make mistakes, it hurts the second generation. I mean either they're going to do the same thing or if they're resilient enough, they're going to fight it." He attributes problems with alcohol and the related abuse to "that *jatvaad"* and hopelessness. "They really have no direction," referring to both the first and second generation.

This lack of direction referred to the absence of examples of how to consume alcohol mindfully. Manmohan speaks to how conversations around alcohol are impractically had with the second-generation in Sikh spaces and how they could benefit from hearing stories of those who have struggled.

> There was a lot of *Gurmat* classes[173] here, those training camps or whatever that would just say alcohol bad, but they want to like actually go through the process of how people drink...Harmeet Uncle[174] drank when he was16, cut his hair, went through three years of what he described as a nightmare and then came back. But because of that experience, he's able to actually understand and explain it thoroughly. This is why you're going to do it. This is what's going to happen until you hit this bottom point and then the choice is yours.

Manmohan states that in mainstream Sikh spaces the conversation around alcohol consumption is simply that it is bad. The lack of a more nuanced understanding based on the lived experience of members of the community means that problems with alcohol continue. Having individuals such as Harmeet Uncle speak to young Sikhs about his

[173] Gurmat classes refer to teachings delivered to young Sikhs (often on Sundays) in classroom setting to help them develop an understanding of what Sikhi is.
[174] Here uncle does not mean an individual that one is related to but simply an older male in the community.

experience would illuminate the lived reality of what a problem with alcohol actually looks like in the Panjabi-Sikh context. The significance of Harmeet Uncle cutting his hair is particularly poignant as it is a physical example of a move away from Sikhi. Moving beyond simply painting alcohol as bad to having an individual within the community who has struggled share his story allows for a deeper discussion around alcohol, Sikhi, and the relationship between the two.

Manmohan's focus on the internal in Sikhi permeates his understanding of alcohol, caste, and intergenerational influences. The community's lack of engagement with *Gurbani* means that some interpretations are privileged over others. In his description of *IkOankar* as something without duality, ridding notions of good or bad, we can begin to understand his interpretation of alcohol consumption as moving beyond these binaries. Failing to engage with varied interpretations can be attributed to the ego and stubbornness associated with *Jat* identity. These binary interpretations are then passed on through generations, failing to engage with the lived reality, perpetuating problems with alcohol in the community.

3.5 Kamal

Adherence to Sikhi takes many shapes and forms. Defining Sikhs as those who have taken *amrit*, adhere strictly to the *rehat*, or outwardly appear as Sikh and engaging with those who have grown up in a Sikh household illuminates the myriad ways in which individuals interact with the tradition.

23-year old Kamal identified as a 2 out of 10 Sikh and spoke about his journey with Sikhi, often conflating Panjabi and Sikh identity as "pretty much the same thing." He described being Sikh as being in the culture. "Going to Gurmat camps, it's just being a part of the community and going through with all of the rituals and stuff like that and the traditions." Growing up he was fairly religious, an eight or nine out of ten, but as he got older and his parents stopped going to the *Gurdwara* as often, he too stopped.

When directly invoking the role Sikhi plays in problems with alcohol, he spoke about the conflation between Panjabi and Sikh identity, stating that he has seen individuals who outwardly present as Sikh, "people with turbans like they look really, really religious," engage in binge-drinking. However, he doesn't think these actions hinder anything as "some people follow Sikhi but they don't follow it like 100%...There's a couple of things that you're not supposed to do. They only follow the ones that are like most convenient to them."

He also spoke about the reputation of the community as being "rowdy" and personally thought that his Panjabi-Sikh friends tend to "drink more and more often, which may be one of the reasons that they become a bit more rowdy compared to my other friends, like they drink too, but they don't drink as excessively." In elaborating on this excessive drinking, similar to Manmohan, ego was invoked, "like hey he's drinking more than me and I want to just like, you know, one up him." He also stated that at times because of his Panjabi-Sikh friends he was pressured to keep up with them, "so a lot of times I would like over-drink and that would cause me to throw up or like blackout." Furthermore, "Panjabi music influences a lot too…the recent Punjabi music it talks a lot about like drinking and like the violence thing. I don't think that directly correlates with

it, but I think that increases the amount you drink because Panjabi songs are usually pretty rowdy."

