

CANADIAN IDEOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY:

THE IMPACT ON VANCOUVER SIKH

'ETHNIC' AND 'RELIGIOUS' ADAPTATION¹

The problem which motivates this paper is that of explaining the relatively recent and ever-increasing proliferation and diversification of institutions within Vancouver's Sikh community.² Since the focus of this conference is on ethnic politics, the development of the dominant ethnic-political organizations within the community will be highlighted.³ However, the emergence of these organizations can only be understood in terms of an apparently more general differentiation of Vancouver Sikh 'ethnic' and 'religious' identities, organizations, activities, and leaders.

Vancouver's Sikh community is the largest, oldest, most heterogeneous, and perhaps most influential Sikh community in Canada. For seventy-five years, despite periods of relative isolation from the Indian sub-continent and alternately hostile and indifferent treatment from the wider Canadian society, the community has persisted. During the past ten years, the community has experienced considerable growth and internal diversification brought on, in part, by a tremendous upsurge in Sikh and non-Sikh "East Indian" immigration from South Asia, Britain, East Africa, and Fiji; the coming of age of a sizeable Canadian-born and reared generation of Sikh immigrant offspring; and the emergence of an organized and vocal group of gore (white) Canadian and American Sikh "converts."

Verne A. Dusenbery

**Department of Anthropology
University of Chicago**

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1970s--the Vancouver Sikh community was a case of "ethnic adaptation," i.e., "accommodating to the larger Canadian society by foregoing some aspects of traditional Punjabi culture" (Chadney 1977a:5912-A). Nevertheless, these accounts suggest that this "adaptation" had not involved wide-spread behavioral, structural, or marital assimilation into white-Canadian society. Rather, taking into account

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- 1974 "Family Organization and Change Among the Overseas Indians with Special Reference to Indian Immigrant Families of British Columbia, Canada" in George Kurian (ed.), The Family in India: A Regional View (The Hague: Mouton), pp. 369-391.

Wood, John

- 1978 "East Indians and Canada's New Immigration Policy" in Canadian Public Policy, Vol. IV, no. 4, pp. 547-567.

Verne A. (Van) DUSENBERY

Ph.D. candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago,
Chicago, Illinois U.S.A.

In Indonesia — January 1980 — June 1981

accompanying wife (Elizabeth Coville) who is doing research
on medicine among The Tanah Toraja of
Sulawesi, Indonesia

Interested in visiting Sikh communities in Indonesia, Malaysia,
Singapore, and India.

before Dec 10, 1979 write

15589 Rose Drive

South Holland, Illinois 60473
USA

after Dec 10, 1979 write

c/o Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dusenbery
9824 S.W. 2nd Ave
Portland, Oregon 97219
USA

in Vancouver learning about Sikh religion and culture
from the Sikh community from June 1978
until October 1979.

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Vancouver's Sikh community is the largest, oldest, most heterogenous, and perhaps most influential Sikh community in Canada. For seventy-five years, despite periods of relative isolation from the Indian sub-continent and alternately hostile and indifferent treatment from the wider Canadian society, the community has persisted. During the past ten years, the community has experienced considerable growth and internal diversification brought on, in part, by a tremendous upsurge in Sikh and non-Sikh "East Indian" immigration from South Asia, Britain, East Africa, and Fiji; the coming of age of a sizeable Canadian-born and reared generation of Sikh immigrant offspring; and the emergence of an organized and vocal group of gora (white) Canadian and American Sikh "converts."

Prior anthropological accounts (see Smith 1944, Mayar 1959, Ames & Inglis 1973, Srivastava 1974, and Chadney 1976, 1977a,b) seem in agreement with Chadney's assessment that--at least through the time of Chadney's fieldwork in the early 1970s--the Vancouver Sikh community was undergoing a process of "ethnic adaptation," i.e., "accomodating to the larger Canadian society by foregoing some aspects of traditional Punjabi culture" (Chadney 1977a:5912-A). Nevertheless, these accounts suggest that this "adaptation" had not involved wide-spread behavioral, structural, or marital assimilation into white Canadian society. Rather, taking into account

the often conflicting social and cultural pressures emanating from the host and sending societies, these analyses stressed the changes internal to a community which continued to differentiate itself from the wider Canadian society.

One area of "adaptation" little noticed in previous accounts has been that of "institutional adaptation."⁴ For most of the community's seventy-five years, the original gurdwara (temple) society fulfilled the traditional role of institutional centre for the various activities of the Sikh community. Increasingly, however, new institutions have arisen to take on a significant responsibility for these activities. Thus, today, one finds active Sikh participation in a number of 'ethnic' organizations with explicitly political, Cultural (i.e., folk art and language), social, or social service objectives.⁵ Gurdwaras, in the meantime, flourish, but with more narrowly 'religious' concerns.

Demographic and social changes, in and of themselves, are not sufficient to account for the new institutional makeup of the community. Nor can factional and interpersonal disputes within the community be entirely responsible for the proliferation and diversification of institutions. Instead, I will argue that institutional developments within the community--and especially a differentiation of 'ethnic' and 'religious' institutions, activities, and leaders--can best be understood as institutional adaptation reflecting the increasing impact of the prevailing Canadian ideology⁶ and its encoding in Canadian public policies.⁷

'Religion' and 'Ethnicity' in Canadian Ideology and Public Policy

As befits its New World ethos, 'religion' in Canadian ideology is conceived in terms of notions of pluralism (i.e., many religions and religious denominations coexist harmoniously), voluntarism (i.e., the individual is free to belong to and participate in the activities of the religious group of his or her choice), and freedom (i.e., the state neither endorses one particular religion nor allow limitations to be placed on the individual's legitimate religious expression; and, at the same time, the state bestows certain special statuses on all recognized religious organizations). This Canadian ideology with respect to 'religion'

finds encoding in Canadian governmental policies in the form of the legal protection of individuals' rights of religious affiliation and expression (e.g., as set forth in the Canadian Bill of Rights (1960), the Canadian Human Rights Act (1978a), and the various provincial and municipal human rights statutes) and in such advantages as the tax-exempt status accorded the property of 'religious' organizations when such property is used for 'religious' purposes (e.g., see the B.C. Religious Institutions Act (1960) and the Vancouver Charter (Chpt 55 Sec. 396(c)iv)).

