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Migration, religion and identity: a generational perspective on Sikh immigration to Spain*

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ABSTRACT

Spain is a recent addition to the places of the Sikh diaspora, with 21,000 individuals recorded in 2016 (1% of the Sikh diaspora, but half of the total of Indian immigrants in Spain). This immigrant group shows clear generational components and is marked by expulsion from the political and economic spheres of their homeland, Punjab. Our main objective is to study how generational differences affect the socio-demographic structure, the migration process (reasons, routes, ways and destinations), religious practices and identity issues in the diaspora. We use a qualitative methodology. Primary data were collected in 60 in-depth interviews of Sikhs of diverse socioeconomic profiles and generations, from 25 municipalities of Spain during 2015–2016. We find that all the generations respond to the internal and external boundaries of the community in different ways which shape their views regarding the preservation and reproduction of religious practices and identity in a foreign setting.

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Introduction: Sikh diaspora and generations

The colonial wound that led to the birth of independent India in 1947 particularly affected Punjab state. The partition of India, or crude division of Bengal and Punjab by the Radcliffe Line, took place in the most dramatic and violent fashion (Brass 2003). Ethnic cleansing typifying the homogenising efforts of the nation-state (Yeoh 2003) occurred on both sides, even when cultural, ethnic and religious diversity was an important part of the construction narrative of post-colonial India. Hence, the memories of many Punjabis in general and Sikhs in particular, mainly the older generations who lived through this period, are memories of displaced people whose experience of displacement changed their environment and emotional landscapes. These differ substantially from those of subsequent generations which eventually produced the leaders of the contemporary Sikh diaspora, now settled in more than a hundred countries around the world, including Spain (Garha and Domingo 2017).

In Spain, the Sikh population consists of 21,000 individuals listed in municipal registers on 1 January 2016 and making up half of the total of Indian immigrants in Spain. Most of

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the Sikh population is settled in the northern Autonomous Community of Catalonia. Taking colonial migration routes, the majority of the early Sikh emigrants initially went to the UK, but with the increasing restrictions on the entry of Commonwealth citizens (after the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968), they started migrating to the Gulf countries and later on to Canada and the USA (Tatla 2009). Owing to the availability of low-skilled jobs and possibilities for permanent settlement in Europe, their orientation in the 1990s and early twenty-first century shifted to new destinations such as Spain, Italy, Germany and France (Thandi 2012).

The Sikh population in Spain consists of different generations of the Indian Sikh community who immigrated during the period of 1960–2015. Among the challenges they faced were reproduction and preservation of Sikh religious practices and identity in a foreign context. Internal (tensions between baptised and non-baptised members, gender roles and recognition of castes and clans) and external (between the immigrant group and host community) boundaries of the Sikh community have made these challenges more difficult. Our main objective is to analyse the tensions around these internal and external boundaries on the basis of the viewpoints of three different generational groups: first, the ‘Children of Independence’ (COI) generations, whose members were born before 1980; second, the ‘1980s generation’, with members born in the decade of 1980s and finally, the ‘millennium generation’, consisting of people born after 1990.

The generational perspective on religious purity and external boundaries

The concept of ‘generation’ apart from its biological connotation as a birth cohort refers to groups of individuals, who belong to a common location in the historical dimension of the social process (Mannheim [1927/28] 1972, 290). These people share with one another a particular type of social location (Mannheim [1927/28] 1972, 291), determined by the way in which certain patterns of experience and thought tend to be brought into existence (Mannheim [1927/28] 1972, 292). In transnational migration scholarship, generations have been a key theme or category of inquiry shedding light on the rationality of experiences, emotions and trajectories among migrants in a particular period of time, or between them and their family members (Fresnoza and Shinozaki 2017). Less common, but increasingly important, are analyses of intra-generational differences within and between the diverse cohorts that comprise migrant diasporas (Baldassar and Pyke 2014; Baldassar, Pyke, and Ben-Moshe 2017).

The migration process affects the inner world of the immigrants, influencing their sense of self and their identity formation process (Phinney et al. 2001; Schwartz 2005; Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones 2006). The descendant of immigrants, especially adolescents in the process of constructing their identity (Erikson 1968), face conflicting social contexts in which they attempt to incorporate ‘here’ and ‘there’ into a meaningful sense of self (Rumbaut 1994). In terms of identity and integration, ‘generations’ especially, the migrant generations and their descendants, can be understood through their attitude towards boundaries, as quoted by Massey and Sanchez (2010, 16), ‘Immigrant assimilation is a process of boundary-brokering in which immigrants, encountering categorical boundaries that separate them from natives, do whatever they can to challenge, circumvent, or accommodate those divisions to advance their interests’. These are the external boundaries that separate immigrants from hosts, and generally, immigrants negotiate with the host

community for maintaining these boundaries to preserve their separate identity and peaceful coexistence. But also there are internal boundaries in the group based on the internal social hierarchy, and different generations respond to these boundaries in their own way. In this concern, South Asians in the diaspora have not only maintained the homeland culture and identities, but also created, recreated and negotiated such identities under different circumstances in the multiracial and multicultural societies (Sahoo and Sheffer 2013).

The identity of a particular group which shares some sort of set of rules also includes existing divisions and fractures within the group, and the tensions polarised between 'purity and contamination' give rise to the internal dynamics of the group (Douglas 1966). A major concern of the Sikh community in new diaspora countries like Spain is reproduction and preservation of purity (mainly religious) – as explained by Douglas (1966) in her classical analysis – in a foreign context, and its transmission to the coming generations. Maintenance of purity in the community and peaceful coexistence with hosts create tensions around the internal and external boundaries of the community and often requires a restructuring of religious beliefs.