This culmination of the feelings that Panjabi music evokes allows individuals to exaggerate stereotypical traits that are often associated with Panjabi culture. Panjabi music is often the first connection many individuals in the diaspora make to their cultural identity. It serves as the basis for what they believe it means to be Panjabi. This is not to say that Panjabi identity is the sole perpetrator of why this problem exists but to illuminate its role.

Growing up, Kamal's father drank but nobody else in his family did. Kamal saw and understood alcohol in both negative and positive ways. His father would become more extroverted and sociable but the drinking would also cause fights between his parents. As opposed to the "rowdy" demeanor of the second-generation, he saw the first-generation as getting rowdy in a different sense.

> They would always just like, get super loving. They were always like, Hey, I want you to have this. Say I love you more…They're way more extroverted when they were drunk, they wouldn't go like outside of the room. Like that would just be like their area. But if you're inside the room, you're in their territory and whatever they say goes, like if they have to make you do something physically, they'll make you do it. They're like, pick you up, you know, they'll do whatever… I don't know. Like when they're not drunk, they always, it's kind of like they're putting up an act, like they restrict some of their emotions. Like my family was kind of like strict growing up and then the alcohol kind of just like removed that and showed like what they were really feeling. So I think that might've been it…They were kind of like forced to grow up faster.

Speaking to the gap in communication between generations, he compares experiences of individuals whose parents are born in the same cultural context. Unlearning poor coping mechanisms becomes notably difficult when a cultural gap exists

between parents and their children.

> Like white kids were born in Canada too, or their parents probably weren't born like in India or anything like that. It's like growing up there, they're, they're raised differently, differently than what we were raised like. And like their parents have been through like the same thing that they're going to be going through. Same thing that their grandfathers had been through. But this is completely different cause this is a new experience for our parents, like moving to a new country and settling in so we're not going to have the same experiences they had back in India. So we don't really know what to do sometimes. You know, we're kind of like making our own paths.

Not only have patterns of how alcohol is consumed been passed down but also the type of alcohol that is consumed is mimicked as well. Speaking to the types of alcohol the community consumes, Kamal mainly spoke of homebrewed alcohol, *desi daru,* and high alcohol content spirits, "they just stick to hard liquor, like the whiskey and it's harder to control that…and sometimes they'll have the *desi* alcohol they'll try out like Canadian or like white alcohol but they'll usually stick to those ones…And what I've noticed is like that's kind of like gotten passed down to like our generation."

More than trauma is passed down intergenerationally. Although these inheritances are sometimes related to the trauma, they are also their own unique entities. Kamal's discussion of the passing down of the type of alcohol consumed, the ways in which it is consumed, and the communication, or lack thereof about alcohol consumption, shows the persistence of this behaviour. The disparate experiences between the first and the second-generation vary from those that the first-generation had with their parents, illuminating another reason why problems with alcohol may occur in the community. Kamal's conflation of Panjabi and Sikh identity does not simply relegate the problem to one and

the solution to the other, but rather highlights how these identities are actually inextricable from each other in lived experiences.

3.6 Gurmeet

When engaging with Sikhi and Panjabi identity in relation to problems with alcohol, individuals found themselves at a crossroads: the former was telling them it was prohibited while the latter was promoting it. This binary was exaggerated when both Sikhi and alcohol consumption by family members played a major role in these individuals' early years.

Growing up, 30 year old Albertan Gurmeet took *amrit* when she was six. Neither of her parents were baptized Sikhs, a stark difference from the others who had taken *amrit* in her *Gurmat* class. However, when she turned eighteen, she began questioning her relationship with Sikhi, "going back and forth and trying to find a middle ground and finding where [she] fits." Today, she says that Sikhi plays a big part of her life, "I think it was the foundation," stating that a lot of her values and political ideologies are connected to Sikhi.

Gurmeet grew up in a household where alcohol consumption was the norm, often in excess. She could not pinpoint an exact moment in her childhood when she was first aware of alcohol's existence, as it was always a fixture in her life. "Alcohol has been in my family my whole life…like it's been part of my whole childhood so I don't have like that definitive starting point because it was always there. I can't identify like when it was or wasn't." Her father, who "won't identify as an alcoholic" but has consumed alcohol

since she was born "drank alcohol to the point that is was not okay but all of the uncles in my family did that." His drinking never impacted his life so he never saw it as a problem. "A lot of people in the community, there's this work ethic…my dad used to get sloshed, like so sloshed and that guy still woke up at 7 am, went to work, and never complained he was hungover." Gurmeet said she grew up absolutely hating her father's drinking habits and, as she grew older, she started holding her father accountable in terms of her expectations of his alcohol consumption, "I have empathy for alcoholism and I also have a lot of anger."

