"MY KIND OF BROWN": INDO-CANADIAN YOUTH IDENTITY AND BELONGING IN GREATER VANCOUVER

by

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ABSTRACT

Since the mid-1990s, more than 100 Indo-Canadian - or South Asian - men under the age of 30 have been murdered in Greater Vancouver. Generally described as "gang-" or "drug-related," these murders and related criminal incidents have easily lent themselves to sensationalism. As a result, the image of groups of young Indo-Canadian men engaged in various violent and criminal activities has become increasingly prevalent. This has been reinforced by perceptions of them as lacking a strong 'sense of belonging.' In this project, I explore notions of belonging and not belonging in relation to Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality. I focus on how news media, various state institutions, and community organizations have related youth violence to the notion that youth lack a strong sense of belonging, as well as how discourses about, and responses to, youth violence have affected young Indo-Canadians' understandings of their own identities, ethnocultural difference, and multiculturalism. I frame my discussion in terms of three socio-spatial binaries that have become central to discourses about Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality. First, I discuss discourses that position 'immigrant culture' in opposition to 'non-immigrant culture,' a key element of which is the idea of 'culture clash,' particularly over gender norms. Second, I examine conceptualizations of society as consisting of discrete, 'bounded' ethnocultural 'communities,' such that 'ethnic' stands in opposition to 'mainstream.' I point out the racialization of these boundaries, as reflected through discourses about 'Brownness' among young Indo-Canadians. Third, I discuss discourses of belonging and not belonging, in which youth are characterized as alienated from either an ethnic 'community' or wider society, leaving them in a supposed state of poor or misdirected moral development. I argue that these socio-spatial binaries have been challenged, contradicted, and made ambiguous, even as they have been deployed as dichotomies with distinct poles. Therefore, I also discuss the slippages, gaps, and contradictions that destabilize them.

Keywords: social geography, Indo-Canadians, belonging, youth gangs, second generation, identity

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

High rates of immigration are reshaping Canadian society, especially in its largest metropolitan areas – the destinations for the majority of immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2008). Immigration involves numerous processes related to demographic, economic, social, cultural, and political change: as Canada's cities continue to experience these changes, the meanings and identities of particular urban places – as well as of Canada as a nation – are likewise in flux. In keeping with its adoption of multiculturalism as official federal policy, one of Canada's approaches to the increasing diversity of its urban populations has been to develop multicultural policies at provincial and municipal levels. Discussions about ethnocultural diversity in cities such as Vancouver frequently invoke an idealized conception of a harmonious, multicultural community. The meaning of multiculturalism, however, continues to evolve – both in terms of popular understandings and in terms of the policies through which it is enacted and supported. The concept of multiculturalism is thus a subject of self-conscious and continual concern in terms of its definition, implementation, maintenance and utility both as a policy framework and as a social context.

This concern implicitly involves questions of how, and to what extent, immigrant communities should integrate into Canadian society and the impact of growing ethnocultural minority groups on Canadian national identity. Ongoing worries about the relative adaptation of immigrant groups are indicative of the fact that "as a political theory and as a set of policies, multiculturalism remains (necessarily) very much a contested ideology, perpetually open to new definition as newcomers arrive and challenge congealed or congealing notions of identity, belonging, and citizenship" (Sandercock, 2003, p. 3). Central to these challenges are debates over how to foster the acceptance of immigrants by other Canadian communities, as well as how to strengthen immigrants' sense of attachment to place and identification as being Canadian. That is to say, immigrants' sense of *belonging* to the nation of Canada remains a fraught topic.

Just as the context of multiculturalism informs understandings of ethnicity and ethnocultural groups, changes in understandings and definitions of ethnocultural identity

necessitate corresponding changes and refinements in multicultural policy. Likewise, anxieties over immigrant identity are inherently related to concerns over the success of multiculturalism as a policy framework in meeting the needs of a diverse society. Of particular importance to these concerns are the ways in which young people – specifically the descendants of immigrants and those who immigrated at a young age – are socialized into different collective ethnocultural identities. Reflecting the importance of these questions to policy-makers, the federal government has indicated an interest in both research concerning immigrant youth and research about multiculturalism.

Within this context is an issue that has troubled Vancouver for more than fifteen years. Since the mid-1990s, more than 100 Indo-Canadian – or South Asian - men under the age of 30 have been murdered in the Lower Mainland area of British Columbia (Austin, 2008). Between 1994 and 2006, the total number of homicides in Greater Vancouver was 695 (Statistics Canada, n.d.). So, while Indo-Canadians made up approximately 9.9% of the total population in Greater Vancouver in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2008), they accounted for approximately 14% of the homicide victims over the previous twelve years – a situation of obvious concern. Generally described as "gang-" or "drug-related," many of these incidents, along with related non-fatal shootouts, have been somewhat spectacular in nature, occurring in public places such as movie theatres, nightclubs, and restaurants, and involving unusual displays of firepower. Such incidents easily lend themselves to sensationalism. As a result, the Indo-Canadian community in Greater Vancouver is often depicted as plagued by violence, in particular due to the growth of 'youth gangs' involved in the illegal drug trade. The actual number of youth involved in organized criminal groups is quite small. As such, the greatest concern for many within the community is not the growth of organized criminal gangs, per se, but instead the popularity of the gangster image, the apparent glamorization of violence among young Indo-Canadians, and less organized forms of criminal activity.

'Youth gangs' and violence are often framed as problems internal to the Indo-Canadian community. As a result, much effort has been put into attempting to bridge the real and perceived social divides between the Indo-Canadian community and the 'outside.'[1] While the police seem more inclined to describe this problem as one of "group

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[1] As is often noted in discussions of ethnocultural groups, the use of the term 'community' to describe Indo-Canadians in Vancouver can be argued to mask the social, religious and linguistic differences within this group, while at the same time strengthening discourses about the perceived "closed" nature of Indo-Canadians to "external" institutions, particularly the police.

violence" rather than "organized crime" (O'Neil, 2004, p. A1), the image of groups of young Indo-Canadian men engaged in various violent and criminal activities has become increasingly prevalent, popularized in part through media accounts of gang activity and the plight of Indo-Canadians attempting to quell the violence (Edmonds, 2005). This situation has prompted concern from a range of groups, including Indo-Canadian organizations, the police, and policy-makers at both the national and local levels. Sikh religious leaders and other elders within the Indo-Canadian community have emphasized a need for improved policing, while a much publicized study commissioned by the former Department of Canadian Heritage (Tyakoff, 2003) emphasizes the need for improved parental guidance and inter-generational relations. From the perspective of members of the various groups and institutions involved in addressing the problem, it is increasingly clear that the underlying processes that have created a supposed 'culture' of violence among Indo-Canadian youth defy simple explanation or easily implemented policy.

In this chapter, I first outline my research objectives, including a discussion of the relevance of 'belonging,' to understandings of second generation Indo-Canadian youth identity. Second, I discuss the questions that have framed my research as well as the general structure of my responses to these questions. Third, I outline the main data sources I used to address my questions; I return to a more detailed discussion of these sources and other aspects of my methodology in Chapter 4. Finally, I summarize the structure of the remaining chapters.

Research Objectives and Questions

The emergence of a discourse of 'troubled youth' and 'youth gangs' has important implications not only in terms of the real suffering caused by such violence, but also in terms of the representation and construction of a 'deviant' racialized ethnocultural 'other' in a context of supposed multicultural social harmony. It raises questions concerning to what extent, how and why violence has become particularly prevalent within this group, what steps should and could be taken to reduce violence, what the material aspects of this violence are, and the degree to which it impacts the integration and acceptance of young second generation immigrants and visible minorities. As a problem of criminality, it also raises issues concerning relationships between young Indo-Canadians and the

state – specifically law enforcement and the judicial system – as well as issues concerning the realities and stereotypes of ethnic crime and ethnic 'youth gangs.'

