NATURE AND DYNAMICS OF PUNJABI IDENTITY A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled **"Nature and Dynamics of Punjabi Identity A Comparative Study of India and Pakistan"**, submitted by **Ellora Puri** is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University and is her own work.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Nancy Jetly
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Supervisor

The Gossamer swabs of aak
Are Scattered in the air
In search of self-identity
They roam all over countries and continents
Inside out and outside in...

- Ravinder Ravi, ***Mann da ik***
Parchawan *(A Shadow of the Mother)*

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

'If you want real freedom for the Punjab, that is, a Punjab in which every community will have its due share in the economic and administrative fields as partners in a common concern, then that Punjab will not be Pakistan, but just Punjab,land of the five rivers, Punjab is Punjab and will always remain Punjab whatever anybody may say'.

-Speech in Punjab Legislative Assembly, 11 March 1941, by Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, a Unionist Party Leader and the Chief Minister of undivided Punjab*.[1]

I

This statement was made by one of the most influential political leaders of the pre-1947 Punjab. It reflects the inter-communal accommodation spirit that his party, the Unionist Party, believed in and practiced. This party dominated Punjabi politics for over two decades before the Partition. The statement gives a picture of Punjab which is in sharp contrast to what M N Roy wrote, around the same period, 'Let it not be forgotten, that Punjab is the centre of the Hindu-Moslem conflicts that radiate from there to all other parts of India'.[2] These quotes reflect two sides of the same picture.

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1. Cited in Joyce Pettigrew, *Robber Noblemen* (London, 1975),p.1

2. Quoted in Ayesha Jalal, 'Nation, Reason and Religion, Punjab's Role in the Partition of India' in *Economic and Political Weekly* (8 August 1998),p.2183.

Punjab was region which was highly divided along religious lines. Riots were so endemic in its cities that the British insisted on calling it the 'Ulster of India'.[3] Communal organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha, Khaksars and Ahrars, and revivalist groups like the Arya Samaj, the Singh Sabhas and, the Muslim *anjumans* had strong presence in the urban Punjab. [4] They tended to employ the context of the modernising impulses unleashed by the colonial state-communication revolution, urbanisation, education and creation of new structures of power for producing particularised religious identities.[5]

However, Punjab was also a region in which the rural political tradition dominated over the urban tradition, and this tradition, in contrast to the latter, was more fluid and accommodating. The symbol of this tradition was the Unionist Party which dominated the politics of the region till 1947. In the 1937 provincial election the party captured more than sixty-eight percent of the seats. Even in the 1946 elections when the Muslims League swept the elections in Punjab, the party managed to get over twenty percent of the votes polled.[6] The base of the Unionists were basically the rural tribal and kinship structures.

Talbot points out that the Unionist Party used 'consociational devices' of 'proportionality' in recruitment and decision making. The pact between

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[3] See Ian Talbot, 'British Rule in the Punjab, 1849-1947', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* vol.XIX, no.2 (1991), p.205.

[4] See for a discussion on how these organisations tended to dominante the scene in Punjab's cities, Ian Talbot, 'State, Society and Identity' in Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot, *Punjabi Identity: Continuity and Change* (New Delhi,1996), pp.7-33.

[5] ibid.

[6] Ian Talbot, "Back to the Future?" *International Journal of Punjab Studies,* (IJPS), vol.3, no.1, (1996),pp.67-68.

Sikander Hayat Khan, the Unionist leader and Baldev Singh, an Akali leader, was an example of such a device-it sought to increase Sikh representation in government departments and endorsed some sort of an autonomy for the Sikhs. Likewise, when Khan formed his cabinet in 1937, he made sure that the cabinet represented all the communities. He also ensured that the minority members of the cabinet were selected only after consultation with other leaders of their respective communities.[7]

The Unionist Party also symbolised another tradition - of regionalism. It placed a lot of importance on the fact of Punjab being a strong regional actor, and understood attempts by the Congress and Muslims League to make inroads into Punjab as attempts at subversion of this reality. The use, by the other two parties, of all-India symbols, prompted the Unionist Party to reject their ideology as that would mean the interest of Punjab being made secondary to the 'national' interests.[8]

These traditions were soon to be swept aside, at the time of the 1946 elections. Dynamics beyond the control of the Unionist Party interfered - the World War II and increasing communal polarisation elsewhere in India. The first resulted in economic grievances that developed due to war-time shortages, inflation, rationing, bureaucratic highhandedness and the government's decision to control grain prices. These, along with the complaints of the demobilised soldiers, served to buttress anti-Unionist sentiments.[9] The second, more importantly, led to swelling of the ranks of the opposition - the Muslim League and the Congress, with Muslims and Hindus, respectively. The process was also aided by untimely deaths of Sikander Hayat Khan and the second in command of the Unionist Party, Chotu Ram. The party also faced factionalism as a result of weak, inexperienced leadership of Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, the new premier.[10]

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[7] ibid., Punjab was a Muslim-majority state - nearly fifty seven per cent of the population was Muslim. See Swarna Aiyar, 'Violence and the State in the Partition of Punjab', 1947-1948' (Ph.D. Thesis, King's College, University of Cambridge, 1994).

[8] See, Yunus Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil* (New Delhi,1995), and 'Reflections on Partition: Pakistan Perspective', *IJPS*, vol.4, no.1 (1997),pp.43-61.

Muslim League successfully linked the support for its demand for Pakistan with individual commitment to Islam. The Unionist Party, in this discourse, came to symbolise the 'myriad narrow loyalties that divided Muslims' thus posing a threat to Muslim unity in form of a potential *fitna* (meaning general disordering of the community).[11] The League also used the same loyalties of 'tribe' and brotherhood which the Unionists had so effectively used earlier, to make inroads into their rivals rural strongholds.[12] The collective result of all these mobilization strategies was that Muslim League struck a break - through in the election to secure a majority of seats. However, the Unionist ministry continued with the support of the Congress and the Akali Dal for nearly an year.

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9. See Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947* (New Delhi, 1988),pp.163-6, and David Gilmartin, 'A Magnificent Gift: Muslim Nationalism and the Election Process in Colonial Punjab'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* vol.40,no.3 (July,1998),p.420.

10. Darshan S. Talta and Ian Talbot, *Punjab* (England, 1995),pp.xxi-xxxii.

11. Gilmartin, n.9,pp.415-36.

12. See David Gilmartin, "Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab," in *Modern Asian Studies,* vol.13,no.3 (1979),pp.485-517; and *Empire and Islam* (New Delhi,1989).

The Muslim League saw this as a political disaster as it thought it essential to have power in Punjab for its objective of Pakistan.[13]

In the meantime, the Pakistan demand started gaining momentum in North India, especially in the wake of the British departure becoming imminent. In Punjab also communal tension was picking up tempo especially given the fact that Muslim League had started agitating against the coalition government and that private communal armies like the Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Muslim League National Guards and Akali Sena had sprouted.[14] The announcement of the British intention of transferring power by June 1948, exacerbated the communal politics. The fallout was immediate-Khizr Tiwana, unable to cope with the deteriorating law and order in his province announced his resignation in the March 1947.

The collapse of the Unionist ministry signalled the end of the last remanant of the politics of accommodation and it heralded communal violence of unprecedented nature, to the province. In March, the Sikhs were the primary victims, in the western part of the province. This fed a desire for revenge and thus followed sporadic riots. On 3 June, the Mountabatten Plan providing for the partition of the country into two dominions of Pakistan and India was announced. This basically meant a division of Punjab and Bengal. The Plan was accepted by all the major political parties, thus makings it imminent. What followed was increased tension, fear and insecurity among the population. The killings of this period happened in this context of uncertainty and nervousness. The Sikh were the worst victims of this anxiety. They formed nearly thirteen per cent of the Punjabi population - a small minority compared to the Muslims who constituted fifty-seven per cent and Hindus who were around twenty-eight per cent of the population. They were not concentrated in any one region of the province and were scattered all over Punjab. The maximum number lived in the central division of Lahore and Jullundur, which, if the Partition line was drawn on the basis of Muslim and non-Muslim districts, would be split down the middle. And, to top it all, the most sacred places of Sikhism would go to Pakistan.

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[13] Jinnah had once called this Muslim-majority region the 'corner-stone of Pakistan'. Ian Talbot, 'The Punjab Unionist Model of Consociational Democracy for Contemporary India and Pakistan', *IJPS*, vol.3,no.1 (1996),p.72.

[14] Tan Tai Yong, 'Sir Cyril Goes to India: Partition, Boundary-Making and Disruption in the Punjab', *IJPS*, vol.4,no.1 (1997),p.3.

'Frustrated by the failure of their leaders at the negotiating table and craving for revenge on the Muslim, Sikhs started to make plans to meet partition on their own terms'.[15] The violence started in the central districts and soon retaliatory actions followed. The unprecedented nature of this violence left around 180,000 dead, according to a conservative estimate. Scholars blame the high militarisation of the Punjabi society, as a result of Punjab being a premier recruiting area, for the intensity of way the violence burst in 1947. A large demobilised soldiery, mainly Sikhs and Muslim, perpetrated all kinds of atrocities on each other.[16] The violence was aimed at putting to an end any kind of religious pluralism, in both the sides, to push out the religious minorities and to gain control over that exclusive territory where only one's own community lived.

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[15] Tan Tai Yong, 'Prelude to Partition: Sikh Responses to the Demand for Pakistan, 1940-47', *IJPS*, vol.1,no.2 (1994),p.189. The earlier discussion on Sikh anxieties also draw from this article,pp.167-195.

[16] One out of every three able - bodied men between the age of seventeen to thirty in Punjab belonged to the army. Aiyar's main contention in her thesis is that the unprecedented nature of the violence during the Partition was due to this very reason. n.7.

The above discussion points out the various ways the Punjabis self-identified themselves in the pre-Partition era. The identities were structured along the lines of regional and religous; rural and urban in the political arena. The regional-rural dyad was the dominant one while the religious-urban dyad formed the secondary adjunct. However, the circumstances around 1947 led to the reversal of this diacritica - aggravation of tensions on religious lines in other parts of the country, soon engulfed Punjab, as well. The discourse of 'difference ' made way into the various political spaces of the province and the primary identification of the Punjabis, like the rest of the North India in the same period, became communal.

In this background is located our subsequent study of the Punjabis who got divided in 1947 to become Indian and Pakistani Punjabis. The discussion hinges around two points - one, that the Punjabis have identified themselves variously, according to the different contexts they are placed in. And two, that inspite of these different ways of identifying, some kind of a common Punjabi ethos has permeated their experiences.

II

In what kind of a theoretical construct do we situate our discussion of the Punjabi identity? The first postulate of this theoretical construct would view community identities as flexible and malleable and the process of identification as dynamic, contingent and contextual.[17] Identity is not a stable, unchangeable, given attribute of a particular group. In fact, a group possesses a plethora of identities which might or might not overlap in 'social time and social space'.[18] These identities usually are *'fuzzy'* in nature, to borrow Sudipta Kaviraj's phrase,[19] when they exist without much thought to exclusivity and self-definition (in terms of an 'other'). and thus, do not claim to represent or exhaust all the layers of self-hood of the community and its members.

Exclusivity and self-definition of a community comes about with the construction of a self-image of community which posits itself as different from others (in most cases as different from a particular other). It is the formation of this self-image which becomes ideal for situations of ascriptive mobilizations in the name of religion, language, caste, race or the nation. Identities in fuzzy state are too unwieldy for such mobilization, while identities in this state, since they have undergone a process of exclusion-inclusion in which certain cultural resources of the community are picked and other omitted, are easier to handle and hence 'mobilizable'.

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[17] See Dipankar Gupta, *The Context of Ethnicity* (New Delhi,1996).

[18] Elizabeth Tonkin, et al, *History and Ethnicity* (London,1989.).

[19] See, Sudipta Kaviraj, 'The Imaginary Institution of India' in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey, eds., *Subltern Studies VII* (Delhi,1992),pp.1-139. However, here the term is not used in the way Kaviraj uses it. He contrasts it to the 'enumerated' identities of the modern world and places the 'fuzzy' identities in the pre-modern context. Our formulation is that such *fuzziness* is present even in the modern temporal space and in fact, the 'enumerated' identities get constructed by negotiating with these fuzzy ones. See for a discussion of this aspect, Gilmartin, n.12,pp.417-8 Dipanker Gupta gives another criticism of Kaviraj's view, according to which, even in the pre-modern period there existed group identities that could be marked out. This is true, but it must be remembered that the modern era has processes like improved communications, at its disposal which help individuals in 'imagining' themselves as members of a particular community much more easily. See Dipanker Gupta, n.17,pp.141-3, and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, 1991).

However, what markers are stressed and what ignored depends upon different temporal and spatial contexts. These markers might be language, religion, nationality, caste and they might be picked up separately or they might be used together.

The second postulate views the community as a site of both correspondence and contestation. Correspondence becomes evident when ideas of shared history, similar backgrounds and comparable present - day circumstances are stressed. Contestation manifests itself through antagonism, resistance, 'cultural superiority complexes' and essentialisation.[20] These two opposing vectors of community identifications form the determinants in the formation of a specific identity in any particular situation.

Our third postulate concerns the relationship of power with community identity. It is posited that identities which are denied power in the political structures, usually re-imagine and re-define themselves so as to create a self-image in oppositional terms to these structures and the groups dominating these structurse. In contrast, the groups which are associated with the power structure are 'silent' about their self-definition.[21]

These three postulates will be tested in the next three chapters. The various fashions the Punjabi community has identified itself in the post-1947 forms the core of this work. An attempt shall be made to discern the processes that determine the way these identifications manifest themselves. An effort will be made to understand the interaction between power politics and the Punjab community identity as defined in various contexts. We shall also seek to discern how Punjabi identity, as a site of correspondence has manifestied itself.

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[20] See Raminder Kaur and Virinder Singh' Brazen Translations', in Pritam Singh and Shinder S. Thandi, *Globalisation and the Region* (United Kingdom, 1996),p.405.

[21] Tonkin, n.18,p.18.

CHAPTER - II

PUNJABI IDENTITY IN PAKISTAN

Identity politics has played a crucial role in the history of Pakistan. The country was created as a result of identity politics mobilised around the idioms of religion - Hindu majority versus Muslim minority. The circumstances of the period immediately preceding the Partition were such so as to make an overarching construct of 'Muslim' identity more salient than the various contested linguistic and regional identifications of Muslims, that existed particularly in the Muslim majority provinces of Bengal, the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Punjab and Sind. In the changed context of post-1947 Pakistan, regional-linguistic identity politics emerged as a counter-hegemonic discourse to official homogenising religious nationalism. It is in this post-Partition period that this chapter can be situated.

Punjabi pre-eminence in Pakistan, especially its State structure, is a fact that has been remarked about by almost every commentator of Pakistani politics. This Punjabi dominance is seen variously as 'ethnisation' of the State, 'Punjabisation' of Pakistan or the making of a 'Punjabistan'. These analysts pre-suppose a cultural homogeneity of Punjabis and a design on their part to dominate the political processes of the country. In this chapter, an attempt is made to problematize this notion and see how, Punjabiness or Punjabi identity, as we call it, has determined the post independence politics of Pakistan and how, in turn, the political mechanics of the country affected this Punjabi identity.

I

In the post-independence history of Pakistan, Punjabis have been of pivotal importance. In a country which has seen elected democratic dispensations for fewer years than unrepresentative ones, the Punjabis have a substantial representation in the army and the bureaucracy - the key non-elected institutions of the State. Punjab is virtually the home of the Pakistani army which has wielded power directly for nearly twenty-five years and indirectly for longer still. Even during the democratic dispensations, the region has been an important actor.[1] Punjabis took over immediately after independence. It was the Punjabi bureaucratic elites who came to dominate the political decision-making during this period, in absence of an effective political leadership. The core of this elite comprised two men - Ghulam Muhammad and Chaudhary Muhammad Ali.[2] By the early 1950s, what Yunas Samad calls the 'ethnisation of the state,' had already taken place. He defines this as a process in which the Punjabis aligned with the Muhajirs against the majority Bengalis.[3]

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[1] As Ian Talbot points out, this fact was recognised as early as March 1951 when the Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan moved his office from Karachi to Lahore during the Punjab provincial election campaign. Ian Talbot, 'From Pakistan to Punjabistan? Region, State and Nation Building, *International Journal of Punjab Studies* (IJPS), vol.5, no.2 (1998), p.180.

[2] Lawrence Ziring, The Failure of Democracy in Pakistan : East Pakistan and the Central Government, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, pp.116-18, quoted in Saeed Shafqat, *Civil Military Relations in Pakistan* (Pakistan, 1997), p.28.

[3] The Muhajirs are the section of population that migrated from India after the Partition in 1947. In the initial period, they enjoyed priveleged positions in the government and bureacracy which were disproportionately high in, both, number and power. They constituted 3.5 per cent of the population and had nearly 21 per cent of the jobs in the Pakistani Civil Service. Yunas Samad, 'Pakistan or Punjabisation : Crisis of National Identity,' *IJPS*,vol.2, no.1 (1995), p.2.

In the debates of the time, the Punjabis and the Muhajirs were the most vocal proponents of a strong centralised state. This was mirrored in the One-Unit scheme. Authors, like Sayeed, attribute the authorship of the scheme to Punjabi political leaders with an objective of offsetting the numerical superiority of the Bengalis by adopting principle of parity between the east and the west wings.[4] The scheme did more than this; it practically placed smaller provinces of Sind, Baluchistan and the NWFP under Punjabi domination in the West Wing.[5]

Likewise, various other important political junctures in Pakistan's political history are seen as visible manifestations of the Punjabi dominance. The zeal of the Punjabi - controlled State's for over-centralization resulted in the break-up of the country and the emergence of Bangladesh. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, though himself a Sindhi, emerged as a powerful mass leader because of his political base in the Punjab.[6] This was also a direct result of the emergence of the Punjab as the most populated province of Pakistan - it has nearly sixty percent of the population. In Zia-ul Haq's strategy of restricting the support base of the

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[4] Khalid B. Sayeed 'The Role of Military in Pakistan' in Jacque Van Doorn, ed., *Armed Forces and Society : Sociological Essays* (The Hague, 1968), p.289, and *Politics in Pakistan : The Nature and Direction of Change*, (New York, 1980), pp.32-35. Also See, Raunaq Jahan, *Pakistan : Failure in national integration* (Dacca, 1972) and Samina Ahmed 'Centralization, Authoritarianism and the Mismanagement of Ethnic Relations in Paksitan' in Michael E. Brown and Sumit Ganguly, eds., *Government Policies and Ethnic Relations in Asia and the Pacific* (Massachussets, 1997), p.94

[5] Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia* (Lahore, 1995), p.53.