At the same time, and like Barth (1969), we believe that the boundaries that define a group when it comes into permanent contact with other groups need some structuring of the interaction which allows the coexistence and persistence of cultural differences. In this paper, we aim to show how different generations of Sikh immigrants are restructuring both internal and external boundaries of the community in order to prosper and peacefully coexist with the host society. In the case of internal structuring, we refer to negotiations around the boundaries between baptised and non-baptised Sikhs, different castes and clans, gender and generation roles, and their effects on the migration process and socio-religious reproduction of the community.

Data sources and methodology

The data have been collected through 60 in-depth interviews of individuals with different demographic and socioeconomic profiles, who identify themselves as Sikhs, and who are now living in Spain irrespective of their legal status. The interviews were conducted during the period between November 2015 and June 2016, in the 25 municipalities where Sikhs are mainly concentrated in Spain, among them 18 municipalities with Sikh temples. Interviewees were selected through the snowball sampling technique (Johnson 2014). The interviews were semi-structured, and respondents were asked to express themselves on the following issues: family background, migration history, present socioeconomic condition, religious practices and beliefs, attitude towards castes and clans, generational relations, marriage, gender roles and future expectations. The interviews were conducted in the Punjabi language. Of a total of 60 interviews, 25 were from the COI group, 20 from the generation of the 1980s and 15 from the millennium generation. One-third of the interviewees were females (Table 1).

We have used a qualitative research methodology. The inductive approach, also called a bottom-up approach in the terms of 'Grounded Theory' (Glaser and Strauss 1967), has been applied. All interviews were audio recorded and encoded in the computer programme Atlas.ti, using a thematic classification. This prepared the content of the interview for theme-by-theme analysis. Each interview was summarised in a 'portrait' based on a thematic grid (generation, migration history, entry into Spain, access to the labour

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewees.

Socio-demographic characteristic	CIO group	Interviewees	
		1980s generation	Millennium generation
Sex			
Males	18	12	10
Females	7	8	5
Education			
Primary	16	7	0
Secondary	8	9	12
University	1	4	3
Occupation			
Agriculture	3	2	0
Factory workers	3	4	0
Services	8	8	10
Retired	3	0	0
Unemployed	8	6	5
Marital status			
Never married	0	2	15
Married	23	17	0
Others	2	1	0
Total	25	20	15

market, family reunion, views about religious practices and social classes (caste or clans), relation with hosts and identity consciousness). These portraits were illustrated by quotes. By comparing the portraits, we established a typology of representations and practices of different generations. The typology was defined separately for each different generation in order to make a comparison. Finally, we report on how generational differences affect the attitudes of different groups regarding preservation and transfer of religious practices, caste and clan boundaries and identity issues.

Different generational groups: causes, motives for and ways of immigration

Each generation of the present Sikh population of Spain has the imprint of different political events of Punjab's history on their lives and this shapes their migratory experiences, religious beliefs and identity. In order to follow the important events in the lives of individuals, from all generational groups and through the time, we have used the Lexis diagram (Figure 1), where we present the life trajectories of the members of all generations, including events like first migration, arrival in Spain, marriage, family reunification, birth of children, legalisation and citizenship. The Sikh population in Spain consists of 20.7 thousand individuals, registered in the municipal registers on 1 January 2015, which makes half of the total Indian immigrants in Spain. Majority of Sikhs is settled along with the Mediterranean coast in which half of them have settled in the Northern Autonomous community of Catalonia. The present Sikh population of Spain belongs to the different generations of the Punjabi Sikh community. Each generation has the imprint of different political events of Punjab's history on their lives that shapes their migration experiences, attitude towards religion and relation to their homeland. In order to follow the important events of an individual's life from all generational groups, we have used the Lexis diagram (Figure 1), where we present the life trajectories of all generations depicting the events, such as first migration, entrance in Spain, marriage, family reunification, birth of children, legalisation and citizenship.