One means of approaching these issues is through an examination of the ways in which ideas about place and identity inform the discourses and actions of various actors engaged in responding to Indo-Canadian youth violence. Key among these actors are the media, various state institutions, and community organizations. My _research objectives_ are: (1) to explore how ideas about _belonging_ and _not belonging_ inform public discussions of violence among Indo-Canadian youth; (2) to examine how a discourse about belonging and not belonging informs political and policy action surrounding this issue; and (3) to examine how a discourse about violence among this group complicates notions of an officially-promoted multicultural ideal in which (a) ethnocultural 'difference' is framed in terms of the positive expression of cultural practices rather than in terms of negative patterns of structural inequality or deviance, and (b) diversity is celebrated while racist stereotypes and acts of discrimination are deemed as anomalies. In addressing these points, I understand discourse to be broadly defined as "a set of representations, practices and performances through which meanings are produced, connected into networks and legitimized" (Gregory, 2000, p. 180). As such, the processes of creating written and spoken 'texts' – for example, news media or policy documents - can be understood as contextually embedded discursive practices that attempt to create and reproduce knowledge and meaning.

In order to frame an approach to my research objectives, I draw from work within human geography that examines the ways in which place identities and social identities are intertwined and mutually constitutive. In particular, discussions about attachment to place have argued that a strong sense of attachment to place can be deployed as a sort of "positional good" (Duncan & Duncan, 2001), in which claims of a strong sense of personal identification and emotional investment in particular locales serve as a means for legitimating and giving preference to certain perspectives, or identities. Commitment to place, whether expressed as national or civic pride or as dedication to preserving or enhancing local landscapes, "can be fruitfully analyzed as a form of 'symbolic capital' and 'positional good'" (ibid., p. 42). Unlike discussions of a strong attachment to place as breeding insularity or provincialism, the notion of attachment to place as a positional good speaks to the idea that authenticity – and the right to speak in a given community – is held by those who claim a strong sense of belonging or 'rootedness' in a particular place. In this sense, attachment to place relates to the "politics of belonging," which are

"characterized by recurring debates over questions such as: who belongs where; who decides who belongs where; on what basis is this belonging determined; who is considered to be in place or out of place; and who is authorized to represent place and community" (Taylor, 2009, p. 295).

One issue that sits at the heart of how particular groups are constructed as belonging or not belonging is how the public, social identity – or the collective ethnic identity – of that group is defined. In contrast to theories of ethnic identity formation that focus on personal characteristics, collective ethnic identity research is concerned with how groups of individuals collectively form a shared identity (Bacon, 1999). A sense of belonging to a particular social group or collective identity can further be understood as dialectically related to a sense of belonging *in* place and *to* a place. Questions then emerge concerning whether, and how, violence and deviance as related to youths' supposed lack of a strong 'sense of belonging' have become part of discourses on the collective identity (including stereotypical representations) of young Indo-Canadians. As discourses are intrinsically related to action – or practice – and to institutions, questions also emerge concerning the role of a discourse about 'not belonging' might shape responses — individual, institutional, etc. — to Indo-Canadian youth violence. Further, if the notion of an ideal *multicultural* place can be thought of as involving a community whose members – despite their diversity – have a strong sense of belonging in and to that place and its dominant values, questions emerge concerning what the perceived correlation of a particular 'unattached' or 'displaced' identity with violence might reveal about underlying anxieties about "actually existing multiculturalism" (Sandercock, 2009a; Schierup, 1994; Uitermark, Rossi, & van Houtum, 2004).

Questions of belonging are not exhaustive of discourses about Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality. I argue, however, that they are particularly salient for an analysis of the ways in which identity is structured around spatial relationships that position second generation immigrants vis-à-vis the nation and ethnocultural communities. By focusing on discourses about belonging, I also aim to position my discussion in relationship to work on the construction of collective ethnic identity in the context of multiculturalism, particularly work that critically examines multiculturalism as a framework designed, in part, to foster a 'sense of belonging' to the nation.

<u>Research Questions</u>

Related to my research objectives of exploring the role of youths' 'sense of belonging' in framing discussions of Indo-Canadian youth violence, examining how discourses that relate a lack of a 'sense of belonging' with violence inform action surrounding this issue, and examining how violence among this group complicates notions of a multicultural ideal, I pose the following *<u>research questions:</u>*

- How have (a) the media, including mass-market, widely-read print media and local forms such as urban ethnic media; (b) various state institutions, including multicultural social planning and policing; and (c) community organizations, including non-profit anti-violence and ethnocultural organizations, constructed Indo-Canadian youth collective identity as violent and lacking a strong sense of belonging?
- What narratives contribute to a discourse that relates a lack of a sense of belonging with violence and criminality and how do these narratives inform actions surrounding this issue, such as government, police and community responses?
- How has a discourse of Indo-Canadian youth as violent and lacking a sense of belonging affected young Indo-Canadians' sense of their personal identities and their understandings of ethnocultural difference?
- How might anxieties over this 'displaced' violent identity inform the practice and experience of actually existing multiculturalism, in terms of popular notions of multiculturalism, particularly among young Indo-Canadians?

I organize my responses to these questions by examining how Indo-Canadian youth identity has been constructed in terms of discursive socio-spatial binaries framed at different scales. First, at the scale of the 'nation-state,' I discuss imagery that positions 'immigrant culture' (or 'Indian,' 'Sikh,' 'Punjabi') in opposition to 'non-immigrant culture' (or 'Canadian,' 'Western'). A key element of this discourse is the idea of 'culture clash,' particularly over gender norms. Second, I examine a conceptualization of 'community' that views society in terms of 'bounded,' or discrete, ethnocultural groups, with 'Indo-Canadian community' standing in opposition to 'mainstream community.' I point out that these boundaries are not only implicitly, but also explicitly, racialized, as reflected through the emergence of discourses about 'Brownness' among young Indo-Canadians.

I discuss the emergence of the racialized category of 'Brown' in relation to discourses about multiculturalism. Third, at the scale of the 'body,' I discuss discourses of belonging and not belonging, in which youth are characterized as alienated from either an ethnic community or wider society, leaving them adrift in a state in which their moral development is seen to flounder or become misdirected.

In addressing these points, I should emphasize that I divide my discussion according to different scales as a heuristic device: scale is always relational, making any discussion of 'individual' scales somewhat arbitrary. For example, the categories of citizenship and 'citizen,' immigration and 'immigrant,' can be understood as mediated through relationships between the body and other scales such as globe, nation-state, city and community. In addition, while the pairings that I discuss serve to delineate boundaries between categories of nationality, race, and community, for example, they are also challenged, contradictory and ambiguous, even as they are deployed as dichotomies with distinct poles. Therefore, as I discuss these socio-spatial binaries, I also discuss the slippages, gaps, and contradictions that destabilize them.

Clarification of Terminology

From the outset, I would like to clarify a few points concerning ethnic identifiers such as "East Indian," "South Asian," and "Indo-Canadian." The term "East Indian" is generally used in Canada to refer to "people whose roots are specifically in India" (Nayar, 2004, p. 235), and is used to distinguish this group from indigenous North Americans ("Indians") and people from the Caribbean ("West Indies"). Statistics Canada uses the term "East Indian" as a category used to describe the ethnic origins of someone's ancestors. In addition, Statistics Canada uses the term "South Asian" to describe "people who reported an ancestry that originates in South Asia, including those reporting their origin as at least one of Bangladeshi, Bengali, East Indian, Goan, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Pakistani, Punjabi, Nepali, Sinhalese, Sri Lankan, Tamil, or South Asian" (Statistics Canada, 2007b, p. 8). As such, "South Asian" is an aggregate that includes people with "East Indian" ancestors as well as people with ancestors in other areas of South Asian. While "South Asian" thus refers to a broader group of people, it is often used somewhat interchangably with "East Indian" and "Indo-Canadian."

"South Asian" is also used by Statistics Canada as a visible minority category. The definition of "visible minority," as established by the Canadian Employment Equity

Act, includes "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (*Employment Equity Act*, 1995). As such, all non-white immigrants and their descendants are considered visible minorities. Prior to 1996, Statistics Canada derived the size of visible minority populations from census questions about respondents' ethnic origins. The 1996 Canadian Census introduced an additional question on respondents' "population group," which is now used as the indicator of whether someone is part of a visible minority group (Statistics Canada, 2011c).