[6] He acknowledged this when he called the Punjabis, "the bastions of power, the heart and mind, the sinews, muscles, and arms, the brains and brawn of Pakistan" quoted in Asaf Hussain 'Ethnicity, National Identity and Praetorianism : The Case of Pakistan', *Asian Survey,* vol.16, no.10 (1976), p.927.

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the Punjab again figured prominently. He skillfully created sympathisers and supporters in Punjab and through patronage of religious groups, traders, merchants and business groups in the Punjab, consolidated a coalition of interests opposed to PPP.[7] In fact, the present prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, is seen as a product of this very strategy, as he was a protege of Zia. During, Zias time itself, there was a realignment of political forces - a Punjabi - Pakhtoon clique took over from a Punjabi - Muhajir one. In the process, Muhajirs were slowly excluded.[8] The inference was obvious; the core group always consisted of the Punjabis who coopted elites. Since the options for cooption were limited by the 'size of the cake,'[9] the cooption of one group would be at the expense of another group.

The post-Zia politics reinforced the impression of the Punjabis as the centre of gravity of Pakistani politics. Benazir Bhutto discovered this at her cost, when her national administration in Islamabad was consistently undermined by a hostile provincial government in Lahore. According to authors like Samina Ahmed, the Punjabi dominated army got rid of the PPP government because it distrusted it. Subsequently, it got Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI), which had a Punjabi leadership, to not only form the central government but also all the four provincial governments in 1990, through a rigged election.[10]

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7. See Shafqat, n.2, p.231; Jalal, n.5, p.106.

8. The result of this process has been a relative feeling of deprivation and a consequent alienation among the Muhajirs. This has led to the rise of Muhajir separatism in Pakistan. See, for example, Farhat Haq, 'Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilization,' *Asian Survey*, vol.xxxv, no.11, (November, 1995), p.993.

9. Samad, n.3, p.28.

10. Ahmed, n.4, p.113.

The Punjabi hegemony, in non-Punjabi eyes, is also evidenced from the way the Supreme Court restored a Punjabi Prime Minister in 1993, but failed to do so in the case of a Sindhi Prime Minister dismissed on the same grounds in 1990. Similarly the sacking of the Sindhi Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah in December 1997 is also understood as an indication of this hegemony.[11] With the voting into office of Rafiq Ahmad Tarar, on 31 December 1997, as the President, the offices of President, Prime Minister, Senate Chairman and the Chief of Army Staff, are all held by Punjabis. This, alongwith the concentration of development funds in the Punjab by Nawaz Sharif, is taken to be a step towards Punjabisation of Pakistan.[12] The idea of Punjabi dominance and the emotions it arouses can be evidenced from the reactions evoked by the nuclear tests on May 28, 1998 and the following announcement of construction of the Kalabagh dam on June 11, 1998 by Nawaz Sharif, in the non-Punjabi provinces. To the former, the response was muted as the bomb was seen as a Punjabi bomb - the adverse reaction of the Baluchistan government as well as the populace to the explosions was noted by the media everywhere. To the latter, the response was uproarious with both Sind and the NWFP, the non-Punjabi provinces to be affected by the dam, up in opposition. In their perception the dam (which Punjabis want to build essentially for their provincial interests) will herald an economic and environmental catastrophe for them.[13]

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[11] See, Mohammad Waseem, 'Democratisation in Pakistan : A Decade of Trials and Tribulations,' *IJPS*, vol.5, no.2 (1998), p.194.

[12] Talbot, op.cit., pp.179-80; see also newspaper reports like, Waseem Ahmed Shah, 'What prize autocracy?' reproduced from The Frontier Post in *The Observer*, 16 January 1998.

[13] 'Because it would displace many people in the NWFP, inundate valuable agricultural land, and increase Punjab's access to water at a high costs to Sindh,' Ahmed, n.4, p.117; also see, S. Akbar Zaidi, 'On Verge of Major Upheaval'? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1 August 1998, pp.2062-5; the newspaper reports of June 1998 like, *Dawn* editorial of 21 June, 1998 and *The Frontier Post* editorial of 22 June, 1998.

II

Punjabis happen to be visible just not politically, their importance in the economy of the country, can not be gainsaid. The massive irrigation projects launched by the British in the 1880s made Punjab the bread basket of pre-independence India. In the post-1947 period also, West Punjab which retained a lion's share of these projects,[14] is the richest agricultural area of Pakistan, supplying most of its food grains. This region, like its counterpart in India, experienced rapid technological changes associated with the so-called Green Revolution. As a consequence, by 1976-77, the Punjab was producing seventy-two per cent of the country's output of major crops and sixty-seven per cent of the foodgrains output. By the 1981 Census, eighty per cent of all the tractors and eighty eight per cent of all tubewells in Pakistan were to be found in Punjab.[15] The Green Revolution resulted in a marked increase in the differentiation between this province and other regions.[16]

The influx of refugee capitalists at the time of the Partition gave a boost to industrialisation, which was further encouraged by the development of the region during the martial law eras. Faisalabad as the 'Manchester' of Pakistan and

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[14] Nearly eighty percent. See, Shinder S. Thandi, 'The Unidentical Punjab Twins : Some Explanations of Comparative Agricultural Performance Since Partition', *IJPS*, vol.4, no.1 (1997), p.64.

[15] M.H. Khan, *Underdevelopment and Agrarian Structure in Pakistan* (Boulder, 1981), pp.3, 11 quoted in Talbot, n.1, p.184.

[16] See, Akmal Hussain, 'Land Reforms in Pakistan: a Reconsideration,' in Iqbal Khan, *Fresh Perspectives on India and Pakistan* (Oxford, 1985), pp.211-12; and Hamza Alavi, 'Elite Farmer Strategy and Regional Disparties in Agricultural Development' in Hassan Gardezi and Jamil Rashid, ed., *Pakistan : The Unstable State* (Pakistan, 1983), pp.237-56. However, these works also emphasise the exacerbation of differences within the region itself. See, for example, Carl H. Gotsch, 'Regional Agricultural Growth. The Case of West Pakistan', *Asian Survey*, vol.8, no.3 (March 1968), p.190.

Lahore as an important industrial centre led the way in the Punjab.[17] The flight of capital from Karachi in the 1990s, due to civil strife, was to the Punjab.[18]

Due to the 'military-ethnic equation,'as Clive Dewey calls the relationship between the army and the Punjabis,[19] the benefits, that accrue from being associated with the military, in a military-dominated state structure, have all gone to this group. The maximum amount of army recruitment has been taking place from, since the British days, the north and the north-west Punjab - Jhelum and Rawalpindi districts - broadly described as the Potohari speaking area. This area has barani land - hilly poor agricultural tracts - for which rainfall is the only source of irrigation. The army is the principle employer for this region. This association with the army has transformed this localist, rural area into a lower middle-class, mobile society.[20] Army has acted as a development agency by paying for lifestyles, encouraging strategic industries and defence contractors who apply their skills in the civil sector once they master the techniques. The agricultural economy receives a continuous stimulation from the demands of the cantonments and produces of the Military Farms Department. Also, because of the army, a relatively sophisticated pool of labour - drivers, mechanics and engineers - is generated, which applies its skills in the civilian economy once discharged from the force.[21] The added advantages of this 'military - ethnic equation' for the Punjabis come from the continuation of the colonial policies of making land available to servicemen (in not just Punjab, but elsewhere too, particularly Sind), especially in the military regimes. Thus, this has created a nexus of interest between Punjabi landowners and the military.[22]

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[17] See, Syed Abdul Quddus, *Punjab : the land of Beauty Love and Mysticism* (Karachi: 1992), pp.59-60; and Talbot, n.1, p.185.

[18] Talbot, ibid.

[19] See, C. Dewey, 'The Rural Roots of Pakistani Militarism' in D.A. Low, ed., *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan* (Basingstoke, 1991), pp.255-8.

[20] Iftikhar H. Malik, 'Understanding Punjab's Political Economy,' *IJPS*, vol.1, no.1 (1994), pp.125-6.

III

This picture of a Punjabi pre-eminence, as painted above and as perceived by the non-Punjabis, makes both Punjab and the Punjabis the *bette-noire* of the other identities in the country. The feeling is further exacerbated by the very nature of the Pakistan State which has sought to build a unifying, homogenising national identity. In such a canvas, there appears to be no scope whatsoever of hybridity and diversity, that are natural concomitants of a multicultural society like Pakistan. The national identity project is ostensibly, a part of the nation- and state-building enterprise. The latter part of this enterprise has been undertaken through authoritarian forms of governance, the denial of regional autonomy and the creation of unified economic policies.[23] And the former, through particular cultural policies which try to 'locate, fix and objectify an essentialised notion of Muslim identity'.[24]

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[21] See, Dewey, n.19, pp.271-4; Samad, n.3, pp.32-33.

[22] See Sarah Ansari, 'Punjabis in Sind-Identity and Power', *IJPS*, vol.2, no.1 (1995), p.13; Tahir Amin, *Ethno-national Movements of Pakistan* (Islamabad, 1988), p.226; Malik, n.20, p.125; and Talbot, n.1, p.181-2.

[23] Ahmed, n.4, p.84.

[24] Samad, n.3, p.23.

The objectification involves adoption of the slogans of Muslim nationalism of yore (pre-1947) by the State extolling the virtues of 'Islamic Solidarity'; linking Pakistan to Mughal Indian culture; portraying Urdu as the sole language of the country; and denouncing linguistic-regional movements as divisive provincialism. Ironically, these so-called attempts at nation- and state-building have been counterproductive. Attempts at erecting a unitary, homogeneous Pakistan have reinforced the multiple linguistic and cultural identities; have encouraged political mobiliation on the basis of ethnisation; and have, also in extreme case, contributed to severe conflict (notably, civil war in East Pakistan and the resultant emergence of Bangladesh). In this clash for identifications, language has been a major impetus for political activization as groups 'endeavour to protect their ethno-linguistic heritage, gain access to educational facilities and achieve economic advancement'.[25]

Where do the Punjabis fit in this space of contestation? They dominate the institutions of the State, have the maximum number of electoral seats and are visibly dominant in the national economy. They seem to be the group benefitting the most from the status quo. The State as well as the other structures in the country, which are seen as discriminatory towards non-Punjabis are identified with the Punjabis. Anti-Punjabi sentiments have thus become the most common idiom of the political space in Pakistan. Fears are expressed in

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25. Kavita R. Khory, 'National Integration and the Politics of Identity in Pakistan,' *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol.1, no.4 (Winter, 1995), p.33. For further discussion on making of the official national identity see Urmila Phadnis, *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia* (New Delhi, 1990), pp.98-101; Anwar H. Syed, Pakistan: *Islam, Politics and National Solidarity* (New York: 1982); Hamza Alavi, 'The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh,' in Kathleen Gough and Hari P. Sharma, *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia* (USA, 1973), pp.145-73; and Samad, n.3, pp.23-31.

the political arena that Pakistan might start unravelling as a result of demands by non-Punjabi identities for more space in the political, economic and cultural spheres. The academic discourse does not fail to acknowledge this evident Punjabi visibility in Pakistan. Scholars like Yunas Samad go to the extent of insisting that Pakistan has turned into a 'Punjabistan'.[26]

IV

These sentiments portray a single monolith of a Punjabi identity, whose only object is to somehow maintain its hegemony over the Pakistan state and to suppress any form of dissent and difference. How did the Punjabis, who were latecomers in joining the cause of Muslim nationalism become the 'roller coaster'[27] of this cause? How have the Punjabis, who in the pre-1947 era were the strongest champions of decentralisation, become equally powerful votaries of centralisation? Do all Punjabis constitute this monolith, out to homogenize the country and repress any kind of dissensions? And how has Punjabi identity manifested itself in the conditions described above? The answers to these queries need delving into the history of Punjabi identity and its operation in the broad Pakistani rubric.

V

Pakistan, as mentioned earlier, is a product of identity politics. This politics involved a formation of a counter-hegemonic discourse along religious lines against the pre-eminent Indian nationalist discourse. However, even this

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26. Samad, n.3.

27. Iftikhar Malik terms it so, in 'Pluralism, Partition and Punjabisation: Politics of Muslim Identity in the British Punjab', *IJPS*, vol.5, no.1 (1998).

discourse was not a composite, indivisible whole. In fact, it was a contested space in which Muslim religious nationalism vied with strong regional interests. Punjab represented one such regional interest. For a long time, regional identification in this province had an upper hand. And the fear of a central control by the Congress or the Muslim League was in effect the *raison d'etre* of politics in the region. To cut the story short, conditions were created in north India for the communal frenzy that gripped it in the 1940s, due to the conflation of various circumstances like the breakdown of constitutional negotiations, the civil disobedience movement launched by the League and the accelerated British time table for departure.[28] In these circumstances, the opposition of the regional interests to Muslim nationalism vanished and as a consequence, Pakistan was created.

The new country that emerged soon developed into, what has been variously described as, an authoritarian, a military-bureaucratic and an unrepresentative-undemocratic State. It was in this entity that the Punjabis came to play an influential role. The reason for this lies in the colonial pattern of 'economic development, military recruitment and administration' in the region.[29] The colonial legacy of recruitment of 'martial castes' from certain regions of the Punjab contributes to the predominance of Punjabis in the army.[30]

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[28] See Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj: 1849-1947* (New Delhi, 1988); Yunas Samad, *Nation in Turmoil : Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan: 1937-58* (New Delhi, 1995); and David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam* (New Delhi, 1989).

[29] Talbot, n.1, p.183.

[30] See Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley, 1984) and 'State Building in Pakistan' in Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner, *The State Religion and Ethnic Politics* (Lahore, 1987), pp.299-332, for an exposition on 'martial race' theory, its origins and the legacy it has left.

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The Punjabi influence in the bureaucracy stemmed out of their better educational development than other areas in the country.[31] Similarly the 'Punjab tradition' and bureacratisation of the State complemented each other because the former, as amply demonstrated by P.H.M. van den Dungen, prioritised administration over governance. This tradition privileged the politics of co-option exercised through patronage with greater preference for rural and landholding agricultural interests.[32] After the separation of Bangladesh, the sheer size of the Punjabis, in terms of population and resources, has engendered such a situation of dominance.

Punjabis did (and still do) constitute the largest component of the State structures. However, the way these structures have functioned in Pakistan polity - undemocratically, repressively, unitarily and unrepresentatively - was an institutional response to Pakistan's problems rather than an Punjabi ethnic response. Bureaucratic-military elites, irrespective of their origins, were generally in agreement on a strong center[33] and on the trajectory of their responses to any kind of demands for a representative system, regional autonomy or identity recognition. As it is, the two main non-elected institutions of the Pakistani state were by no means working exclusively to promote Punjabi interests. Indeed, many occasions saw conflict between the bureaucrats and the primarily landlord politicians of the Punjab.[34] The so-called 'organic alliance' between the State and the Punjab politicians was more of a 'politics of compromise'. Often, non-elected officials were prepared to compromise for the sake of a politically expedient arrangement that could perpetuate and enhance State authority under their institutional dominance.[35]

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[31] Leonard Binder 'Islam, Ethnicity, and the State in Pakistan', in Banuazizi and Weiner, n.30, p.264 and Talbot, no.1, p.183. See Talbot, n.28, for how in the pre-Partition era the devolution of responsibility of education was seized upon by the Unionist Mian Fazl-i-Hussain, following the introduction of dyarchy. He ensured a forty percent reservation of places for Muslims in institutions like the Government College, Lahore, which were earlier the preserves of Hindus, p.69.

[32] See PMH van den Dungen, *The Punjab Tradition : Influence and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century India* (London, 1972); and Iftikhar H. Mãlik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan* (Oxford, 1997), pp.17-18.

[33] Shafqat, n.2, p.32; and Samad, n.3, pp.31-32.

In this scheme of things, the Punjabi elite stood to gain. And any section of the society, which is at advantage in a certain set up usually lacks political generosity and is most of the times, status-quoist. The Punjabi elite has become the 'roller-coaster' for Muslim nationalism, the official ideology of the country due to this reason. It supports the centralised State because it benefits from it. But it has not been a one way street. The Punjabi elite attitudes have not been shaped just by the State. The civil society postures have also influenced the elite and, in turn, the State profoundly.

The second part of the answer to the first question lies in the Partition which in the Punjabi popular lore is described as a horrendous, catastrophe. The unprecedented communal riots that tore asunder the Punjabi society wre a corollary of the Partition. Yet, soon after 1947, the West Punjab settled down swiftly.[36] However, the Partition of the Punjab left indelible marks on political attitudes in more than one way. The high level of organised violence that accompanied it was unprecedented in the sub-continent. It was accentuated by the militarised nature of the Punjabi society.[37] The violence came along with (an inclination) to harass religious minorities and push them across borders by religious majorities of both sides. The purpose was to put an end to the religious pluralism of the region. While in other parts of the country, especially Bengal, the minorities continued to stay, in the Punjab (both sides), there was a complete migration of minorities.

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[34] Jalal, n.5, p.50.

[35] ibid., p.147.

[36] The author did not come across any academic literature dealing with the reasons for this, except cursorily. These reasons could form an interesting sociological study, if looked into, as they would throw more light on the Partition itself and the subsequent socio-political scene in Pakistan.

Such a nature of the Partition was accompanied with the sense of betrayal that the Pakistanis, in general, and Muslim Punjabis, in particular, felt over the way the Punjab was divided. The Radcliffe Award was perceived as favouring the Indian side, as it alloted certain Muslim majority areas, like Gurdaspur, to India.[38] It was the Punjab, in Pakistan, that got the maximum number of migrants from India, nearly one-third, that is, more than a six million refugees, approximately one-fourth of the population of the province.[39] This population was assimilated in the host society in a very short period of time. They were dispersed in large numbers all over Punjab. They created in the local population a heightened sense of insecurity (especially, vis-a-vis India), relatively enhanced consciousness about Islam, and a dependence on armed forces.[40]

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[37] See Swarna Aiyar, Violence and the State in the Partition of Punjab, 1947-1948 (Ph.D. Thesis, King's College, University of Cambridge), 1994.

[38] The Pakistani sense of injustice was compounded by the fact that these areas provided access to Jammu and Kashmir. Mohammad Waseem, 'Partition, Migration and Assimilation : A Comparative Study of Pakistani Punjab', *IJPS*, vol.4, no.1 (1997), p.23-27.

[39] ibid, p.22; and Quddus, n.17, p.61.

[40] See Waseem, n.38, pp.32-33; and *Politics and the State in Pakistan* (Islamabad, 1994), pp.110-11.

