Sikh Diaspora to Spain seen through Generations
A socio-demographic perspective

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Abstract: Spain is a recent addition to the Sikh diaspora, with 20,791 individuals recorded in the municipal registers in the year 2014 (less than 1% of the total Sikh diaspora, but more than 50% of total Indian population in Spain). This immigration to Spain have a clear generational component, marked by diverse expulsions from the political and economic spheres of their homeland i.e. Punjab. The Green revolution and consequent surplus of labour; the attacks on golden temple in 1984 and further persecution of Sikhs; and the neoliberal government policies and consequent decline of the agriculture and industry in Punjab has expelled Sikhs of different generations, like Children of Independence, the 80’s and the Millennium, to the global diaspora. The main objective of this paper is to study how the generational differences affects, when it comes to the socio-demographic structure, migration process (reasons, routes, ways and destinations), and religious practices in the diaspora. For this study, we are using qualitative research methodology; we have done 60 in-depth semi structured interviews of Sikh individuals from different profiles and generations, who settled in different parts of Spain. In the preliminary finding, we can say that the different generations are responding to the internal and external boundaries in a different way that effects their interaction with host societies and the preservation and reproduction of their identity in foreign context.

Keywords: Sikh, religion, diaspora, generations, immigration, Spain.

1 Introduction: Sikh diaspora seen through different generations

The postcolonial wound that led to the birth of independent India in 1947 particularly affected the Punjab state. The partition of India along with the borders of Punjab took place in the most dramatic and violent fashion (Brass, 2003). The ethnic
cleansing that characterizes the homogenizing efforts of the nation-state (Yeoh, 2003) occurred on both sides, even when the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity was an important part of the construction narrative of postcolonial India. Thus, the memories of many Punjabis in general and Sikhs in particular, mainly the older generations, who lived through this period, are the memories of displaced persons, where the displacement experiences had changed their environment and emotional landscapes, which differs substantially from that of their next generations, who eventually become the leaders in the contemporary diaspora.

The Sikh diaspora in Spain consists of 20,791 individuals, registered in the municipal registers on 1st January 2014, which makes half of the entire Indian residents of Spain. It is composed of different generations of Sikhs, who entered Spain during different periods. Their migration marked by the confrontation of Sikh community with the Indian government that culminated in the operation Blue Star and destruction of political and religious centres of the Sikh community and the consequent assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 (by her Sikh guards), and the subsequent repression of the Community in Punjab (Dhillon, 2007). The generations who lived through these events, including those born in the years of repression, have staged the latest wave of Sikh diaspora in Spain. Besides the timely departure of refugees following the events of the eighties, three factors can be clearly identified as the causes of these migratory movements (Thandi, 2012), firstly, the transformation of agriculture in Punjab with the "Green Revolution", which precisely from the seventies affected much of its population; secondly, the arrival of migration from southern and eastern India to compete in the labour market advantageously with the local population, partly because of the shortfall in the education level of wide swaths of rural Punjabi population, and partly because of the policy of positive discrimination of the lower castes adopted by the Indian government. Finally, the increasing restrictions in the UK (after the immigration law of 1968) and in the Gulf countries (after 1980’s) as the recipients of the Sikh migration, explains their orientation in the nineties and early twenty-first century to the new immigration destination in Southern Europe.

The first two causes of emigration are directly related to the shift of Indian policies to neoliberalism, the first clearly economic, leaving the Punjabis farmers struggling, while the doors were opened for the international companies with interests in agricultural production, which caused mass impoverishment of smallholder farmers (Sebby, 2010). The second related to policy of Hindi and Hindu nationalism, which
controls the apparatus of Indian State, and promoted by the neoliberal turn, so that, they can blame external (the Pakistan, mainly) and internal enemies (the Muslims, Sikh or other religious minorities) to hide the ill effects of free market, which contributes to the misery of the vast majority of the population, while a few benefited from them (Roy, 2015). In the light of the introduction of neoliberal policies since the 1990’s, we can define the Sikh emigration as ‘Expulsions’ as defined by Saskia Sassen, (2015).

The attempted production of purity, around which the tension of the current Sikh diaspora is articulated, is based on the memories of a homogeneous Punjab of the previous generations. The feelings of Purity, as explained by Mary Douglas’s (1966) in her classical analysis, is threatened at the origin by a Nation State, which directs its institutions towards the building of a supposed homogeneity on the basis of Hindi population and language. That is, the memories of today’s Sikhs in the diaspora, unlike their ancestors, are the memories marked by the alleged cultural purity at origin, endangered on one side by the political hostility of the Indian state and on the other side, by the rapid changes in their own demography (drastic reduction in fertility, increased imbalance in sex ratio, emigration of Sikh youth, immigration boom of Hindi population in Punjab). The diaspora communities established by the latest emigration from Punjab, face new challenges of the reproduction of Sikh identity that cuts across all organization, starting from the management of Gurudwaras, which are the basic pillars for the community building process but, also it includes the internal boundaries of the group (the division between baptized and unbaptized, gender roles, or recognition of castes), which are exacerbated when they come in contact with the host society.