The term "Indo-Canadian" is not an official category used by Statistics Canada. It came into widespread use during the 1980s in reaction to the introduction of multicultural policy and the popularization of multicultural ideology (Nayar, 2004). Some authors reserve the use of "Indo-Canadian" to refer to "Indians who have acquired Canadian citizenship" (Sharma, 1997, p. 16). While I also use the term to refer to Canadians of Indian descent, this is less to indicate formal citizenship and more to emphasize the 'Canadianness' of Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality and the responses this issue has garnered. That is, I want to avoid characterizing Indo-Canadian youth violence as a problem with solely 'foreign' ("East Indian" or "South Asian") causes. I recognize, however, that 'hyphenated ethnicities' like "Indo-Canadian" are problematic in that they also effect a process of 'othering,' "operat[ing] to produce spaces of distance, in which ethnicity is positioned outside Canadianness – as an addition to it, but also as an exclusion from it" (Mahtani, 2002, p. 78). In addition, as Nayar (2004) notes, people of Indian descent often self-identify with other 'categories':

> Although this term [Indo-Canadian] is now used by Canadian society generally, people of Indian heritage tend strongly to identify themselves and their community with their regional language group and/or religion (i.e., Hindu, Sikh, Tamalian, Ismaili and the like). (p. 164)

Nonetheless, given that 'Indo-Canadian gangs' have generally been described as consisting of second generation immigrants, I feel that "Canadian" – albeit 'hyphenated' with ethnicity – is a more apt signifier of the national identity of gang members and their non-criminally involved peers. In addition, I feel that the term "Indo-Canadian" is most consistent with the ways in which gangs and violence have been framed as a social problem, particularly within local news media, as well as the ways in which, under Canadian multiculturalism, difference tends to be framed in terms of the nation-state origins of immigrants and their descendants.

Data Sources

I analyzed three main types of research data in this project: secondary quantitative data taken from the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), archival material from a range of sources, including newspapers, government documents, and documents published by non-profit organizations, and semi-structured qualitative interviews. I also engaged in participant observation at public meetings and forums.

The EDS asked questions on topics including ethnocultural identity, language use, family interactions, and civic participation. Of particular interest to me are questions concerning the degree to which respondents reported feeling a sense of belonging to their family, ethnic group, municipality, province, Canada, and North America, as well as questions concerning respondents' frequency of feeling "uncomfortable or out of place" due to their ethnicity, race, skin color, language, accent or religion. By looking at responses to these questions, I provide some sense of broader, national discourses around ethnicity and belonging.

One of the central issues of concern to both policy-makers and the broader Indo-Canadian community involves 'mainstream' media coverage of stories about Indo-Canadian youth violence, as media depictions both reflect and produce discourses that help shape public perceptions of ethnic and racial minority groups. As Mahtani (2001) argues:

> The media provides an important source of information through which citizens gain knowledge about their nation, and our attitudes and beliefs are shaped by what the media discerns as public knowledge. The media is directly responsible for how Canada, in all its diversity, is interpreted among its citizens. Simply put, the media is responsible for the ways that Canadian society is interpreted, considered and evaluated among its residents. (p. 99)

Consequently, in additional to the large international body of work on media relations and race/ethnicity, a substantial body of research in the Canadian context has examined the roles that media discourses play in the social construction of ethnicity and race. A number of studies have examined bias and racism in mass media representations of visible minority immigrant groups, with particular attention to the exclusion of minorities in depictions of these groups as threats to national identity and public safety (Bauder, 2008; Bradimore & Bauder, 2011; D'Arcy, 2007; Dunn & Mahtani, 2001; Henry & Tator, 2000; Hier & Greenberg, 2002; Hirji, 2006; Jianming & Hilderbrandt, 1993; Jiwani, 2005;

Odartey-Wellington, 2009; Szuchewycz, 2000). Such work has examined the news media's complicity in processes of racialization and stigmatization. As Jiwani (2006) argues:

> In representing race, the news media racialize particular groups of people, demarcating them as different from the majority and imputing qualities that emphasize their difference, and then, by inferiorizing, trivializing, and exoticizing these qualities, ultimately render such differences deviant. (p. 40)

In addition, some researchers have focused on "ethnic media" (Ojo, 2006; Sherry & Catherine, 2007), while others have addressed the exclusion of visible minorities in production of mainstream mass media (Fleras, 1991; Mahtani, 2001, 2009; Roth, 1998; Ungerleider, 1991). With some exceptions (see, for example, Lee & Tse, 1994; Mahtani, 2008, 2009), a relatively small body of work has addressed how immigrants and visible minorities *consume* media, and Mahtani (2001) points out the need for additional research into how members of visible minorities perceive and interpret different forms of media.

As such, in addition to broad findings taken from an analysis of the EDS, I conducted a focused archival study into key media discourses – primarily print and electronic versions of print media. Sources included mass, as well as ethnic, national and local newspapers. Other sources of archival data included government documents (or media), such as multicultural policies, press releases, public information campaign material, and various forms of publication used by community organizations.

In order to explore findings from the secondary data analysis and archival research by examining the discourses and practices of individual actors, I conducted 25 interviews, each lasting between 45 to 90 minutes, with actors in community organizations, government policy agencies, the police, the media, and other groups dealing with issues of youth violence. I also conducted 22 interviews of similar length with individual Indo-Canadian youth. I provide a full discussion of my methods, data sources and analysis in Chapter 4.

Chapter Structure

Following from this introduction, the remainder of my dissertation is organized into two broad sections, followed by a concluding chapter. First, in Chapters 2 and 3, I elaborate on my theoretical framework. In Chapter 2, I review key literatures about

immigrant and second generation immigrant identity, including theories of assimilation, acculturation, and transnationalism. I find that these literatures often invoke what might be described as spatial metaphors of inclusion/exclusion, for example, yet, with the exception of transnationalism, they generally do not directly address the spatiality of immigrant identity. In order to address this gap, I draw from work done in human geography that focuses on identity as embodied and structured around material and metaphorical spatial relationships, and belonging as inherently contextual and multi-scalar. In Chapter 3, I discuss ethnocultural diversity in Canada by providing a brief overview of recent immigration patterns, and by discussing the legislative framework of Canadian multiculturalism. I also outline key theoretical debates concerning Canadian multiculturalism. I find that most of these approaches tend to frame multiculturalism at the scale of the nation-state; I argue instead for the potential of approaching an analysis of multiculturalism by focusing on how individuals conceptualize multiculturalism as it plays out in the spaces of their everyday lives, particularly in multicultural cities. Figure 1 depicts how the literatures I address in Chapters 2 and 3 relate to my overall conceptualization of identity and belonging as framed in relation to different socio-spatial scales, and 'actually existing' multiculturalism as involving the continual definition and redefinition of ethnocultural categories and traits.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework
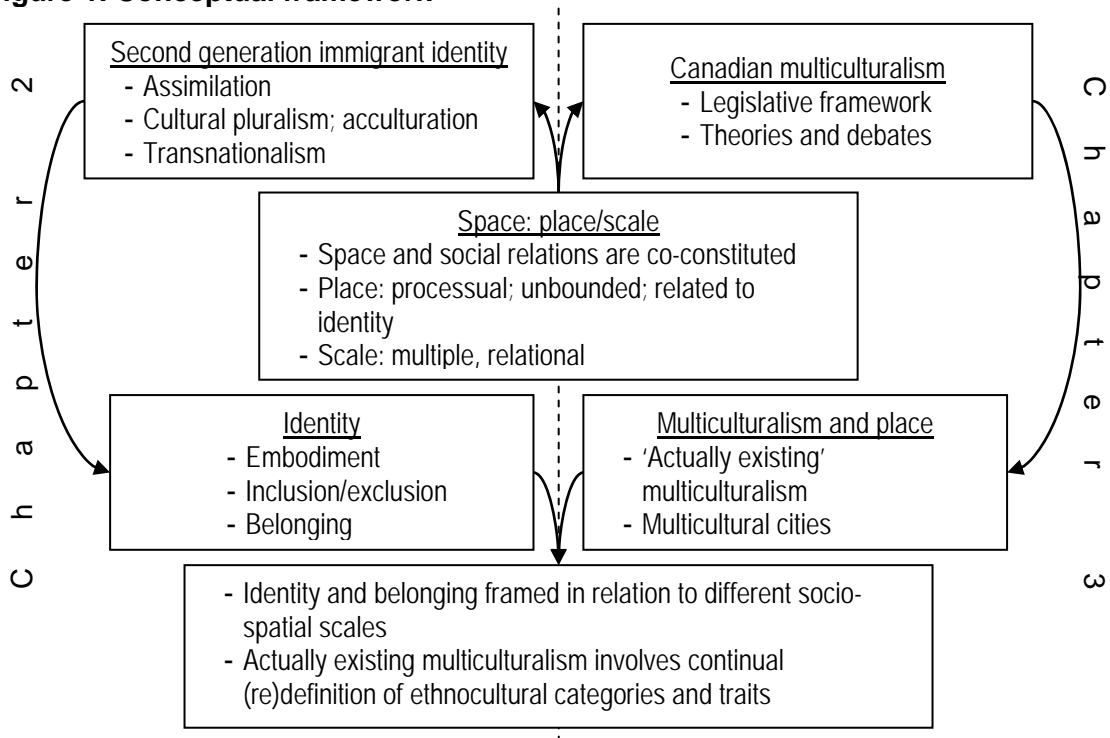
In the next broad section of my dissertation, I move into a discussion of my empirical work. In Chapter 4, I provide a more detailed background on the empirical context of my project. I also elaborate on my data sources and methods. The next three chapters address my empirical findings in terms of the scaled socio-spatial binaries discussed above; Chapters 5, 6, and 7 examine discursive binaries framed at the scales of the nation-state, the community, and the body, respectively. In the final chapter – Chapter 8 – I present some concluding thoughts on the overall contributions of this project and its shortcomings, as well as possible directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2:
SECOND GENERATION YOUTH IDENTITY