Her strong relationship with Sikhi and the all-pervasive memories surrounding alcohol in her early years informed her understanding of the relationship between the two throughout her life. Gurmeet grew up "swearing [she] would never drink alcohol ever" but started drinking when she entered university. When she saw her peers engaging with alcohol in a responsible manner, she started questioning her stance. In describing her relationship with alcohol, she thinks moderation is key and always made sure she was not "super plastered" as she knew someone who cared about her would have to take care of her and she hated that idea.

However, when invoking Sikhi she says she struggles with rationalizing if it is permissible for her to consume alcohol. "I think there's a friction between what it means to be Panjabi and what it means to be Sikh and if you factor in immigration and the diaspora, like there's a lot of layers of why we have these social issues." Moving away from simply blaming Panjabi culture or following Sikhi the proper way as the solution for social problems, Gurmeet toys with the nuance and layered experience of Sikh-Canadians.

Gurmeet says there is a normalization of alcohol consumption, "where the music is like yeah, *daru peekay* (drink alcohol)" and a close connection to what is understood in the mainstream as Panjabi culture. In middle school Gurmeet switched from a predominantly white school to a predominantly Panjabi school in middle school where her understanding of Panjabi culture began taking form.

> I was the only Brown kid in my school and it was really hard to understand what it meant to be Panjabi outside of the household. Cause you went to school with all these white kids and you have to become like them and then you go home and then you switch…then I switched to a school where like I think 70% of my school was Panjabi and that was a cultural awakening and all of my friends became Panjabi. Then we started becoming proud to be Panjabi, right? Like because for so long you couldn't. But then I think in that self-exploratory phase of what does it mean to be been Panjabi, we went to music. At the age of 13 that was cool, right? Like it was the cool thing to do and drinking was cool and like being able to drink and thinking that drinking is being Panjabi but when you think about Sikhi and it's like, well how do you do that? Right? Like as a Sikh, you're not supposed to drink, but as a Panjabi you're supposed to drink and dance. Like it's just, I think they're two polar opposites.

The normalization of alcohol consumption in Panjabi culture and the complete prohibition in Sikhi made it difficult to reconcile what the correct choice was. As those around her deemed drinking and, by association, Panjabi identity the "cool" choice, individuals moved away from Sikhi because it did not align with the choices they wanted to make. But the relationship was not so simple. Although it may have momentarily been an easy decision, understanding the reasons for why alcohol consumption can become a problem is much more complex.

In continuing to peel back the layers of why social issues exist, Gurmeet goes on to invoke Panjabi and Sikh history, pointing to historical and political trauma and how alcohol is used as a form of escapism and as a coping mechanism. The trauma related to

experiencing events such as the Partition of 1947, the 1984 Sikh Genocide, and the trauma of immigration worked to promote the problematic consumption of alcohol. Gurmeet also highlighted the state's role in promoting Panjabi culture over Sikhi. She states that from the onset Panjabi-Sikhs have a background and an identity that is formed out of being warriors and fighting the oppressor. This identity threatens individuals in power.

> There has been this kind of conscious effort to suppress the Sikh identity and give way to the Panjabi identity because with Sikhi, if you're *not* drunk and you are empowered and you are feeling like you want to stand up to the oppressor, that is more of a fear than people that are like drunk and don't have that…So I truly believe there's a layer of political power and like state intervention and all that on the state of Panjab and this conscious effort to do that…I think there's been like a conscious effort to dilute our identities.

Thinking through the consequences and the intergenerational persistence of this suppression, Gurmeet pointed to the impact it has on the diaspora. Using alcohol as a coping mechanism has been normalized. Individuals within the community have become comfortable in the presence of alcohol and in using it as a tool to cope. Internalizing this behavior, the second-generation perpetuates it. As it is both legal and socially acceptable in the Panjabi and Canadian context, it is easier for it to become a problem.