We believe that the Sikh diaspora in Spain is a demographic reproduction system based on emigration, which on the one hand is favoured by the process of globalization and transnational networks, and on the other hand is threatened by the worsening of their internal conflicts and the challenges of their identity preservation. Our main objective is to identify these tensions around internal and external boundaries emerging in the discourse of three different generational groups: firstly, who born before the eighties, whom we named as ‘Children of Independence (COI)’ generations, second, who born in the decade of 1980’s, whom we named as the 80’s generations and finally who born after 1990, whom we named as ‘Millennium’ generations.
2 Sources and Methodology

It is very difficult to get reliable data on the immigrant minorities like Sikhs in Spain, because the data on the basis of the ethnicity or religious affiliation is not collected in the census records and municipal registers of Spain. But as in Spain the data on surnames is collected by INE and in Sikh community all males and females have the same surnames of Singh and Kaur respectively, so we have used this information crossed with the information collected in municipal registers (Padrón Continuo) to estimate about their age structure, sex composition, place of birth, place of residence and year of arrival in Spain. Due to their small number, all other cross information with other statistical sources was not allowed for the sake of anonymity, as well as the lack of statistical significance. For the information on the socio demographic context of Punjab, we are using the 2011 census data provided by the office of the Register General and Census Commissioner (ORGC), of India.

For the detailed analysis of the attitude and experiences of different generations regarding the issues like identity preservation and transfer, gender and religion, we are using the qualitative research methodology. The inductive approach (Goddard & Melville, 2004) has been applied, which means that we are going to develop a theory or look for a pattern of meaning on the basis of the information that we have collected through interviews. This involves a move from the specific to the general and is sometimes called a bottom-up approach, under ‘Grounded theory’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The universe for the interviews was constructed by including the individuals of different profiles, age groups, sexes and socio-economic statuses, who born in Sikh families and identify themselves as Sikhs, and now living in Spain irrespective of their legal status. The minimum age limit for the interviews was fixed on 16 years; it means all the interviewees were born before 1998. Secondly, the territorial distribution was also taken into consideration to provide equal visibility to all 25 municipalities of their major concentration in Spain\(^2\), which includes the 18 municipalities with Gurudwaras (Sikh temples) that serves as the religious and socio political platform for the

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\(^2\) The interviews have been conducted in the municipalities of Barcelona, Hospitalet de Llobregat, Badalona, Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Salt, Olot, Vic, Santa Coloma de Farners, Lloret de Mar, Reus, Barbera del Valles, Viladecans, Terrassa, Sant Cugat, Sabadell in Catalonia; Torre Pacheco, Los Alcazares in Murcia; Valencia, Alicante, Torrevieja in Autonomous community of Valencia; Fuengirola in Andalucia, Palma de Mallorca in Balearic Islands, Madrid in Autonomous Community of Madrid; and, Santa Cruz de Tenerife in Canary Islands.
community. Different generational groups have equal representation in the interview sample according to their population size in Spain. To include variety, we have also considered the present occupation, marital status, time of arrival, education level and legal status of all interviewees. In total we have conducted 60 interviews, in which 25 from the COI group, 20 from the generation of 80’s and 15 from the Millennium generations. Among all these interviewees one third were females. The interviews were conducted in Punjabi language with a semi structured questionnaire.

In the COI group the age of interviewees ranged from 63 to 35 years. The number of female interviewees in this group was 8 and all of them were migrated to join their husbands in Spain. The average male interviewee in this group was first migrated at the age of 25.6 years and reached to the Spain at the age of 35.8 years. Their level of education varies from illiterates to the university degree holders, but 80 per cent of them were low educated. In the 80’s group, all interviewees were in their late 30’s, the number of females in this group was 6, all were married and living with their families in Spain. Only 20% were working and others were housewives. Their level of education was higher than their husband’s level. In the Millennium group, we only interviewed the youth elder than 16 years of age, mostly they were the descendants of the Sikhs, who were already settled in Spain. The number of female interviewees in this group was 5 and they all were migrated with their families to join their fathers in Spain. This generation has passed through the Spanish education system. Most of them are working in different sectors from their parents.

3 Socio-demographic situation of Punjab (homeland of sikhs)

Punjab is a north western state of India with 27.7 million residents (according to the Census 2011 of India), that makes almost 2 % of the total Indian population. It has witnessed a steady population growth during the last century. In 1901, the population of Punjab was 7.5 million which increased to 24.4 million till the end of the twentieth century. It increased constantly with the exception of 1911 and 1951, firstly due to the deaths occurred because of famines and secondly due to the ethnic cleansing and the division of Punjab in 1947 (Figure 1). The exponential increase in the population of Punjab has been witnessed after the decade of 1960’s; due to the effects of Demographic Transition, the population of Punjab doubled from 13.6 million in the year 1971 to 27.7 million in 2011. But after 1981 the growth rate of population started declining and in the first decade of 21st century it has been reduced considerably to 13.89% from 20.1% in 2001.
Punjab is the only state of India, where Sikh population forms the majority (58%). The other religious communities are Hindus (38.5%), Muslims (1.9%) and Christians (1.3%). The total Sikh population of India is around 20.8 million and those who live outside India are around 2.5 million that makes the global Sikh diaspora. In India, Punjab is the leading state in terms of the proportion of its population living abroad (10%). The Sikh diaspora is now extended from its centre in United Kingdom to Canada and USA in the west up to New Zeeland and Australia in the East (Tatla, 2005).

Figure 1: The decadal growth rate and population of Punjab during 1901-2011.

Source: own elaboration, with data from the office of the Register General and Census Commissioner (ORGC), India.

Figure 2: The population Pyramid of Punjab, by five year groups, 2011.

Source: own elaboration, with data from 2011 census provided by the office of the Register General and Census Commissioner (ORGC), India.