The sense of injustice over the Radcliffe Award and the communal violence of the Partition created a legacy of anti-Indianism which became an essential element of the official ideology of nation-building. This legacy was more visible in its manifestations in the Punjabis than other groups, like, say, the Sindhis.[41]

It also affected the intra-country politics as the stress was on religious sources of identity. The presence of the migrants in large numbers in the cities their political views carry more weight, especially in light of their swift assimilation, which made their influence non-distinct and diffuse. The sacrifice of life and property, that went hand in hand with migration, led to an enhanced sense of national security. The settlers came to deify the state and depend upon religion as a source of identity. Parochial politicians were frowned upon and seen mostly as corrupt and selfish. This section also formed the support base for martial law governments. And if that was not the case, they preferred a presidential system over a parliamentary one as it symbolised 'unity of authority'.[42]

These attitudes acted in combination with, what has been described as, the 'Punjab tradition' of governance[43] to influence the Pakistani state, where they were represented substantially.

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[41] See Khory, n.25, pp.36-37.

[42] Waseem, n.38, p.33.

[43] See earlier reference, n.32.

It would be difficult to say what was more important in the change in the way Punjabis started perceiving their world-view - the Partition and its concomitant political attitudes or the incorporation of the Punjabi elites into the State structures of the country. The former would definitely have left a more lasting impression on the civil society and it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the elite to be not influenced by the Punjabi civil society. Yet, if it had not been for the cooption of the elite into the State structure, the influence of the Punjabi civil society on the State institutions would not have been to the extent it is now.

VI

The discussion above might give the impression that the Punjabi identity is a singular, uniform, monolithic construct. However, Punjabi identity is not a homogeneous entity and it needs to be viewed keeping in mind its inner cultural-linguistic variations. In the Punjab itself, these differences overlap the politico-economic diversities. Principally, Punjab can be divided into three different parts-central, northern and south western. The central Punjab contains virtually half the population of the province. In this region, Majha Punjabi is spoken. It has traditionally been a home of the 'yeoman farmer' of the colonial administrators. It can easily be said that it is the politico-cultural hub of the province. Lahore, the cultural capital of the country is situated here. By vitue of it also being the provincial capital, the area acquires political significance as well. Its political importance is augmented by the concentration of population here, giving it fifty five National Assembly seats out of the total hundred and fifteenallotted to the province total of hundred and fifteen. A large percent of the population here comprises east Punjabi migrants. Consequently, the region has an affinity for the migrant attitudes dealt with in the previous section. The area is also the most industrialised (and the most agriculturally fertile) in the province. It, therefore, has a well developed middle class and is also a flourishing business centre. The recent ascension of the middle class- business and trader groups in the Pakistani politics has reinforced the importance of this region.[44]

The northern region (north and north west) corresponds with the administrative boundaries of the Rawalpindi division and contains around ten per cent of the Punjab's population. This is a predominantly Potohari-speaking area which extends into the NWFP and Azad Kashmir. We discussed earlier how military connection has revoluitionised this basically hilly and sparsely populated area with very low agricultural earnings. With the assured salary, mobility and social status that the army service brought to this area, a transformation took place to make this a mobile society middle class[45] With a change in career opportunities from the 1970s, even the officer corps of the army, which earlier was the preserve of the prosperous central region, draws its junior officers from the region.[46]

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[44] See, for a discussion of the intra-Punjabi diversity Talbot, n.1,p.188; Samad, n.3 p.32; Malik, n.32, p.79; and C. Shackle 'Siraiki: A Langauge Movement in Pakistan', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol.11, no.3 (1977), pp.385-6. This discussion also draws upon an interview with Prof. Rasul B. Rais, in March 1999.

[45] Around seventy-five per cent of the Pakistan army comes from three districts of this part of the Punjab : Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Attock, and two districts of the NWFP: Mardan and Kohat. See Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, n.30, pp.44,57; and Dewey, n.19.

[46] Samad, n.3,p.33.

Approximately one-fifth of the Punjab populace lives in the South-West zone of the Punjab. This zone primarily comprises Multan and Bahawalpur divisions and Siraiki, a Punjabi dialect closely related to Sindhi, is spoken here. The notion of an indivisible Punjabi identity gets problematized, in the context of this region. It has been argued by many that south Punjab has more in common with Sind than with its northern half, in terms of its economic framework, social structures, religious character, cultural life and language. In the recent past, this area has made a conscious and explicit attempt to distance itself from the dominant groups of the province. A search for a separate identity was triggered off in this area by the influx of the East Punjab refugees who essentially were from Maoha speaking parts and whose cultural nucleus was the central Punjab and Lahore. These refugees formed approximately half the population in Multan and dominated the industrial and commercial sectors of the city.[47] An incipient Siraiki movement emerged first as a move to make the erstwhile Bahawalpur state a province and then as a campaign to create a Siraiki province with its locus at Multan. The movement directed its anger against allotment of 600,000 acres of local land to non-Siraikis, neglect of Siraiki speaking people in the quota system and hurdles in the growth of Siraiki culture through print and electronic media[48]

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47. ibid, p.37 and Shackle, n.44, p.393.

48. Waseem, n.38, pp.35-36.

The movement started in the 1960s and was instituted in a number of cultural and literary organisations and journals.[49] The inability of the movement to make a political dent, it concentrate more on cultural matters-like persuading Radio Multan to increase transmission of Siraiki, and organising activities by Siraiki Academy. Recently, since the from mid-1980s, the call for a Siraiki Suba has been renewed by organisations like Siraiki Quami movement and Pakistan Siraiki Party. But the movement has not gathered much momentum, as yet[50]

Economically, the south-west part is the poorest in the Punjab, particularly the western districts of Jhang, Sargodha and Dera Ghazi Khan. It is primarily agrarian and, unlike central Punjab, is organised on a feudal basis.[51] Many politically influential landowners hail from these regions, for instance, the Noon-Tiwanas were from Sargodha, the Daultanas from Multan district and Legharis from Dera Ghazi Khan.[52]

The heterogeneous nature of the Punjabi identity, within the province, is reflected politically as well. For example, in the 1993 National Assembly elections, the PPP lost badly to the Muslim league in the north Punjab, but got

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49. Shackle dates the beginning of the Siraiki movement to 1961, when Riaz Anwar, a Siraiki-speaking lawyer emerged and took the initiative of organising the first of a series of 'Farid Festivals' (Jashn-e-Farid, Yaum-e-Farid). These festivals used Khwaja Ghulam Farid's name (a nineteenth century Sufi) for organising biennial festivals throughout the 1960s. Number of organisations like the Bazm-e-Saqafat, Siraiki Academy and Siraiki Adabi Majlis were set-up around this time. Journals like Akhtar, Siraiki Adab and Siraiki also came up in the 1960s. Shackle, n.44.

50. See ibid; Samad, n.3, p.37; and newspaper reports like, Aabha Dixit, 'Sub-national Stirrings in Pakistan', *Indian Express*, 4 August 1995; 'Four ethnic regious unite in Pakistan', *The Hindustan Times*, 5 Octobar 1998; 'ONM to launch campaign for equal rights in Quetta', *Kashmir Times*, 6 November 1998.

51. Talbot, n.1, p.188.

52. See Craig Baxter, 'The Peoples' Party vs. the Punjab "Feudalists"', in J.Henry Korson, ed., *Contemporary Problems of Pakistan* (Leiden, 1974), pp.6-29.

twenty-two out of thirty-six seats in Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rahimyar Khan and Bahawalpur, the Siraiki speaking divisions. In the present Muslim League tenure, the charges of Punjabisation of Pakistan are related to the diversion of development funds to the central Punjab and the influence that the political elite of this region enjoys.[53]

There exist at least, two more contestation spaces, apart from the Siraiki-speakers' attempts at forging a distinct identity of their own, which problematize the notion of a uniform Punjabi identity. First such space is occupied by religious sectarianism. Among the reasons for the rise of this phenomenon are cited the legacies of 'Zia(s) Islamisation programme and the Afghan war, the return of Taliban militia to Pakistan, the sectarian indoctrination of the young in the widespread networks of *madrassas* and the sponsorship of a proxy war in Pakistan by the Saudis and Iranians'.[54] Punjab, as a consequence, has seen the emergence of a number of heavily armed and dangerous extremist sectarian groups like Sipah-i-Sabha Pakistan (SSP), a break away from Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI); Tehrik-i-Jafria-i-Pakistan and Sunni Tehrik. The first one has been involved in a protracted and bloody struggle against the Shias. SSP and its splinter groups target Shias and Ahmadiyyas in their literature. Tehrik-i-Jafria-i-Pakistan is the local chapter of the Khomeini revolution, around which are organised the Shias. It was originally confined to the NWFP but soon made inroads into Punjab to challenge SSP's anti-Shia campaign. Sunni Tehrik has been in the forefront of the anti- Christian campaign. Most of these groups are local, but their collective influence spans 'a crescent stretching from Sialkot to Fasilabad, covering Gujranwala, Sargodha and Jhang'[55] Jhang district, with its Shia landholding class was the epicenter or the violence accompanying the rise of sectarianism. However, since the last two years it has spread. Lahore was witness to a number of terrorist acts like a bomb blast in the Sessions Court on 18 January, 1997 and a sectarian attack on a mosque in the Gujarpura area of the city on 6 August, 1997 which claimed nine lives, 1996 alone saw twenty-nine bomb explosions, one twenty-five deaths and more than four hundred injured, due to sectarian strife, in the Punjab.[56]

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[53] Talbot n.1, pp.188-89.

[54] ibid, p.189. Also see Khory, n.25, p.32, where she quotes Anita Weiss, "By legislating what is Islamic and what is not, Islam itself could no longer provide unity, because it was now being defined to exclude previously included groups' See Anita Wiess, 'The Consequences of State Policy for Women in Pakistan' in Weiner and Banuazizi, n.30, p.438.

The second contestation space is inhabited by a part of the country which is actually not a territorial part of the Punjab. The Pakistan side of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), especially Mirpur and Kotli, has, culturally and linguistically, for long been considered a component of the Punjabi heartland.[57] Yet, it has never been treated so, in Pakistan, where it has got a peripheral

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55. Samad, n.3, p.36.

56. From Talbot, n.1, p.189 and Mohammad Waseem, 'Islam and the Secular State in Pakistan', *Ethnic Studies Report*, vol.xiii, no.1 (January 1995), pp.39-42; and reports like Aabha Dixit, 'Pak Polls threatened by Sectarian Strife', *Indian Express*, 28 January 1997; and Amit Baruah, 'Shattered Peace', *Frontline*, 5 September 1997.

57. It is not, in any way, being suggested here that this position of J&K is a part of Punjab. It is being touched upon to show how various contested spaces of identifications exist. In fact, this experience is paralleled in the experience of the Jammu region in the Indian side. Here also the Dogri speaking population has been asserting its difference from Punjabi, since 1947. To affirm its separateness, Dogri is written in Devanagri. There has been sustained demand for the inclusion of Dogri in the schedule of Langauges of the Indian constitution. Drawn from discussions with Dogri writers like Padma Sachdev and Ram Nath Shastri.

treatment despite its significant contributions to the country as a whole. The maximum amount of foreign exchange, in the form of remittances from abroad, is contributed by the Mirpuris, who constitute the largest number of Pakistanis living abroad. Inspite of exploitation of the financial and environmental resources of Mirpur, no economic and infrastructural development has taken place in Mirpur (or for that matter in the whole of the Pakistan side of J&K). The Mangla dam that was built in Mirpur did not generate any benefits for the local population. The electricity it generated was supplied downstream as far as Karachi, much before the neighbouring villages were connected. The people of the area, now assert their separate identity by calling themselves Kashmiri rather than Punjabi (inspite of being more akin, culturally and linguistically, to Punjab.[58]

The picture of heterogeneity of the Punjabi identity is further complicated by the dispersal of a large number of Punjabis to different parts of Pakistan. Many of them have never lived in Punjab. Nevertheless, they are still recognized as Punjabis and they identify themselves as so. A more focussed sense of Punjabi identity is seen in the recent arrivals. The reasons for this does not lie only in the obvious lack of time for settling down. It has more to do with the new dimension of the association of power with the Punjabis and the politicisation of ethnic identity in contemporary Pakistan.[59]

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58. See Samad, n.3, pp.37-38; Roger Ballard, 'Kashmir Crisis: View from Mirpur', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 2-9 March, 1991, pp.513-17; and Nasreen Ali, Pat Ellis and Zafar Khan, 'The 1990s: A Time to separate British Punjabi and British Kashmiri identity', in Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot, ed., *Punjabi Identity : Continuity and Change* (New Delhi, 1996), pp.229-56.

59. See Ansari, n.22, pp.2-3.

So the response to our third question of whether the Punjabi identity is a uniform entity is in the negative. It is manifested, in Pakistan, in its diversity and thus, is not an undifferentiated whole. The fact of the matter is that the Punjabisation, that is referred to, is only in terms of an institutional dominance of the ruling establishment, now tempered with electoral politics, which largely benefits the Punjabi elite and a certain coopted section of the Punjabi population. The influence is exercised by patronage through *biraderi* politics. *Biraderi* was used by the British as a structure of accommodation and still holds steady in the light of bureaucratised power in post-British period.[60] In fact, accounts of election campaigns indicate the relationship between the local kinship-solidarity and party politics is increasingly becoming complex.[61] However, at present, the beneficiaries do not belong exclusively to the landed gentry. The industrial bourgeoisie and the urban middle class are now in ascendence. Nawaz Sharif, the present Prime Minister, belongs to this group. The new breed co-exists with the older one and uses the same structures of accommodation as and when needed[62]

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60. Biraderi is the basic unit of social organisation in rural areas. In political arena, a candidate normally seeks to recruit whole biraderis, a kinship group, rather than individuals. And at provincial and national levels, biraderis of landlords function as powerful blocs. Biraderi is of two types; biraderi as lineage and biraderi as clan. It, thus, signifies both vertical ties of common descent and horizontal ties of brotherhood. See Hamza Alavi, 'The Two Biraderis: Kinship in rural West Punjab', in TN Madan, ed., *Muslim Communities of South Asia. Culture Society and Power* (New Delhi, 1995), pp.1-62; and David Gilmartin, 'Biraderi, and Bureacracy: The Politics of Muslim Kinship Solidarity in Twentieth Century Punjab', *IJPS*, vol.1, no.1 (1994), pp.1-29.

61. See, for instance, Theodore P.Wright, Jr., "Biraderis in Punjabi Elections", *The Journal of Political Science*, vol.XIV, no.s 1,2 (1991), p.79 and reports like, 'Pak Poll: Clan support vital in Punjab', *The Times of India*, 22 October 1990.

62. Samad, n.3, p.40 and newspaper reports like, D. Sen, 'Mian Nawaz Sharif- a profile', *The Hindustan Times*, 5 November 1990. Also drawn from the interview with Rais.

VII

Indeed, the nexus between the Punjabi elite and the power structures of the country have given rise to a peculiar dynamics, involving Punjabi identity and its expression. Ostensibly, Punjabis dominate these structures and arouse fears of 'Punjabisation' of the country. But this linkage, instead of promoting the Punjabi linguistic cultural cause, has led to what this author would call the 'de-Punjabisation' of Punjabis. The fact that the Punjabis have associated themselves with the official creed of national identity which emphasises homogeneity and unitary cultural and linguistic identity, has resulted in a total insouciance and irreverence for their own culture, historical symbols and language. Ironically, this official emphasis meant to construct a uniform Pakistani identity, has reinforced non-Punjabi identities. Contrarily, it has had an effect of submergence of Punjabi identity. In fact, as Rais pointed out to the author, no one has, as yet, used 'Punjabiness as political currency to capture political power'[63] in a country where the Punjabis are a dominant group. The only time, it appears from a study of Pakistani politics over the last fifty years, that anyone came near doing so was when Ghulam Mustafa Khar challenged Zulfikar Bhutto in 1975, on the agenda of 'Punjab for Punjabis'. But even this was a politically expedient ruse which did not carry much weight.[64]

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[63] Interview with Rais.

[64] This is drawn from newspaper reports of 1975 like, Dewan Badrindranath, 'Khar's challenge implies rift in Pak Establishment', *Patriot*, 3 October 1975; A Special Correspndent, 'Crude Tactics by Bhutto and Henchmen', *Patriot* 17 October 1975; and A Special Correspondent. 'Irony of the new Muslim League Challenge to Bhutto', *Patriot*, 28 November 1975.

If the State and the Punjabi elites had their way, the Punjabi language, with its rich historical antecedents, would be totally extinct by now.[65] It is neither taught in any educational institution,[66] nor is their any kind of patronage for the literary associations trying to revitalize Punjabi prose and poetry. In reality, such organisations face the wrath of the State in much the same manner as their non-Punjabi counterparts.[67] Punjabi is rarely put into writing and Urdu is, more or less, the language of literacy in Punjab. Waseem avers that this phenomenon has converted Punjabis into 'linguistic agnostics'. They, therefore, are generally immune to the language-based demands of other communities.[68]

The picture, however, is not all bleak for Punjabi culture and language. The civil society, as is the case in any similar situation, has asserted itself to keep alive its traditions. An 'absolute majority'[69] of Punjabis expresses itself in its mother-tongue. Punjabi is used in popular culture-stage poetry, theatre and films-albeit, written in Persian script. The folk tradition of Punjabi is very strong and this has sustained it through the years of neglect by the elite-influenced high culture.[70] Punjabi has 'emphatically [been] the language of the shrines of the Sufi pirs'.[71] It is not that the elite has totally become removed from its traditions there has been an attempt at reclaiming the Punjabi tradition by them. A number of Punjabis revivalist groups have sprung up, like - the Dulla Bhatti Academy, Punjabi Majlis and Khaddar Posh Trust. The symbols used by such groups vary form region to region within the Punjab for example, the Siraiki speaking groups use names of personalities like Baba Farid and Sultan Bahu to coalesce.[72]

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[65] Feroz Ahmed calls this a relegation by the Punjabi elites of their own culture and language. He mentions this in the course of his discussion on the need for senstivity and understanding in dealing with the Punjabis, while analysing grievances of the smaller 'ethnic' groups in the Pakistan. *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi, 1998), pp.284-5.

[66] Except at Masters level in the Punjab University, Shackle, n.44, p.384.

[67] See Jalal, n.5, p.232.

[68] Waseem, n.38, p.36-37; and ibid.

[69] ibid, p.37.