Gurmeet spoke about boys in the community who "grew up in these households with things like hyper toxic masculinities, alcohol abuse and they kind of absorb that…if the parent's generation, if it was the trauma of immigration for them then [for the second generation] it's the trauma of being raised in an immigrant household, right?"

The first generation lacked the tools and supports to be able to find a healthy way to cope with their personal traumas, turning to alcohol. The second generation, having grown up in these households perpetuates the behavior. Furthermore, Gurmeet states that

she thinks one of the main reasons why these problems persist is "our inability too communicate." She says she has realized that she is a good communicator and is able to find the supports she needs "to communicate and understand what's wrong and what [she] can do to improve on it. That does not exist in our community…so it's not *just* that they don't know how to drink, I just don't think that they know how to release their emotions in healthy ways."

As someone who was heavily influenced by Sikhi growing up and exposed to excessive alcohol consumption, Gurmeet delivers a unique perspective. Speaking to her at this particular moment in her life when it appears that she concretely understands the role Sikhi played and continues to play in her life, and has evidently thought deeply about the layers that influence the community's relationship with alcohol, she is able to outline articulately reasons for why problems with alcohol continue and are perpetuated through generations. She begins by broadly outlining the relationship between alcohol and Sikhi and Panjabi culture, the former prohibiting consumption and the latter encouraging. However, she goes on to gradually peel back the layers and reveal that the rationale is not so simple, invoking the historical, political, and personal.

Conclusion

At times, interviewees attempted to separate the categories of religion and culture but lived experience, history, and politics made it difficult to do so. How does one categorize intergenerational trauma brought upon by historical and political issues that impact Panjabi, Sikh, and Panjabi-Sikh individuals? How does one define the impact of a

loved one's relationship with alcohol on their relationship? Is it Panjabi culture or is it lived Sikhi when speaking about the inability to communicate emotions? Although Sikhi and Panjabi identity play roles in how individuals may understand alcohol, understandings of said roles are not so easily defined or universally understood.

Although it is normatively understood that Sikhi prohibits the consumption of alcohol, this is evidently not what is practiced. Mere prohibition does not stop consumption or problems with alcohol from occurring. Simply blaming Panjabi culture and relegating those who consume alcohol as bad Sikhs does not address the issue at hand. Illuminating the myriad ways in which Sikhi is actually practiced as opposed to what is simply understood as written in the text, allows for a more intersectional conversation to be had around problems with alcohol. The impacts of historical, political, and social realities, the ways in which lived reality impacts how individuals practice Sikhi, and understanding the issue as beyond a cultural problem, allows for a more robust engagement with the issue.

There is nothing natural about religious or cultural identities. These categories are constructed by, deeply rooted in, and impacted by external forces. Questioning the natural status of these labels does not imply that these are invented categories or that there are not commonalities within the group. Rather, it is to say that the homogenization centers some narratives and erases others. These hardened identities privilege certain discourses over others. Individuals are seen as fitting into categories such as "Panjabi" or "Sikh" or not and certain issues are simply understood as "Panjabi issues" without moving beyond these essentialized identities.

CONCLUSION

Defining themselves beyond colonial influence is a daunting but pressing task for the Panjabi-Sikh community in Canada. This decolonization is not a new phenomenon and has been in the works for years. Understanding the historical and political milieu within which problems with alcohol exist allows for a more holistic approach. By moving beyond simply blaming Panjabi culture to considering the traumas of colonialism and beyond and engaging in a decolonial intervention, individuals within the community and those who wish to provide services may more wholly understand the experience.

Understanding the colonial ties to masculinity, religion, and culture and how they are related to problems with alcohol, allows for the Panjabi-Sikh community in Canada to better understand themselves and why such problems manifest. Engaging with historical trauma and its intergenerational perpetuation allows for an understanding of the contemporary manifestation of the historical. Moving beyond simply understanding what Panjabi culture and Sikhi says about alcohol in the mainstream and engaging in this conversation in a more nuanced way, helps to aid the move away from binaries of prohibited and acceptable or promoted and prohibited. Being able to grasp the metaphorical nature of Sikh texts, allows for a more robust engagement with the text that allows individuals to make decisions and come to conclusions that cater to their particular experiences and needs. Moving beyond a straightforward, yes-or-no answer is a difficult task but it can illuminate the path that caters to the situation and individual without being prescriptive.