In this chapter, I discuss the dominant approaches that have been used to theorize identity formation among immigrants and their descendants in Western, multicultural nations. In the first section of this chapter I review some of the main theories of immigrant adaptation and integration into host societies. In particular, I review how immigrant identity formation has been addressed from assimilationist and cultural pluralist perspectives, pointing out some of the key variants of this work, as well as some of the critiques of these perspectives. I also discuss transnationalism – an approach that attempts to address problems with previous approaches. I emphasize how various authors have combined transnationalism with feminist and post-colonial theories – elements of the literature that are particularly apropos to my study of young Indo-Canadian men and women. In the second section of this chapter I turn to a discussion of how researchers have addressed second generation youth identity in Canada, emphasizing the need for continued work in this area. I also argue that there is a need for theorizations that are more sensitive to the particularities of the experiences of the second generation rather than focusing primarily on the first generation. Finally, in the third section, I discuss ways in which adopting a 'geographical' perspective on identity – one that explores the spatial relationships that structure identity – could contribute to understandings of second generation youth identity.

Immigrant Identity Formation

Immigration research has tended to examine immigrant identity from either an assimilationist perspective – the so-called 'melting pot' model – or from a cultural pluralist vantage point – which favours the 'ethnic mosaic' metaphor. These two perspectives have been used to theorize how different immigrant groups adapt to their new homes, with particular attention to questions of psycho-social adjustment and socioeconomic status. Researchers in fields such as sociology and psychology have used these frameworks to address issues pertaining to second generation immigrant identity formation, including intergenerational relations (Kurian, 1991; Ng, 1996; Park,

1999; Zhou, 1997a), social adjustment (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Bagley, Bolitho, & Bertrand, 2001; Fuligni, 1997; Harker, 2001; Hovey & King, 1996; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981), and differences in language use across generations (Portes & Hao, 2002). This literature represents changing theoretical perspectives on assimilation and ethnocultural identity formation.

Assimilationist Theory

Classical assimilation theory is based on three central assumptions. First is the idea that diverse ethnocultural groups within a given national context will come to share the same 'culture' and access to various opportunities within society through a 'natural' assimilation process. Related to this is the idea that acculturation – or cultural assimilation – is a progressive process that, once started, follows a generally beneficial, inevitable and irreversible path (Gans, 1997; Reitz & Sklar, 1997). Classic assimilation theory's third main assumption is that this natural, inevitable process consists of the gradual replacement of old cultural habits and behaviours – those associated with an immigrant's society of origin – with habits and behaviours associated with an immigrant's new home (Zhou, 1997b). This perspective on immigration adaptation has tended to focus on immigrant identity in terms of how successfully immigrants are assimilated into their new cultures and how thoroughly and quickly immigrants develop a sense of identity consistent with the mainstream values and perspectives of their new homes (Rumbaut, 1997). Consequently, the argument goes, "distinctive ethnic traits such as old cultural ways, native languages, or ethnic enclaves are sources of disadvantages" (Zhou, 1997b, p. 977), which each successive generation drops in favour of conforming to the mainstream. Inherent in this perspective is the idea that assimilation ideally involves immigrants progressively adopting a stronger sense of identification with their new homes than with their former homes. An increasing sense of place attachment and belonging to the destination country is seen as a necessary aspect of successful assimilation.

One major critique of classical assimilation theory is that it is predicated on the assumption that a coherent 'mainstream' exists, as well as the implication that 'ethnic' attributes and values are inferior to those of the 'mainstream' (Zhou, 1997b). In most Western countries, this mainstream is tacitly understood as white, middle-class, heterosexual and Protestant (at least nominally). The potentially discriminatory

ramifications of classical assimilation theory become evident in this regard. Another major critique of classical assimilationist perspectives is the empirical fact that assimilation does not always proceed along an inevitable path, and that ethnocultural differences may persist and even become more pronounced across generations. Concern with this inconsistency has led to the development of a 'bumpy-line' model (Gans, 1992) which, while still positing an eventual acculturation from 'ethnic' to 'non-ethnic,'[2] allows for the possibility that 'bumps,' or disruptions, may occur in this process. This model can therefore account for declines between the first and second generation in factors such as educational attainment and economic status.

A related corrective to classical assimilation theory with particular emphasis on the second generation is the idea of segmented assimilation. Developed primarily in the context of the United States, segmented assimilation "attempts to explain what determines into which segment of American society a particular immigrant group may assimilate" (Zhou, 1997b, p. 984). Rather than focusing on how particular factors might *determine* acculturation, this perspective focuses on the *interactions among* various individual-level factors - including education, birth-place, language fluency, age upon arrival, and length of residence in the host country – and contextual, or structural factors - such as socioeconomic background, place of residence, and 'race'[3] – that shape how immigrants are received in their new homes (Bankston, 1998; Boyd & Grieco, 1998; Portes, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997b). Different combinations of factors can lead to a range of different outcomes:

> this theory places the process of becoming American, in terms of both acculturation and economic adaptation, in the context of a society consisting of segregated and unequal segments and considers this process to be composed of at least three possible multidirectional patterns: the time-honored upward mobility pattern dictating the acculturation and economic integration into the normative structures of middle-class America; the downward-mobility pattern, in the opposite direction, dictates the acculturation and parallel integration into the underclass; and economic integration into middle-class America, with lagged acculturation and deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and solidarity. (Zhou, 1997b, p. 984)

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[2] The ways in which different ethnocultural groups are or are not constructed as 'ethnic,' or defined in terms of ethnic characteristics, relates to what characteristics constitute 'difference' or 'otherness' in a given society.

[3] 'Race' is likewise a complex, problematic concept, as it is frequently invoked as a form of biological differentiation rather than as a socially constructed means of defining and categorizing human bodies.

In this sense, the segmented assimilation approach does not necessarily assume the teleological progression of classical assimilation theory, recognizing that second and subsequent generations may or may not acculturate, and that immigrant identity is shaped through the intersections of multiple lines of difference.