There are a few scholar, and litterateurs who are even attempting to learn the Gurmukhi script but their numbers are very few. The sentiments of the Punjabi scholars attempting a revival of their language are summed up succinctly by Salim Khan Gimmi, a novelist, '... [Punjabi intellectuals] felt remorse at their (*sic*) ignoring their mother tongue. They started believing that they could best express themselves in Punjabi alone. Urdu appeared to them as an alien tongue. The refugees from UP and Bihar spoke far more idiomatic Urdu than they could ever do. Urdu has become the language of the rulers, it could never be the language of the masses in west Punjab. If we wish to reach the people and share their dreams, we must write in their language'.[73]

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[70] In this connection, Akbar S. Ahmed eludes to the 'tension between the grand, identified as non-local and extra-ethnic Islam, Pakistani nationalism, national langauge, urdu), and the local and homegrown (folk language and customs).' Akbar S. Ahmed, 'Tribes, Regional Pressures, and Nationhood', in Victoria Schofield, ed., *Old Roads New Highways: Fifty years of Pakistan* (Karachi, 1998), p.150.

[71] Even the Christians, the only substantial religious minority here, use Punjabi for their congregational meetings in Punjab's villages. The New Testament and some other literature has been printed in the language, as well. C. Shackle, Punjabi in Lahore, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol.4, no.3 (1970), pp.256-7.

[72] Iftikhar Malik, n.32, p.187.

This movement has had important names like Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Fahmida Riaz, Zohra Nigah, associated with it. One indication of its influence is the fact that Bulle Shah, a Sufi mystic, and not Iqbal was named,[74] when West Punjab was asked by UNESCO to decide on a national poet.[75]

Punjabi identity has also emerged as a political marker, in response to the way others, particularly Sindhis and Muhajirs, have couched their 'disillusion-ments in more and more improbable idioms of difference'.[76] So one hears occasional slogans like 'Jag Punjabi Jag', (wake up, Punjabi, wake up!), as in the late 1980s, reflecting a reaction to what urban Punjabis see as 'Punjab bashing'.[77] Such a consciousness is more conspicuous in the Punjabis who live outside the Punjab, especially in the Sind. The Sindhi and Muhajir group consciousness has set the agenda for Punjabi identity here.[78] However, mercifully, the attempts to stir up a 'Punjabi backlash by the more chauvnistic elements'[79] have not fructified inspite of contrary predictions to the effect.[80]

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[73] Quoted in Sant Singh Sekhon and Kartar Singh Duggal, *The History of Punjabi Literature* (New Delhi, 1992), p.409.

[74] An interesting aside here is provided by the fact that Iqbal himself, supposed to be the greatest Urdu poet of this century, was derided for using 'Punjabi-isms' in his Urdu poetry. Shackle, n.71, p.242.

[75] Amrik Singh, 'Punjabi and the Punjabi Genuis', *The Statesman*, 19 September 1964.

[76] Jalal, n.5, p.198; and Feroz Ahmed, n.65, p.284.

[77] Malik, n.20, p.116; n.27, p.6; and Shackle, n.71, p.244. An example of such a reaction can be seen in an article titled, 'The Real Oppressors' written by Shafqat Tanvir Mirza, in which he rallies against the Oppressed Nations Movement, an alliance of the three other provinces and the Siraiki region, set-up in 1998. The main demand of this alliance is greater autonomy for the regions. Mirza calls this alliance opportunist in its Punjabi-baiting. *Dawn*, 7 September 1998.

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[78] See Ansari, n.21,pp.2,16-18.

[79] Jalal, n.5, p.198.

[80] See, Ahmed, where she quotes from *Dawn*, 17 June 1996, to say if the grievances, of the other identities are addressed, there might be a 'potentially dangerous' Punjabi backlash, n.4, p.117.

CHAPTER - III

PUNJABI IDENTITY IN INDIA

The discourse of the Punjabi identity in India is fashioned in strikingly contrasting terms to the discourse in Pakistan. A different context forms a background of this discourse. The Punjabis do not form an overwhelming majority here, unlike Pakistan. In fact, they constitute just 2.3 per cent of the whole population.[1] The Indian Punjab, where most of them live, is dwarfed, both in terms of territory and population by its Pakistani counterpart which is four times larger in extent and has three times as many people.[2]

The two sides are also differentiated in terms of how within the Punjabi community identifications are constructed. The division of Punjab and consequently the Punjabis, in 1947, took place in circumstances when religion was the primary identification. So while most of the Muslim Punjabis opted for Pakistan, non-Muslims came to India. In the changed situation, the Punjabis in Pakistan belonged essentially to one religious community, Muslim, and in India, two, Hindu and Sikh. As a result, in Pakistan, religious identification got muted in the Punjabis. The case was quite the opposite in India where the earlier mobilizations along religious lines continued.

The dominance of the Punjabis in the State structure in Pakistan has also resulted in a comparatively low key politics of identity within the community

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1. From India 1995, a Ministry of Information and Broadcasting publication, cited in Kanti Bajpai, 'Diversity, Democracy and Devolution in India', in Michael E. Brown and Sumit Ganguly, eds., *Government Policies and Ethnic Relations in Asia and Pacific* (Massachusetts, 1997), p.35.

2. Darshan S. Tatla and Ian Talbot, *Punjab* (England, 1995), p.1.

whereas the Indian Punjabis have been subject to quite an eventful contestation of identities. They do not present a homogeneous, monolithic picture like the West Punjabis. It is a much more complex and heterogeneous story of the Punjabis on this side of the border. They have identified themselves in various fashions - on the lines of religion, language, script, caste and rural-urban divide. Nevertheless, the religious identity seems to be the prominent most. The basic characteristic of these identifications is that they generally have been contentious in nature. Mohammad Waseem, a Pakistani scholar, points out that 'even at the best of times [they are] hardly as harmoniously integrated as in West Punjab'.[3] Thus, the dominant discourse of the Punjabi identity in India has been of 'difference'.

This chapter would endeavour to discern various facets of Punjabi[4] identity by looking at how this discourse of 'difference' is constructed and whether this discourse, being the dominant one, camouflages another discourse.

The main platform for the articulation of this discourse has been politics. Politics and community identities - their formation, strengthening and crystallisation - have been inextricably linked in the Punjabi context. The key events that have provided the necessary conjunctures in the post-1947 scenario in this link are summed up in the next section.

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[3] Mohammad Waseem, 'Partititon, Migration and Assimilation: A Comparative Study of Pakistani Punjab', *International Journal of Punjab Studies (IJPS)*, vol.4, no.1 (1997), p.38.

[4] From here on 'Punjab' and 'Punjabi' are used in the Indian context, unless otherwise specified.

I

The partition of the country involved, essentially a division of Punjab and Bengal into two halves each. In Punjab, it was accompanied with a violence of unimaginable proportions - a near total ethnic cleansing of the 'other' community. In the Indian Punjab, that essentially meant that Hindus and Sikhs now made up almost the entire population.[5]

The new Punjab that came about after 1947 was a Punjab which had witnessed a demographic upheaval. The Hindus from being a minority of about thirty per cent in the pre-independence period, now formed a majority of seventy per cent in this new entity. While the Sikhs who had been around thirteen per cent earlier, now came to form thirty per cent of the total population.[6] So Sikhs, from a small minority in a multi-communal province became a substantial minority in a dual community province.[7] This was a novel situation also because for the first time the Sikhs got concentrated in a particular area - the central Punjab.[8]

It was in this context that the Punjabi Suba agitation occurred. The formulation of the demand was foregrounded in the earlier demand by the Sikhs (in the pre-1947 era) for a separate territory for themselves. This elicited an unfavourable reaction from the Punjabi Hindus who saw in it, because of the way the discourse was structured, portents of a new division of Punjab. Now that they were a majority in the state (and at the national level), such a scenario was distasteful to them as it would mean a reduction in their effective majority. Therefore, they repudiated links with Punjabi language and started portraying Hindi as their mother tongue. In 1961, for the first time in the recorded census, Punjabi-speakers formed a minority in the region with 11.4 million population professing to speak Hindi (nearly 56.3 per cent) and 8.8 million Punjabi (about 43.3 per cent).[9]

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[5] See Swarna Aiyar, 'Violence and the State in the Partition of Punjab, 1947-1948 (Ph.D. Thesis, King's College, University of Cambridge, 1994).

[6] Satya M. Rai, 'The Structure of Regional Politics in the Punjab', in V. Grover, *The Story of Punjab,* vol.2 (New Delhi, 1995), p.197.

[7] Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Delhi, 1975), p.300.

[8] Rai, n.6, pp.193, 197.

In the meantime, the government-appointed committees to discuss the feasibility of the linguistic reorganisation proposal in the country, excluded Punjab from their purview. The proponents of the Punjabi Suba took this as a betrayal.[10] The main proponent of the demand was the Akali Dal, while the main opponents were the Arya Samaj-backed Hindus. Thus, the divisions were on communal lines. The former talked of the need of protection of the Sikh minority community and a resultant need for a unilingual state where they would be in substantial numbers. The latter played upon the sentiments of the Hindu Punjabis to call the demand an anti-Hindu demand.

Though the debate on the Punjabi Suba, in the public sphere, was in communal terms, yet it was never presented on religious lines. In 1953, before the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC), the Akali Dal emphasised the linguistic basis of the demand - a Punjabi speaking than a Sikh-majority state.

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[9] Brass, n.7, p.294; and Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab* (Princeton, 1966), p.15.

[10] Rai, n.6, p.198.

However, it was rejected primarily on two grounds - that, the Punjabi language was not sufficiently distinct from Hindi and that the movement lacked general support.[11]

The Punjab Government, to assuage the sentiments of the Punjabi protagonists, submitted proposals in October 1949 on the language question in the 'Sachar Formula'[12] and again in 1956, in the form of the 'Regional Plan'.[13] On both the occasions the Sikhs agreed to the provisions but the Hindu organisations widely opposed them who they responded by 'Save Hindi' campaigns. In 1960, the Suba demand was again renewed under a new leadership.

The leadership of the Akali Dal changed hands from the upper caste, urban-middle class Sikhs represented by Master Tara Singh to the rural majority of the Jats represented by Sant Fateh Singh.[14] Sant Fateh Singh insisted that the demand for the Punjabi Suba was simply a linguistic one. Around this time a movement for a separate Haryana Prant and separation of the hill districts was also launched. Thus the demands of the Sikhs of the central districts and the Hindus (non-Punjabi speaking) of the eastern hill districts coincided.[15] The new context, with a new leadership of not only the Punjabi Suba movement, but also of the forces ranged against the demand in the establishment,[16] facilitated the settlement of the dispute, at last, in 1966.

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[11] Brass, n.7., p.320. He quotes an Akali leader as complaining that 'while others got, states for their languages, we lost even our language.

[12] 'According to this, the state was divided into two linguistic regions - Punjabi and Hindi. The language of the region was to be the medium of instruction in all the schools till matriculation and the children were required to learn the other language at the secondary stage. The choice for the medium of instruction in the educatonal institutions was left entirely to the parents or guardians of the people'. Satya M. Rai, *Punjab Since Partition* (Delhi, 1986), pp.269-70.

[13] By this formula Punjab and PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union), which was an administrative unit formed by the merger of the former princely states located within the borders of Punjab) were merged into a single state. Punjab was declared a bilingual state with both languages as its official langages. Two committees of the state legislature were established consisting respectively of Hindi-and Punjabi-speaking regions. Baldev Raj Nayar, 'Punjab', in Myron Weiner, ed., *State Politics in India* (Princeton, 1968), p.451.

[14] Surinder S. Jodhka, 'Return of the Middle Class', *Seminar*, vol.476 (April 1999), pp.23-24. Also see Brass, n.7, p.325.

Punjab was divided into two states - Punjab and Haryana - and the hill districts were merged with Himachal Pradesh. The 1961 census was used to demarcate the boundaries. Chandigarh and the neighbouring villages were formed into a Union Territory, leaving the decision of its ultimate settlement to the Prime Minister. The new state was left with forty-one per cent of the area and fifty-five percent of the population. In this reorganised Punjab, the Sikhs were 60.22 per cent of the population, thus making them a majority. And the Punjabi Hindus refusal to acknowledge their linguistic identity left them as a minority in the region.[17] However, the formation of a Punjabi Suba did not end the agitational politics of the movement days.

Inspite of the majority of population being Sikhs and the Akali claim of being their sole representative, Akalis could not win an outright majority because of the peculiar demographic dynamics in the new state. The Sikhs are a heterogeneous community - around sixty-five percent are Jats, mostly prosperous and land owning. The rest are divided into three, the traditional upper castes of Khatris and Aroras concentrated in the urban areas; the traditional 'backward' castes, such as the Sainis and the Ramgarhias; and the Scheduled Caste Sikhs (Mazhabis) who are nearly twenty per cent of the Sikh population. The Khatris and Aroras constitute a little under ten per cent and the backward castes, around seven to eight per cent.[18]

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[15] Hindus of these regions wanted separation to safeguard their own legitimate interests and identity which were being submerged by the people from the more advanced Punjabi-speaking areas. Rai, n.12, p.287.

[16] By this time Nehru and Kairon, the Punjab Congress Chief, had passed from the scene.

[17] Rai, n.6, p.200.

The party divisions reflected this caste reality. The Congress had a support base among the Mazhabi Sikhs, some urban Khatri and Arora Sikhs, and the Hindus. A significant minority of Hindus also supported the Jan Sangh. The Akali Dal was supported by the upper caste Sikhs (though some of them resented the loss of their prominent position in the Dal to the Jats, and hence supported the Congress) and the Jats. The Mazhabi Sikhs did not vote for the Akali Dal as it was perceived to be an upper caste party.[19] This obviously meant that the Congress got the maximum share of votes in the elections. While the Dal could form the government only if it allied with the Jan Sangh, ironically, a pro-Hindu party, as it did in 1967 and 1979.[20] However these coalitions were hopelessly unstable and the governments did not last for long.

In the 1972 elections, the Congress came back to power and Akalis were resoundingly defeated. The new government, in order to widen its support base, undertook to portray itself as the champion of Sikh religion through gestures like

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[18] See Jodhka, n.14, p.23 and Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge, 1990), p.355.

[19] Kohli, ibid., p.356.

[20] Till 1966, the Congress had been in power in the state.

leading the 'great' march in celebration of the completion of Guru Gobind Singh Marg (which linked all the religious sites of the Punjab). The strategy was to divide the Sikh support base and it was pursued by identifying with the interests of Harijans, Mazhabi Sikhs, and poor and small farmers, in contrast to the middle and upper segments of the Jat Sikh peasantry.[21]

The Akalis, felt their hold on the Sikh masses loosening and decided to counter mobilize. They drew up a list of grievances to embarass the Chief Minister, Zail Singh and his government and show him to be anti-Sikh. In 1973, therefore, the working committee of the party adopted this list in a meeting at Anandpur Sahib. This was the same list that later came to be called the Anandpur Sahib Resolution (ASR).[22] The most notable feature of the tenure of this government had not been what it had done, but that which it had not done - the resolution of Chandigarh's status, the disposition of Abohar and Fazilka,[23] and the distribution of Ravi-Beas waters. All these were highlighted in the ASR.

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[21] See Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (New Delhi, 1991), pp.185-6. In it was stated the Akali Dal's claim to be a party of all the Sikhs. The resolution sought to just not counter-mobilize support of all Sikhs but also reinforce its Jat base by demanding rights biased in favour of the farmers as against the traders. Government branded the document as secessionist. However, it was more of a demand for greater autonomy and it played upon the issues that had been left unresolved at the creation of Punjabi Suba. In any case, the ASR did not become significant till early 1980s, when it was appropriated by the Sikh extremists. Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, *Amritsar : Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle* (Delhi, 1985), p.47.

[22] ibid., pp.45-46, and Kohli, n.18, p.358.

[23] These two had been brought in as a part of, what Tully and Jacob call, a 'messy award by Indira Gandhi in 1970 when she decided to award Chandigarh to Punjab and these two Hindu majority areas to Haryana. These were Punjabi-speaking areas, not Hindi-speaking. There were obviously other considerations involved, as the award went against the spirit of liguistic states. Tully and Jacob, n.21, p.45.

The ASR was displaced temporarily by the more pressing event - the Emergency, 1975. The Akali Dal vigorously protested against Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism. It, in fact, led perhaps the most organised protest against the Emergency by any political party throughout 1975 to 1977 by sending *jathas* to fill the jails.[24] It's reasons for doing so were two-fold - one, on principle and two, more importantly, because the issue offered opportunity to mobilize public opinion.[25] In the 1977 elections Akali Dal came back to power by forming a coalition ministry with the Janata Party. Its government lasted till 1979 and during this time there was no mention of the implementation of the ASR. In reality, the new resolutions adopted in 1978 eliminated the earlier separatist rhetoric of the resolution, with an emphasis on federal demands.[26]

It was around this time that the coterie in Congress led by Sanjay Gandhi and Zail Singh decided to prop up someone who could discredit the traditional Akali leadership and thus, affect its support base. They zeroed in on Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a religious leader, for this task.[27] He shot into fame through his involvement in, what has come to be called, the 'Nirankari incident'. The Akali Dal government, apparently under the pressure of its Jan

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[24] Rai, n.12, p.323. *Jatha,* means organised groups.

[25] Kohli, n.18, p.359.

[26] Kuldip Nayar, 'Towards Disaster', in Abida Samiuddin, ed., *The Punjab Crisis* (Delhi, 1985), p.116; and Hamish Telford, 'The Political Economy of Punjab', *Asian Survey*, vol.XXXII, no.11 (November 1992), p.973.

[27] He was the head of historic Damdami Taksal and he enjoyed high status due to the wide respect the Taksal commanded. Nayar, ibid, pp.95-96 and also see Chand Joshi, *Bhindranwale, Myth and Reality* (New Delhi, 1984) which traces Bhindranwale's career.

Sangh partner, agreed to let Nirankaris, who are considered heretical by the mainstream Sikhs, hold a convention in Amritsar. Bhindranwale and his followers decided to confront them and what followed was violence that left thirteen of his men dead. This was the genesis of the warfare among heavily armed terrorist groups trying to prove that they were the most faithful of them all.[28]

The Congress' support to Bhindranwale has been well-documented.[29] The Congress came back to power in 1980 in Punjab.[30] The reason was obvious - to divide the Akali Dal and to draw rural Sikh support away from it. The Akalis who had lost considerable popular support (not the least bit because of Bhindranwale, but more because of their own factional infighting)[31] fought for their life by utilising their political resource of the Sikh identity. In their perception, their Sikh support was being cut into, and needed to be recovered through a strategy of agitational politics. They started by submitting a list of demands to the government. These demands were more Punjabi in nature, yet Akalis portrayed them as Sikhs'.

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[28] See Tully and Jacob, n.21, pp.57-58.