Engaging with individuals who do not adhere to mainstream definitions of a follower of Sikhi, illuminates various perspectives on Sikh texts, the lived reality of problems with alcohol, and the relationship between religion and culture. Individuals who have grown up in a Sikh household, have inherited the history of the Sikhs, and self-identify as Sikh are included in the interviews and larger conversation around problems with alcohol in the Sikh community. My work does not aim to claim that Sikhi advocates for the consumption of alcohol. Rather, my research engages directly with the text and lived reality in which the text does not serve the purpose of acting as a rule book and the lived reality shows varied levels of alcohol consumption.

Future research could engage directly with what community-centred services look like for Sikh-Canadians, how Sikhi can be used when directly engaging with individuals who are impacted by problems with alcohol, and how to harness the Panjabi identity to better understand the phenomenon. Gaps in this research include privileging voices of upper-caste, university educated, cis-bodied, heterosexual individuals. Future research that is intentionally and mindfully intersectional is needed.

I hope to put this research into action as I embark on graduate studies for a Master of Social Work degree, engaging directly with the Panjabi-Sikh community. Creating resources that centre the community's voice, needs, and traditional practices is particularly important when engaging with this issue. Rooting services in *Panjabiyaat* and Sikhi's revolutionary and resilient foundation encapsulates a strengths based approach that is missing and necessary.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

……2020

Letter of Information

A Study of Alcohol Consumption in Second-Generation Sikhs

Investigators:

Student Investigator: Ms. Manvinder Gill
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Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
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Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Mark Rowe
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Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
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Purpose of the Study

In this study, I want to investigate Sikh perspectives on alcohol consumption. I am hoping to learn if the second-generation believes that problem drinking persists in the community through generations and if they do, why they believe it exists. I also hope to find out what their formative/primary interactions with alcohol were, revealing their initial understandings of alcohol that shaped their later interactions with the substance.

What will happen during the study?

Through a semi-structured interview, you will be asked questions about your religious background, your understanding and relationship with alcohol, and how you think the two have informed each other. We will also ask you some demographic information like your age, education, and religious background. The interview will be recorded and notes will be taken. The interview process should take between 30-60 minutes.

Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts:

You may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions that are being asked however, you do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer.

Due to the personal and sensitive nature of the study involving discussion about alcohol consumption, and personal experiences, the main risks include the possibility of participant distress during narration of their experience, disclosure of participant trauma and the potential of uncovering current child abuse.
If the participant discloses trauma, physical or psychological abuse, the student researcher will have community resources available that the participant can access. If the participant discloses information pertaining to any evidence of child abuse, Children's Aid Society will be contacted. The participant will be informed that the student researcher is contacting the appropriate authorities if child abuse is suspected.

Potential Benefits

The research may not benefit you directly.

The researchers may learn more about insider perspectives on alcohol consumption in the community.

Confidentiality:

Every effort will be made to protect (guarantee) your confidentiality and privacy I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. However, we are often identifiable through the stories we tell. Please keep this in mind in deciding what to tell us.

The information obtained by me will be kept and only available to myself. Data will be stored on the student investigator's password controlled laptop. The data will be store in an encrypted folder on the software NVivo 12 which is further encrypted, while the consent forms will be separately and safely locked in a cabinet that only the student investigator can access. Personal or confidential data will not be sent via email. Information will be destroyed after my thesis has been defended in September 2020.

B) Legally Required Disclosure:

Information obtained will be kept confidential to the full extent of the law and I will treat all information provided to me as subject to researcher-participant privilege.

Due to the personal and sensitive nature of the study involving discussion about alcohol use, problem drinking, and personal experiences, the main risks include the possibility of participant distress during narration of their experience, disclosure of participant trauma and the potential of uncovering current child abuse.

If the participant discloses trauma, physical or psychological abuse, the student researcher will have community resources available that the participant can access. If the participant discloses information pertaining to any evidence of child abuse, Children's Aid Society will be contacted. The participant will be informed that the student researcher is contacting the appropriate authorities if child abuse is suspected. Ongoing consent will be obtained in order to proceed with each stage of the study.

Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to participate, you can decide to stop at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided to that point will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study. After May 2020 it will no longer be possible to withdraw data from the study as it is projected to be completed by July 2020. If you wish to withdraw data before May 2020, you can request to do so via e-mail.