Segmented assimilation theory is often an aspect of contemporary research, as attention has begun to focus on second generation immigrants. "New second generation" research has been U.S.-centred with a particular concern with changes in immigration as the bulk of new immigrants to that country come increasingly from non-European parts of the world (Portes & Zhou, 1993). The two key features of new second generation research can be summarized as the perceptions that: (1) "the long-term effects of immigration for the host society depend less on the fate of first generation immigrants than on their descendants," and (2) "the experiences of the present generation cannot be inferred from those children of earlier European immigrants" (Portes, 1997, p. 814). Therefore, one concern of new second generation immigrant research has been to identify and theorize differences in the psychological and social barriers faced by first versus second generation immigrants. Although heavily debated, a number of studies of different groups in a variety of national contexts have found that second generation immigrant youth suffer from higher rates of psycho-social adjustment problems and may be somewhat more prone to problems such as depression than their parents or their non-immigrant peers (Aronowitz, 1984; Fuligni, 1997; Harker, 2001; Hovey & King, 1996). Authors of such research, however, generally caution against drawing broad generalizations, recognizing a range of contingent factors including national origin – which may relate to linguistic and/or cultural conflicts – family structure, and ethnocultural environments in destination areas (Bankston, 1998; Zhou, 1997a). In effect, new second generation research is a response to the challenges to traditional notions of assimilation and integration created by the experiences of contemporary immigrants.

While segmented assimilation theories and second generation research address some of the flaws of classical assimilation theory, they still largely rely on the assumption that 'immigrant,' or 'ethnic' values and traditions are identifiably distinct from 'non-immigrant,' or 'mainstream' values and traditions. In addition, while segmented assimilation usefully addresses the ways in which structural factors shape the experiences of immigrants, it is less useful for considering how immigrants might shape - and potentially change – structural factors. In other words, although segmented

16

assimilation allows for an understanding of assimilation as a process with multiple possible outcomes, it remains centred on the assumption of a separation, and unidirectional relationship, between 'structure' and 'individuals.'

<u>Cultural Pluralist Approaches</u>

While assimilationist perspectives informed the bulk of Western studies of ethnic identity formation for most of the 20th-century, over the past three decades, pluralist approaches attempting to address some of the problems with assimilationist perspectives have become increasingly prevalent (Sanders, 2002). The early cultural pluralist perspective of primordialism posits ethnic identity is a fixed, fundamental aspect of human existence (Hebert, 2001). Work in this tradition counters the idea immigrant groups will – or even should – gradually lose their distinctiveness as ethnocultural groups. This perspective, however, has been widely critiqued for the ways in which it assumes ethnocultural identity to be based on a set of unchanging traditions and practices (Abu-Laban, 2002). More recent cultural pluralist theories emphasize the dynamic, open-ended and multiple aspects of identity (Gans, 1997; Hebert, 2001).

Both early and more contemporary cultural pluralist perspectives reject the 'unified core' posited by assimilation theory. Culturally plural societies are seen as consisting of a heterogeneous set of ethnocultural groups, generally including a dominant majority group (Zhou, 1997b). As such, cultural attributes associated with an immigrant's home country should not be assumed to be inferior or detrimental. Instead, cultural pluralism – of which multiculturalism is one form – has been argued to represent an "alternative way of viewing the host society, treating members of ethnic minority groups as a part of the American [or host country] population rather than as foreigners or outsiders, and presenting ethnic or immigrant cultures as integral segments of American [or host country] society" (ibid., p. 982). Likewise, cultural pluralist approaches – most based on research done in the United States - draw from the perspective that pre-migration ethnocultural patterns may or may not be retained, based on their fit with the host society, and even those retained are likely to be changed, reshaped, and negotiated (Gans, 1997; Sanders, 2002; Zhou, 1997b).

Acculturation

One particularly influential concept in work on immigrant attachment to ethnocultural identities and communities in the context of cultural pluralism is that of acculturation. While acculturation is relevant to first as well as second generation immigrants, it has been a central framework in second generation immigrant studies. Likewise, while acculturation can be used to address immigrant adaptation in a range of societal contexts, it has been particularly important to research on immigrant youth adaptation under Canadian multiculturalism. This is due in part to the influential work of Canadian scholar and key acculturation theorist John Berry, who argues that acculturation is most compatible with a cultural pluralist framework and thus particularly relevant to the Canadian context (Berry, 2005).

Acculturation is a concept from cross-cultural psychology that refers to "the process of cultural and psychological change that follows intercultural contact" (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006, p. 305). If cultural pluralism can be thought of as a general framework for understanding immigrant and second generation immigrant identity, acculturation seeks to identify and explicate the specific strategies through which immigrants construct those identities. According to theories of acculturation, the attitudes and strategies involved in intercultural adaptation can be divided into four categories: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization (Berry, 2002; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989). These four categories are differentiated by two factors: immigrants' retention or abandonment of their previous culture, and the extent to which immigrants seek out contact with other groups within society. As discussed above, assimilation refers to the process through which immigrant groups adopt the culture of the dominant society. It may also refer to the process through which cultural differences between immigrant and non-immigrant groups are gradually eradicated by changes occurring in both groups. On the other hand, if members of a non-dominant group retain their original culture and seek to isolate themselves from other groups in society, they have adopted a strategy of separation. Integration refers to a strategy in which immigrants maintain elements of their previous culture while also seeking to engage with other groups – marginalization occurs when immigrants have no interest either in maintaining previous cultural practices or engaging with other groups (Berry, 2002; Berry, 2005; Berry et al., 1989; Berry et al., 2006).

Given the association of acculturation theory with the context of cultural pluralism, it is, perhaps, not surprising that of the four general strategies, integration – in which immigrants both maintain their cultural heritage and also seek out engagement with other groups – is generally posited as an ideal, and has been associated with higher levels of psychological well-being such (Berry, 2005; Berry et al., 2006). Ager and Strang's (2008) study of refugee settlement in the United Kingdom suggests that fostering a 'sense of belonging' is key aspect of successfully 'integrated' communities:

> Many [research participants] additionally identified 'belonging' as the ultimate mark of living in an integrated community. This involved links with family, committed friendships and a sense of respect and shared values. Such shared values did not deny diversity, difference and one's identity within a particular group, but provided a wider context within which people had a sense of belonging. (pp. 177-178)

However, the socio-political context of acculturation will shape the prevalence of attitudes and possibility of strategies. For example, structural barriers and discrimination may prevent someone from assimilating, even when he or she is seeking to do so. Likewise, a strategy of separation is only possible when other members of one's ethnic group also want to preserve and maintain distinct 'ethnic' traditions.

Proponents of acculturation theory point out that these strategies are not to be considered mutually exclusive categories or a means of 'pigeon-holing' individuals into a typology (Berry, 2002). Instead, any particular individual is likely to be engaged in multiple strategies at one time or in different strategies over time. In addition, acculturation theorists argue that acculturation is not a one-way phenomenon, but instead often involves changes in the 'mainstream' as well as within 'ethnic' segments of society. As Berry (2005) notes, "Acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological changes that involve various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to some longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups" (p. 699). While acculturation theory thus recognizes that what constitutes 'ethnic culture' and what constitutes 'mainstream culture' is not static, like assimilationist theory, acculturation perspectives tend to assume that the scale of change is the nation-state. In contrast, transnational theory challenges this by addressing migration as a process involving relationships among a range of geographical scales, from the individual body to global flows of labour.

<u>Transnationalism</u>

More traditional approaches to immigrant identity formation have been argued to have a tendency to essentialize the characteristics ascribed to different ethnocultural groups (Abu-Laban, 2002; Chan, 2003). Some of those concerned to draw from a theoretical framework that better allows for the fluidity of identity – or the idea that identity is unfixed, dynamic, and multiple – have turned to transnationalism as the basis of their work. Transnational theory argues transnational migrants are "part of a social system whose networks are based in two or more nation states [and] maintain activities, identities and statuses in several social locations" (Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992, p. 3). This recognition of the multiplicity of processes shaping the experiences of transnational migrants has been applied to the issue of immigrant identity formation. Unlike assimilationist and multiculturalist approaches, which tackle the issue of identity formation largely within the context of the receiving country's society, the transnational perspective allows that migrant identity is often shaped by on-going connections to two or more nations. Transnationalism thus challenges the nation-state focus of assimilation and acculturation theories. This challenge is furthered by the ways in which researchers have used transnationalism to theorize the identities of those who "migrate," but fall outside of state-defined categories of "immigrant," such as undocumented migrant workers (Cravey, 2005) and refugees (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000; Black, 2003).