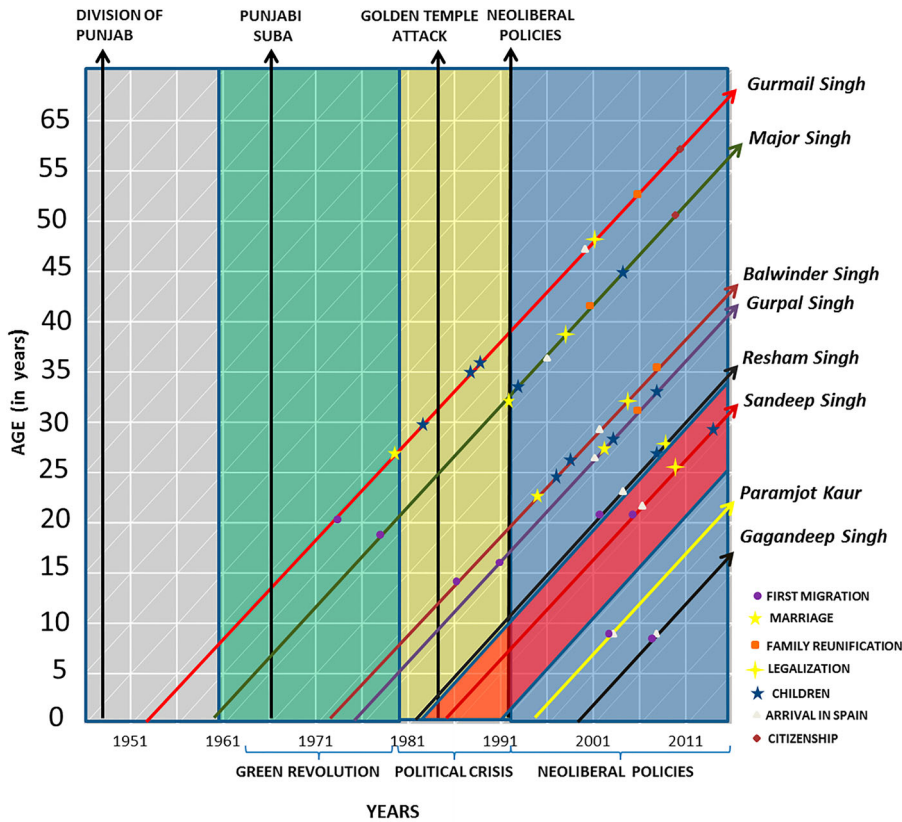


Figure 1. Lexis diagram represents the three generational groups, illustrated by Sikh immigrants interviewed in Spain, 2015–2016. Source: Own elaboration, with in-depth interviews during 2015–2016.

Children of independence

Members of the COI, the largest and oldest generational group of Sikhs in Spain, were born soon after Indian independence or in the period of the Green Revolution. First of all, their childhood memories are those displaced people as many of their forebears migrated from West Pakistan to the Indian Punjab after the division of British India (Singh and Tatla 2006). As adolescents, they witnessed the emergence of the ‘Punjabi identity’ struggle and the formation of Punjabi Suba (a state with a majority Sikh population) on the basis of language in 1966, and the transformation of Punjab from the land of displaced people to the bread basket of India with the Green Revolution. In their thirties, they led the struggle for Sikh rights during the period of political crisis in Punjab. In this period, their perception of Punjab was marked by two historical events, first, the Operation Blue star (Indian military operation on the Golden Temple in Amritsar to crush Sikh protesters in June 1984), which was followed by the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards on 31 October the same year (Dhillon 2007) and, second, the period of militancy (1984–1992).

The main causes of their emigration include the first demographic transition, agricultural failure and political unrest in Punjab. The first demographic transition began in

Punjab soon after independence. After 1961, the population started increasing at a decadal growth rate of more than 20%. The combination of the growing population and the laws of inheritance (land was divided equally between all male children) meant that the size of land holdings was getting smaller and the situation became unsustainable for the whole population. As explained by Gurmukh, 63 who was a teenager the time ‘I had three brothers and there wasn’t enough land for the survival of anyone, so one of my brothers entered in Indian army and I decided to emigrate in search of work’. In the 1960s, the Indian government decided to introduce an intensive agricultural plan in Punjab, which later becomes famous as the ‘Green Revolution’ (Randhawa 1977). The new technology favoured capitalist farming which significantly reduced opportunities for employment in previously labour-intensive rural areas of Punjab, while rapidly growing inflows of labourers from other states of India further worsened the plight of local rural workers (Singh and Singh 2006). All these events triggered their exodus as economic migrants, first to the UK and then to countries of the Middle East during the oil boom of the 1970s. The UK was the most favoured destination, but due to restrictions imposed by the British government on free movement of Commonwealth citizens under the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 (Hepple 1968), Sikhs were denied access to the UK, whereupon they started migrating to Middle Eastern countries (especially Dubai) where, thanks to the construction boom, the demand of manual workers was high (Tatla 2009).

In the following decade, with the emerging demand of autonomy and the political crisis caused by the operation Blue Star and assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, Punjab became a battleground ground for young Sikhs when the central police and other armed forces unleashed anti-Sikh pogroms and, in particular, targeted rural youth in orchestrated encounters. During this period, many Sikhs migrated from Punjab to save their lives and for a better future outside India (Dhillon 2007). Most of them moved to Canada and the USA, where they initially applied for refugee status but, when the governments of these countries rejected their applications for asylum, they moved to Europe, mainly to Germany or Italy. Some eventually settled permanently in these two countries and others moved to neighbouring countries including Spain, where the conditions for permanent settlement were comparatively easier (Farjas 2006). As explained by Harwinder, 48, a baptised Sikh in Barcelona, ‘the police were targeting the young boys in orchestrated encounters in our village; so my family forced me to emigrate from Punjab. First I first entered Germany illegally and then moved on to Spain for regularisation’.

In Spain, according to the interviewees, 90% of the individuals among the COI generations were stepped migrants. As for their motives, those who migrated directly from Punjab during the period of the Green Revolution (before 1980) were economic migrants but the majority, who migrated after the events of 1984, were political refugees. Most of them entered Spain during the period of regularisation (2000, 2001 and 2005) with the main aim ‘getting legalised’. Owing to the fact that there were fewer restrictions on legal immigration before the 1970s, the majority of the first-wave immigrants arrived on flights to Europe, and some even came by sea on the post-colonial shipping routes from the port of Calcutta to Mediterranean ports. However, others, who migrated in the late 1980s, have taken the same routes as irregular immigrants from Africa or northern Europe, as subsequent immigrants (Figure 3(a)) have also done. According to the

municipal registers of 2014, the size of the COI group was 7665 individuals of whom 24% were female (Figure 2).