The Canadian ideology with respect to 'ethnicity' is reflected in the commonly accepted image of Canadian society as a "mosaic"--a pluralistic society in which, unlike the American "melting pot," the constituent elements are discrete "ethno-cultural" groups which retain their unique 'ethnic' identity and 'cultural' integrity despite social interaction. The most explicit statement of this ideology in the area of public policy is, of course, in the federal policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework," first enunciated by the Liberal government in 1971 (see Canada 1971). There, the government does not simply guarantee certain human rights to individuals of all races, colours, ancestries, national origins, etc. (for these, see the Canadian Bill of Rights (1960), the Canadian Human Rights Act (1978a), and the various provincial and municipal human rights statutes) but takes positive steps to ensure the recognition and vitality of "ethno-cultural" organizations and their activities.⁹

There is much to notice about the representation of 'religion' and 'ethnicity' in Canadian ideology beyond their common pluralism. While social scientific definitions of "ethnicity" often list "religion" as one of the bases of ethnic identity and solidarity (see, e.g., Isajiw's (1974) review article), it appears that in Canadian folk ideology 'religion' and 'ethnicity' are viewed as generally separable and potentially cross-cutting sources of social identity and social solidarity and as relatively distinct generators of social norms. Furthermore, not only can 'religious' and 'ethnic' identities, groups, and norms be distinguished and separated according to Canadian folk ideology, but they can

also be seen to contrast. Thus, whereas 'religious' identity is viewed as essentially voluntary and individualistic (membership being achievable through the symbolic action of re-birth, confirmation, or conversion), 'ethnic' identity--like the even more extreme 'racial' identity--is viewed as essentially communal and non-volitional (membership being ascribed on the basis of common ties of origin and descent).¹⁰ Furthermore, as a corollary of the preceding, whereas 'religious' norms are seen as absolute and inviolable (generally involving ^{faithful} adherence to some "code for conduct" enjoined on all believers and protected as 'religious' rights), 'ethnic' norms are seen as relatively loose and non-specific (generally involving the retention of only a few "cultural markers" sufficient to index one's membership in a particular 'ethnic' category).¹¹ Finally, implicit in the ideology and crucial ^{implementation} to the public policy/is a separation of secular and sacred domains such that 'religious' institutions (e.g., churches, temples, mosques, and other "houses of worship") which benefit from certain taxation and incorporation policies can be distinguished from 'ethnic' institutions (e.g., ethnic-political, ethnic-cultural, ethnic-social, and ethnic-social service organizations) which are the intended beneficiaries of Multiculturalism funding.¹²

Traditional Sikh Ideology and Institutions

In his comparative study of South Asia and the modern West, the French anthropologist, Louis Dumont (1970) has admonished us to fully recognize and respect the contrasting ideologies of the two regions. Among other things, he has suggested that one significant contrast between South Asian and modern Western ideologies is in the latter's differentiation of social action and identity into a multitude of separate and distinct "domains." Inden & Nicholas (1977)

even go so far as to suggest that the conventional distinction made in the modern West between the sacred and secular domains may not be present in South Asian cultures.

It would, therefore, be a serious mistake to assume a priori that traditional Sikh ideology corresponds to that of Canadian ideology with respect to the differentiability of 'religion' and 'ethnicity'. Since Sikhism has heretofore been essentially a regional faith, the Sikh and Punjabi identities of its adherents has been largely conjoined. And even when Sikhs have settled abroad, their insularity -- reflected in such things as endogamy and non-proselytization--has meant that they have gone virtually unchallenged in defining as they pleased the meaning of the term "Sikh." It is not surprising to find, therefore, that it is commonly asserted of and by Punjabi Sikhs that the Sikhs constitute a distinct religious-cum-political-cum-social-cum-cultural community and that it is either impossible, unwarranted, or ill-advised to attempt to delineate out components of this unique Sikh identity. Chadney reflects this traditional Sikh ideology when he asserts:

It is this constant blending of sacred and secular identities, goals, structures, and functions, which, at the emic level, helps explain the important continuance of Sikhism in Vancouver.... For it is not simply a religious identity, it is an identity of Sikh which is an identity incapable of being categorically isolated into disparate and separate sacred and secular identities (Chadney 1976:195; emphasis in original).

Rich symbolic support for this ideological unity of the sacred and secular domains is to be found in Sikh culture in the miri/piri and deghe/tegh/fateh concepts. According to Sikh traditions, the sixth Sikh guru(teacher), Hargobind, was invested with two swords at his installation as guru, one representing spiritual power (piri: from the Persian word, pir, used to denote a religious teacher) and the other representing temporal power (miri: from another Islamically-introduced word, amir, meaning commander of the faithful). Besides encapsulating the long-standing Sikh notion of worldly involvement coexisting with spiritual enlightenment, the pairing of miri and piri reflects the ideal of Sikh religious and socio-political unity and sovereignty. A more recent symbolic development, first popularized at the time of the ninth and tenth gurus, was the pairing of the terms deghe (cooking pot) and tegh (sword) to emphasize that "the use of arms is an extension of the giving of alms" (Cole & Sambhi 1978) and their conjunction with fateh (victory) which refers to the temporal and spiritual victory of God and God's Khalsa Panth (the orthodox Sikh community).

Historically, one could enumerate countless examples of the blending of what from the perspective of contemporary Western ideology one might want to distinguish as 'religious' and 'non-religious'. Institutionally, one can observe this in the political and religious aspirations of the Sikh communal party, the Akali Dal, which has periodically agitated for a separate Sikh homeland and against incorporation into a secular India; in the political as well as religious activities of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (the committee legally empowered to run the affairs of the historical gurdwaras in the Punjab); and in the often parallel leadership of these most dominant of Punjabi Sikh organizations.