In a discussion of transnationalism and identity, Vertovec (2001) notes, "the multi-local life-world presents a wider, even more complex set of conditions that affect the construction, negotiation and reproduction of social identities" (p. 578). This concept of the "multi-local life-world" resonates with social and cultural geographers' understanding that space "play[s] an active role in the constitution and reproduction of social identities; and social identities, meanings and relations are recognized as producing material and symbolic or metaphorical spaces (Valentine, 2001, p. 4). If transnational 'bodies' can be understood as moving – literally and/or figuratively – across international boundaries and between multiple places, transnational identity formation involves a complex set of interactions between processes occurring across space, between places, and at different scales. Similarly, recent transnational perspectives on identity emphasize flows connecting distant places and the fluidity of the boundaries of identity. Such work is careful to avoid over-glorifying the idea of transnational identity as

a potential source for resistance against hegemonic forms of capitalism. As Mitchell (1997b) argues:

> Although the potential for resistance is clear, the celebratory theoretical assumption of a progressive politics of intervention is not always borne out in empirical transnational studies…In other words, strategic self-fashioning in liminal and partial sites can be used for the purposes of capital accumulation quite as effectively as for the purposes of intervention in hegemonic narratives of race and nation. (p. 109)

Given this, the now stereotypical image of a transnational "flexible citizen" (Ong, 1999), smoothly adopting and manipulating different identities while seamlessly moving between social worlds has been replaced by one that highlights *both* the potentially liberating and debilitating character of transnational identity.

Das Gupta (1997) discusses how this approach can be used to examine the ways in which ethnicity is constructed and contested while avoiding the problems of assimilationist and pluralist approaches. She labels these earlier approaches as being based on the 'ethnicity paradigm,' and in doing so, she outlines their shortcomings: "The paradigm deals with questions of cultural identity in two ways, assimilation or pluralism. Despite the differences in their position on ethnicity, both traditionalize homeland cultures and share a common nationalistic tone" (ibid., p. 581). She points out how a transnational framework informed by sensitivity to difference – in this case, gender – can reveal and potentially address some of the problems of this paradigm, arguing that such an approach:

> exposes three connected sets of problems fundamental to the ethnicity paradigm: its inability to account for culture as power relations between genders, its preoccupation with loss or persistence of ethnicity, and its presumption that immigrant cultures in the United States [or any host country] are isolated from current and historical links between receiving and sending countries. (ibid., p. 573)

Das Gupta uses this framework to examine the construction of identity of second generation Indian women, focusing on the construction of the "authentic Indian family" by the first generation, the resistance against this on the part of the second generation, and the moves by women of the second generation to 'reinvent' their identities in a process of going back and forth between multiple cultures. In her discussion she addresses the complex relationships and intersections between inter-generational relations, parental and societal expectations, class, gender and ethnicity. Das Gupta's work is thus an

example of how transnationalism might be used to address complex questions concerning second generation immigrant identity formation. It also suggests an understanding of transnational identities as developing through the complex nexus of processes articulated at a range of spatial scales.

The importance to transnational theory of understanding space as inherently relational is more explicitly articulated by Crang, Dwyer, and Jackson (2003). In response to the ways in which the transnationalism literature has focused on migration and migrants, they offer a conceptualization of transnational space, emphasizing the spaces of commodity culture. They propose an understanding of transnationalism as "a multidimensional space that is multiply inhabited and characterized by complex networks, circuits and flows" (ibid., p. 441). In this sense, they see transnationalism not in terms of some marker of particular bodies, but as a "lived social field" (ibid., p. 451). This allows them to investigate the idea that transnational space is "multiply inhabited" by both ethnic migrants and non-ethnic non-migrants – an idea that does more toward problematizing the construction of national divisions and borders than more limited conceptualizations of transnationalism.

Ethnic Youth Gangs

Related to theories of the adaptation and integration of immigrant and second generation youth is a body of work that seeks to understand relationships between immigrant youth identity and more serious forms of social conflict, particularly criminal violence and other illegal activities. A range of studies – particularly within criminology, sociology and psychology – have focused on immigrant youth gangs, primarily within the context of the United States and Australia (Alexander, 2004; Alsaybar, 1999; Bankston, 1998; Collins, Noble, & Poynting, 2000; Gemert, Peterson, & Lien, 2008; Johnson & Muhlhausen, 2005; Mao, Pih, & Hirose, 2010; Nakhid, 2009; Noble, Poynting, & Collins, 2002; Rios, 2008; White, Perrone, & Guerra, 1999). While a significant body of work has addressed youth crime in Canada, including a relatively small but growing body of work on youth gangs, few studies have examined relationships between ethnocultural identity and youth gangs.

In general, the development of ethnic youth gangs has been analyzed in terms of structural factors or cultural factors - "what might be termed loosely the 'class' (socio-economic) and 'underclass' (culturalist) debates" (Alexander, 2004, p. 530). Recent work

has been particularly concerned with addressing the ways in which 'conservative' culturalist arguments have increasingly supplanted more 'liberal' structuralist arguments, as well as the complex ways in which structuralist and culturalist perspectives are intertwined in public discourse and policy (Alexander, 2004; Waters, 1999; Wilson, 2005).

To some extent, debates over whether structural or cultural factors are the underlying cause of ethnic youth gangs begs the question of whether structural and cultural factors are separable in the first place. One way around the potential stalemate between these perspectives is to emphasize second generation social conflict as embedded in particular empirical contexts. Such a perspective might focus on how conflict is constructed and negotiated 'on the ground' among a range of individuals and organizations without necessarily attempting to fit an examination of that conflict into the 'either/or' explanatory frameworks of structural and cultural accounts. Doing so might enable approaches to prevention and intervention that recognize the ways in which structural and cultural factors shape each other, and even more importantly, that address the context-specific ways in which these factors interact.

A place-centred perspective on ethnic youth gangs could potentially draw from the idea of *collective identity*. Unlike approaches that focus on how individuals form understandings of themselves as part of an ethnic group, work on collective identity focuses on how individuals interact to form a shared ethnic identity (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Bacon, 1999; Taylor, 1997). Collective ethnic identities can be understood as inherently public and are formed through interaction in particular places (Bacon, 1999). The ways in which young people reshape collective ethnic identities can be understood as processes of struggle, conflict and negotiation over the characteristics and meanings of a particular ethnic group – an inherently social and public set of interactions:

> In the public realm, groups of people come together…and in the process produce a collective ethnic identity. A collective ethnic identity is an identity of a different order, more than a mere collection of individual ethnic selves. It is the result of social interaction among a group of people, and resides in the public arena. It is supra-individual. (ibid., p. 142)

Membership in a criminal group is a very public identity, based on an affiliation with a social group that inherently positions and bounds that group relative to wider society. It is

not simply that criminal group members are represented as violent on an individual basis, but that the influence of 'bad elements' operating specifically through the group affiliation of gangs has lured youth into a subculture of violence. From this perspective, Indo-Canadian youth, for example, become a threat once they publicly act and identify as an antisocial group.

New Directions and Canada's New Second Generation

Like all theoretical approaches, assimilationism, cultural pluralism and transnationalism have their respective strengths and limitations, relative to any particular empirical concern. In terms of this project, the utility of assimilationism and cultural pluralism lie largely in terms of theorizing dominant understandings of immigration and multiculturalism – particularly insofar as they are projects of the state - as well as some of the potential problematic assumptions of those understandings. Transnationalism offers additional insight into these concerns. It has also proven amenable to the concerns of post-structural theories, in general, and contemporary feminism, more specifically, allowing for a conceptualization of identity as partial, fragmented, and contextual. Further, transnationalism has been used to explore some of the more complex intersections of migration with other axes of social identity, such as race, gender, class, ethnicity and nationality.