The age structure and sex composition of Punjab according to the latest census data 2011 (Figure 2) shows that the sex ratio is in favour of males and the share of young
population are declining. The 47.2 per cent of the total population of Punjab were females. The 80’s generation of Punjab has the sex ratio of 915 females per thousand males, in the COI group, it was 960 females and finally in the Millennium generations it further declined to 811 females per thousand males. This huge fall in sex ratio has become a matter of concern for Punjab, because this is the result of selective abortions of female child (Singh & Singh, 2014). The mean age was 31 years, about two third of them were below 35 years and one third were even below 15 years of age. The share of population that belongs to the 80’s generations was 20 per cent while that of COI and Millennium generations was 41 and 39 per cent, respectively.

Although the proportion of rural population among different generations has remained over 60% of the total population in the last decade, fertility decline has reduced the size of families and growth rate. The most important change has been witnessed in the educational levels of different generations. In 2011, one third of Punjab’s population was illiterate, in which male and female illiteracy rates were 28.7 and 36.8 per cent respectively. The two third of the population was up to secondary level and only 6.3 per cent had the university education. Interestingly at the university level the females are ahead of males. The share of illiterates in Millennium generation was only 7.8 % but in the 80’s generation was 13% and one third of the children of independence were illiterate.

4 Different Generational groups: Children of Independence, 80’s and Millennium.

The present Sikh population of Spain belongs to the different generations of the Sikh community in Punjab. We are taking the generational group of 80’s as a reference point to compare the changes in behaviour of sikh population because this group was born in the period of transition, when fertility was declining fast, sex ratio was getting more skewed in the favour of males, level of education was improving especially for females, emigration was on all time high and finally, this group marks the divide between Indian state and Sikh community in Punjab and all over the world after the events of 1984. In the context of Spain, it is also important to note that the majority of present Sikh population here was born in the decade of 1980’s. The other generational groups Children of Independence (1950-1979) and the Millennium (1990-2015), which are quite big in terms of the time period, are formed on the logic of before and after 80’s. In order to follow the important events of individual’s life from all generational groups through the time, we have used the Lexis diagram (Figure 3), where we present
Figure 3: Lexis diagram represents the three generational groups, illustrated by Sikh immigrants interviewed in Spain, 2015-2016.

Source: Own elaboration, with in-depth interviews during 2015-2016.

Figure 4: Age structure and sex composition of different Sikh generations (Indian or Spanish nationals) in Spain, 2014.

Source: Own elaboration with data from municipal registers (Padron Continuo 2014), INE.
their first migration, marriage, family reunification, birth of children, legalization, entrance in Spain and citizenship.

4.1 Children of Independence (COI):

The COI, which is the biggest and eldest generational group of Sikhs in Spain, was born soon after the Indian independence or in the period of Green revolution, firstly they have the childhood memories of displaced people, as many of their ancestors were migrated from West Pakistan to Indian Punjab after the division of British India (Singh & Tatla, 2006). When they were in their teen ages, they have witnessed the emergence of ‘Punjabi identity’ struggle and the formation of Punjabi Suba (state with majority Sikh population) on the basis of language in the year 1966 and the transformation of Punjab from the land of displaced people to the bread basket of India under the Green revolution. In their 30’s they have lead the struggle of Sikh rights during the period of political crisis in Punjab. In this period, their perception of Punjab marked by the two historical events first Indian government’s attack on Golden temple to crush the Sikh protesters in June 1984 and the militancy period followed by the assassination of Indira Gandhi, by her Sikh bodyguards in the same year. Soon after the independence, the period of Demographic Transition begins in Punjab. The population of Punjab after 1961 start increasing at the decadal growth rate of more than 20%. The better survival rate of children because of the improved medical facilities and the surplus of food due to the Green revolution contributed to the exponential growth of population. In the decade of 1960’s government of India decided to introduce an intensive agricultural plan in Punjab. High yielding variety of seeds, agro chemicals (fertilizers and pesticides) and use of heavy machinery were the basic pillars of this plan, which later become famous as ‘Green revolution’(Randhawa, 1977). The new technology gave stimulus to capitalistic farming, which survives on the heavy doses of investment, which was out of the reach of small farmers. Due to the introduction of new techniques the grain production multiplied but the benefits of this growth remained in few wealthy hands (Sebby, 2010). Because of the increasing population and the law of inheritance (land was divided equally between all male children) the size of land holdings were getting smaller and smaller. There is strong evidence to indicate that mechanization and use of herbicides significantly reduced employment opportunities in rural Punjab. Due to the lack of alternative employment opportunities and the surplus of labour force the real wage rates got depressed. The fast immigration of labour from other states of the country further worsened the plight of local agricultural labour (Singh and Singh, 2006).
All these events triggered their outmigration as economic emigrants firstly to UK and then to Middle East countries during the oil boom of 1970’s. Regular remittances from abroad have improved the living status in Punjab and which in turn triggered the new emigration flows.

In the coming decade, due to the emerging demand of autonomy and the consequent political crisis caused by the attack on golden temple and assassination of Indira Gandhi, the Punjab was converted into a burning ground for Sikhs, the central police and other armed forces were targeting rural youth in fake encounters. During this period, many Sikhs migrated from Punjab to save their lives and for better future outside India (Dhillon, 2007). Many of them moved to Canada and USA, where initially they were accepted as refugees, but when the government of these countries start refusing the asylum applications, the new immigrants moved to different parts of Europe, mainly in Germany and Italy. With the passage of time some settled permanently there and others moved to neighbouring countries including Spain, where the conditions for permanent settlement were comparatively easier (Farjas, 2006).