The 1980s generation

The 1980s generation of Sikhs suffered from a process of cultural ‘purification’ in India promoting intolerance towards ethno-cultural, linguistic or religious minorities (Appadurai 2015). They are very far from the idyllic image conjured up by Friedman (Friedman and Friedman 2006, 196–197) of India’s neoliberal shift (citing what he calls the generation of ‘zippies’) featuring the children of liberalisation as ‘entrepreneurs’. This generation was born in a period of estrangement between the Sikh community and the Indian state. They have memories of an insecure, terrified Punjab with deteriorated public infrastructure and services. During their childhood, they saw older generations emigrating from Punjab in search of a livelihood and sometimes to escape persecution or even save their lives. As in the words of Karmjit, 30, male, a restaurant worker in Barcelona, ‘I was very young when my father emigrated from Punjab, he was terrified because of the political unrest in Punjab, then following him my uncle also emigrated for work’. As adolescents they suffered from the effects of a hostile neoliberal government which was taking advantage of Punjab’s political crisis and the situation of shock (Klein 2007) after the attacks on Golden Temple, and selling the neglected public infrastructure and services (public distribution system, education, health, power and transport) to private companies. They were deprived of good public education and health services (Patnaik 2014) and, as a result, their low level of schooling and lack of formal training made them unqualified for decent jobs in industry and the public administration in India. As explained by Sukhjot, 31, male, an agricultural worker in Murcia,

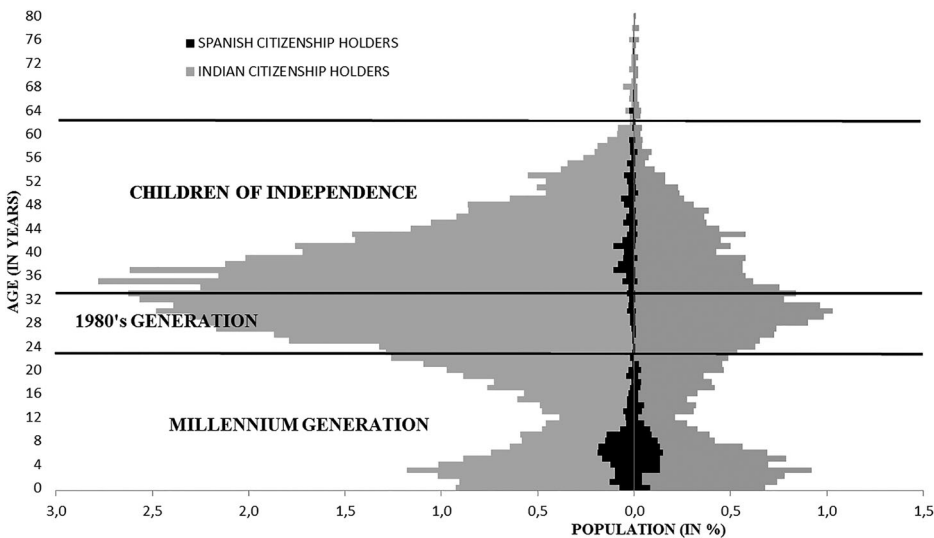


Figure 2. Age structure and sex composition of different Sikh generations (Indian or Spanish nationals) in Spain, 2014. Source: Own elaboration with data from municipal registers (Padron Continuo 2015), INE.

after the events of 1984, government stopped funding and quality control of education in Public Schools in Punjab. Hence, the quality of education deteriorated sharply. The investment in professional training was also stopped and young masses were left uneducated and untrained.

Their recruitment into the Indian army, which was their traditional occupation for many centuries, also declined after the political crisis of the 1980s. All of these factors led to a decline in the average living standard and quality of human capital in rural areas of Punjab. Hence, the little-educated and unskilled Sikh youth started emigrating to the western countries on a massive scale, which could be described as ‘Expulsions’, to use Saskia Sassen’s word (2015).

The motives of these emigrants were clearly economic. Tightening border controls in Europe and ever-increasing numbers of youth wishing to immigrate have fuelled illegal human trafficking networks controlled by immigration mafia in Punjab and abroad, the real beneficiaries of the process (Bhawra 2013). Punjab has become the leading centre for illegal emigration from India (Saha 2009). According to interviewees, people were paying more than 20,000 euros to enter Europe or 40,000 for Canada or the USA, after selling their ancestral land or mortgaging their houses. In the words of Karamjit, 34, an agriculture worker in Murcia, ‘my father sold part of our ancestral land to buy a Schengen Visa for me. He paid an agent 10 lakh rupees [€12,480] ... this is the story of every second emigrant from Punjab’. The magnitude of emigration was so great that in the first decade of the twenty-first century, every middle-class family in rural Punjab (especially the Doaba region) had one or two members living outside India. Kartar, 31, a restaurant worker from Barcelona says, ‘now it is difficult to find young boys in our villages [in the Doaba Region], because they all emigrating before their twentieth birthday’.

As they explain in the interviews, the majority have come to Spain from other European countries. Owing to strict border controls and EU immigrant detention policies, many entered the country through illegal routes from northern European or African countries (Thandi 2012). In the case of the Northern route, as explained by Sandeep, 31, who took this option,

mostly they [immigrants] reach Russia by air and then from Moscow, with the help of agents, they enter Europe through land routes, mainly going to Germany via Ukraine and Poland. As the rules for regularization and permanent settlement are very strict in Germany, they move on to Spain or Italy, where they get legalized easily.