[29] ibid., p.59.

[30] In 1980 Congress won the general elections and subsequently dimissed many opposition-controlled governments. The Akali government in Punjab was one of them. Elections were called in which the Congress won.

[31] Brass, n.21, pp.179-91.

It was around this time that the terroristic violence which was to engulf Punjab for the next few years started with the murder of Lala Jagat Narain.[32] The Congress, whose main political rival was the Akali Dal, sought to utilise the opportunity that it saw in the situation to discredit the Dal. Thus it gave a long rope to Bhindranwale, inspite of the mounting charges against him for being the source of many violent acts both in the state and outside.

As the Akali Dal saw its ground slipping it decided to launch a 'Dharamyudh Morcha' for its specific demands based on the earlier resolution to the government. It also decided to bid for Sant's Bhindranwale's support by asking the government, which at last had arrested him, to unconditionally release him.[33] The other demands were basically of two categories - the religious and the political ones. The first category included granting of holy city status to Amritsar; broadcast of the recitation of holy scriptures in the Golden Temple; naming of the Flying Mail from Delhi to Amritsar as the Golden Temple Express; allowing Sikhs to carry *kirpans*[34] on domestic and international flights;

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[32] ibid., p.118 and Tully and Jacob, n.21, p.66. Narain was a Hindu leader who used to publish two widely read newspapers, Hind Samachar (Urdu) and Punjab Kesari (Hindi), which at best, would give a mildly Hindu communal line and at worst, be extremely virulent. These newspapers had taken a pro-Nirankari Line. Narain was an ex-Congressite who had resigned from the party on the question of the Regional Formula. He was an Arya Samaji and therefore, had opposed the Formula (See the previous discussion). Nayar, n.13, p.471.

[33] The Sant, in the meantime, had decided that he had enough popular support to do without Congress, ibid., Tully and Jacob, n.21, pp.72-74; and Nayar, n.26, p.121.

[34] Small daggers.

and for a new Gurudwara Act to cover the historic Gurudwaras throughout the country. The political demands included redistribution of the river waters; merger of Chandigarh with the Punjab without transferring Abohar and Fazilka to Haryana and the implementation of the amended ASR.[35]

The Central government was forced to start negotiations with the Akali Dal. The negotiations however, which failed. Their failure, due to the intransigence of the Centre, marked an important conjuncture in the development of the Punjab crisis. This was in sharp contrast to how Bhindranwale had made the government dance to his tune.

In the next two years, the Akali Dal, under the leadership of Longowal undertook a series of agitations, essentially non-violent in nature - rasta roko, rail roko, kam roko (road, rail and work stoppages), and constitution burning. The response of the Center was prevarication, partial concessions on minor issues[36] and refusal to concede major demands. Three series of intermittent negotiations between the central government and Akalis took place between 1982 and 1984. Almost all the literature on these negotiations mentions that agreements were reached between the two sides, yet Indira Gandhi's intervention always scuppered them.[37]

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[35] Tully and Jacob, n.21, pp.72-76.

[36] Like relaying hymns through the local radio station, allowing airline passengers to carry kirpans and banning the sale of tobacco, liquor and meat in areas around the Golden Temple at Amritsar. These concessions were always unilaterally announced. Bajpai, n.1, p.72; and Brass, n.21, p.203.

[37] Kohli, n.18, p.362.

The failure of the Akali Dal to secure any advantage in the negotiations served to shift the initiative into the hands of the extremist fringe. The violence that had been initiated with the Narain murder kept growing. The Sikh terrorists targetted Nirankaris, Hindus and the many Sikhs who courageously spoke against them. Bhindranwale was accepted as the tacit leader of all those using violent means to work for the goal of political control of Sikhs over their own destiny, which, in the extreme, was formulated as a demand for Khalistan.[38] The failure of the government to act against Bhindrawale made the Akali Dal's predicament all the more assailable.

The handling of the whole situation by the government was tactless. The arbitrary body searches and humilitions of the Sikhs during the Asian Games, especially in Haryana; and the repressive tools that it used to counter the militants - the National Security Act, the false encounters, vengeful excesses by the police force, served to exacerbate the crisis.[39] Fuel was also added to the already smouldering fire by the Hindu nationalist forces which accused the government of appeasing the minorities and pampering the Sikhs, especially.[40] These forces 'took it out' on the Sikhs by organising mob violence against the Sikhs in the towns of Haryana.[41]

Things came to a head in 1984 - killings and robberies had become the order of the day. By 1983 itself, there had been a hundred and fifteen incidents of major violence, since Jagat Narain's murder in September 1981 and twenty-four murders by the extremists.[42]

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[38] A separate Sikh State.

[39] Bajpai, n.1, p.72, See, Nayar's discussion on the People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL) report on the excesses by the forces, n.26, pp.128-29.

[40] Rai, n.12, p.331.

[41] Nayar, n.26, p.136.

Bhindranwale and his cohorts had been functioning from Guru Nanak Niwas, a hostel premises in the Golden Temple Complex. He had managed to build a considerable organisation around himself consisting of many terrorists.[43] The government chose not to take any action against him when he was building his following of mayhem-wreckers.[44] On 25 April 1984, A.S. Atwal, a DIG Police was shot dead at the main entrance of the Golden Temple while returning from his prayers. The government did not do anything to arrest his assassin who ran back into the Temple. After this, the extremists became more bold and a spate of indiscriminate killings started.

The opposition parties and the press demanded action. After allowing the situation to reach a stage of no return the government decided to take action. What followed was Operation Bluestar.[45] On 1 June 1984 the army took over the administration of the state. On the fifth of June, the battle between the army and Bhindranwale's men in the Golden Temple commenced and on the seventh, the 'death and devastation' ended. The operation coincided with the 378th anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev.[46]

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[42] Brass, n.21, p.193.

[43] There was a rapid growth of militant Sikh organisations during 1983-84, like the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) led by Amrik Singh, Akhand Kirti Jatha, Babbar Khalsa, Youth Akali Dal and Akali Federation. All of them had their headquarters in the Golden Temple Complex.

[44] Tully and Jacob, n.21, pp.93-94.

[45] Code name for the army's move in Punjab, against terrorists.

[46] Khushwant Singh, 'The Genesis', in Samiuddin, n.26, p.99 and Tully and Jacob, n.21, p.144 ff.

Bhindranwale and his comrades were killed in the operation alongwith a large number of innocent pilgrims.[47] The Golden Temple was damaged and the adjoining Akal Takht was completely wrecked. Instead of finishing terrorism, this action resulted in swelling the number of people opposed to the state. The Sikhs felt humiliated and were horrified by what they called an 'unnecessary overkill' by the government.[48] A groundswell of Sikh hostility erupted. Even a known critic of Bhindranwale, Khushwant Singh, protested by returning his Padma Bhushan.[49] Army soldiers mutinied in a number of places.[50]

The most conspicuous act of protest came in the form of the assassination of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 31 October, 1984 by her own guards. What followed was an anti-Sikh pogrom which left a much deeper scar on the Sikh psyche than the Operation Bluestar. The irony was that the mass violence that had been avoided in Punjab till now, engulfed the capital of the country, Delhi and places as far removed as Bokaro. In Delhi alone, the official figures put the death toll at six hundred. The more public unofficial figure put the death toll around 2500. Most Sikhs killed had little or no connection with Punjab and, more certainly, not with the 'Khalistan' campaign. The victims usually came from the lower middle class or poor areas in New Delhi. Around 50,000 Sikhs fled from the capital to Punjab for safety and another 50,000 to the special camps set up by the government and voluntary agencies. These riots were orchestrated with the active connivance of the ruling party members.[51] Almost the first statement that the new Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, made after taking over seemed to exonerate the killers - 'when a big tree falls, the earth beneath is bound to shake'. Thus, the Sikh community was extremely alienated.

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[47] The estimates of the numbers killed vary from a few hundreds to numbers in thousands. Brahma Chellaney who was there on journalistic duty puts the toll at around 1200, Khushwant Singh puts it at 5000. See Chellaney, 'An Eye Account', in Samiuddin, n.26, p.183 and Singh, 'Fifteen fateful years: 1984-1999, *Seminar*, vol.476 (April 1999), p.15.

[48] Dipankar Gupta, *The Context of Ethnicity* (New Delhi, 1996), p.77.

[49] Interview with Khushwant Singh, 'I felt I should Reaffirm my Identity as a Sikh', in Samiuddin, n.26, pp.321-3.

[50] See Gupta, n.48, pp.90-91. Sikhs form a substantial number in the army.

After winning the 1984 elections, Rajiv Gandhi opened peace negotiations with the Akalis. In July 1985, he signed a peace accord with Sant Longowal, famously called the Longowal accord. Under it, the Accord sought to address the long-standing issues - Chandigarh was to be transferred to Punjab on 26 January 1986; the fate of Abohar and Fazilka was to be decided by an adjudicating body; portions of the ASR relating to the centre-state relations were to be referred to the Sarkaria Commission and the river water dispute to a Supreme Court judge.[52] Rajiv Gandhi also agreed to additional demands such as an investigation into the anti-Sikh violence in Delhi.[53] The Accord allowed for elections in Punjab in 1985. The Sikh militants across the state opposed the Accord, and called for a boycott of election.[54] Yet, nearly seventy percent voters turned out for casting their ballot.[55]

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[51] For details on the 1984 riots, see the various reports that voluntary groups came out with. For example, *'Who Are the Guilty?'* (New Delhi, 1984), *Report of the Citizen's Commission* (Delhi, 1985); *Manushi*, vol.25 (1984). See also Uma Chakravarti and Nandita Haksar, *The Delhi Riots: Three Days in the Life of a Nation* (New Delhi, 1987) and Madhu Kishwar, *Religion at the Service of Nationalism and other Essays* (Delhi, 1998).

[52] Gupta, n.48, p.80.

[53] Kohli, n.18, p.365.

[54] See Singh, n.47, p.16. The Accord was followed by the murder of Longowal within a month of its signing.

[55] Higher than both the preceding state elections in 1977, and 1980. Kohli, n.18, p.368.

The Akali Dal emerged victorious and Surjit Singh Barnala became the Chief Minister. Notwithstanding all the hopes aroused, things came to a nought in a short while. The provisions of the accord remained unimplemented because of the lack of political will.[56]

From 1986, terrorism increased sharply. The militants increasingly controlled the Punjab agenda and used terroristic means to achieve their various goals - which was Khalistan for some, and for, others revenge for all the wrongs, real or perceived, done to the Sikhs. For still others, the goal was to drive out Hindus from Punjab.

In these circumstances the Akali Dal government was dismissed in 1987 and President's Rule reinstalled. The government launched Operation Black Thunder to flush terrorists off the Golden Temple. This Operation was conducted with much more finesse, a siege was laid around the main temple and the militants were compelled to surrender.[57] This, however, did not bring militancy to an end. The election of the National Front government aroused new hopes for a solution to the imbroglio, with a visit by the Prime Minister V.P.Singh to the Golden Temple; the repeal of the Fifty-Ninth Amendment;[58] replacement of the governor (who was preceived to be partisan in his dealings), S.S.Ray with Nirmal Mukarji; the release of many detenues from jails; and the establishment of special courts to institute criminal proceedings against 1984 riots suspects.[59] These efforts too reached a stalemate. The successor government decided to open a dialogue with the militants which resulted in an agreement to hold the Assembly election in June 1991. But this government did not last long. The Congress took over again in June 1991, under the pale of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and thus a political will to combat terrorism.[60]

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[56] Gurharpal Singh, 'Punjab Since 1984', *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXVI, no.4 (April 1996),p.412.

[57] Gupta, no.48, pp.83-84.

[58] An Amendment made in 1988 by which the security forces had been given emergency powers to deal with terrorism. ibid, p.82.

The government undertook anti-terrorist operations with a new vigour and in these circumstances, elections were held in Punjab. The Congress won under embarassing conditions - the Akalis boycotted and the voter turnout was the lowest ever, 4.6 percent.[61] The reason, alongwith disenchantment with political processes, was the threats issued by the terrorists against any kind of involvement in the electoral process.

The new state government gave the security forces a free hand to rein in the militants. This period saw the near total decimation of terrorism.[62] In the process, the traditional Akali leadership was provided a fresh lease of life and they started their normal political activities. In the meantime, Beant Singh was assassinated in 1995 and subsequently the Congress fell into a disarray.

The Akali Dal led by Badal returned to power in Punjab by winning ninety-three of hundred and seventeen seats, with its alliance partner the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). This total was the highest ever by any party or coalition since post-Independence Congress regimes of 1952 and 1957.[63] The normalcy seemed to have been restored to Punjab.

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59. Brass, no.21, p.211.

60. Singh, no.56, p.413.

61. Bajpai, n.1,p.73.

62. Singh, n.56, p.414.

63. *Frontline*, 7 March 1997.

II

A detailed exposition of the Punjab political scene has been made to underscore how 'difference' seems to be the main episteme of Punjabi identity in India. This exposition gives us an idea of one of the controlling undercurrents behind the visibilities that constitute the 'difference'- power politics.

It is very evident from the discussion that many of the discordant notes were a result of a power struggle between the Congress and Akali Dal. In this context, Paul Brass makes an important formulation about the politics in Punjab - of 'persistent dualism'.[64] Congress and Akali Dal form the two ends of this dualism. Till, at least, the 1980s this dualism was qualified in several respects, one, it was unbalanced in favour of Congress; two, the weaker of the two forces, the Akali Dal, thus, had to seek inter-party alliances to defeat Congress to come to power in the state; and three, because the alliance with the Jan Sangh (or it's later manifestation, the BJP) made the Akali Dal a real threat to Congress' power aspirations.

These tendencies were there in the pre-1966 period, as well, but since the Akali Dal did not constitute a real alternative to Congress given the political equations of the time, they did not become very evident. Though, even at that time, according to Pettigrew, the Congress had used every resource available to it to discredit Master Tara Singh and replace him with Sant Fateh Singh.[65]

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[64] Brass, n.21, p.176.

[65] Joyce Pettigrew, 'A Description of the Discrepancy between Sikh political ideals and Sikh political practice; in Myron J.Aronoff, ed., *Ideology and Interest* (New Jersey, 1980), pp.151-92 However, one thing should be made clear here that there were other processes at work too in this change of leadership. This reason must have fastened the process not created it. The process which had started with the introduction of universal adult franchise involved a shift of leadership from an upper caste, urban-based middle class to a Jat rural-based leadership. See Jodhka, n.14, pp.23-24.

The dynamics behind this action was that the Hindi-speaking Congress leaders saw in the demand for Haryana an oppurtunity to acquire power. The fact that Sant Fateh Singh seemed to be non-communalist and non-secessionist, a picture which was more close to the Congress thinking of the time, played an important role in shaping the Congress' actions. The characteristics of the 'dualism' became more apparent after 1966. The peculiar demographic profile of the state, as discussed earlier, meant that there was a structural tilt in favour of the Congress in electoral politics. However, the tilt could be subverted if the Akalis allied themselves with a group which had support base in the population which did not vote for the Akalis. Therefore, the Akali Dal now, did pose an important challenge to the Congress hegemony in the state. The Congress met this challenge one, by encouraging factions within the Dal to revolt and two, by mobilizing those very sections of the population which supported the Akali Dal coalitions. The first strategy was evident in the fall of the coalition governments of 1967 and 1971.[66] The second was visible in the way Zail Singh tried to portray the Congress as the sole champion of the Sikh cause.[67] Second strategy became more evident when Bhindranwale was propped up by the Congress. After all, Bhindranwale could never be a direct contender for power.[68] (as he repudiated the very processes that went behind power struggles).

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[66] ibid, p.177.

[67] Kohli, n.18, p.358.

[68] Balraj Puri, *Understanding Punjab*, (Jammu, 1985),p.11. Also in Samiuddin, n.26, pp..610-621.

Power politics was also visible in the way the central government refused to reach a negotiated settlement with the Akali Dal between 1982-84, thus shoring up the militants by discrediting the Dal.[69] This, in the Punjabi context, reduced the credibility of the arch-rival of the Congress. Otherwise, since the events in Punjab linked up with the 'attitudes and voting patterns'[70] of Haryana and rest of India, the Congress did not want to appear giving any kind of concessions to the Sikhs, just in case that would effect its Hindu vote base in North India.

The power politics, in turn, led the Akali Dal up the path of agitational politics, especially in the 1980s, when they felt their hold on their Sikh support-base slipping. So they adopted hardline postures, in a bid to outdo their opponents. So the disorder of the 1980s was, in a sense, a 'managed disorder'[71] which served as an instrument of the game of power politics between the Congress and the Akali Dal.

III

To understand better the episteme of 'difference' of the Punjab identity, we shall move beyond the political sphere to the socio-cultural sphere. Identities 'take shape over a long period of time and always in response to a combination of factors and series of experiences'.[72] This is also true in the case of Punjabi community.

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[69] Kohli, n.18, pp.362-3.

[70] Brass, n.21, p.176.

[71] Singh, n.56, p.417. According to him the 1980s crisis was carefully orchestrated by the central government It even provided active support in setting-up and controlling the militant organisations.

The Punjabis have been subject to tumultuous ruptures in the past fifty years. These ruptures have expressed themselves in various ways - in increased communal consciousness, in religious nationalism, in the various attitudes of the Punjabis and particularly, in the crisis of the 1980s.

(A)

The first such rupture came in the form of the Partition when mayhem and violence served to tear apart the Punjabi social fabric. The Partition left its mark on the community psyche of the Punjabis and expressions of this can be seen in how it influenced various identity questions that the Punjabi community faced in succeeding years. Communal identity came to be an important identity marker for the Punjabis as the Partition sharpened the awareness of a religious community on those lines - first, because communities were forced by the turbulent events of pre-Partition and Partition days to identify themselves in relation to an 'other' and second, because religious communities acted as the basic support structures, to individuals in the face of their displacement and the consequent trauma.

The Partition also left in its wake, a heightened sense of insecurity in the Punjabis. The demand by the Sikhs for a state in which they would have numbers that would matter and later for a separate homeland, could be traced to the insecurity that had been engendered in the Sikhs about their numbers. In

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[72] Surinder S.Jodhka, 'Crisis of the 1980s and changing Agenda of 'Punjab studies *Economic and Political Weekly*, 8 February, 1997, p.276.