According to the municipal registers, in the year 2013, their number was 7,665 individuals in which 24% were females. Their average age was 41.5 years and they formed a majority in total Sikh population of Spain (see Figure 4). It is clear from their interviews that they are well settled. Mostly they entered illegally but now almost all of them are legal citizens and some even have the Spanish nationality. They are married and on the average have three to four kids. Mostly they are living with their families, whom they have reunified in Spain after getting legal permits. The migration of this generation was totally male dominated, as the females of this group, who are now living in Spain, are entirely sponsored by their husbands. These females generally don’t work and fully depend on their family members. This group mostly entered in Spain before the construction boom period so most of them have worked in the agriculture and food processing industry in Catalonia and other northern states of Spain like La Rioja. But when the demand for workers increased in construction sector, a significant part of them also moved to the construction sector. Majority of them now have their own small businesses like fruit shops, electronics or travel agencies.

4.2 The 80’s generation

The 80’s generation of Sikhs suffered from a process of Puritanism culture of Indian state which promotes the intolerance towards ethno-cultural, linguistic or religious minorities (Appadurai, 2015). They are very far from the idyllic image created
by Thomas Friedman of the neoliberal shift of India (citing the "Generation of zippets"), featuring the children of liberalization as ‘entrepreneurs’, for whom the world is a cake (Friedman and Friedman, 2006, pp:196-197).

They were born in a period of divide between the Sikh community and the Indian state. The confidence and faith that Sikhs have bestowed in the majority Hindu community at the time of independence was shattered by the Indian army’s attack on the Golden temple, the holiest shrine for Sikhs. This generation have the memories of an insecure and terrified Punjab with the destroyed public infrastructure and services. During their childhood, they have seen their elder generations emigrating from Punjab to save their lives. They were deprived of good public education and health services. In their teen ages they come under the effect of hostile neo-liberal government, which was taking the benefits of Punjab’s political crisis and the situation of shock (Klein, 2007) among the people after the attacks on golden temple, and selling the deteriorated public infrastructure and services sector (Public distribution system, education, health, power and transport), to the private companies. Consequently their low education level and no formal training made them incompetent for the better jobs in industries and public administration. The agriculture was already insufficient to provide work to the whole population, which was increasing at a high rate because of the age structure created by their past generations. Their recruitment in the Indian army, which was a traditional job for Sikhs for many centuries, was also reduced after the political crisis of 1980’s. Systematically under the neoliberal policies, a large chunk of population was denied the access to good education and employment (Patnaik, 2014), which resulted in the fall of average living standard and quality of human capital in rural Punjab.

The number of 80’s Sikhs in Spain is 6,228 individuals, in which the share of female is about 27.7%. The average age of Sikhs in this generation is 29 years (figure 4). Majority of them have entered in Spain after 2005, now they have legalized their status under the continuous process of regularisation called ‘Arraigo’. This migration was also male dominated but the share of females is increasing due to the process of family reunification. Their education and professional qualification level was low; as they entered during the period of construction boom in Spain (2004-2010), their first major occupation was construction sector. After the explosion of construction bubble they moved to restaurant services, agriculture or food processing industry. Some females are also working in their family businesses (like restaurants and shops) and in
factories. According to the interviews of this group it is quite visible that they have plans of migrating to any English speaking country after getting Spanish nationality.

4.3 The Millennium generation:

This generation Sikhs in Spain, were born after 1990, in the divided transnational families, where one or two members of their families were already living and working outside India. The emigration of Sikhs from India always remained male dominated so most of them have their father working outside, they have lived their childhood with single parent, mostly mothers. Due to the regular remittance from the western countries and the huge income differences among east and west, the economic conditions of these families improved a lot. This regular flow of money from outside has changed the socio economic environment and the aspiration of Sikh youth in Punjab, now the young men, who were poorly educated and have no future in rural areas, start immigrating to first world countries with legal or illegal means to take their share of ‘el dorado’. This migration was strongly encouraged by kinship networks and families. This flow was characterized by four main groups i.e. the ascendants of Sikhs living abroad, the unskilled and poorly educated young workers, the students and finally some trained professionals. The 90% of the Millennium generation in Spain are the family members of other immigrants, (who were expelled in their youth by Green revolution, political persecution or neo liberal policies) and come with legal ways under the process of family reunification (figure 3). Another small part consists of the young men, who entered with or without work permits, in the search of job opportunities and for regularisation of their migrant status in Spain. Third group consists of the students, who come for higher studies in Spanish universities. Their number is very small but increasing with time.

According to municipal registers the size of the Millennium generations is comparatively smaller i.e. 5,723 individuals, than the other groups. They belong to the age group of below 24 years and the share of females is 39%, which is highest among all generational groups (figure 4). A significant part of this group makes the one and a half or second generation of Sikhs in Spain. They have studied in the Spanish schools so they don’t have any problem with language. They are moving to other occupational sectors than their ancestors like administration services, health and commerce.

5 Motives and emigration itineraries of different Generations

A detailed analysis of the interviews of different generations revealed that around 70% of them were not even aware about the existence of Spain at the time of
their first emigration from their homeland i.e. Punjab. Spain was never been in the list of most favoured destinations for Sikh emigrants. The insufficient information, language differences and the lack of work opportunities in Spain were the main limiting factors. Majority of them were come from other countries and ended up in Spain in the search of legal permission of residence and work, as here it was easier to get legalize as compared to other European countries. After the hypermobility period of illegal stay most of them settled permanently in different parts of Spain after getting legalized (Garha and Domingo, forthcoming). During the last 6 decades, different generations have followed the different migration routes to reach Spain (figure 5).