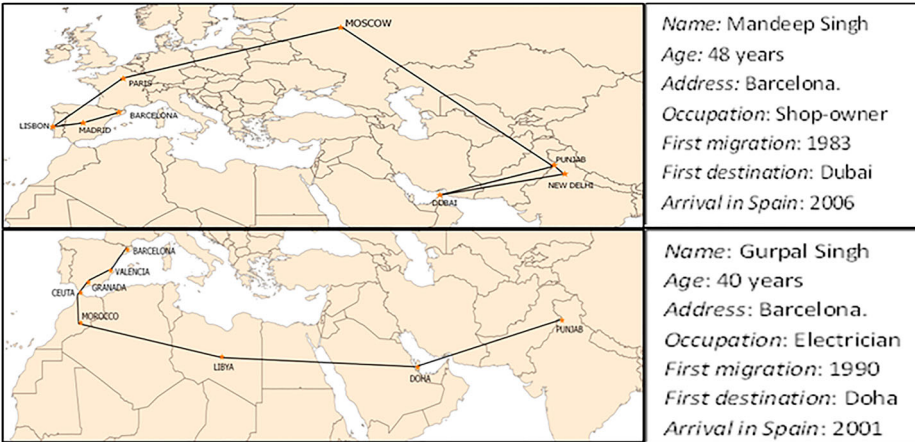
The second route passes through Africa. Harjot, 28, who took this route explains that,

first they enter an African country, like Burkina Faso, Mali, Algeria or Morocco by air and then, with the help of human traffickers, they enter Morocco through land routes and, from Morocco, the agents smuggle them to the Spanish city of Ceuta. After entering Ceuta, they contact the Red Cross, which provides them with assistance in camps and helps them to enter mainland Spain. (Figure 3(b))

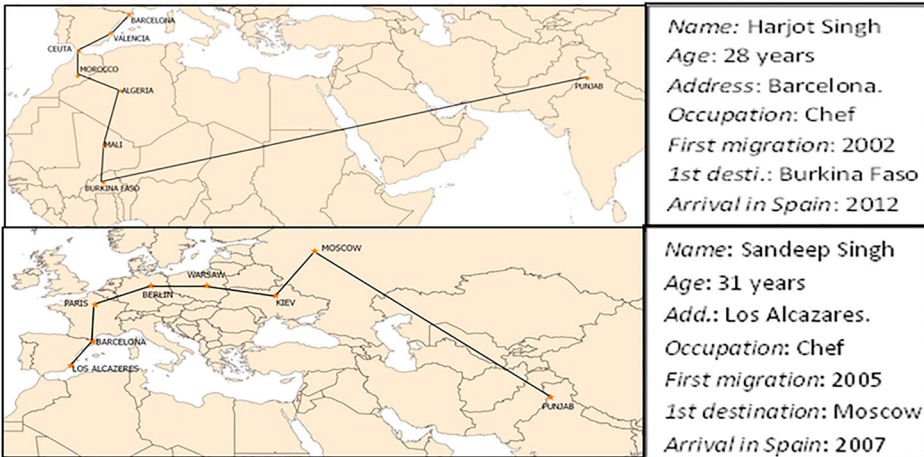
These routes have been described as the ‘donkey flight’ (Smith 2014) and they are a clear characteristic of the 1980s generation.

A small part of this group entered Europe with Schengen visas issued by Greek, Spanish or Portuguese embassies in India, and many interviewees suspect the involvement of embassies in an immigration racket. One Jagtar, 34, says, ‘these embassies give visas

3.1 The Children of Independence:



3.2 The 1980's Generations (donkey flights):



3.3 Millennium Generations:



Figure 3. Itineraries taken by different generational groups of Sikh immigrants in Spain, in the period 1960-2015. (a) The children of independence, (b) the 1980s generations (donkey flights) and (c) millennium generations. Source: Own elaboration, with in-depth interviews by the first author during 2015–2016.

and the agents charge money, so surely they [agents] give part of this money to the embassy people also'. In exceptional circumstances, there are also some highly qualified Sikhs from this group, who entered Spain with legal job contracts to work in Spanish

companies. The 1980s generation in 2014 consisted of 6228 individuals, among which the female share was about 27.7% (Figure 2).

The millennial generation

This generation was mostly born after 1990, into divided transnational families where one or two members were already living and working outside India. In most cases, owing to the male-dominated nature of Sikh emigration, the father is working outside India. As in the case of Gurjit, 19, female, a student from Alicante, 'I was only two years old when my father emigrated from Punjab, I lived my whole childhood with my mother. At the age of 16, my father sponsored our visit to Spain here under family reunion'. During the decades from 1990 to 2010, the regular flow of remittances from outside has changed the socioeconomic environment and the aspirations of Sikh youths in Punjab. Now the young men who are poorly educated and have no future in rural areas start emigrating by legal or illegal means to seek their share of 'El Dorado'. As explained by Gurkamal, 54, male, Gurdwara managing committee member in Valencia, 'The Western money [remittances] has spoiled the minds of young boys and girls, they don't want to study or have a job in India. They only want to immigrate to western countries'.

This group is composed of three subgroups, namely relatives of Sikhs living abroad, unskilled and poorly educated workers and university students. In Spain, 90% of the millennium generation were family members of other immigrants and had migrated legally the family reunification process (Figure 3(c)). Some explain their migratory experience as culture shock and others relate it with their future expectations, for example, Amardeep, 19, a restaurant worker in Barcelona, who explains, 'I immigrated to Spain under the family reunion plan to join my father, who sponsored my visit. It was like dream come true for me'. Almost all of them travelled directly from India by air with official permission. They took the shortest route, without any intermediaries and were aware of their final destination at the beginning of their journey. By comparison with the others this is the smallest group – 5723 individuals – but also that with the highest share (39%) of female immigrants (Figure 2).