1947, when Sikhs were a very small minority in Punjab, the community had faced days of uncertainty and anxiety over its future.[73] It was in this context that Master Tara Singh's constant refrain, 'The Hindus got Hindustan, the Muslims got Pakistan, what did the Sikhs get?[74], could be placed. Territoriality,[75] thus, became an important aspect of the Sikh self-definition. After all, before the Partition, Punjab had not been identified with Sikhs alone. The first expression of this aspect came with the demand for a Punjabi Suba.[76]

The Hindu Punjabis experienced insecurity in two ways. First, was in terms of a fear of a loss of the predominant position that the community had come to acquire in the post-1947 period and second, was the insecurity of existence that came up due to the peculiar social structure of the Punjabi society. The first insecurity expressed itself when they chose to repudiate the most basic human identity definer-their language. They saw the demand for the Punjabi Suba as a ploy to reduce their newly acquired effective majority.[77] The identification with Hindi, in that sense, was also an identification with the language of the 'mainstream' and of power.

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73. See Tan Tai Yong, 'Prelude to Partition: Sikh Responses to the Demand for Pakistan,' *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, vol.1,no.2 (1994),pp.167-195.

74. Quoted in Harjot S. Oberoi, 'From Punjab to "Khalistan", Territoriality and Metacomnentary', *Pacific Affairs*, vol.60,no.1 (September 1987), p.38.

75. Defined as the belief that 'a territory belongs to a particular community and that this sense of place, among other factors, binds that community together, endowing its constituents with a sign emblem of self-identity', ibid,p.27.

76. The earlier demand for a Sikhistan was not an expression of this but a desperate attempt by the Sikhs to make their case be known, in face of threats of the Partition. See Yong,n.91,pp.180-1.

77. Gupta, n.48, p.127.

Most of the Punjabi Hindus came from an urban middle class milieu. The displacement during the Partition was perceived by them in much more stark terms than the Sikh refugees, who were generally from a rural background. The rural population was rehabilitated in groups, in specific places. For example, refugees from the canal colonies were settled in their former areas of residence from where they had earlier migrated.[78] Usually it was tried that the colonists from one village or close relatives were kept together. The rural population thus was settled in settings which were as apposite to the original settings as possible. They also had their traditional occupation to fall back upon - agriculture. The opposite was the case with the urban refugees who unlike their rural counterparts were not settled in groups. Hence, they were denied the community support-structure at the time when they needed it most. More than anything else, it was because of the fact that in an urban setting, community bonds are as it is very tenuous, and a catastrophic event like the Partition easily breaks them.

They also found themselves in a situation where they had to look afresh for opportunities to start and settle in the new strange surroundings.[79] They had been the moneyed class of the old Punjab, so they comprehended their deprivation in relative terms. An added consequence of all these circumstances was more rootlessness and anger than the rural population, which was mostly Sikh.

This explains their anxiety and over-reaction in the face of the Punjabi Suba demand - of horror in anticipation of a new division. It also explains their lack of sympathetic understanding of the 1980s crisis.[80] The Punjabi Hindu community is viewed as a very willing receptor of communal ideology and of ultra-nationalism. This can be explained by locating it in the above context.

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[78] Waseem, n.3, p.37.

[79] Gupta, n.48, p.51.

The Partition, thus served to sharpen communal identities which slowly started reflecting the way, the question of what it meant to be a Punjabi was dealt with. Hindu Punjabis sought to associate themselves with the mainstream national ideology especially by giving up their mother tongue, while the Sikhs gradually became the only spokespersons of Punjabiness. In this fashion, nationalism acted as another rupture.

(B)

The ideas of nationalism and the state that inform the modern *weltanschauung* are ideas which are 'fearful of diversities, intolerant of dissent unless it is cast in the language of the mainstream, and panicky about any self-assertion or search for autonomy',[81] by sub-national groups. The goal of these ideas is to homogenize and eliminate any form of difference in order to have one 'mainstream national culture'.[82] This entails an inclusion - exclusion process by virtue of which certain attributes come to signify the mainstream and other are excluded in order to purify this culture. In effect, this means that the culture of the majority comes to enjoy primacy.[83] In the course of the definition of national culture, if the excluded 'little' cultures try asserting themselves,[84] they face repression which, in turn, leads the community to define itself as the 'other' of the mainstream and thus see the State as partisan.[85]

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[80] Nayar points out how during the 1980s the writings in Hindi owned newspapers became more virulent. He also mentions hostile Hindu reactions as exemplified by the anti-Sikh slogan 'Kacha, kara, aur kirpan- bhejani ge ise Pakistan' (drawers, bangle and dagger, three symbols of Sikh, will be sent to Pakistan). Nayar, no.26, pp.118-19,120.

[81] Ashis Nandy, et al, *Creating a Nationality* (Delhi, 1997), p.19.

[82] ibid.

[83] ibid., p.78.

In India, Indian-ness has come to be identified with the majority Hindu community. The nativisation of the ideology of nationalism has meant the redefinition of Hinduism to fit into the mould of national culture. Embree points out this redefinition has happened to the extent of Hinduism acquiring the status of a civic religion.[86]

The juxtaposition of the Indian mainstream culture with the Punjabi context has produced interesting results. It has led to the deepening of the already present fissures. The Punjabi Hindus identify themselves with the mainstream. Thus they propagate the cause of Hindi, which has became one of the main markers of the national culture. They, in fact, also seem to share the negative stereotypes of the Punjabi language with non Punjabis of it being 'rough, crude and vulgar'.[87]

The sacraliztion of the territory of the nation is also another marker of the mainstream culture that they are passionate about. Therefore, they see the Sikhs as renegades in the cause of the nation as they do not valourize Hindi and have sought a different territorial arrangement from the sacralized version that is considered inviolate.

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[84] Due to either deep stirrings of consciousness or emerging capacities of Challenging hegemonies, Rajni Kothari, 'Ethnicity', in Kumar David and S.Kadirgamar, *Ethnicity, Identity and crisis* (Hongkong, n.d),p.17.

[85] ibid., pp.16-17.

[86] Anslie Embree, *Utopias in Conflict* (Berkeley, 1990),p.89.

[87] Aditi Mukherjee, *Language Maintenance and Language Shift* (New Delhi, 1996), p.37.

The Sikhs, on the other hand, also came to look at the Punjabi Hindus as traitors for disowning their own traditional cultural heritage. They, thus, consider themselves to be the sole inheritors of this tradition and identify Punjabi interests as their own interests. In the discourse of the 1980s there was a constant reference to how Hindus, who had even betrayed their 'mother' (obviously the Punjabi language), could not be trusted.

The response of the Indian State to any form of identity assertion by Sikhs was that it threatened the 'national integrity and security'.[88] This response, in reality, aided in a further intensification of a separate Sikh identity. The Sikhs asserted their separateness in light of their perception of discrimination by the State which refused to make any concessions to them. The facts like, Punjabi Suba being the last linguistic state to be conceded in India, that also after two decades of sustained agitation; the Punjabi Hindus attempted to stop this by lying about their language; the non-transfer of Chandigarh; the attempts to take away some rural Hindu Punjabi-speaking areas; Operation Bluestar; anti-Sikh pogrom of 1984, all are linked up to be invoked to prove how they are 'different'. The difference gets reinforced, therefore, by the State behaviour located in homogenizing rhetoric of nationalism.

The mono cultural thrust of nationalism evokes negative reactions from the Sikhs also because they see it as an attempt by the dominant culture to subsume their identity. After all, for nearly a century now, the Sikhs have been trying to define themselves differently from Hindus by pointing out 'Hum Hindu Nahin' (we are not Hindus).[89]

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[88] Such response by the Indian State was for the first time articulated in its refusal to grant a Punjabi Suba. See Harji Malik 'The Historical Legacy' in Amrik Singh, ed., *Punjab in Indian Politics* (Delhi, 1985),p.15.

(C)

Self-identification of communities is also a part of the historical process, which for the want of a better word, might be called modernisation when is seen here as another rupture. Attributes like the creation of a print culture and subsequent expansion of communication; democracy and consequent competitive political mobilisation; commercialisation of rural economy and urbanisation; and an increasingly powerful State, cumulatively define modernisation. All these aid in transforming identities into 'signs of distinction' between politically organised communities.[90]

Many scholars point to this linkage between modernisation and differentiation.[91] The reasons are not difficult to seek since the first attribute makes it easy to 'imagine' oneself as part of a wider community,[92] and a sharpening of this imagination accompanies the process of political mobilization. Modernization also promotes the breakdown of the traditional intra - and inter-community ties through its other two attributes. What develops thus is a subculture of anomie and alienation of an individual from society. Such an individual is the easiest to mobilise around the ties of religion, which serve to offer some sense of belonging in the face of such dislocation. Religion in this case is not the traditional religion (religion-as-faith, as Nandy puts it)[93] which is 'operationally plural'[94] and consists of number of local traditions that are linked by a common faith. Rather, it is the opposite - a religion through which a group of people 'set about closing ranks' as a community and use their enhanced sense of mutual solidarity to advance their collective interests.[95]

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[89] Title of the famous tract of Kahan Singh Nabha' Kenneth Jones, 'Hum Hindu Nahin', in *Forum Gazette* (16-31 October 1986).

[90] T.N.Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Myths* (New Delhi, 1997),p.86.

[91] For example, Oberoi in his study on the Sikh tradition, stresses how 'evolution of the Sikh self-identification in the colonial period took place in the light of the Dalhousion revolution' in communications, emergence of new elites, increase in market towns, and commercialization of agriculture'. Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, (Delhi, 1994), p.303.

[92] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Comminities* (London, 1991) for how print capitalism aided in the process of a community 'imagining' itself as a nation.

The 'little culture' of the religious tradition in the process is rejected as backward and untrue. The definition is then in terms of 'we' as opposed to others.

However, what needs to be stressed is that despite 'closing ranks' the small traditions have a knack for survival. They tend to disappear in periods of extreme crisis but then return when the crisis is over.[96]

In the case of the Punjabis, the Sikhs and Hindus (and Muslims) undertook the modern project of defining themselves and in the process, differentiating themselves from the 'other'. This process has continued over a period of hundred years now. The Arya Samaji attempts at reconstructing the

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[93] Ashis Nandy, 'The Politics of Secularism' in Veena Das, ed., *Mirrors of Violence,* (Delhi, 1992), pp.69-91.

[94] ibid., p.70.

[95] Roger Ballard, 'Panth, Kismet, Dharm te Quam' in Pritam Singh and Shinder S.Thandi, *Globalisation and the Region : Explorations in Punjabi Identity* (United Kingdom, 1996),p.25.

[96] Robin Jeffrey, *What's Happening to India*? (London 1986),p.8.

Punjabi Hindu tradition, in effect to semitize it, was part of this project.[97] So was the Singh Sabhas attempt to do the same with the Sikh tradition.[98] In post-1947 period, the modernization process was accelerated - mobilisational politics with the advent of full-fledged democracy became more prominent; a communication revolution took place with the advent of new means like the television, and the Green Revolution[99] happened.

The lines between the two communities started getting more defined. Politics played the crucial-most part, by providing the point of crisis in the 1980s as we discussed earlier. However, the communication revolution facilitated the process as mobilizational appeals were now transmitted easily from the political actors to the masses through mediums of television and newspapers.[100]

The effects of modernisation were visible in how religious communities imagined themselves. While the Punjabi Hindus sought to identify themselves with the new redefined Hinduism which tried transcending the local traditions of the Hinduism-as-faith, the Sikhs in the form of Bhindranwale reacted to modernity by revolting against its percepts through going back to certain selective fundamentals of their religion. The process by which Hindu Punjabis defined themselves was tempered with the fact that they formed a part of the dominant religious community which fused territoriality with its self-definition.

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[97] See Kenneth Jones, *Arya Dharm* (New Delhi, 1976) for details on Arya Samaj and its impact on the Punjabi, especially the Punjabi Hindu, society.

[98] See Oberoi, n.91.

[99] See Vandana Shiva, *Violence of Green Revolution* (London,1991) on how Green Revolution led to the destruction of community and homogenisation of social relations.

[100] See Jeffery, n.96, pp.8-9,59,84-85.

The concept of Hinduism came to have a territorial component in which 'Bharat Varsha' belonged to the Hindus. Due to this territoriality 'Hindu' defined oneself as 'one who... has faith in ... moral and spiritual lifestyles which have their origin in India'.[101]

That meant faiths of Indians origin like Sikhism would be a part of Hinduism. By doing so, in effect, Hinduism sought to become Embree's 'civic religion' firmly locating itself in the project of modernity, especially by utilizing the resources of modernising State to efface other identities in the name of the 'mainstream culture'.[102]

Modernisation elicited a different reaction from the Sikhs who saw in it a threat to existence of their religion. The Hindus, the State and the apostates were perceived as three instruments of modernity which posed this threat. The attempt by the Hindus to place Sikhism within the rubric of Hinduism was seen by the Sikhs as an attempt at reabsorption of their religion. In a way their response represented a revolt against the homogenizing tendency of the big tradition of the modern Hinduism. 'When they say the Sikhs are not separate we'll demand separate identity', was what Bhindranwale had to say in the context.[103]

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101. Jaswant Rao Gupta quoted in Nandy, n.93, pp.88-89, See,p.67.too.

102. Partha Chatterjee, 'Secularism and Toleration' *Economic and Political Weekly* (9 July 1994), p.1768.

103. ibid., This fear of assimilation is described by Veena Das in terms of construction of feminine-masculine. Hindu-Sikh dualism where a danger is perceived of the feminine Hindu 'other' dissolving the Sikh masculine self See Veena Das, 'Time, Self, and Community: Features of the Sikh Militant Discourse' *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol. 26,no.2 (1992),pp.245-259. For a recent articulation of anger and fear felt about attempts to incorporate Sikhism into Hinduism See I.P.Singh, 'Hinduising of the Sikhs', *The Spokesman*, vol. 48, no.5, (May 1999),pp.41-44.

The modern Indian State also is identified as a foe because of, one, the associations that it seems to have with the Hindu culture and two, the character of the State which is homogenizing and intolerant of diversities which according to it, pose some kind of a challenge to its conception of 'national interest'. The implication of these reasons were discussed in the section on nationalism and 'difference'.

During the periods of crisis the three instruments become the targets of attack. The apostates are the individuals who seem to have renounced their faith (which is being defined at such times in an exclusive fashion). So in the late 1970s and 1980s the Nirankaris and Sikhs whose lifestyle did not reflect the fundamentals of the Sikh faith, became apostate. Bhindranwale told the Sikhs, 'tusi change Sikh bano'[104] (become good Sikhs!) and rallied against those who inspite of being Sikhs did not 'behave as Sikhs'.[105] For him these Sikhs were more dangerous to the faith than the other two foes.[106] This obviously was because they challenged the concept of a homogeneous Sikh community which was being constructed.

IV

At this juncture, we need to problematize the discourse of 'difference'. The formulation of this discourse presupposes a dichotomous relationship between two homogeneous religious communities. This supposition does seem to hold ground in exigencies. The events around 1984 formed such a juncture when the two communities were defined in exclusive terms, when a "'we' group (was).. created out of a heterogeneous community".[107] This involved a redefining of the communities through a master narrative which involved 'forgetting' of the overlaps that existed between the two communities of 'common (spoken) language, common mythology, shared worship and the community created through exchange in everyday life'.[108] It was also the time when the internal differentiation of the two communities was sought to be glossed over.

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[104] Madan, n.90, p.70.

[105] Quoted in Joyce Pettigrew, 'In Search of a New Kingdom of Lahore', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 6, no.1 (September 1987),p.15.

[106] ibid.

Processes of self-definition are continuous ones. However, self-definition becomes exclusive in the time of crisis. The events of early 1980s succeeded in doing so for the Punjabi community. This was the period when the Sikh self-image came to believe that the Hindus 'had wronged them deeply, judged them unjustly and treated them without respect'.[109] The State and society (predominantly Hindu) were seen as the 'other' which through 'tacit agreement' had decided to perpetrate indignities on them, first, through Operation Bluestar (a State action which had widespread public, meaning Hindu support) and second, through the violence against Sikhs in November 1984 (public show of force having an approval of the State).[110]

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107. Das, n.103, p.245.

108. ibid., p.253.

109. Gupta, n.48, p.107.

110. Amrit Srinivasan, 'The Survivor in the Study of Violence', in Das, n.93, p.314.

The Hindu discourse, in turn posited Sikhs as the 'other'. So they were portrayed as the present day butchers out to hack the 'Mother India' all over again. The stereotype of Sikhs as 'fanatical, vengeful and violent'[111] emerged. Sudhir Kakkar, the famous psychologist, mentions, in this connection, number of reported dreams, of his patients which portray 'psychotic delusions' about the Sikhs as being frighteningly aggressive.[112] The stereotype of the Sikh was thus both feared and hated. 'Khoon Ka Badla Khoon, tumne hamari ma ko mara ham sardaron ko marange, sardaron ko jala denge',[113] (blood for blood, you killed our mother, we will kill the Sardars and burn them) was the kind sentiment that came to express the hatred of the stereotyped Sikh.

Likewise, the period also saw dissolution of number of cleavages within the communities to evolve a 'single overarching' identity.[114] So the crisis saw the disappearance of divisions of the Sikhs community - Jats, Mazhabis, Khatris and Aroras in the formation a Sikh self-image which was homogenizing in nature. The assassins of Indira Gandhi, Beant Singh and Satwant Singh belonged to the lower caste, who till then were marginal to the Sikh self-definition.[115] It is the events of the period that 'sledge hammered' the Sikh psyche to remove these divisions. The obliteration of these differences has been reflected in political terms. The 1985 and 1997 Assembly election saw the Akali Dal winning a consolidated Sikh vote unlike earlier when the divisions tended to work against it.[116]

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[111] ibid.

[112] Sudhir Kakar, 'Some Unconscious Aspects of Ethinic Violence in India', in Das, n.93, p.138.

[113] Srinivasan, n.110.

[114] K.R.Bombwall, 'Sikh Identity, Akali Dal and Federal Polity, *Economic and Political Weekly* (17 May 1986),p.888.

The self-definition of the Hindus was also rehashed around this time. The process was described above of how little cultures were rejected in the favour of a new pan-Indian religion. The flux of 1980s, especially the Sikh militancy, led to a strengthening of this process - the manifestation of which was seen in the emergence of Hindutva as a political ideology in this period.

However, the master narratives of difference are usually difficult to sustain. This was proved by how the crisis of the 1980s petered out fast and the heightened sense of identity difference also slowly tempered down. One main reason was the contradictions involved in the discourse of 'difference'. These contradictions problematized the notions of both the homogeneity of communities and the dichotomy between them.