5.1 Children of Independence (COI):

In Spain, among the COI generations, if we take the interviewed population as a model the 90% of Sikhs arrived here by passing through other countries. As per the motives of this emigration, those who migrated from Punjab during the period of Green revolution (before 1970) were the economic emigrants, who emigrated in the search of work opportunities, because of the mechanization and specialization of agriculture they were left without jobs in their homeland. But mostly who migrated after the events of 1984 were political refugees, as their lives were endangered by the indiscriminate repression of Indian government. In Spain they entered during the period of regularisation (2000 and 2005), with a principle motive to get legalized.

The UK was the most favoured destination for the young workers expelled by Green revolution, but due to restriction posed by British government on the free movement of Commonwealth citizens under the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1968 (Hepple, 1968), Sikhs were denied the free access to UK, so they start migrating to Middle Eastern countries, where the demand of manual labour was high due to the construction boom (Tatla, 2005). At that time their favourite destination was Dubai. They used to go by plane or ships to Middle East countries for work. Working visas were easily available for the trained labourers. But in most of the Middle Eastern countries, they were treated as guest workers and very limited social and political rights were given to them. The permanent settlement of these workers was discouraged and they were forced to return back to their home countries. After finishing their job contracts, mostly they were offered with other contracts, so they often return to the same work places again and again in a circular migration (Singh & Tatla, 2006).
Figure 5: The itineraries followed by different generational groups during last 60 years.

5.1 The Children of Independence group:

- **Name:** Gurmail Singh  
  **Age:** 62 years  
  **Address:** Barcelona  
  **Occupation:** Mason  
  **First migration:** 1973  
  **First destination:** Dubai  
  **Entrance in Spain:** 1999

- **Name:** Gurpal Singh  
  **Age:** 40 years  
  **Address:** Barcelona  
  **Occupation:** Electrician  
  **First migration:** 1990  
  **First destination:** Doha  
  **Entrance in Spain:** 2001

5.2 The 80’s generations (donkey flights):

- **Name:** Resham Singh  
  **Age:** 33 years  
  **Address:** Barcelona  
  **Occupation:** Chef  
  **First migration:** 2002  
  **1st dest.:** Burkina Faso  
  **Entrance in Spain:** 2007

- **Name:** Sandeep Singh  
  **Age:** 31 years  
  **Address:** Los Alcazares  
  **Occupation:** Restaurant  
  **First migration:** 2005  
  **1st destination:** Moscow  
  **Entrance in Spain:** 2007

5.3 The Millennium generations

- **Name:** Paramjot Kaur  
  **Age:** 20 years  
  **Address:** Barcelona  
  **Occupation:** Student  
  **First migration:** 2005  
  **First destination:** Spain  
  **Entrance in Spain:** 2005

*Source: Own elaboration, with in-depth interviews during 2015-2016*
With the end of the Middle East construction boom, when they returned to Punjab, they were caught under the political crisis and most of them again fled to European countries especially in Germany, France or Italy, where they worked and lived in illegal form for several years and then migrated to Spain during the immigration boom period to get legalized and finally settled in Spain (figure 5.1). The itineraries of migration remained changing with time and immigration policies. Sikh emigrants during 1970’s, journeyed on the direct flights to Europe or through ship routes, because at that time the restrictions on the legal immigration was very limited; some even followed the post-colonial ship routes from Calcutta port to Mediterranean port. But others, who migrated in late 80’s, have followed the same route of illegal migration from Africa or northern Europe like their next generations.

5.2 The 80’s ‘donkey flight’ generations:

The donkey flight, which is a clear characteristic of 80’s generations, is an illegal way of immigration to Europe, with the help of human traffickers who smuggle the immigrants to western countries without any legal permission (Smith, 2014). The motives of these emigrants were clearly economic, due to the constant increase in population, costly living, and failure of agriculture to provide employment to all and finally because of the discriminatory neoliberal policies of the Indian government against Sikhs, they have decided to emigrate to earn their livelihood out of India. The increased border controls and number of youth willing for immigration have fuelled the illegal human trafficking networks, controlled by immigration mafia in Punjab and abroad, who were the real benefiters of this emigration process (Bhawra, 2013). Punjab becomes the leading centre for illegal immigration from India (Saha, 2009). On the average people were paying more than 20 thousand euros to enter in Europe or more than 40 thousand for Canada or USA, which they were doing by selling their land or mortgaging their houses in Punjab. In the last decade of the 20th century, no middle class family in rural Punjab left whose one or two members were not living out of India.

Among them, as explained in their interviews the majority also come from other European countries like their ascendants. Due to the restrictions imposed by European countries on the free entries of immigrants from Africa and Asia, many immigrants start entering through illegal routes from north European countries through Moscow, Russia or from African countries through Mediterranean. In the northern route mostly they reached Russia with an air flight and then from Moscow with the help of human trafficking mafia they entered in Europe mainly in Germany through Ukraine and
Poland. In Germany they settled in huge numbers, but as in Germany the rules of regularisation was very hard so they moved to Spain in the coming years, where they get legalised and now living there permanently. The second route was passing through Africa, majority of them reached to some African country like Burkina Faso, Mali, Algeria or Morocco by air flights, then from there with the help of travelling agents they first enter in Morocco through land routes, then from Morocco they smuggled into the Spanish city of Ceuta, which is situated on its borders. After entering in Ceuta, they contact Red Cross organisation which eventually helped them to enter in Spain.