However, the institutional framework wherein the differences in ideologies are best observed is in the scope and function of the Sikh gurdwaras, the central Sikh institutions at the local level. It is conventional in English to translate gurdwara (literally, "the Guru's door") as "temple." This is unfortunate, since, as virtually every Sikh scholar has pointed out, Sikh gurdwaras have traditionally been--and in most cases continue to be--more than simply "houses of worship" as 'religious' buildings in the West are commonly considered. If we wish to apply our conventional Western understandings to an explanation of the traditional role of the gurdwaras in Sikh social life, it would be much more appropriate to speak of them as religious, social, political, Cultural, and social service centres for the local community.¹³

Institutional Development within the Vancouver Sikh Community

Given this place of the gurdwara in traditional Sikh society, it is not surprising that a gurdwara was formed in Vancouver in 1908 coincident with the arrival of five thousand Sikh laborers and that from the very beginning it served a multiplicity of apparently 'religious' and 'non-religious' purposes. In its early years, the Khalsa Diwan Society's gurdwara on West Second Avenue was truly a religious, social, political, Cultural, and social service centre for the entire South Asian immigrant population of the lower mainland. In this building, regular readings from the Sikh Holy Scriptures, the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, were conducted; the traditional free kitchen (langar) operated; shelter was provided for the homeless. In addition,

the gurdwara was the place where the overwhelmingly male population came together during non-work hours to socialize, where consensus was reached on decisions affecting the immigrant community, and where conflicts were aired.¹⁴

Since it was not inconsistent with Sikh ideology for a "temple" organization such as the Khalsa Diwan Society (hereafter, KDS) to engage in 'political' activities, the KDS took the lead in fighting against the exclusionary Canadian immigration policies and for the extension of rights to all South Asian immigrants in British Columbia. Having played a central role in the community's rejection of a proposal that the community be relocated to British Honduras, the KDS found itself deeply involved in seeking a redress of the community's grievances against the Canadian & B.C. governments. Causes championed by the KDS in the period from 1909 to 1947 included the following: sending delegations to Ottawa and London to argue for the lifting of the exclusionary "orders-in-council"; supporting court challenges to the legality of Canadian immigration policies; offering material and legal support to the passengers of the ill-fated Komagata Maru; assisting individual immigrants facing deportation orders; working for favorable decisions from Canadian officials which (1) would allow South Asian immigrants to bring over their wives and dependent children, and (2) would extend domiciliary rights to illegal immigrants who had been successfully established in the country for a certain period of time; and working for the federal, provincial, and municipal franchise for "Hindus" which would allow South Asian-Canadians/^{in B.C.} not only the right to vote but also the right to enter certain professions (notably, law and medicine) otherwise closed to them.¹⁵

During the community's first decades, sporadic attempts to found what would have been separate ethnic-political organizations failed for lack of support from the largely working class community (see Lal 197).¹⁶ For most Sikhs, the gurdwara was deemed the appropriate place for determining a response to the Canadian experience. And thus, so long as the South Asian immigrant population remained small, overwhelmingly Sikh, and relatively united (if only in respect to the intransigence of Canadian authorities), the KDS was able to serve as the institutional

centre for meeting the community's varied needs.¹⁷

Things began to change following WW II. By 1947, the Sikh population in the lower mainland had shrunk to little over one thousand. However, with changes in Canadian immigration and citizenship policies, the community began to expand after decades of contraction and retrenchment. One effect of the changes was to stir up incipient factional conflict between the more "moderninst" and "traditionalist" segments of the community. In 1952, a dispute arose over requirements for election to the KDS executive committee. The "traditionalists" argued unsuccessfully for the exclusion of clean-shaven and turbanless Sikhs from KDS leadership positions. And after their defeat, some ^{"traditionalists"} _A broke with the KDS and founded a second Vancouver gurdwara and a second society, the Akali Singh Sikh Society. Thus, while the KDS continued to represent the majority viewpoint of the community, its credibility as the sole organization speaking to the wider Canadian society on behalf of all "East Indians" was open to question.¹⁸

Out of this ^{changing situation} _A emerged what could be regarded as an ethnic-political organization -- the East Indian Canadian Citizen's Welfare Association. It was 'non-religious', being independent of any gurdwara. And, though dominated by the sizeable Sikh population and sharing some leadership with the KDS, by setting its objectives as working for the benefit of the entire "East Indian" community throughout the country, it implicitly accepted a Canadianized view of social reality--viz., that there exists an "East Indian" ethno-cultural group sharing certain unique interests and activities. Thus it was at this juncture that the Welfare Association began to take over some of the more 'political' functions (e.g., pressing the government for increased immigration quotas for India) which had previously been undertaken by the KDS.¹⁹

As the community gradually grew in numbers during the 1950s and 1960s on the strength of sponsored relatives and quota immigrants, evidence pointed to a continuing "accomodation" to certain Canadian norms. While the influx of newcomers (and

especially the practice of seeking spouses from India) served to counteract any assimilative tendencies, the new immigrants generally deferred to the established immigrants--often their relatives and fellow villagers--for direction in adapting to Canadian customs (Thus, for example, on the basis of the job-getting advice of earlier immigrants, male Sikhs were often clean-shaven and turbanless by the time they reached Canada).

As the 1960s drew to a close and the KDS prepared to move into its impressive new gurdwara overlooking the Fraser River, leadership of the KDS and the Welfare Association was in the hands of those "modernists" who counceled "accomodation" and who had themselves "succeeded" in Western terms.²⁰ With the community prospering, suffering little overt hostility, and anticipating more open immigration, the Welfare Association had become less activist. And the gurdwaras, while still the social centres for the Sikh community, were now more than ever functioning like Western-style "houses of worship"--opening their doors primarily to perform weddings and hold Sunday services. However, certain events had been set in motion or were about to be set in motion which in the course of the past decade have significantly changed the community makeup and have altered both the organizational structures and leadership patterns.