V

The social structure of the Punjabi society was one such source of contradictions. The militancy's major support seemed to come from the peasantry which was essentially Jat dominated. Pettigrew's study of the social structure of the Jat peasantry indicated how it was a group riven with a proclivity for feuds, factionalism and rivalries. This was so because of the value system which put emphasis on egalitarianism, competition and honour-cum-reputation. The linkages in this society were, she averred, of vertical not horizontal nature.[117] The Green Revolution accentuated these attitudes by atomizing the village society and hence introducing further competition and factionalism.[118] A later day study by Pettigrew shows how the Sikh militants, whose predominant feature was factional divisions, were influenced. This helped in their ultimate elimination too.[119]

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[115] Mark Juergesmeyer, 'The Logic of Religious Violence: The Case of the Punjab, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* vol.22,no.1 (1988), p.79. See also Gupta, n.48, p.73.

[116] *Frontline*, 7 March 1997.

The other contradiction that persisted was between rural Sikhs and the rich urban Sikhs. Pettigrew points out how some rural poor did not want to belong to a Khalistan as they faced a domination by landlords and capitalists.[120] She also observed a fear among the urban Sikhs of a Jat domination. If Khalistan became a reality, they feared the creation of a 'Jatistan'.[121] Likewise, they seemed to be wary of the Khalistan slogan because of its associations with fundamentalism -'They feared for their "modernity"'.[122] The Sikhs with interest outside Punjab, in India, also were opposed to the idea.[123]

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117. Joyce Pettigrew, *Robber Noblenen* (London,1975).

118. Singh, no.56, pp.415-16.

119. Joyce Petigrew, 'The State and Local Groupings in the Sikh Rural Areas Post-1984', in Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot, *Punjabi Identity* (New Delhi, 1996), pp.139-158.

120. Pettigrew, no.105, p.11.

121. From a discussion on Pettigrew's book, The Sikhs of the Punjab (1995) in Jodhka, n.72, p.275.

122. Pettigrew, no.105, p.11.

123. ibid.

Similarly, the urban-rural division can be seen in the Hindus as well. Though majority of them are urban-based. The self and other-awareness is more apparent in the urban Hindus. The more basic division was at a surprisingly different plane. It was between the strand which chose to view the Sikhs as a part of the all-encompassing definition of Hinduism and the other strand which looked at them as widely apart. The first strand was professed to, by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). The 'territoriality' inherent in the idea of 'Hindu nation' meant inclusion of faiths like Sikhism in the definition of Hinduism as it was religion of India (unlike the outsider religions of the Muslims and the Christians).[124] The other view chose to emphasise the stereotypes of differences talked of earlier.

VI

The discourse of 'difference' that stresses dichotomy between the two Punjabi traditions might be the dominant discourse, but not the only one. There is another discourse whose emphasis is on overlaps and commonalities of these traditions. This is the discourse of Punjabiat which is reasserting itself with a vengence now after having been overwhelmed by the other discourse for so long. The striking most evidence of this discourse is the way the Punjabi society which experienced extremes rupture in the 1980s, pulled itself together and rebuild the tattered inter-community relations. Even during those years of discord things never became so bad as to witness a riot in the Punjabi villages. The shared linguistic regional identity did not get effaced - in fact, in situations of crux it asserted itself. Khushwant Singh points out how at many places the

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[124] See Pramod Kumar, et al, *Punjab Crisis* (Chandigarh,1984),p.95.

Punjabi Hindus outside Punjab, came to the rescue of the Sikhs when they were attacked in the 1984 riots. Also the Punjabi Hindu business group, the Thapars, took upon itself the task of rebuilding the gurdwaras destroyed during the period.[125]

Punjabiat has been gradually reasserting itself over the last few years. Linguistic identity is an integral part of this discourse, which for long was disowned by the Punjabi Hindus. However, they have now started accepting Punjabi as their mother tongue. The process started from the 1981 census when an overwhelming majority of the Hindus entered Punjabi as their primary language.[126] Likewise, the decision by the Delhi government to make Punjabi the third official language, is seen as a reflection of this reality. (After all, Delhi has a huge population of Hindu Punjabi refugees who, if they did not approve of this measure could have scuttled the move by virtue of the fact that they form a big vote bank in the capital).

The Hindus who had decided to go to Haryana in 1966 and repudiate their Punjabi identity now are organising themselves around the marker of Punjabiness. They are doing so to fight against their exploitation which they feel, they face due to their being Punjabis.[127]

The Punjabi literature expresses this Punjabiat the best. Though the language became a space of contestation for the political groupings associated with the different Punjabi religious traditions, yet it was used by both the groups to talk of the anguish of this division. If Balraj Sahani, the famous actor, in 1960, made a 'plea for understanding' to the people bent on desowning their mother tongue,[128] in the 1980s, Surjit Patar wrote,

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[125] Khushwant Singh, 'Rooted in History', *Resurgent Punjab*, (April 1999), p.11.

[126] Kumar, n.124, p.39.

[127] Times of India, 19 April 1999.

> 'We divided Waris Shah the other day,
> Is it Shiv Kumar's turn today'.[129]

Perhaps the most visible manifestation of this resurgent discourse is the Punjabi influence on popular culture in India, through their songs (and dances) in Punjabi language. This large scale acceptance of the language is definitely a far cry from the days when it was disowned by those very people who spoke it.

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[128] Balraj Sahni was also a popular writer in Punjabi. He stopped writing in Hindi and English and wrote just in Punjabi after the controversy on language erupted. He did so, P.C.Joshi averred, to set an example to rest of the Punjabi Hindu community and to show to non-Hindu Punjabis that not all Punjabi Hindus had given up their language. See Balraj Sahni, 'A Plea for Understanding' and P.C.Joshi,' Triumph of a Just Cause' in *Punjabi Suba-Symposium* (n.d.),pp.14-28 and 52-137.

[129] From Sant Singh Sekhon and Kartar Singh Duggal *The History of Punjabi Literature* (New Delhi,1992),p.32, Waris Shah was an eighteenth Century poet, widely regarded as the Shakespeare of the Punjabi language and Shiv Kumar is a contemporary modern poet of Punjab.

CHAPTER - IV

TRANSNATIONAL PUNJABI IDENTITY

Take away the land
Give me my friends.
I adore Nanak and Ranjha.
I am a devotee of Bulha,
A lover of Sassi and Saheban,
I admire Faiz and Hafeez, Qateel, and Jalib.
I enjoy Noor Jehan's melodies
And salute Salim from across the seas.
Give my Ilam Din, Syed, Talib and Rahi,
Give me back my friends.

-The Embrace[1]

I

The previous discussion on the Punjabi identity in Pakistan and India focussed upon its different manifestations in disparate circumstances. In this chapter, an attempt would be made to seek out points of correspondence‘ of the Punjabi identity-the shared past, similar backgrounds... [and] comparable present-day circumstances’.[2] These points of correspondence are the factors that make the Punjabi identity into a distinct entity which transcends the boundaries of varied geographical spaces which Punjabis now inhabit.

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[1] This is a translation of a Punjabi poem, from Sant Singh Sekhon and Kartar Singh Duggal, *The History of Punjabi Literature* (New Delhi,1992), pp.191-2.

[2] As opposed to the points of 'difference where either through antagonism, resistance or cultural superiority complexes, particularities are stressed'. The two together-correspondence and difference-form overlapping determinants of identity formations. Raminder Kaur and Virinder Singh, 'Brazen Translations: Notes for a new terminology' in Pritam Singh and Shinder S. Thandi, ed., *Globalisation and the Region* (United Kingdom, 1996), p.405.

Punjab, a region to which all the Punjabis trace their origins, has been undergoing constant change in terms of its political spatial space. The Mughal Punjab, the Punjab of the Ranjit Singh era, the colonial Punjab and the post-colonial Punjabs have all been different entities.[3] However, Punjab as a metaphor for the socio-cultural commonalities of the region has been much the same. This can easily be espied from the use of the terms 'Punjab' and 'Punjabi' in the creative compositions of various poets of the region. For instance, Waris Shah, an eighteenth century poet, distinguishes Punjab from the rest of India by calling it the 'beautiful forehead of Hindustan'.[4] A distinct consciousness of what was Punjab is also visible in the nineteenth century works of Ganesh Das[5] and especially, Shah Mohammad.[6]

In the contemporary period, Punjabis have been divided politically between India and Pakistan and within India there has been a further division between the Hindu Punjabis (many of who choose to call themselves non-Punjabis) and the Sikhs. The division here has basically been on religious lines. There is another set of Punjabis who are not spatially located within Punjab- the Punjabi diaspora, which can be found almost anywhere in the world. Together the Indian Punjabis, the Pakistani Punjabis and the Punjabis disapora form the determinants of what we call Punjabi identity or Punjabiat.

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[3] See J.S. Grewal, 'Punjabi identity: A historical Perspective', in Singh and Thandi, ibid, pp.41-45.

[4] From Harjot S. Oberoi, 'From Punjab to Khalistan: Territoriality and Metacommentary', *Pacific Affairs*, vol.60, no.1 (September 1987),p.29.

[5] Grewal, n.3, pp.46-50.

[6] Darshan Singh, 'Shah Mohammad on Punjabi Identity' in Singh and Thandi, n.2, pp.69-77.

II

The Punjabis draw upon the resources of their common history, folklore, tradition and texts to define their identity. Various themes run through these - of antiquity, invasions, survival, mobility, adaptability, innovation, valour and self confidence. Punjab is the region where Indus Valley civilization flourished. It was here that Hinduism started taking form -Rig Veda, Mahabharata and Ramyana were composed in this area. From the Aryan invasions onwards, Punjab was on the invasion route into the subcontinent-the Greek, Afghans, Iranains, Sakas, Turks, Mongols, all intrusions took place through Punjab.[7] The folk tradition of the region recognises this. The ancient most hero of the lore is perhaps King Porus who fought Alexander the Great so valiantly. Likewise, the battler of Panipat are referred to again and again. The most popular form of poetry in Punjab is *Vaar*, which means a narrative of heroism. The constant upheaval and change also forms a part of this tradition.[8]

Another set of themes that is visible is iconoclastism, eclectism, mysticism, egalitarianism[9] and stresses upon 'expressive and experiential rather than formal and scholarly'.[10] These themes are most visible in what Roger Ballard calls the *Panthic* and *Kismetic* dimensions of the Punjabi religious tradition.[11] This tradition is best evidenced in the poetic expressions of the Sufi saints and the folklore, which is also drawn upon by these saints to explicate their teachings. From Shaikh Ibrahim Farid Sani (or Baba Farid) to Sultan Bahu and Bullhe Shah, such themes were stressed as is exemplified by the following verse by Bullhe Shah:

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[7] See Syed Abdul Quddus, *Punjab: The Land of Beauty Love and Mysticism* (Karachi, 1992), p.2, and Gurcharan Singh, *Studies in Punjab History and Culture* (New Delhi,1990),pp.2-7.

[8] Quddus, ibid.,pp.6-7.

[9] Punjab was perhaps unique in historical India to not possess a rigid caste sytem. This was one main reason for the egalitarian theme of Punjabi tradition. See for example, Joyce Pettigrew, *Robber Noblemen* (London, 1975).

[10] Roger Ballard, 'Panth, Kismet, Dharm to Quam' in Singh and Thandi, n.2, p.14.

> When I learned the lesson of love
> My heart grew fearful of the mosque
> Questioning, I reached the walls of the temple
> Where a thousand conch-horns sound
> The ever-new spring of love
>
> I grew tried reciting Vedas and Qurans
> I wore down my forehead performing prostrations
> God is not at the [Hindu] pilgrimage site or in Mecca

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[11] The *Panthic* dimension is the one in which 'a body of people [is] drawn together by their commitment to the teachings of a specific spiritual master, sometimes living but very often dead'. This spiritual master could be any Guru, Sant, Yogi, Mahant, Sheikh, Pir or the more generic Baba, thus encompassing nearly the whole specturm of Punjabi religion with its Hindu, Sikh and Islamic components. The most notable aspect of this dimension is that inspite of the presence of large number of these spiritual teachers and the differnt ways each give their message, all of them strive to achieve one goal of the ultimate congruence between the microcosm of our individual selves and the macrocosm of the entire existent universe. *Kismetic* dimension of religion 'consists of those ideas, practices and behaviourial strategies which are used to explain the otherwise inexplicable' and if possible, to arrest the march of ill fortune. Ballard just aposes these two dimensions to the *Dharmic* and *Qaumic* dimensions. The former deals with a divine set of rules to which everyone should conform and the latter refers to the 'ideas and activities' through which a group of people close ranks and use their enhanced sense of mutual solidarity to advance their collective intersts. These two seem to have over the last century, occluded the first two dimensions as witnessed by increased attempts to define ones cmmunity according to a set a rules and subsequent moblizations like the ones leading to the Partition. However, the other two dimensions of the Punjabi religious do remain popular now also and their influence on the Punjabi way of life is still apparent, ibid,pp.7-38.

Whoever has found him [has found] the light of lights
The ever new spring of love...

Hir and Ranjha have come together
But Hir went astray and sought him in the woods,
Her beloved Ranjha played beside her
She did not realise it - come to your senses.
The ever new spring of love.

Here Bullhe Shah points to the mystical experience of the Union with the beloved (God) which cannot be found in the parameters of orthodox Hinduism or Islam but through an immediate, personal experience which requires flaunting conventions.[12] Similarly the folklore also emphasises these themes. The most popular and influential folk tale of Hir and Ranjha "illustrates how conformity to... conventional morality is the very antithesis of commitment to *ishk* [Love], but also that it... is the central obstacle to the lovers' reunion".[13] Hir comes forth in various versions of this tale, especially Waris Shah's, as a heroine who stands up against societal mores and conventions. Damodar, in fact, portrays his Hir as a 'dare-devil militant leader' of the village women, who fights a battle against Chandhar tribals and wins.[14]

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[12] This translated version of his poem 'Ishq di Navio Navi Bahar' is taken from Robin Rinehart, 'Interpretations of the Poetry of Bullhe Shah', *International Journal of Punjab Studies* (IJPS), Vol.3, no.1 (1996), pp.56-57.

[13] From Ballard, n.10, p.23.

[14] See Singh n.7, pp.155, 207. There are many versions of the Hir Ranjha tale the most famous is that of Waris Shah. In this, Hir and Ranjha are lovers who are not allowed to unite by Hir's relatives who marry her off to someone else. Despite the questions of social morality involved, Hir keeps on meeting Ranjha. Eventually both die.See Rinehart, n.12, p.61.

III

In the past fifty years, another theme has become a part of the Punjabi 'common sense'[15]-the Partition and the accompanying cataclysm. An anthropologist points out how inspite of never having solicited anyone's views on the Partition in the course of his fieldwork in the Punjabi diasporic community in Britain (on the subject of memory and identity), the event was repeatedly evoked intentionally and unintentionally (as it was so much 'entangled and interwoven into everyday speech and stories of ordinary events').[16] In the chapters on Pakistan and India it was discussed how the Partition has come to shape the political attitudes of the various communities. The influence of the Partition can also be seen by how it gets employed as a theme in the literature written by the Punjabis. In whichever language they wrote-Mulk Raj Anand in English; Krishan Chander and Krishna Sobti in Hindi, Saadat Hasan Mantq, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Rajinder Singh Bedi in Urdu; and Amrita Pritam and Mohinder Singh Sarna in Punjabi[17] it was an expression of the Punjabi anguish and distress at the events of 1947. The feelings that the Partition brings forth among the Punjabis can be gauged by the overwhelming popularity that Amrita Pritam enjoys both sides of the Punjab border for a poem that she wrote in 1948. The reaction to the poem had been instantaneous then and it still manages to draw forth similar pathos and anger at the Partition carnage.

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[15] 'Common Sense' here is used in the Gramscian sense.

[16] Dhooleka Sarhadi Raj, 'Partition and Diaspora: Memories and Identities of Punjabi Hindus in London', *IJPS*, vol.4, no.1 (1997), p.104.

[17] See for a representative work of this genre in Saros Cowasjee and K.S.Duggal, ed.s, *Orphans of the Storm* (New Delhi, 1995). Also see Tejwant Singh Gill, 'Punjabi Literature and the Partition of India', *IJPS*, vol.4, no.1, (1997), pp.85-99.

Today I ask Waris Shah:
Speak from your grave;
Open a new chapter
In the Book of Love.

A daughter of the Punjab once wept;
You wrote her long story for her
Today millions of daughters weep
Waris Shah. They're calling you.

O Friend of Sorrow,
Look at the Punjab.
The village square heaped with corpses,
The Chenab flooded with blood!...

Waris Shah! Open your grave
Write a new page
In the Book of Love.[18]

In the poem Pritam calls upon Waris Shah to rise from his grave to articulate the sorrows of the Punjabi women who suffered the maximum in the frenzied violence that accompanied the Partition.

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[18] Translated from Punjabi by Kiron Bajaj and Carlo Coppolo, in Miriam Cooke and Roshni Rustomji-Kerns, *Blood into Ink; South Asian and Middle Eastern Women Write War* (USA, 1994), pp.13-15. See for another translation Gill, ibid, p.88.

The stories of the violence of 1947 have now become part of the folk culture and are harked back to during interactions between the Punjabis. They are referred to both in the situations of amicability and conflict. In the former, the emphasis is on shared sufferings and loss during the mayhem of 1947. In the latter, memories are invoked of how the 'other' community perpetuated violence of the worst kind on one's own community.[19]

The various themes delineated above give a concrete shape to the Punjabi identity. From the next section, the manifold manifestations of this identification shall be discussed.[20]

IV

Political boundaries between India and Pakistan are a reality that would be difficult to eclipse, at least in the near future. However, these boundaries are not impermeable they are shaped by the shared heritages of the two countries. One such shared heritage is the Punjabi community which makes its presence felt both in the times of friendship and discord.

The events of the past one century or so, especially the Partition, have left the Punjabi society fractured spatially as well as psychologically. Yet this division is permeated by the commonalities which are much more antiquated. So what is witnessed is a strange complex relationship between the two fragments of the community of-both love and hate. *The Story of Enmity*, a Punjabi poem very eloquently tells us of this phenomenon.

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[19] See, for example, Furrukh Khan 'Of Victims and Villains' *IJPS*, Vol.4,no.2 (1997),pp.181-200; and Raj, n.16.

[20] One such manifestation-literature-is discussed throughout the chapter in various contexts and thus will not be dealt with, in a separate section.