In all these routes, many die when passing through the cold forests of northern Europe or hot deserts of Sahara or crossing the Mediterranean Sea with temporary boats. A small part of this group also entered in Europe with the Schengen visas issued by the Greece, Spanish or Portuguese embassies in India, many interviewees also doubt their involvement in this immigration racket. In some exceptional circumstances there are some Sikhs with high qualification from this group, who comes from USA after completing their studies, to work in different Spanish business schools.

5.3 The Millennium generations:

This generation give different motives for emigration which can be classified as family reunion, studies or work. The 80% of them come to join their fathers in Spain, who were already settled here. For them this emigration was a dream, which they were nurturing for long, some of them explain it as a cultural shock and other relates it with their future expectations. Some of them only come to work, as they had left the schools at early ages and have no future in India, they come to do manual jobs and earn their living in Spain. A small part is also now coming to study in different Spanish universities, but their number is very small. They have followed the entirely different routes from their ancestors. The majority of them come with family visa or temporary study or work visas. Almost all of them come directly from India by air flight with legal permissions. They had the shortest route and were aware about their final destination at the beginning of their journey.

While talking about the motives and routes of female immigration to Spain, Sikh females of different generations were immigrated to join their husband or father. They had the shortest and direct routes.
6 Generational boundaries and the Religion

Following the work of Douglas Massey and Magaly Sanchez, we focus on the concept of "boundaries", as explained in their own words: "We thus conceptualize immigrant assimilation as a process of boundary-brokering in which immigrants, encountering categorical boundaries that separate them from natives, do whatever they can to challenge, circumvent, or accommodate those divisions to advance their interests" (Massey & Sánchez, 2010 p: 16). These are the external boundaries which separate the immigrant groups from natives, and generally immigrants negotiate with the host community for maintaining these boundaries to preserve their separate identity and peaceful coexistence. The identity of a particular group, who shares some set of rules, includes existing divisions and fractures within the group, whose tensions polarized between purity and contamination (Douglas, 1966) enables the dynamics of the group. At the same time like Fredrick Barth (1969), we believe that the boundaries that define the group, when it comes in a permanent contact with other groups, need some structuring of the interaction, which allows the coexistence and persistence of Cultural Differences.

In this paper, we want to focus on the internal boundaries, which contribute to the internal structuring of the group. Thus the process of redefining the limits, serves both to understand the interaction of the group with the host society as the tensions in which it accept and interact with it, and the internal tensions of the group on the basis of their differences in beliefs and behaviours. While talking about the internal tensions among Sikh community, we refer to the boundaries between baptized and non-baptized Sikhs, different castes and clans, gender and generations’ roles, and their effects on the migration process, demographic and social reproduction of the community.

On the basis of the interviews with 22 Gurudwara heads and the individuals of different generations in Spain, we can say that all the above mentioned generational groups have different ideas towards their religion and they follow it in their own ways. These different ideas are strongly influenced by their age, sex, parental relations (grandparents, parents, children) or with their migratory experiences, which includes their exposure to the host society and relations to the origin, like their participation in transnational networks created by all generations involving their own links (family and relatives) at both ends of their migration route. Focusing on religion, the vital experiences of immigrants explain a constant reformulation of the religious orthodoxy and rituals in the foreign context to make the peaceful coexistence with the host society.
and other immigrant communities. In this situation the traditional values of the religion
remained oscillating in between the ‘purity’ at the origin, and to a reformulation of
rituals to accommodate at the destination. It also affected by the social environment of
the host society. The religious discourse among the present Sikh community in Spain is
focused on the themes like Gurudwaras or Sikh temple’s construction, management and
control; Baptized and not baptized Sikhs; Caste and clan system and finally the role of
women in religion.

6.1 Gurudwaras: construction, management and control

The Gurudwaras, along with their formal role as religious places, are the centres
of power and representation for Sikhs, where whole community come together to pray
and share their resources and ideas. They also serve as a platform for the discussion of
all social and political issues (Jacobsen, 2012). The features that characterize
Gurudwaras in Punjab are maintained and transformed in Europe, they are conceived as
sites of spirituality and for the transmission of Sikh principles, yet they also contribute
to enhancing community well-being and development (Gallo, 2012). It can be said that
the social life of all Sikhs move around the Gurudwaras.

In Spain, there are 22 Gurudwaras which are constructed in different
municipalities during the last two decades. First gurudwara was established in the year
1998 at Barcelona, which was their first major concentration in Spain and recently the
last gurudwara was established in the year 2015 at Los Alcazares, Murcia. Mostly the
mere existence of a gurudwara at a place shows the presence of 200 to 300 individuals
in that particular municipality, which is a threshold of the population for maintaining a
Gurudwara in Spain. Almost half of the Gurudwaras of Spain are situated in Catalonia
alone and constructed by the COI generations. They also control the functioning of
Gurudwaras through a managing committee with a fixed tenure, mostly of two years, of
five or more members selected by the community. The entrance in the managing
committee is a matter of prestige and power, so everybody wants to become a member,
which breeds internal conflicts that often ended up in violent clashes (Qureshi, 2014).
This power conflicts often lead to the division and the creation of new Gurudwaras in
the same municipalities; in fact most of the cities with two Gurudwaras in Spain like
Madrid, Valencia, Torre Pacheco and Mallorca have faced the same clashes. These
clashes also show the disputes on the issues of orthodoxy and the division between
baptized and not baptized sikhs, or the caste and clan conflicts for the representation and
power in the Gurudwaras (Takhar, 2008). The women theoretically have all rights to participate in Gurudwara management but practically the presence of females in managing committees is null.