First of all, changes in Canadian immigration policy in 1962 and especially in 1967 (and lasting until modified in 1973 and 1974) significantly liberalized the regulations effecting Indian immigration. As a result, the Sikh population has experienced perhaps a four-fold increase to today's estimate of forty thousand in the lower mainland. At the same time, the makeup of the "East Indian" population as a whole (now including Ismailis, Pakistanis, Fijians, and others of South Asian ancestry) has gone from being overwhelmingly Sikh to the point where Sikhs represent perhaps a bit over half of all "East Indians" in greater Vancouver. Furthermore, rapid growth within the Sikh community (resulting from Sikh immigration from Britain, East Africa, Fiji, and other Commonwealth countries) has meant some attenuation of the influence of the old family and village ties which had served

in integrating new immigrants into the community and which had created power bases for certain community leaders. While such ties continue to be important generators of solidarity within the community, no one person's ties are by themselves sufficient to ensure power and position within the Sikh community. And at the same time that diversification and internal growth in the Sikh community has worked against the continued dominance of the old Sikh leaders, similar factors of demographic growth and internal diversification conspire to challenge any assumption of continued Sikh dominance within the collective "East Indian" 'ethnic' category.²¹

The past decade has also seen the introduction of the federal multiculturalism programs and the passage of human rights legislation at the federal and provincial levels. One effect of these policies has been to make clear that in the Canadian context "East Indians" are seen as constituting a distinct "ethno-cultural" group and that the Canadian government would prefer to deal with pan-"East Indian" 'ethnic' organizations. At the same time, however, it has become apparent that while Canadians persist in lumping all those of South Asian ancestry into an undifferentiated "East Indian" 'ethnic' category, they are capable of recognizing that various 'religions' may be represented within the 'ethnic' category. Thus, it may be noted, the term "Hindu" which was one applied indiscriminantly to those of South Asian ancestry in Canada is now recognized as a 'religious' label and has generally been replaced by "East Indian" as the most commonly used 'ethnic' label.

While other Canadians may assume that "East Indians" share common "ethno-cultural" traits and common 'political' interests, Indo-Canadians themselves are aware of the increasing diversity of backgrounds and interests of those considered "East Indians." Thus it is not surprising that, as John Wood (1978) makes clear, "East Indian" participation in the process leading to the new Immigration Act of 1976 was marked by disparate and conflicting presentations. By the mid-1970s, there was no organization, either nationally or locally, which could accurately be said to represent the interests of a united "East Indian" community. In Vancouver, the Welfare Association

was only sporadically active and had been stricken from the Provincial Register of Societies, the KDS was increasingly immobilized by internal struggles for control of the executive, and the Akali Singh Sikh Society continued its generally quietistic ways. About the only organization claiming to represent the entire community was the soon-discredited East Indian Defence Committee, a Maoist group (now affiliated with the Albanian-leaning CPC-ML) which had organized vigilante actions to defend "East Indians" from physical and verbal harassment by whites.²²

To fill this void in 'ethnic'-political organizational solicarity exposed by the immigration policy review, an all-Canada "East Indian" umbrella organization was formed in 1975-76. Drawing its leadership and support from the Indo-Canadian elite (i.e., the Western-educated, English-speaking professionals, bureaucrats, and businesspeople) and, at the local level, from those with prior experience in dealing with Canadian governmental bureaucracy (e.g., through private or government employment and/or through leadership of the KDS or Welfare Association during their activist phases), the organization called itself the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India (NACOI) and set as its aims and objectives:

1. To encourage Canadians of origins in India to fully participate in Canadian Society.
2. To provide a national voice to Canadians of origins in India.
3. To provide a forum for exchange of ideas, issues and common concerns.
4. To facilitate communication within and with other organizations.
5. To assure and protect the rights of Canadians of origins in India.
6. To assist in the orientation and adaptation of Canadians of origins in India to the Canadian milieu and bring about a better understanding of Canada and other Canadians.
7. To formulate guidelines for improving the collective image of Canadians of origins in India.
8. To assure due recognition of the contributions of Canadians of origins in India to Canada (NACOI 1977).

While at the local level, NACOI's B.C. Chapter has been dominated by the Sikh elite, it would be unwarranted to assume that the Sikh community in Vancouver is united in accepting the wisdom or necessity of participation in a pan-"East Indian" 'ethnic'-political organization. Given the traditional Sikh ideology of religious-cum-ethnic distinctiveness, it is not surprising that there should be residual support for the position, most vocally enunciated by the local Shiromani Akali Dal

of Canada, that Sikhs are a "separate people" who should be known as "Canadian Sikhs" and whose 'political' interests should be looked after by the gurdwara societies or other representatives of the Khalsa Panth (orthodox Sikh community).²³

In general, however, local Sikh participation in NACOI and in the revived and revitalized East Indian Canadian Citizen's Welfare Association and the fledgling Fraser Valley East Indian Canadian Welfare Association suggests a significant acceptance of the position that to compete for funds and recognition in the wider Canadian society it may be necessary to organize into what are at least in theory pan-"East Indian" 'ethnic'-political organizations.

As suggested earlier, the rise of ethnic-political organizations has gone hand in hand with a proliferation of 'ethnic' institutions of various sort. Thus, with the establishment of groups like the Punjabi Cultural Association, the Punjabi Literary Society, and independent Punjabi schools, one finds that ethnic-Cultural (i.e., folk arts and language) activities are no longer the exclusive province of the gurdwaras. Likewise, groups like the India Club and the International Punjabi Society function as ethno-social organizations independent of the gurdwaras. Finally, ethnic-social services, once almost exclusively the province of the gurdwaras, have now largely been taken over by governmental agencies or semi-governmental organizations like the Immigrant Services Centre and the local Neighborhood Houses.²⁴

One might suspect that this proliferation of 'ethnic' organizations taking over what were once the multiple responsibilities of the gurdwaras might leave the gurdwaras as deserted, lifeless institutions. This has not been the case. Gurdwaras continue to enjoy high/ ^{attendance} and tremendous material support from the Sikh community. New gurdwaras have been built, are being built, and are being planned in the greater Vancouver area.²⁵ Indeed, the past ten years have seen something of a 'religious' revival within the Sikh community. Calls for greater 'religious' orthopraxy have resulted in increasing ritual elaboration in the established services and in the reintroduction of Sikh ceremonies and gurdwara protocol which had nearly died out in Vancouver. This year's election of an "orthodox"-dominated executive of the KDS was seen by many as a consolidation of "orthodox" control

over gurdwara affairs and a repudiation of lapses in 'religious' orthopraxy perpetrated in the name of "accomodation."²⁶