Strange is the story of this enmity
If I were to tell a stranger,
He wouldn't believe it.
When your armies
Surrendered arms to our armies,
It was a sad day for you
And something to feel sorry about;
You must have shed tears
It was, indeed, so natural
But why did tears gush out from my eyes?[21]

The poet poses a conundrum which hints at the complexities involved in the way the Punjabi identity functions both as a fracturing and a cementing agent. It is the Punjabis who predominate the armies which fight eachother at times of Indo-Pak conflict. It is the Punjabis, at least in Pakistan, who by dominating the power structures determine the very occurrence of such conflicts. It is they who form the most vocal supporters of the war-mongers in the two countries.[22]

Yet, it is they who also support the peace-niks. This was most evident when two Punjabis Nawaz Sharif and Inder Kumar Gujral took over as prime minister in their respective countries. There was an almost overwhelming reaction by the Punjabis who all of the sudden started visualising the end of the conflictual relationship between the two countries. This reaction was mixed with that of pride in their success - reports talked of celebrations in Jhelum (Gujral's hometown) and in Jati Umra[23] (Sharif's village). Similarly, when Atal Bihari Vajpayee decided to undertake the bus journey to Lahore, it was Punjab, both sides of the border, that celebrated. Punjab's importance was also acknowledged by the inclusion of a large number of Punjabis in the entourage, including the Punjab Chief Minister, Prakash Singh Badal[24]. Punjabis, inspite of the constant mistrust that they have for eachother, evince widespread interest in what is happening across the border.[25] The migrants from both the sides, especially, show such an interest as they remember their roots. The fifty years of the Partition evoked an out-pouring of such an interest. Memories of the 'home' across the border formed the locus of this interest.[26]

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[21] Translated from Punjabi, in Sekhon and Duggal, n., p.208.

[22] In the previous chapters we talked of such a tendency resulting out of the memories of the Partition and hence engendered insecurities.

Likewise, the Khalsa tercentenary celebration in April this year evoked widespread interest in the other side. A delegation went specially from India to invite Punjabis from the other side for joining in the festivities.[27] As many as three hundred and fifty Pakistani nationals came and this group consisted of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. The group got a rousing welcome in India.[28]

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23. The whole village apparently offered thanksgiving in the gurudwara when Sharif became the prime minister. *Indian Express*, 19 February, 1999.

24. See newspaper reports of February 1999.

25. Ballard mentions how such an interest in one another could be utilized to further 'positive links' between the two countries. Roger Ballard, 'The Politics of Sectarianism in Punjab', *Punjab Research Group*, Discussion paper series, no.7,(n.d),p.12.

26. See newspaper reports of August 1997. Also see Mushirul Hasan, 'Memories of a Fragmented Nation', *Economic* and Political Weekly (10 October 1998) pp.2662-8.

27. *Times of India*, 5 April 1999 and 6 April, 1999.

28. *Times of India*, 12 April,1999.

Scholars like Shackle argue that the emergent 'national' Punjabi feeling in Pakistan is reflected in the 'great longing and affection' with which Sikhs are spoken of in West Punjab.[29]

The Sikhs also have a special affinity for West Punjab as most of their sacred shrines are located there. A survey conducted by the Archeological Department of Pakistan immediately after the Partition had listed as many as hundred and thirty important Gurdwaras.[30]

It was this affinity that was used by the Pakistani establishment to help the Sikh militants in their movement for Khalistan. Shackle mentions the 'crude propaganda programme' run by Lahore Radio 'specifically directed at the Sikhs in India'. The programme consisted of Sikh hymns, occasional talks and news, in which attention was focussed upon the statements of Jan Sangh calling for Hindu domination and closure of Gurdwaras. Similarly the Sikh causes of dissatisfaction were highlighted in these programmes. They were conducted in a distinctive 'Sikh Punjabi'.[31]

Pakistan obviously was fishing in troubled waters, but its support to the Khalistan movement did definitely aid, monetarily and in the form of supply of weapons and training, in the furthering of the case.[32] Jagjit Singh Chauhan and Ganga Singh Dhillon, the two Sikh expatriates who leaders of the movement, maintained contacts with Pakistan through the period of the movement.[33]

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[29] Shackle explains this in terms of the Punjabis feeling 'rather empty without the natural Indian culture which had previously underlain their culture'. The symbols picked are those of the Sikhs as they are more acceptable than the Hindu Symbols (which are perceived as anti-Pakistani) See, C.Shackle, 'Punjabi in Lahore', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol.4, no.3 (1970), pp.265-6.

[30] J.S. Sandhu, 'Pak intentions behind PGPC creation' *Tribune*, 23 May 1999.

[31] That is, Punjabi with many Hindu and Sanskrit words. See Shackle, n.29, pp.254-5.

Pakistan was obviously using the resources of the Punjabi-ness to encourage these militants. Reports point out that in the training grounds which were in Punjab, the courses were conducted in Punjabi and lectures on Punjabi way of life and Sikh scriptures formed the integrated part of these courses.[34] This is also attested to by the recent statement of Lt-Gen. Javed Nasir, the chief of the newly termed Pakistan Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PGPC), in an interview to Jung, a Pakistani daily, in which he suggested that the creation of the PGPC would give a fillip to the 'separatist' movement in Punjab in order to 'threaten the very integrity of India'.[35]

The indigenous factors of the Sikh militancy are not sought to be glossed over in this section in fact they were the primary causes as seen in the Chapter 3. The example of the Pakistani establishments support to the Sikh militants is highlighted here just to show that common cultural resources instead of being used to further amicability between the two people, are used by the vested interests to aggravate the existing divisions.

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[32] Asoka Raina, 'Guns Across the Border' in Abida Samiuddin, *The Punjab Crisis* (Delhi, 1985), pp.375-9 and Urmila Phadnis, *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia* (New Delhi, 1990), pp. 236-8.

[33] See Arthur W. Helweg 'Sikh Politics in India' in N.Gerald Barrier and Verne A. Dusenbery, ed, *The Sikh Diaspora : Migration and the Experience beyond Punjab* (Delhi, 1989) pp.314-6

[34] Raina, n.32, p.378.

[35] Quoted in Sandhu, n.30.

V

Despite the use of the markers of Punjabi identity for divisive causes, the cohesive attributes of Punjabiat still persist, especially in the popular culture. The conspicous evidence of these attributes is the Punjabi Music. The popularity of Ustad Fateh Ali Khan, both side of the Punjabi border (much before he started singing fusion music) attests to the pervalence of Punjabi cultural motifs liberally used by him. His *qawwalis* were in the praise of Sufi saints like Baba Farid. Ballard sees in his music a reflection of the *panthic* dimension of Punjabi religion.[36] Many other singers and composers have drawn upon similar Punjabi culture motifs and their fame demonstrates the ability of such symbols to withstand the blows that they have suffered over the years of discord. [37]

The popularity of Bhangra music again trancends the boundaries.[38] Daler Mehndi with his version of this genre is a permanent fixture on the media screens. The past few years have seen a sudden upsurge in the visibility of this music. The reason perhaps lies in the media revolution that has taken place - proliferation of television channels and channels exclusively devoted to music.[39] The media revolution has also aided in the revival of the Punjabi film industry in India. The fortunes of Punjabi films in India had dipped when around 1953 when the Pakistan government banned the import of Indian films to encourage their own industry.

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[36] Ballard, n.10, pp.16-17.

[37] Junoon, a popular Pakistani group of Sufi singers uses Bullhe Shah's compositions. Similarly, it was Bullhe Shah's composition again which inspired the hit song of last year -Chaiya, Chaiya.

[38] See Nasreen Rehman, 'Music' in Victoria Schofield, ed., *Old Roads New Highways* (Karachi, 1998), pp. 113-4

[39] Last year, in fact, saw the inaugration of a new channel, the Punjabi World Channel which devotes itself exclusively to Punjabi themes.

The market of these films, therefore, shrank and the film makers found it more economical to make Hindi films.[40] It is only now after the advent of globalised media, that the Punjabi film industry has rejuvenated itself and come out with hits like *Shaheed-i Mohabbat* and *Mahaul Theek Hai*.[41] The former won critical acclaim and a national award to go with it. The reason for this resurgence is obviously the assurance of a wider viewership - in India, Pakistan and outside among the Punjabis.[42]

VI

The Punjabi diaspora forms a decidedly visible manifestation of the Punjabi identity. The academic discourse has now come to recognize it as the third Punjab.[43] The Punjabi diaspora is a large one - it perhaps is the largest from the subcontinent. Does Punjabi-ness constitute a site of identification for the diaspora? The answer to this question depends upon the varied contexts in which the diasporic communities live. Basically it is determined by three factors - one, the relations with the homeland; two, the relations with the resident country; and three, the relations with the host community.[44]

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[40] This was in contrast to Pakistan where Punjabi cinema thrived. See Shackle, n.29, pp.255-6

[41] See Sonia Trikha and Bajinder Pal Singh, 'Punjabi Goes Places,' *Indian Express*, 14 March, 1999, and Nirupama Dutt, 'Dubbed for Bollywood', *Resurgent Punjab* (April, 1999).

[42] The past few years have also been witness to a proliferation of associations, like the World Punjabi Organisation, which regularly organise events involving Punjabis from both sides of the border. The reach of these organisation is not much. Usually their activities are confined to the hoi-poloi of the two countries and events organised are published only in the society pages of the newspapers. The fact that is of interest to us here is that these organisations are using the platform of a secular Punjabi identity. For an example of such events organised read a newspaper report tilled 'Balle, Balle : Baisakhi hangama' in *Times of India*, 21 April, 1999.

[43] For instance, Gurharpal Singh makes a distinction between three Punjabs-one, the pre-1947 Punjab; two, the East and West Punjab since 1947; and three, the diasporic Punjab, 'Introduction' in Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot, ed.s, *Punjabi Identity : Continuity and Change* (New Delhi, 1996), p.1. Singh and Thandi also distinguish between three Punjabs- one, Indian; two Pakistani; and three diaspora, n.2, p.1.

The way these determinants function has varied according to different context. However, the first determinant has provided certain important junctures which had similar impact across most situations. The emigration from Punjab had started from the beginning of the century and scholars have commented upon how among these pioneer emigrant one found an absence of contested identities along religious lines. They identified themselves more in terms of overarching identities like either 'Indian' or 'Punjabi', with the second one predominating. This soon was to give way to particularistic identities, especially after the Partition in 1947.

Microstudies by Karen Isaken Leonard and Bruce La Brack of the Punjabi immigrants in California points towards such a transformation. La Brack describes how from a stress on 'shared homeland, language, history.... [and other] cultural commonalities', a shift to 'religious particularism' took place. It was not as if 'the religious distinctions were irrelevent [earlier] but rather that a more secular Punjabi identity tended to transcend religious particularism'.[45]

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[44] This formulation is borrowed from Helweg, who uses it to describe the varied influeces on the English Sikh Community. See Arthur Wesley Helweg, *The Development of Migrant Community* (Delhi, 1979). p.11.

[45] Bruce La Brack, 'California's "Punjabi Century": Changing Punjabi/Sikh identities' in Singh and Thandi, n.2, pp.373-386. Also see Karen Isaken Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans* (Philadelphia, 1992) and 'Pioneer Voices from California: Reflections on Race Religion and Ethnicity' in Barrier and Dusenbery, n.33, pp.120-139.

Similarly Juergensmeyer in his study of the Ghadar movement of 1915[46] argues that the "movement's ideology was... untainted with the language of faith."[47]

The division surfaced within the emigrant Punjabis around the time the Partition was taking place in India-so the expatriate Punjabis became Indian Punjabis and Pakistani Punjabi.[48] Analogous was the situation in the 1980's when the events in India changed the equations between the Sikh and Punjabi Hindus. The Operation Blue Star resulted in the 'instant emotional unification'[49] of the majority of Sikhs who saw it as a sacrilege. The Punjabi diasporic identity thus split into three, like it had in the subcontinent.[50]

The second determinant in process of identity formation in the Punjabis abroad relates to the intra-community relationships. In face of the alienating experience in the new surroundings in foreign lands, home cultures provide vital support system. These home cultures through community networks also act as agents of cultural reinforcement and group identity maintenance. The strong

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46. The Ghadar movement was launched by a group of expatriate Punjabis in the United State with the aim of liberating India from the British through militant struggle, See in details Harish K.Puri, *Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organisation and Strategy* (Amritsar,1983).

47. Mark Juergensmeyer, 'The Ghadar Syndrome: Nationalism in an immigrant community', *Punjab Journal of Politics*, vol.1,no.1, (October,1977),p.11.

48. Dhooleka S.Raj refers to such a change of identification in Britain as well. Raj, no.16, p.111.

49. La Brack, n.45, p.379. Also see Raj, no.16, pp.112-3; Helweg, n.33, p.306; and Raminder Singh, 'Development of Punjabi culture and Identity in Britain,' *Punjab Research Group*, Discussion Group Series, n.15, (n.d.), pp.19-20.

50. It is important to stress here that the second split happened after 1984, though in the pre-1984 period (in fact, from the early 1970s itself) also a small group of Sikh expatriates made noises about 'Khalistan'. Jagjit Singh Chauhan and Ganga Singh Dhilllon were two such advocates of the idea. However,prior to 1984 they did not have much influence in their compatriots. See Helweg, n.33, La Brack, n.45, pp.379-81.

tendency, as a result, within the immigrant community, is towards conformism. This is also the case with the Punjabi expatriates. The Punjabi community abroad is usually conformist which keeps intact its 'traditional social frameworks of norms, values behaviour and practices'.[51] The respect within the community is earned by acquiring status within the indigenous institutions or conformity to the conventional mores.[52]

The dynamics here also gets tempered by the interaction between the host culture and the immigrants. In Western countries, Punjabis have had to face constant racism, discrimination and stereotyping. This has had significant influence in the way Punjabi identity has shaped over the years. Cultural reinforcement is also a reaction to such constraints faced by the immigrant communities. Thandi points towards a decision by the younger Sikhs to grow their beards, wear turbans and traditional clothes in the public spaces, as a result of such dynamics.[53] Similarly, Raminder Singh mentions the growing interest of the Pakistani Punjabis in their traditional social system.[54]

These two factors together serve to reinforce a sense of Punjabis as a separate community. The strong sense of tradition leads to a harking back to the 'golden past' of Punjab, as evidenced by the poem in the beginning of this chapter. A locus of this sense of cultural identity is the Punjabi language. Dhooleka Raj in his study of the British Punjabi Hindus points out how inspite of

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51. See Singh, n.50,p.30.

52. ibid., p.27.

53. Ibid., p.354.

54. Singh, n.49, p.27.

the association of Punjabi language with the Sikhs, the language remains alive within non-Sikh settings too. In fact, the youth culture, which earlier would reject any traces of 'home' culture, has now sarted associating with the language. This is evident from the popularity enjoyed by the Bhangra Rap scene.[55] Kaur and Singh see in the 'musical and lyrical references to Bhangra, dhols, Jallander city', and use of the Punjabi language and idiom like *Chakdo phatteh* and *Balle Balle*, in the songs of the popular singer Apache Indian, an evidence of a sense of Punjabi identity.[56]

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55. Raj, n.17, pp.117-120.

56. Kaur and Singh, n.2, p.408.

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

This study had been undertaken to understand the different fashions in which the Punjabi identity manifests itself in the post-1947 context.

The choice of the date 1947 requires an explanation. This was the year when Punjabis got divided into two-Pakistani Punjabis and Indian Punjabis. 1947 was also the year in which, during the course of division, they witnessed violence of an unprecedented nature. The Punjabis perpetrated it, and they themselves were victims of it. This year became the defining moment in the way their attitudes shaped in the last fifty years. Hence, the choice of the date 1947.

Punjabis, together form the largest shared linguistic group between India and Pakistan. Their self-definitions and attitudes influence the way the two countries interact with each other. In this study we attempted to see and understand the different dynamics working behind the Punjabi self-perceptions. To this end, after delineating the background, we divided the study into three broad categories - the first, dealing with Punjabis in Pakistan (in the second chapter), the second with Punjabis in India (in the third chapter), and the third with the socio-cultural ethos (in the fourth chapter) that transcends the political divisions.

The first two parts basically dealt with the political nature of the Punjabi identity. What came across, after a detailed examination on this score was that 'difference' informs the way Punjabi attitudes and self-images have developed.

Diacritica like Punjabi-non Punjabi, Hindu-Muslim, Hindu-Sikh, seem to be the essentials of the Punjabi identity, if politics is focussed upon. In fact, talking of a common Punjabi identity in the face of such an overwhelming emphasis on divergence seems to be indulging in some kind of a wishful thinking.

However, the same perusal also gave us some indications of a subtle trend towards an acceptance by the community that 'difference' need not be the only discourse of their existence.

Small beginnings are being made - like the recent decision by the Punjab Government in Pakistan to introduce Punjabi language as a subject from the primary level in schools . indicates some kind of an acceptance of their Punjabi-ness. Such an acceptance should make them sympathetic to non-Punjabi community identity assertions in Pakistan and in some way, also obviate the Punjabi-non Punjabi tensions.

Similarly, in India the Hindu Punjabis, after so many years of refusing to accept Punjabi as their mother tongue, have started acknowledging their linguistic identity. (This is specially evident from the last two census results).

The repudiation by Punjabi Hindus of their language had been one of the main components of the discourse of 'difference' involving the Hindu-Sikh dyad.

Nevertheless, the dominant aspect of the political manifestations that comes through the examination of the events of the last fifty years, in our chapters, is of 'divergence'. It is this aspect that gets problematized by the chapter that deals with the socio-cultural ethos informing the Punjabi identity. The common heritage of the Punjabis both sides of the border (and outside the subcontinent) is emphasised in this chapter. This heritage draws on various sources - the language; the folk culture; the local traditions which together constitute a 'Punjabi religion'(as Ballard calls it); the music; and ultimately the experience of the cataclysm that was the Partition. The literature, the popular culture and the vast diaspora with its firm cultural moorings forms an expression of the site of 'correspondence' that the Punjabi identity can and does provide.

The preceding discussion fits in very well with the theoretical construct that we sketched in our first chapter. The manner in which the Punjabi identity has enunciated itself in different contexts exhibits that malleability is indeed a function of community identities. Likewise, our second contention that community identities are a site of both correspondence and difference is also buttressed by the above discussion.

Our third postulate was that power politics plays an important role in the way community identities manifest themselves. We witnessed how the association of Hindu Punjabis and the Pakistani Punjabis with the power structures of their respective countries led to a de-emphasis of their Punjabi-ness. The opposite was the case with the Sikhs whose exclusion, real or perceived, from power institutions led them to emphasise their Punjabiat. In fact, for a long time they seemed to have become the sole representatives of the Punjabi cultural-linguistic identity.

In the end of this concluding chapter it becomes essential to point out that the scope of this study did not extend beyond secondary sources. Though some primary material was used, we have essentially based our arguments on secondary work. A further examination of these arguments would require primary research which is intended to be taken up as a follow-up exercise to this dissertation.

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