Generational boundaries: religion and identity

The interviews show that these generational groups have different ideas regarding their religion (beliefs and practices) and they live by them in their own ways. The differences are strongly influenced by age, sex, parental status (grandparents, parents and children), socioeconomic profile and migratory experiences, including their exposure to the host society and relations with their origin. With regard to religion, the immigrants' experiences reveal a constant reformulation of religious orthodoxy and rituals in a foreign setting in order to enable peaceful coexistence with the host society and other immigrant communities. In this situation, traditional religious values have remained oscillating between 'purity' at the origin and a reformulation of rituals in order to accommodate at the destination. Religious discourse among the different generations of the present Sikh community in Spain is focused on the themes like constructing a Gurdwara (Sikh temple), management and control; baptised and non-baptised Sikhs; caste and clan system; and, finally, the role of women in religious institutions.

Gurudwaras: construction, management and control

For Sikhs, the Gurudwaras in Europe, along with their formal role as places of worship, are centres of power and representation, where the whole community comes together to pray and share resources and ideas (Hirvi 2010). They also provide a platform for discussion of all social and political issues (Jacobsen 2012). The features that characterise Gurudwaras in Punjab are maintained and transformed in Europe where they are conceived as sites of spirituality and for transmitting Sikh principles and identity, although they also contribute to enhancing community well-being and development (Gallo 2012). It can be said that the social life of the majority of Sikhs is organised around the Gurudwaras.

In Spain, there are 22 Gurudwaras, constructed in different municipalities during the last two decades. The first Gurudwara was established in 1998 in Barcelona, which has the largest Sikh population, and almost half the Gurudwaras in Spain are situated in Catalonia. More recently, the last Gurudwara was inaugurated in 2015 in the municipality of Los Alcazares, Murcia. Most of the Gurudwaras have been constructed by the COI generations, who also control their functioning through managing committees of five or more members of fixed tenure (mostly two years) selected by the community. Being a member of the managing committee is a matter of prestige and power, so everybody wants this position. The associated rivalry sometimes breeds internal conflicts which end up in violent clashes (Qureshi 2014), leading to division and the creation of new Gurudwaras. Indeed, this is the experience of most Spanish towns with two Gurudwaras, among them Madrid, Valencia, Torre Pacheco and Mallorca. Intra-community clashes also include disputes on issues of orthodoxy, the division between baptised and non-baptised Sikhs, and caste and clan conflicts for representation and power in the Gurudwaras (Takhar 2008). Women theoretically have full rights to participate in Gurudwara management but there are hardly any female members in managing committees in Spain. This shows gender bias in the community regarding public life and representation. In the words of Kulwant, 46, a baptised Sikh woman from Barcelona, 'Our religion gives full freedom to women to participate in Gurudwara management, but our Sikh society is still very reluctant to give these responsibilities to women ... Women are only allowed to help in the kitchen and cleaning activities'.

In the interviews, we have found that the Gurudwara has a different importance and significance in each generational group. For the COI group, as explained by Kartar, 57, a baptised Sikh,

the Gurudwaras, along with their formal duty of providing religious services to the people, are the cornerstone of the community building process. They promote a strong sense of identity, bonds of brotherhood and unity in the community, and provide a platform to transfer religious beliefs and the knowledge of rituals to the coming generations.

However, Major Singh, 47, highlights the role of Gurudwaras in the 'reception of new immigrants and their mobilisation towards different occupational niches in different parts of Spain'. In the discourse of the 1980s generation, the Gurudwara is a place for contact with the community where people share problems related with work and social life. Many are like Gurjit, 35, a restaurant worker in Lloret de Mar who states, 'my whole social life is limited to the Gurudwara where I spend my all my free time with friends discussing all the problems related with work and family'. The 1980s generation contributes to the functioning of the Gurudwara with financial support or serving there in weekly meetings. However, most of them visit the Gurudwara at weekends, during festivities or when

they have a day off. They mostly criticise the elder generations for spoiling the atmosphere of the Gurdwaras because of the power struggles, and try to ignore Gurdwara politics. In the words of Kuldeep, 29, a restaurant worker in Valencia,

The Gurdwara is a place of worship, but they [Gurdwara managers] have turned it into a battleground. Everybody wants to be the head of the Gurdwara committee, to control the resources, and have influence in society, but nobody talks about unity and peace.

By contrast, for the millennium generation, it is a place of learning about their religion and culture, and to have fun with friends. Sukhdeep, 18, a student from Murcia, explains, 'I come to the Gurdwara to get closer to my origin. Here I learn about my religion, culture and way of life ... While learning, I also come in contact with many others like me'. They come mostly at weekends. Some Gurdwaras also organise summer camps, where they learn Punjabi language, read religious scriptures and come in contact with other youth. Gagandeep, 19, a baptised Sikh from Barcelona, states, 'I attend summer camp every year. I have learned Gurbani [religious scripture] and now I have many friends, who visit Barcelona to attend this camp with me'. Gurdwaras provide them with a space to discuss problems and issues regarding their own identity and religious beliefs.

Baptised and non-baptised Sikhs

Within the present Sikh community, an important boundary is drawn, based on the distinction between baptised (Amritdhari) and non-baptised (Sehajdhari) Sikhs. Baptised Sikhs wear the 5 K's, or articles of faith: kesh (long uncut hair), kanga (a wooden comb), kara (iron bracelet), kachera (undergarment) and kirpan (sword) (Singh 2014). They do not change their physical appearance, which means not cutting their hair or piercing or tattooing their bodies. Since they lead the performance of religious rituals in the Gurdwaras they have symbolic capital, and they represent a normative appearance for Sikhs and, to some extent, perform the role of guardians of the faith. Their number in Spain is very limited (less than 5% of the total Sikh population, according to the Gurdwara heads we interviewed). The majority group is that of the non-baptised Sikhs who believe in the teachings of Sikh gurus but are not strict adherents of the code of conduct and rituals. They are more flexible in their religious beliefs and adaptable in a foreign context. They form a majority in the global Sikh diaspora and even in Punjab today (Panikar 2007). As for the role of women, they have an equal right in Sikhism to be baptised and freely to follow the religious code of conduct. In fact, the number of baptised Sikh women in Spain is much higher than for males.