At present, the leadership of both the KDS and the Akali Singh Society seem content to view their mandates primarily in terms of promoting a return to 'religious' orthopraxy--thus, concentrating their energies on maintaining the gurdwaras as a context for the practice of what they regard as appropriate Sikh 'religious' activities and involving themselves only indirectly in 'ethnic'-political activities.²⁷ For the old-guard KDS leaders, the loss of power in "their" gurdwara (i.e., one which they built and which represented their brand of Sikhism) is a blow.²⁸ On the other hand, many of them have become increasingly involved in 'ethnic' organizations as a more rewarding forum for their interests and expertise. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that many of the qualities which Chadney had identified as crucial to KDS leadership (e.g., professional or business occupation, lengthy residence in Canada, "modernity," and bilingualism) are now important for leadership of the 'ethnic'-political organizations but of lesser importance in suitability for election to the 'religious' societies' executive.

Whether the proliferation and differentiation of 'religious' and 'ethnic' institutions, activities, and leaders is merely a temporary state of affairs or reflects a more fundamental acceptance of Canadian ideology with respect to 'religion' and 'ethnicity' remains to be seen. It should be noted, however, that support from within the Sikh community for the differentiability of 'religion' and 'ethnicity' comes from those two ^{categories of persons} who, having been born and reared in Canadian society, are most likely to interpret social action and social identity in terms of prevailing Canadian ideology. These two groups are the now sizeable and maturing second and third generation of Canadians of Punjabi Sikh ancestry and the small but vocal and visible group of non-"East Indian" Canadian and American Sikh "converts." While the two groups tend to define themselves in vastly different ways with respect to the Vancouver Sikh community as a whole, their very existence speaks to the separability of 'religion' and 'ethnicity' in the Canadian context.

With immigration once again restricted and with many recent Sikh immigrant families having started families, there is a good deal of concern over the future of Sikh children growing up in this new and suspect Canadian society. Obviously, therefore, those second and third generation Canadians of Punjabi Sikh ancestry who are now reaching maturity are being carefully looked at for some indication of what Sikhs in Canada may be like in the future. Some second and third generation people have become, from the perspective of the Sikh community, "invisible people" who, through their own volition or by transgressing the implicit norms governing inclusion in "our community," have been written off by the community and merely stand as negative examples of the dangers of uncontrolled "accommodation."²⁷ On the other hand, of those who have remained a part of the community, many feel estranged from the recent 'religious' revivalism, regarding it as an unfortunate return to aspects of life in "village India" with little relevance to or positive implications for the community's situation in Canada. For such people, the issue of 'religious' orthopraxy should be an individual one, distinct from and subordinate to the community's efforts to better their position as "East Indians" in Canadian society. Thus, for many of these people, the orientation of the 'ethnic'-political institutions and the challenge they provide in bridging the gap between the 'ethnic' community and the wider Canadian society is more compelling than what they see as the internal factionalism and obscurant activities of the 'religious' institutions. It is from these people that one gets the clearest statement that it may be possible to be 'ethnically' Sikh (or Punjabi or "East Indian") without being 'religiously' Sikh.

One gets just the opposite message from the gora (white) Sikh converts.²⁸ For them, solidarity with Vancouver's "East Indian" Sikhs is based not on a shared Punjabi Sikh heritage but on common adherence to a universal Sikh dharma (variously translated as "religion," "way of life," "duty"). The converts' major contention vis-a-vis the "East Indian" Sikh community in Vancouver is that in the process of "accommodation" to Canadian norms many have violated what the converts consider to be the inviolable tenets of the Sikh 'religion'. Behind the converts' contention that such people are patit (literally, "fallen"; the common translation is "apostate")

and are thus "East Indians" but no longer "real Sikhs" is the idea that Sikhism is a 'religion' with a particular "code for conduct" (in fact, the Sikhs do have what is called a "code of conduct": the rehat marayada) which enjoins upon its followers certain absolute 'religious' norms not legitimately subject to modification in any social setting.

Since they define themselves in 'religious' terms, the converts have viewed the gurdwaras as the appropriate institutions for their 'religious' involvement with "East Indian" Sikhs. In the gurdwaras, they have aligned themselves with "orthodox" elements, have helped sponsor visits by Sikh "'religious' missionaries" from India, and (at the Akali Singh gurdwara) have started "Sunday school" classes for the children. Furthermore, since they have such an unequivocal notion of Canadian ideology and of their own identity as 'religious' Sikhs, it has been the converts through who, as individual litigants or as co-council/the Sikh Youth Federation of Canada, have been most aggressive in seeking to secure and expand Sikh 'religious' rights in Canada. Thus, basing their arguments on the principle that 'religious' codes for conduct are privileged and inviolable, they have taken cases to the courts and the Human Rights Boards to ensure that "orthodox" Sikhs can wear their beards, swords, turbans, and other 'religious' symbols without fear of discrimination in employment and with full understanding that these are being retained on 'religious' principle and not as mere 'ethnic' customs.³¹

Conclusion

What, then, of the community's future? Admittedly, many questions remain. Is the differentiation of 'religious' and 'ethnic'-political institutions, activities, and leaders merely a temporary structural response to Canadian ideology and public policy or does it represent a more irrevocable institutional adaptation? Will the movement for orthopraxy involve a call for the re-centralization of 'ethnic' and 'religious' activities and leadership in the gurdwaras? Will those recent immigrants who have been largely responsible for the 'religious' revivalism in Vancouver begin to loose their fervor and find it necessary to "accomodate" to make a go of it in

Canadian society? What will be the criteria for being considered a "good Sikh" or a member of "our community"? What are those inviolable 'religious' tenets to which one must adhere to be a "good ('religious') Sikh" or the limits of "accommodation" beyond which one must not venture without ceasing to be accepted as of "our ('ethnic') community?"

The dynamism of the Vancouver Sikh community is such that one can hardly hope for definitive answers to these questions. I do hope, however, that I have left you with a sense of the institutional adaptation that the community seems to have gone through as it increasingly reflects the prevailing Canadian ideology with respect to 'religion' and 'ethnicity.'