Information About the Study Results:

You may obtain information about the results of the study by contacting the principal investigator, Manvinder Gill, directly.

Information about Participating as a Study Subject:

If you have questions or require more information about the study itself, please contact Manvinder Gill.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, you may contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Office of Research Services
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Manvinder Gill, of McMaster University. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study, and to receive any additional details I wanted to know about the study. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, if I choose to do so, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Questions
Alcohol Consumption in Second-Generation Sikh-Canadians
Manvinder Gill

1. Background Questions
    a. Were you born in Canada?
    b. Where were your parents born?
    c. When did they immigrate to Canada?
    d. Why did they immigrate to Canada?
    e. Do you self-identify as Sikh?
2. What does being Sikh mean to you?
3. How would you describe your relationship with Sikhi?
4. Are there any "social-ills" that you could pinpoint as particularly pertinent to the Sikh community in Canada? In Punjab? Elsewhere?
5. What is your understanding of alcohol consumption in Sikhism?
6. What is your stance on alcohol consumption?
7. What factors have influenced your view on alcohol consumption?
8. What was your first interaction with alcohol? This does not necessarily mean the first time you consumed it but more specifically, when did you find out what alcohol was?
9. What role does alcohol play in your home/personal life?
    a. Do you drink in front of your parents? Do they drink in front of you?
10. How do those around you who participate in alcohol consumption participate in it when they are at home? At the bar or a wedding? At the Gurdwara?
11. How do you think living in Canada has affected your stance/consumption or non-consumption, if at all?

Finally, is there anything else you would like to talk to me about? Is there something I should have asked that I didn't?

APPENDIX C: ETHICS DOCUMENTATION

(See next page)

McMaster University | Research Ethics Board

McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
MREB Secretariat, GH-305
1280 Main St. W.
Hamilton, Ontario, L8W 4L8
email: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca
Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 23142

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Today's Date: Mar/05/2020

Supervisor: Dr. Mark Rowe
Student Principal Investigator: Ms. Manvinder Kaur Gill
Applicant: Manvinder Gill
Project Title: Alcohol Consumption in Second-Generation Sikhs: Investigating the Intersections of Masculinity, Intergenerational Trauma, and Sikhi
MREB#: 1709

Dear Researcher(s)

The ethics application and supporting documents for MREB# 1709 entitled "Alcohol Consumption in Second-Generation Sikhs: Investigating the Intersections of Masculinity, Intergenerational Trauma, and Sikhi" have been reviewed and cleared by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants.

The application protocol is cleared as revised without questions or requests for modification. The above named study is to be conducted in accordance with the most recent approved versions of the application and supporting documents.

Ongoing clearance is contingent on completing the Annual Report in advance of the yearly anniversary of the original ethics clearance date: Mar/05/2021. If the Annual Report is not submitted, then ethics clearance will lapse on the expiry date and Research Finance will be notified that ethics clearance is no longer valid (TCPS, Art. 6.14).

An Amendment form must be submitted and cleared before any substantive alterations are made to the approved research protocol and documents (TCPS, Art. 6.16).

Researchers are required to report Adverse Events (i.e. an unanticipated negative consequence or result affecting participants) to the MREB secretariat and the MREB Chair as soon as possible, and no more than 3 days after the event occurs (TCPS, Art. 6.15). A privacy breach affecting participant information should also be reported to the MREB secretariat and the MREB Chair as soon as possible. The Reportable Events form is used to document adverse events, privacy breaches, protocol deviations and participant complaints.

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Recruiting Materials	Sample Recruiting Poster	Jan/20/2020	1
Recruiting Materials	Screening Questionsv2	Feb/10/2020	2
Interviews	Interview Questions v2	Feb/10/2020	2
Letters of Support	Counselling Services Information Sheet v2	Feb/10/2020	2
Agreements	Mcmaster Research - Nachdi Jawani-1	Feb/10/2020	1
Recruiting Materials	Verbal Announcement Script v3	Feb/12/2020	3
Consent Forms	Letter of Information.v3	Feb/12/2020	3
Response Documents	Summary of Revisions for MREB 1709 Gill	Feb/12/2020	2
Recruiting Materials	Email Script	Feb/12/2020	2

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