There are frequent clashes between both groups for power and control of the Sikh temples. The non-baptised Sikhs frequently complain about the others, alleging exclusion from Gurdwara activities, as happens with the Badalona Gurdwara where committee members' positions are reserved for baptised Sikhs only. Hardeep, 32, a non-baptised Sikh from Badalona, protests that 'the baptized Sikhs have a monopoly on the management and control of Gurdwaras. They don't allow us to participate in management, but they want us for funding, cooking and cleaning'. Meanwhile, baptised Sikhs claim they have a legitimate right to control the Gurdwaras as they rigorously follow the code of conduct. In the words of Sulakhkhan, 54, a baptised Sikh and Gurdwara manager, 'a

non-baptized Sikh is not pure. He therefore has no right to manage the Gurdwara sahib. I don't even consider him a Sikh, as he doesn't follow the order of Guru'. These conflicts often lead to violent clashes between the two groups and sometimes the local police must intervene to resolve their issues. This has happened repeatedly in Barcelona, Murcia and Madrid and, in other countries like Denmark, it resulted in the closing of a Gurdwara in the year 2006 (Ilkjær 2011).

Baptised Sikhs in Spain enjoy the respect of the Sikh community, but they often receive harsh treatment from the host society. Spanish people are generally ignorant of the Sikh religion and customs, so they tend to confuse them with Muslims, as explained by Sandeep, 24 a baptised Sikh from Vic, 'Owing to my long beard and turban, they [local people] often confuse me with Muslims, and call me "Bin Laden or terrorist"'. They have very limited contact with the host society and face huge problems finding jobs and better housing. In some places, because of their sword-wearing tradition under the 5 Ks, even local police treat them as suspects. In the sphere of public administration, their different appearance is often used to represent population diversity so they were treated as community spokespersons and funded by local government to promote social cohesion. Yet they very often promote youth radicalisation by encouraging them to embrace religious fundamentalism. As Preetpal, 47, a non-baptised Sikh in Barcelona explains,

they [baptized Sikhs] receive money from the city council, and teach kids that if you cut hair or eat meat you will go to hell, and you shouldn't mix with the host society, as it will pollute your mind and soul.

By contrast non-baptised Sikhs, gradualists who do not observe the 5 K's or keep their hair uncut, are generally neglected by the public administration, but are fairly well treated by the host society. They usually do not face discrimination at work and public places.

As the interviews show, the COI generations in which the number of baptised Sikhs is comparatively higher than in the groups of their descendants, put greater emphasis on homogenisation – as baptised members – of the whole community. Kashmir, 52, a member of Gurdwara management committee in Mallorca, states that 'everybody should get baptized, as it is the only way to conserve our traditional way of life and religious values'. However, the 1980s generation generally relates traditionalism with problems in the labour market. Major, 32, a non-baptised Sikh in Malaga, says, 'I work in a restaurant and they [the owners] don't allow me to work with long hair and a beard. Work is important, so I cannot get baptized right now'. Some relate baptism with age, and plan to get baptised at a certain age, more or less around retirement. The number of baptised Sikhs in the 1980s group was lower by comparison with others.

In the millennium group, there was a mixed response. On the one hand, there are young men and women, who are baptised and strictly follow the Sikh code of conduct. One interviewee, Harsimran, claims, 'I am a proud Sikh and I will never change my Sikh appearance for anyone or for anything'. They have little contact, limited to schools or workplaces, with the host community and spend most of their free time including summer holidays at the Gurdwaras learning about religion and the Punjabi language. They are much more prone to the temptations of fundamentalism since sticking with the basic tenets of the religion and eliminating the space of flexibility gives them the strength which their ancestors decreed makes survival possible in foreign lands. On the

other hand, many young Sikhs do not want to get baptised, as they believe that it will make them look different, which could limit their possibilities for making friends, having a social circle, and getting better jobs in the host society, as Jaswinder, 19, a student from Alicante, explains: 'I don't want to get baptized, as it will give me a different look and way of living. I think it will create a rift between me and my friends'.

Caste and clan system: hundred years on ...

In traditional Sikh doctrine, no importance was given to the castes and clans of Indian society, as the founder of the religion Guru Nanak ruled out discrimination on the basis of castes or clans. Yet many Sikhs relate with their origins from different caste groups within the broader Hindu society, maintain their caste identity and pass it to the next generation. These caste boundaries are among the main causes of conflict in Punjab and also in the diaspora (Singh 2015). In the interviews, almost all the participants of different age groups and profiles have confirmed the existence of caste discrimination in the present Sikh community in both Spain and at the origin. There are some Gurdwaras in Spain which are also associated with certain caste groups. The *Ravidasia* Gurdwara of Barcelona, which was opened by the lower caste *Ravidasia* community and closed after the conflict that occurred in Vienna when a *Ravidasia* Sikh cleric was murdered and another injured in 2009, by a group of upper caste Sikh fundamentalists (Lum 2010), and the *Ravidasia* temple of Valencia, are the good examples of caste-based Gurdwaras. This conflict is not only limited to castes because clans like the *Jatts* and *Lubanas*, which comprise the majority of the Sikh population in Spain, are also fighting for power and representation in the Gurdwaras. Sarbjeet, 24, a *Lubana* Sikh living in Vic, explains that 'the construction of the Gurdwara Sahib in Vic [a town in the Barcelona Province] was delayed because of the conflict between the Jatts and Lubanas regarding control of the Gurdwara Sahib'.