3. By "ethno-political" organizations, I mean those institutions whose primary activities involve lobbying for the interests of a particular ethnic community and mediating between the ethnic community and the social institutions of the wider society. Such organizations are thus not usually political parties, but the relationship between such organizations and the established political parties would be an interesting area for further investigation.
4. "Institutional adaptation" should not be confused with "structural assimilation." While the latter refers to the "large-scale entrance of immigrant group members into the cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society on a primary group level" (Gordon 1964:90), the former refers to changes of institutional structures within an immigrant community with respect to institutions forms sanctioned by the host and sending societies. "Institutional adaptation" is probably (cultural) logically prior to "structural assimilation" and may, in fact, be a necessary prerequisite for it.
5. "Ethno-political," "ethno-social," "ethno-cultural," and "ethno-social service" are, in a sense, ideal type institutions. Organizations can be involved in more than one type of activity. However, in the case of the Vancouver Sikh community, I feel justified in my characterization of various organizations on the basis of their dominant orientation.
6. Like "adaptation," the term "ideology" is a theoretically loaded one which deserves careful definition. Following one common anthropological usage (see Nicholas 1973: 73-80, Geertz 1973:193-233, Schneider 1976:220), I regard ideology as basically social theory. Understood in this way, ideology is a non-evaluative theoretical concept--that is, one stripped of its "connotations of falsity and justification" (Nicholas 1973:76)--which aims at a representation of the natives' ideas about and ideas for their society (cf. Eli's definition of "ideology" as "one variant form of those comprehensive patterns of cognitive and moral beliefs about man, society and the universe in relation to man and society which flourish in human

END NOTES

1. This paper is based on archival research and fieldwork conducted in 1978-9 with the Vancouver Sikh community. A more detailed analysis of Vancouver Sikh social accommodation and cultural persistence will be found in the author's forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation (Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago). This research builds on previous research conducted in 1972 and 1974 with the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization, whose members are now known more widely as Canadian and American Sikh converts. Funding for the latter research was provided by the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities (Youthgrant #AY-20553-74-398). An earlier draft of this paper was read by John Wood, Brenda Beck, and Elizabeth Coville. I thank them for their helpful comments. The shortcomings of this paper, however, remain mine.
2. I use "community" in a broad sense which includes all those persons who either by their own account or in the judgement of others are thought to belong to a particular social category as that category is known in Vancouver. Obviously, as this paper brings out, there may exist differences of opinion as to what these categories represent and who belongs in what category. I put quotation marks around "East Indian" because while it is the conventional categorical label for all those of South Asian ancestry in Canada, many of the persons so labeled find it to be a misleading and derogatory label and would prefer another (e.g., "Indo-Canadian" or "Canadian of origins in India").
3. By "'ethnic'-political" organizations, I mean those institutions whose primary activities involve lobbying for the interests of a particular ethnic community and mediating between the ethnic community and the social institutions of the wider society. Such organizations are thus not usually political parties, but the relationship between such organizations and the established political parties would be an interesting area for further investigation.
4. "Institutional adaptation" should not be confused with "structural assimilation." While the latter refers to the "large-scale entrance of immigrant group members into the cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society on a primary group level" (Gordon 1964:71), the former refers to changes of institutional structures within in immigrant community with respect to institutional forms sanctioned by the host and sending societies. "Institutional adaptation" is probably (cultural) logically prior to "structural assimilation" and may, in fact, be a necessary prerequisite for it.
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According to Geertz, ideologies, like other cultural patterns, "provide a template or blueprint for the organization of social and psychological processes" (1973: 216). Accordingly, the ideological formulations of a particular society involve both the specification of the meaningful domains of social action in that society and the delimitation of social organization and social identity appropriate to those domains. Two societies may thus recognize different domains and organize them in different ways according to their differing ideologies. Where ideologies contrast as significantly as has been suggested for South Asia and the modern West (see Dumont 1970), newcomers may be required to adapt their institutions and social identities if they are to participate meaningfully in the wider society. Finally, while multiple ideologies may coexist within any one society and draw support from different segments of the society, what I call the "prevailing folk ideology" is likely to predominate in most social situations.

It is important to recognize that while ideologies build upon and draw their authoritativeness from persuasive cultural symbols, the natives' social analysis (1) is "prey to the same problems of coherence and authority as are other cultural systems" (Nicholas 1973:76), and (2) "is not the same as the analyst's theoretically constructed view of the native culture" (Schneider 1976:220). These points are important for putting in perspective what is often taken to be a thorny issue, viz., the problem of whether or not Canada is "really" an ethnically pluralistic or, even more problematic, a culturally pluralistic society. Given the definition of ideology presented here, it becomes apparent that one can take "ethno-cultural pluralism" to be the prevailing Canadian folk ideology without thereby endorsing it as one's own "social scientific" analysis of Canadian society and culture. Understanding this, it is possible to agree with Porter's conclusion that "I/f not its one distinctive value, that of the mosaic is Canada's most cherished" (1965:558) without disputing those who present evidence of the fluidity of ethnic boundaries or the widespread adoption of common cultural premises.

7. One way a society can codify its prevailing folk ideology is through its laws and public policies. For newcomers--immigrants and anthropologists alike--law and public policy constitute two of the more intrusive/accessible foci of social life for the internalization/understanding of a society's prevailing folk ideology. For another class of "newcomers," the newborn, informal social interaction in the course of socialization may lead to the internalization of the prevailing ideology. However for adult newcomers (and their offspring), especially those of a group socially isolated through its own and/or the wider societies' actions, the opportunities for informal social interaction with members of the host society may be limited. For these people, schools and the media may supplement law and public policies as additional sources for a relatively explicit and accessible presentation of the prevailing ideology.
8. Implicit in this is the differentiation of sacred and secular domains such that 'religious' institutions and activities can be distinguished from 'non-religious' institutions and activities. As we are all aware, social reality is such that the courts are ever more frequently being asked to resolve questions as to the status of social action undertaken by ostensibly 'religious' organizations.