In the interviews, the COI group explains that the Gurudwaras, along with their formal duty of providing religious services to the people, are the founding stone in the community building process. They promote a strong sense of identity, bonds of brotherhood and unity in the community. They also consider Gurudwaras as platform to transfer the religious beliefs and the knowledge of rituals to the coming generations. All Gurudwaras are established and controlled by this group. They are the organizers and leading actors in all major activities including the celebration of all religious festival of the community, and the reception and the mobilisation of new immigrants to different occupational niches. In the discourse of the 80’s generations, they describe Gurudwaras as a place of contact with community, where they share their problems regarding public life. Many have claimed that their whole social life is limited to Gurudwaras. They contribute in the functioning of gurudwara by monetary funding or by serving there. Generally most of them visit gurudwara on weekends or the festival days, when they have day offs. They mostly criticize the elder generations for the power struggle clashes in Gurudwaras and ignore the gurudwara politics by avoiding conflicts. For the Millennium generations, it is a place of learning about their religion and culture, and to have fun with others. They come mostly on weekends. In some Gurudwaras summer camps are also organized, where they learn Punjabi language and the knowledge of religious scriptures, and come in contact with other youth. Gurudwaras provide them a space to discuss their problems and issues regarding their own identity.

6.2 Baptized and not baptized Sikhs: Amritdhari vs. Sehajdhari

In the present Sikh community, an important boundary is drawn on the distinction between baptized (Amritdhari) and not baptized (Sehajdhari) Sikhs. The baptized sikhs wear 5k’s, articles of faith: kesh (long uncut hair), kanga (a wooden comb), kara (iron bracelet), kachhera (under garment) and kirpan (sword), (B. Singh, 2014). They don’t change their physical appearance which includes they don’t cut their hairs and don’t pierce or tattoo them. It gives them a symbolic capital and they represent a normative appearance of sikhs and up to some extent perform the role of faith guardians. Their number is very limited (5%). The other major group of not-baptized or Sehajdhari Sikhs believe in the teachings of Sikh guru’s but don’t follow the code of conduct and rituals strictly. They are more flexible in their religious beliefs and adaptable in the foreign
contexts. They form the majority in the global Diaspora or even in the present Punjab also (Panikar, 2007). In Sikhism the women have equal right to get baptized and follow the religious code of conduct freely. The share of baptized women are always more than the men, the duty of the transmission of the religious identity to next generation is assigned to women.

There are frequent clashes between both groups for the power and control of Sikh temples. The not baptised Sikhs frequently blames the others for their exclusion from Gurudwara activities, as in the case of Badalona gurudwara in Spain; committee member’s seats are reserved for only baptized Sikhs. On the contrary, the baptised Sikhs claims their legitimate right on the Gurudwaras as they follow the code of conduct. These conflicts often lead to violent clashes between both groups and sometimes even the local police have to interfere to resolve their issues, in Barcelona it happened repeatedly and in other countries like Denmark, it resulted in the closing of Gurudwara in the year 2006 (Ilkjær, 2011).

As discussed in the interviews, the COI generations in which the number of baptised Sikhs is comparatively higher than their descendants that may be due to the age factor, put more stress on the homogenization of the whole community, as baptized Sikhs. They have most conservative ideas about the gender roles and family or demographic behaviour of the community. The 80’s generation generally relates it with their problems in labour market, as almost 70% of them works in the restaurants and service sector, where they can’t have long hairs and beards. Some even relate it with age that they will get baptize at certain age of retirement or so. There is least number of baptised sikhs in the 80’s group as compared to other groups. In the Millennium group, there is a mixed response, on the one hand there are young men and women, who are baptized and follow the code of conduct strictly. They have least contact with the host community, which is limited to their schools or work places. They pass most of their free time including summer vacations at Gurudwaras to learn about religion and Punjabi language. They are much prone to the fundamentalist temptation, which gave them force to stick with the basic principal of the religion and remove the space of flexibility, which their ancestors have maintained to make their survival possible on the foreign lands. On the other hand, many young Sikhs don’t want to get baptize as they think that it will give them a separate look, which can limit their possibilities to get friends, social circle and better jobs in the host society.
To be a baptised Sikh in Spain provides respect in the Sikh community, but often they receive a harsh treatment from the host society. Spanish people are generally not aware about the Sikh religion, so they mostly confuse them with Muslims, and often call them Bin Laden or terrorists. They have very little contact with the host society and huge problems in finding jobs and better housing. In some places even local police also treats them as suspects because of their sword wearing tradition under 5ks. In the sphere of Public administration their different look or symbolic capital is used to present the diversity of population and they were treated as community spokespersons and funded by the local government to promote social cohesion but very often they promote radicalization of youth by encouraging them to return back to the religious fundamentalism. While on the contrary the Sehajdhari Sikhs, who don’t keep the 5ks and long hairs, are generally neglected by the public administration as others, but receive fairly well treatment from the host society. Mostly they are well assimilated to the host society. They have good socializing as compared to the others and easily get job in the service sector. There are many sikhs who have trimmed their hairs and beards to look like local population, as it improves their possibilities of good jobs in service sector. The elder generations have suffered a lot of discrimination but as now the host community is getting aware of the presence of sikhs the Millennium generations are not receiving harsh treatment like their ancestors.