Nonetheless, while assimilationism, cultural pluralism and transnationalism have raised a range of issues in regards to theorizing immigrant identity, their central concern is just that – im/migrant identity. This begs the question as to how fully they address the experiences of the so-called second (and third, fourth, fifth, etc.) generation. While the lives of these children of immigrants are undoubtedly at least partially shaped by their parents' (or grandparents') experiences of immigration, the question remains as to whether that moment should be placed at the heart of theorizing the experiences of the descendants of immigrants. In addition, even work on first generation, or 'newcomer' youth does not necessarily address the kinds of issues most relevant to second generation youth. As Sundar (2008) notes, second generation youth "confront many of the same concerns as newcomer youth, but likely face *particular* challenges in constructing identities that simultaneously admit and resist elements of both their parents' and mainstream cultures" (p. 253).

While still relatively understudied, especially in comparison to similar work done in the United States, Canadian researchers have begun to look more closely at the experiences of the new second generation in an attempt to identify any of the kind of "particular challenges" described by Sundar. As noted above, one focus of new second generation studies has been to address the failure of traditional assimilationist models to account for perceived declines in socioeconomic status and psycho-social adjustment between the first and second generations of certain immigrant groups. New second generation research thus attempts to answer the question about assimilation theory's relevance to second generation immigrants by incorporating the idea of segmented assimilation. A particular concern has been the potential for decreasing rather than increasing levels of education, employment, and income.

As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3, changes to Canadian immigration laws in the 1980s led to a significant increase in immigration to Canada during the 1990s, as compared to previous decades. Most of the children of this recent wave of immigrants are relatively young and have yet, or are just beginning, to enter the workforce, meaning there is still little data on factors such as their employment and income. In light of this, researchers interested in the current second generation have tended to focus on questions of social adjustment and identity, drawing largely from theories of acculturation. Of particular interest have been questions of the new second generation's attachment to ethnocultural identities and communities (Bagley et al., 2001; Ghuman, 1994a; Howard-Hassmann, 1999; Jedwab, 2008), experiences of discrimination or marginalization (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Nodwell & Guppy, 1992; Samuel, 2004), and intra-ethnic, inter-generational relations (Ghuman, 1994b; Judge, 1992; Kwak & Berry, 2001). In addition, several researchers have drawn from transnationalism along with post-structuralist and feminist accounts of identity in order to examine the complex meanings and practices involved in how youth negotiate identity and belonging (Das Gupta, 1997; Ghosh & Wang, 2003; Pratt, 2003; 2010; Walton-Roberts & Pratt, 2005; Waters, 2001). Such work demonstrates the utility of transnational perspectives not only for research on international migrants, but also for research on the second generation.

While previous work on Canada's new second generation has done much to contribute to better understandings of ethnocultural identity formation in the Canadian context, there is a continued need for empirical work in this area. In particular, there is a need to continue exploring processes through which ethnocultural identity is *re*-shaped and *re*-created by the second generation. These new forms may include elements of

their parents' culture and their 'host' culture, but are not reducible to those elements. Likewise, there is a need to continue to expand on work that approaches identity from post-structuralist and feminist perspectives (such as the studies mentioned above) in which identity is understood as partial, fragmentary, contextual and contradictory. Such approaches challenge conventional binary notions such as male/female and white/non-white, arguing that individuals occupy complicated, multiple, and even ambivalent positions in relation to the social categories through which they may identify or be identified by others (Moss & Dyck, 2003; Sharp, 2004).

Spatializing Identity and the Body

Concepts such as assimilation, pluralism, transnationalism, adaptation, and integration all invoke what might be described as spatial metaphors in their explanations of immigrant and second generation identity. They relate to whether or not an individual is 'in place' or 'out of place' (Cresswell, 1996); part, or not part, of a nation or community. Yet, with the exception of transnationalism, the spatiality of immigrant identity is generally not explicitly addressed by these theories. Geographers, however, have understood identity as structured around spatial relationships that are both material (i.e., where one was born, the places one encounters, and how these become incorporated into one's identity) as well as more metaphorical/symbolic (i.e., one's 'place' in society, where one 'belongs,' insider-outsider, etc.). Likewise, space is produced and shaped through social processes that include the creation and maintenance of different social identities. In this sense, geographers have understood space and identity as co-constitutive (Valentine, 2001).

An important aspect of these discussions is an emphasis on the ways in which different 'bodies' are inscribed with different social meanings. Geographers have discussed 'the body' from a range of theoretical perspectives, including phenomenological, psychoanalytical, and social constructivist approaches (Longhurst, 1997; Valentine, 2001). In particular, concern with the ways one's 'embodiment' mediates relationships with place has been a central concern for feminist geographers, many of whom have seen an emphasis on the body as a means to address materiality. As Sharp (2004) notes, "This is not a naïve antitheoretical turn but an attempt to unite the discursive elements of cultural production with the emotions, pains, joys, passions, or requirements of various bodies" (p. 74).

The considerable breadth in geographical literatures on "the body" notwithstanding, my general focus is what Moss and Dyck (2003) refer to as a "social geography of the body" - an approach that can "describe the nexus of personal and collective experiences of social, built and natural environments; tease out the constituent processes of individual and collective identities in relation to power; and explore the possibilities of bodily activities in specific spaces" (pp.59-60). I also draw from feminist constructivist perspectives that see bodies as discursively produced "primary objects of inscription - surfaces on which values, morality and social laws are inscribed" (Longhurst, 1997, p. 489).

From this perspective, the body is not simply a discrete 'container' for or location of an identity, but instead creates and is created through the intersection of processes and discourses occurring at and between multiple scales. As such, "[q]uestions of the body — its materiality, discursive construction, regulation, and representation — are crucial to understanding spatial relations at every spatial scale" (Johnston, 2006, p. 20). A key concept in work that addresses such questions is the idea of belonging, including the social norms that mark different bodies as 'in' or 'out of place' (Cresswell, 1996) as well as the affective ties to place that contribute to one's sense of belonging.

<u>Belonging</u>

While there is no universal definition of belonging, it is, as Mee and Wright (2009) argue, "an inherently geographical concept," as it "connects matter to place, through various practices…which signal that a *particular* collection of objects, animals, plants, germs, people, practices, performances, or ideas is meant 'to be' in a place" (p. 772, original emphasis). Drawing from this definition, an individual's sense of belonging always involves a relationship between that individual and some larger whole. Since belonging to, or in, a particular place implies a sense of belonging among at least some sub-set of the other people who inhabit or use that space, this 'larger whole' is both social and spatial. Dowling and Blunt (2006) describe this as one aspect of 'home,' which they argue "can be conceptualized as processes of establishing connections with others and creating a sense of order and belonging as *part of* rather than *separate from* society" (p. 14, original emphasis). A sense of belonging, then, can be understood as constituted through intersections of one's geographical and social positions; it is a state in which

"the affective aspects of belonging are mobilised and the focus is on feelings of being in place" (Mee & Wright, 2009, p. 772).

Despite the inherent spatiality of belonging, Antonsich (2010) notes that belonging is often taken to be a self-explanatory concept and remains under-theorized in geography. He points out that the term "belonging" has most frequently been used as a synonym for national or ethnic identity and is often conflated with citizenship. Antonsich argues instead for a conceptualization of belonging that focuses on two key dimensions:

> belonging as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and belonging as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion∕ exclusion (politics of belonging). (ibid., p. 645)

This approach recognizes the importance of ideas about citizenship and rights to theorizations of belonging, but also recognizes "forms of territorial belonging as implicated in the mundane, banal claim 'I belong here'" (ibid.), with "here" referring to a range of possible geographical scales. In their discussion of the multi-scalar spatiality of 'home,' Dowling and Blunt (2006) make a similar argument, pointing out that "senses of belonging and alienation are constructed across diverse scales ranging from the body and the household to the city, nation and globe" (p. 27) and that "[f]eelings of belonging and relations with others could be connected to a neighbourhood, a nation, stretched across transnational space, or located on a park bench" (p. 29). In this sense, belonging is linked to - but not necessarily bound by - particular geographical contexts.