9. The Canadian ideology with respect to 'ethnicity' and the government's policy of Multiculturalism have been variously criticized by social scientist for inaccurately portraying the structural realities of Canadian society (see Porter 1975), for confusing the analytic notions of "ethnicity" and "culture" (see Burnet 1976), and for coopting legitimate human rights concerns of immigrant groups by focusing on their "folk" activities (see Schroeter 1978) or by creating "career ethnics" with vested interests in perpetuating current multiculturalism policy (see Frideres and Goldenberg 1977). Nevertheless, the former Liberal government's recent reiteration of its commitment to the multiculturalism policy (see Canada 1978b) and the new Conservative governments prior support suggest that the ideology persists and that the policy is likely to continue.
10. The Canadian ideology with respect to 'ethnicity' appears to share much in common with the ideology with respect to 'race'. The major difference is the greater degree to which the "facts" of 'racial' identity are taken to be innate and encoded in one's substance (e.g., in "blood" and "colour"). It may be most appropriate, therefore, to think of "East Indian," like "Black" and "Native Indian" as racial-ethnic category labels.
11. This point deserves further elaboration. Parsons (1975:65), quoting Schneider, points out that in North America, "ethnic status is conspicuously devoid of social content" and "The markers of (ethnic) identity are in a very important sense 'empty symbols!.'" In other words, in North America, considerable "cultural adaptation" can take place without bringing into question one's 'ethnic' identity. This, I would argue, indicates the dominance of descent and origin over code for conduct in the Canadian ideological notion of 'ethnicity'. Just the inverse (i.e., the dominance of code for conduct descent and origin criteria) seems to characterize the Canadian ideological notion of 'religion'. Note that what I have identified as Canadian folk ideology with respect to 'religion' and 'ethnicity' is not isomorphic with what I would regard to be cultural analyses of religion and ethnicity in (North) American culture (see, e.g., Schneider 1969 and Parsons 1975).
12. While the separation of Church and State is not as absolute in Canada as in the United States (thus, e.g., independent 'religious' schools are eligible for public funds in B.C.), Multiculturalism funding is apparently not intended to support 'religious' activities. Where 'religious' institutions do receive funds, it is specifically for the support of what are taken to be ancillary ethnic-Cultural activities. The Vancouver Sikh gurdwaras have not sought such funding, even though the KDS Punjabi School might be eligible for funding of its language classes. One reason given for not seeking such funding is the fear of loss of autonomy. Since the Punjabi language is closely tied to the Sikh religion, the gurdwara authorities would not want to be obligated to teach religiously-neutral Punjabi classes.
13. See Mayar (1959:8-9) for his discussion of the multiplicity of functions of the traditional Sikh gurdwara.
14. See K. Singh (1977:174-175) and R.K. Das (1923:88) for accounts of some of the early activities of the KDS in Vancouver.
15. Detailed accounts of the successful effort of representatives of the KDS to achieve domiciliary rights for illegal immigrants and to achieve the federal, provincial, and municipal franchise for all "Hindoos" can be found in two KDS publications (see Khalsa Diwan Society 1947a,b).

16. Lal characterizes those behind the efforts to build 'ethnic-political organizations as highly-educated men with considerable prior experience in dealing with Westerners. Support from the masses, however, was apparently insufficient to sustain any of these organizations. Many of these educated people left Vancouver during the community's early years.
17. The Ghadr (Revolution) Party was active in Vancouver at this time. I have not considered it an 'ethnic'-political institution of the Vancouver Sikh community, however, because (1) its orientation was towards the political situation in India rather than the situation of the community in Canada, and (2) while active in Vancouver, its organizational centre was in the United States.
18. The KDS's reputation as the most important gurdwara society in B.C. derives not simply from being the first but also from the affiliation system which, until the emergence of the Akali Singh Society and a similar independent society in Victoria, meant that other B.C. gurdwaras were legally the affiliate branches of the Vancouver KDS. Over the years, the other B.C. gurdwaras have all gained their "independence." Today, the Western Sikh Samachar Society aspires to be an umbrella organization for B.C. gurdwara societies.
19. The aims and objectives of the East Indian Canadian Citizens' Welfare Association as set out in its Constitution and By-laws are as follows:
 - (a) To work for the social, economic, political and cultural advancement of the Canadian citizens of East Indian origin in Canada.
 - (b) To act as an effective medium for cooperation between the members of the Indian Community in Canada and other Canadian citizens.
 - (c) To interpret India, the people, traditions and culture, to the people of Canada.
 - (d) To inculcate among the Canadian citizens of Indian origin, the responsibilities, duties and rights of Canadian citizenship.
 - (e) To promote better understanding and friendship between Canada and India by the exchange of mutual information.
 - (f) To establish centres for the purpose of cultural, recreational, social and other community activities.
 - (g) To purchase, sell, take on lease, hire, mortgage, or otherwise acquire or deal in or foreclose property, land and buildings, or any interest therein, for the purposes of the Association.
 - (h) To erect buildings on such lands, or any of them, to further the purposes of the Association.
 - (i) To buy, sell, deal in, hire, make or provide or maintain all necessary real or personal property or equipment for carrying out the objectives of the Association.
 - (j) To publish periodicals, books, pamphlets and such literature as may be deemed necessary to promote the above-mentioned aims and objects.
 - (K) To promote all other ancillary objects for the advancement of the above-mentioned aims (EICCWA 1954).
20. See Chadney (1976:154-168) for an account of the factors crucial to KDS leadership at the time of his study.
21. The same factors--i.e., growth and diversification--have also worked to lessen the historically dominant position of B.C. "East Indians" (and thus of B.C. Sikhs) within the national arena. B.C. Sikhs have been well-represented, however, on the national NACOI executives.
22. The East Indian Defence Committee presents an interesting case study since it is a group which would apparently like to take advantage of both the Canadian and traditional Sikh ideologies of 'religion' and 'ethnicity'. Recognizing the impor-

tance of the gurdwaras to the Sikh community, the Defence Committee unsuccessfully sought control over the Vancouver gurdwaras during the mid-1970s. One of the arguments raised against their involvement in gurdwara affairs was that as a 'political' and explicitly anti-religious' organization (affiliated with the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist)) their participation in the affairs of a 'religious' organization would be inappropriate. Having been rebuffed in these efforts, the Defence Committee then sought to build a "Memorial Hall" which would serve as a community centre and would commemorate the early martyrs of the Vancouver "East Indian" community, the Indian Freedom Fighters, and the more recent Indian Naxilite activists. They found, however, that it would be more expediant to install a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Holy Scriptures) in one part of the building and call the building a "temple." In this way, they were able to (1) take advantage of the fact that "houses of worship" are considered non-threatening by most Canadians and are granted tax-exempt status under local statutes, and (2) keep open the channels of communication with those Sikhs who need a place to perform functions and do not object to this particular blending of 'religion' and 'politics' in one institution.