6.3 Caste and clan system: hundred years more....

In Sikhism no importance was given to the social hierarchy of Indian society (castes and clans of Hindu social system), as the founder of this religion has ruled out any discrimination on the basis of castes or clans, but still many Sikhs relate their origin from different caste groups, and maintain their caste identity and pass it to the next generation. These caste boundaries are the main cause of conflicts in the community at Punjab and in the diaspora (Singh, 2015). In the interviews, almost all participants of different age groups and profiles have confirmed the existence of caste discrimination in present Sikh community in Spain and at origin. It is strange to see that even in the foreign context people have not changed their mind sets regarding castes. There are many Gurudwaras in Spain, which are also associated with certain caste groups, the Ravidasia gurudwara of Barcelona, which was opened by the low caste Ravidasia community and closed after the conflict of Vienna (Lum, 2010), and the Ravidasia temple of Valencia, are the good examples of caste based Gurudwaras. This conflict is not only limited to the castes, many clans like Jatts and Lubanas, which makes majority
of Sikh population in Spain are also fighting for their power and representation in Gurudwaras.

When we analyse the interviews, we find that the sikhs of COI generations, always deny that they follow their caste rules because it is now politically incorrect to talk about this, but majority of them still feel attached to their clans, which they call *Biraderi*, especially when it comes to the selection of marital relations for their children. The inter caste marriages are very rare and unacceptable in the major section of the society. Some clearly claim that they don’t like to socialize with lower castes. It shows the strength of these inner boundaries of tensions which are very dangerous for the unity and development of the community. As a live memory of the traditional role of women as the transmitter of religious and social identity, the attitude of females is more caste-discriminatory than males. But, with the time these boundaries are fading as the 80’s generation is comparatively less discriminatory than their parents’ generation and the Millennium group have least interests in caste conflict as they have very little contact with native Punjabi society, but still the Indian social media, which is full of caste discrimination material, makes a strong impact on their minds. Being in a country where castes don’t exist and the ideas of equality is taught in all institutes; make a difference in the thinking of youth. As in the words of an interviewee ‘*it will take 100 years more to fully eradicate this caste discrimination from Sikh society*’.

7. Conclusions

The immigration imposes the need to restructure the boundaries and codes of interaction with the host society, on the different basis than that were used in India to build and maintain the group’s identity. The opposition, or the distance from Hinduism and Islam, which had the fundamental contribution to the creation of the Sikh identity, lost its importance in the XXI century Spain. Here in Spain, each generation is responding to this challenge of maintaining group identity, from their own different experiences marked by their migratory routes, parental statuses and age.

During the last 60 years, the different generations of sikhs have responded to different push and pull factors in their migratory process. The COI group includes the economic emigrants and refugees, who were expelled by the unemployment caused by green revolution and the insecurity caused by political crisis; and the 80’s group were mainly economic emigrants, who have left Punjab in the search of better job opportunities overseas due to the diverse effects of neoliberal policies; on the contrary the Millennium generations were pulled by their family or kinship networks.
In the migratory routes, the COI group had mostly their first stay in Middle East countries, and they have followed the legal sea and air routes to enter in Europe. The 80’s group had used ‘donkey flights’ or unscrupulous intermediaries to enter in Europe. They had paid a very high price for these illegal journeys; many of them had lost their life also. The Millennium group had the shortest and direct journey to Spain. They have come legally with family, study or work visas. In the minds of our interviewees from different generation, there is no any final destination, provided by the good jobs and better living conditions; they are always ready to leave Spain. The COI generation group is thinking about their return to India, the generations of 80’s want to move to some English speaking country i.e. England, USA or Canada after receiving Spanish nationality and the Millennium generations, who have studied in Spanish universities, are also planning to immigrate to other rich countries in search of better work opportunities. So we can say that the Sikh population in Spain as a whole is in transit phase, the time will decide where they will end up in future.

As per the religion is concern the major worry of the COI group is to preserve and pass their religious identity to the coming generations, who are now living in a diverse foreign society. To accomplish this goal, they are investing resources and time in the establishment and functioning of Gurudwaras, which are the centres of learning for next generations. On the other hand, the 80’s generation is struggling to follow their religious duties and to keep their jobs in service sector, especially in restaurants, where majority of them works. And finally the Millennium generation is divided in two groups first who want to assimilate to Spanish society and other wants to go back to their roots and learning about Sikhism and follow it very strictly. The decision of following or reviving of religion mainly depends upon the recognition of Sikh community by the host society as a valuable part of it, and when the wearing of religious symbols becomes a symbolic capital for the Sikhs and the discrimination of all kinds at public places and in the labour market will disappear. The revival and restructuring of religion in the foreign context can increase the visibility of sikhs but rigidness of external boundaries can also contributes to the cocooning behaviour, which can hurt the process of integration to the host society.

The clashes for power and control in the Gurudwaras are common in Spain; sometimes the groups under conflicts are based on the inner division lines between baptized and not baptized sikhs, or caste and clans. The internal boundaries, which contribute to the growth of community by reviving the quest for purity, can also lead to
its destruction, when these boundaries become the breeding grounds for the violent clashes. This dichotomise dualism in Sikh community should be considered as a denominating factor which on the one hand act as the preserver of identity and on the hand control its contact with the host society.

As we have seen the different generations takes the internal boundaries in different ways, in future it will be interesting to know, how it will affect their interaction with the host society and the creation and preservation of their identity in the diaspora. Secondly, how the gender roles in religion and society will be redefined in the diaspora context? Thirdly, how the internal boundaries will affect the transnational relations and marriage market in diaspora? And finally how it will affects the demographic reproduction system of the community, which is based on the immigration?

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