In the interviews, we found that Sikhs of the COI generations, always deny that they follow caste rules because it is politically incorrect to talk about this openly, but most of them still feel attached to their clans, which they call *Biraderi*, especially when it comes to the marriage of their children. Inter-caste marriages are very rare and unacceptable for the greater part of the community. In the words of Swaran, a *Jatt* Sikh from Barcelona, 'I will not allow my kids to marry into the lower castes. They have to marry into our own religion and caste'. Some clearly state that they do not like socialising with lower castes. Hardeep, 28, an upper caste Sikh from Madrid, pulls no punches: 'I don't discriminate, but the lower caste people are not worth any relationship, they are filthy, mean creatures'. These attitudes reveal the tough rigidity of these inner boundaries and tensions which are very dangerous for the unity and development of the community. Embodying the traditional female role as transmitters of religious and social identity, Sikh women in Spain are more caste-discriminatory than males when discussing inter-caste marriages and other social ties. In the words of Kulwinder, 47, an upper caste woman living in Murcia, 'I don't believe in the caste system, but I don't want my kids to marry into lower-caste families, as it will bring shame on my family'. These boundaries are expected to disappear in time as the 1980s generation is comparatively less discriminatory than their parents' generation. Hence, Kirat, 31, a *Ravidasia* Sikh from Valencia, says, 'the old people are more discriminatory than the young ones. Many of my colleagues are

from the upper caste and they show no discrimination with me'. The millennium group shows the least interest in caste conflict as they have very little contact with Punjabi society in India, although Indian social media, which is full of material that discriminates among castes, has a powerful impact on their young minds. As Kuldeep, 28, a lower caste Sikh in Valencia, comments, 'it will take 100 years more to fully eradicate this caste discrimination from Sikh society'. Being in a country where ideas of equality are taught in all the institutions, we can expect a change in the thinking of youth with regard to these social problems.

Conclusions

The experience of migration shared by different Sikh generations does not make them more homogenous, but has widened the differences between them. Immigration imposes the need to restructure boundaries and codes of interaction with the host society on a different basis from the way things used to be done in India in order to reinforce and maintain the Sikh identity. Opposition or distance from Hinduism and Islam, which had a fundamental role to play in the creation of the Sikh identity, is not so important in twenty-first-century Spain. Here, each generation is responding to the challenge of maintaining group identity from their own different experiences marked by age, family status, religious beliefs, migratory routes and socioeconomic status.

During the last five decades of immigration to Spain, the different Sikh generations have responded to different push and pull factors in their migratory process. The COI group, which includes economic emigrants and refugees, were expelled by unemployment and insecurity caused by population growth, the Green Revolution and political crisis in Punjab. Most of them stayed first in countries of the Middle East and then entered Europe by sea or by air. The 1980s group mainly comprised unskilled economic migrants with little education who, owing to the diverse effects of neoliberal policies, had to leave Punjab in search of better job opportunities overseas. They have used 'donkey flights' and unscrupulous intermediaries to enter Spain. By contrast, the millennium generation were brought by their family or kinship networks. Theirs was the shortest and most direct journey to Spain, which they entered legally with family, study or work visas.

As for religion, the chief concern of the COI group is to preserve religious purity (as explained by Douglas 1966) and pass on religious practices, beliefs and identity to the coming generations who are now living in a diverse foreign society which can contaminate their minds and souls. To accomplish this goal, they are investing time and resources in the establishment and functioning of Gurdwaras as centres of learning for the next generations. Meanwhile, the 1980s generation is struggling to comply with their religious duties and to keep their jobs in the service sector, especially in restaurants, where most of them work. And, finally, the millennium generation is divided into two groups, one which wants to assimilate into Spanish society and the other which wants to go back to their roots by learning about Sikhism and following it very strictly.

Clashes for power and control in the Gurdwaras are common in Spain where the conflicts between the different groups are based on internal lines of division between baptised and non-baptised Sikhs, or castes and clans. Here, the community will need to think about how to abolish these internal divisions, which are becoming breeding grounds for violent

clashes which can lead to fragmentation of the community. The millennium generation, whose members are growing up in an environment of equality, are expected to play a decisive role in abolishing castes from the Sikh society and easing the tensions between baptised and non-baptised Sikhs.

In future, as explained by Massey and Sánchez (2010), the possibility of keeping the religion alive will also depend on the negotiating capacity of the Sikh community for brokering of internal (within the Sikh community) and external (with the host community) boundaries. In the host society, this will largely depend upon recognition of the Sikh religion by the host government and society as a valuable component of the society. When Sikhism becomes a registered religion, and the wearing of religious symbols (5 K's) becomes symbolic capital for the Sikhs, and discrimination of all kinds against baptised Sikhs in public places and the labour market disappears, Sikhs, who have changed their appearance in the hope of better work opportunities will be able to return to their religious beliefs and their religious identity will be strengthened. In the Sikh community, a revival and restructuring of the religion (dissolving internal boundaries) in the foreign context could reinforce the community (by unifying all castes and clans) and their acceptance in the host society. Otherwise, rigidity in these boundaries, as explained by Barth (1969), can contribute to their social exclusion and be an obstacle to their integration into the host society.

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