23. As an organization the Shiromani Akali Dal of Canada has few supporters. This may reflect more on the reputations of its leadership than on the community's receptivity to the ideology which it espouses. Of a different nature is the more widespread criticism of NACOI by those who feel that it has yet to gauge the grassroot concerns of Sikhs in Vancouver.
24. It is interesting to note that there are no 'ethnic'-social service organizations as such in the "East Indian" community. Traditionally, of course, Sikhs have looked after their own either informally (ie. through family and village connections) or through the gurdwaras. For a period during the early and mid-1970s, the KDS was receiving public funds to run an "information centre" to help orient new immigrants. Now, however, social service activities within the community are largely being undertaken by governmental or semi-governmental agencies which employ "East Indians" to perform the services.
25. The extent of Sikh material support of their gurdwaras is overwhelming. The KDS regularly takes in over \$100,000 a year in donations. Building drives draw out additional donations. At present in the lower mainland, gurdwara societies are committed to several million dollars worth of building or land acquisition projects.
26. The "orthodox" faction of the KDS held power briefly in 1972 and 1974. The election for the 1979 was particularly hard fought and was the first contested election under new secret-balloting procedures.
27. The various gurdwara societies are affiliated group members of NACOI-B.C. The moderate "orthodox" leadership of KDS and Akali Singh Society express no compulsion to challenge for control of NACOI or to withdraw from it as detrimental to Sikh solidarity.
28. Besides arguing that it is "their" temple because their money built it, some also argue that in this 'religiously' pluralistic society, "modernist" and "orthodox" branches of the Sikh 'religion' should be allowed to coexist institutionally in the same way that reformed/conservative/orthodox congregations exist within Judaism or the way denominational differences exist within Christianity. These people argue that there are other gurdwaras for the "orthodox" to attend without taking over the KDS.
29. It is little wonder that such people sometimes experience problems in adjusting since they are denied the support systems of the Sikh community (having passed out of it) without necessarily having a secure place in the wider society (since, as a "visible minority" person, it may be difficult or impossible to pass in).

30. Most Canadian and American Sikh converts are members of the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization (or 3HO), a group founded in 1969 in Los Angeles by a Sikh immigrant, Harbhajan Singh Puri (a.k.a., Yogi Bhaajan, a.k.a., Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi). Originally the group was formed around Puri's Kundalini and Tantric Yoga teachings and had a basically yogic identity, but it has evolved over the course of the past decade into a small but dedicated group of people who regard themselves as upholders of the Sikh religion in the West (see Dusenbery 1973, 1975). At present, perhaps as many as 5,000 (but certainly no where near as many as the 250,000 claimed) Sikh converts live in over one hundred 3HO ashrams ("spiritual communes") throughout North America and in several cities abroad.

In Vancouver, an ashram has existed since 1972. The orientation of the Vancouver ashram is split between involvement with the local Punjabi Sikh community and the "alternative lifestyles" subculture. Relationships between 3HO and Punjabi Sikh communities in North America have often been strained, but the dozen or so members of the Vancouver 3HO ashram have been involved with Vancouver's Punjabi Sikh community both through the gurdwaras and the Sikh Youth Federation of Canada (a joint gora Sikh-Punjabi Sikh venture inspired and advised by Puri).

31. The converts make a clear distinction between 'religious' accomodation, which they find unacceptable, and 'ethnic' accodation, which they could accept. In fact, they often dispair of certain Punjabi cultural traits (e.g., "caste consciousness" and the subjugation of women) which they say is keeping Punjabi Sikhs from living up to the tenets of the Sikh dharma (as these are interpreted by Puri and 3HO).

The converts regard the 5K's -- the traditional Sikh 'religious' symbols: the kesh, unshorn hair; the kanga, a wooden comb; the kirpan, a sword; the kara, a steel armlet; and the kaccha, a loin and thigh garment -- as crucial to their Sikh identity. The converts argue that "accomodation" on the part of those Punjabi Sikhs who have given up the symbols is neither necessary nor excusable. By taking cases before the courts and Human Rights boards, the converts hope to convince Canadians (and especially the so-called patits) that the retention of the Sikh symbols is a matter of legitimate 'religious' expression and not a perpetuation of bizarre Indian customs.

Among the recent decisions confirming these 'religious' rights are: (1) the decision of the Crown to drop charges in the case of REGINA vs. Khamba (1975) in which a Sikh had been charged with carrying a concealed weapon for wearing his kirpan; the decision to drop charges was followed by a directive to all provincial police departments not to regard the kirpan as a weapon unless it is used as one; (2) a settlement agreement before the Human Rights Board of B.C. wherein Pinkerton's of Canada Ltd. agreed to rehire a Sikh employee and agreed to allow him to "in the course of his employment continue to follow his religious beliefs and in particular...wear a beard, turban and carry a Kirpan (Aujila vs. Pinkerton's, 1978). Recently, on the basis of a challenge from one of the converts, the Canadian armed forces announced changes in recruitment and dress policies which will allow Sikhs entering the Canadian forces to retain their beards and turbans (). Finally, a case with potentially widespread repercussions for the Vancouver Sikh community given the community's employment profile is scheduled to be heard this month before a B.C. Human Rights Board of Inquiry. In this case, a Sikh complainant will argue that his religious duty to wear a turban should exempt him from having to wear a hardhat on his mill job.

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