Given the contextual nature of belonging, it is important to consider how socio-spatial norms defining categories of difference are constructed. In their discussion of different approaches to how migrants understand, experience, and create a sense of home and belonging, Ralph and Staeheli (2011) point out that in addition to being a personal, subjective experience, belonging "also relates to how (powerful) others define who belongs to home according to specific spatial norms and expectations" (p. 523). As they explain:

> This social element of belonging speaks not so much to the feeling of identification and familiarity as it does to experiences of inclusion and, very often, of exclusion. Belonging, therefore, does not simply invoke warm feelings of fellowship to various peoples, places and cultures, because it depends on, or takes its meaning from, the inability of some people to participate in mainstream societal practices. As such, belonging

always prompts awkward questions about affiliation and membership in neighbourhoods, communities, cities and nations. (ibid)

These types of "awkward questions" of belonging, nationality and ethnocultural identification figure prominently in the discourses and practices surrounding Indo-Canadian youth criminal groups and violence. From frequently drawn contrasts between 'Indian' and 'Canadian' culture, to definitions of the Indo-Canadian ethnocultural community, to young people's sense of belonging or alienation, second generation Indo-Canadian youth identity is being constructed through complex relationships between the body and a range of other geographical scales. As such, an approach that understands identity as structured through spatial relationships is particularly relevant to an analysis of the discourses and practices concerning Indo-Canadian youth criminal groups and violence.

While far from exhaustive, three sets of spatial relationships have emerged as particularly predominant in media representations of Indo-Canadian youth criminal groups, as well as in the interviews I conducted with government and community actors and young Indo-Canadian men and women: immigrant versus non-immigrant (or 'Indian' versus 'Canadian'), ethnocultural 'community' versus 'mainstream' and belonging versus alienation. While these pairings are often invoked as binaries – serving to delineate boundaries between categories of nationality, race, and community, for example – the ways in which they figured in the archival and interview material were much more complex, such that distinctions were frequently challenged and made ambiguous even as they were deployed. In order to contextualize my discussion of these spatial binaries in Chapter 5, 6, and 7, I first turn to a discussion of Canadian diversity and multiculturalism in Chapter 3 and the specific empirical context of my research in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3:
CANADIAN DIVERSITY: IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

As of Canada's 2006 Census, nearly one-fifth of the country's population was foreign-born – the highest level in approximately 70 years.[4] In addition, immigration accounted for 69.3% of Canada's overall population growth – a trend that reinforces the country's identity as a 'nation of immigrants.' While relatively high rates of immigration are not new to Canada, recent immigrants come from an increasingly diverse range of source countries, leading to the need for changes in social services and planning at the municipal as well as the provincial and federal levels. To a large extent, addressing these needs has become the domain of policies and programs that come under the broad heading of multiculturalism.

Kallen (1982) points out that the term 'multiculturalism' has multiple meanings in Canadian society:

> In the current Canadian context, the concept "multiculturalism" is widely used in at least three senses: (1) to refer to the "social reality" of ethnic diversity; (2) to refer to the federal government policy, designed to create national unity in ethnic diversity; and (3) to refer to the ideology of cultural pluralism (the Canadian mosaic) underlying the federal policy. (p. 51)

In the following sections, I address these three meanings of multiculturalism. First I review some of the major immigration trends affecting Canadian society, increases in the proportion of visible minorities, and changes in immigration policy. Second, I outline the development of federal Canadian multicultural policy and programs. I then turn to some of the theoretical debates over multiculturalism, including what its effects are and different normative theorizations. Such theorizations underpin government policies and inform popular understandings of multiculturalism. This is not to suggest one-way relationships between ideology and policy and ideology and popular conceptions. Similar to the way I divide my empirical discussion in Chapters 5-7 into the scales of the nation,

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[4] Unless otherwise indicated, all data and statistical information in this section come from the following source: (Statistics Canada, 2007a).

community, and body, I separate understandings of multiculturalism in my discussion as a heuristic device. I argue, however, that ideology, policy, social environments, and popular understandings are all interrelated, helping to shape and modify each other. Finally, I discuss the need to understand actually existing multiculturalism at a range of spatial scales, particularly in terms of the everyday, 'lived' spaces of cities.

National Trends: Immigration, Visible Minorities and Policy

During the 1990s, 2.2 million immigrants entered Canada, compared to 1.3 million in the 1980s and 1.4 million in both the 1970s and 1960s. This trend has continued into the 2000s, with some 1.1 million new immigrants arriving in Canada between 2001 and 2006. As of May 2006, this had brought the total foreign-born population to 19.8% of the Canadian population – a figure second only to Australia's 22.2%. This increase in immigration levels has been accompanied by a significant shift in terms of the national origins of immigrants. Until the 1960s the main sources of immigration were the U.S. and Europe, in particular the United Kingdom. Since the mid 1960s, however, immigrants have increasingly come from other areas of the world, notably Asia, and even more specifically, the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong. Figure 2 shows the region of birth of immigrants to Canada by period of immigration.

Figure 2. Region of birth of recent immigrants to Canada, 1971-2006
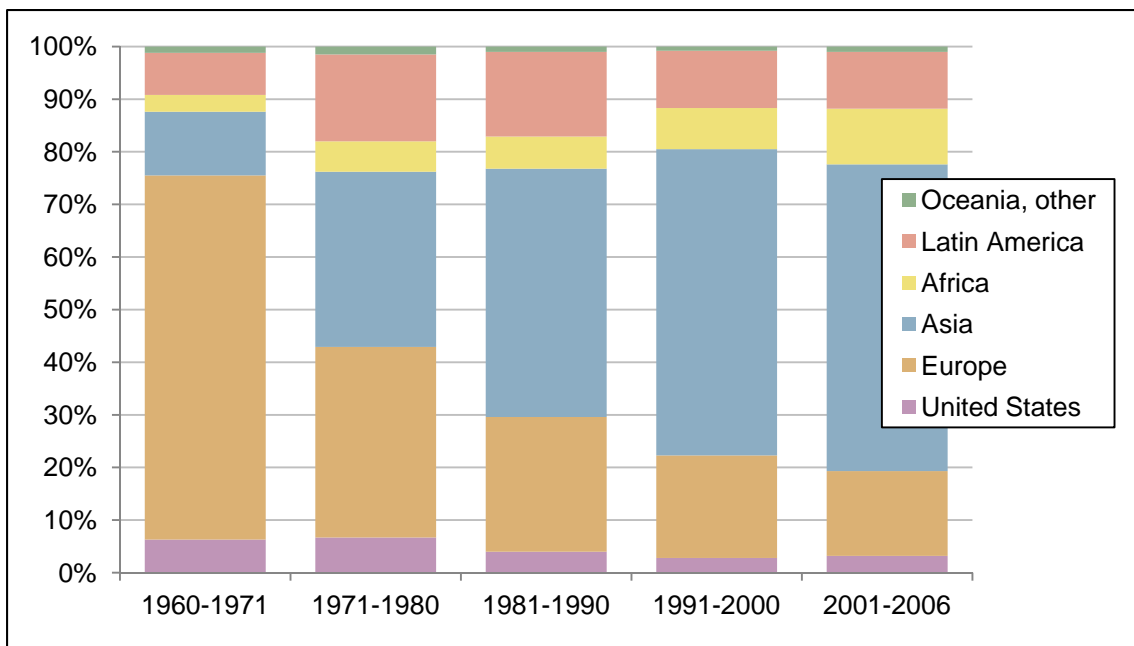
(Statistics Canada, 2007a)

Changes in Canada's immigration patterns are the direct outcome of changes in the regulatory structure of Canada's immigration laws. In 1967, Canada passed new immigration laws stipulating three main categories of immigrants: "independents," "sponsored dependents" and "nominated relatives." In order to qualify as an independent, potential immigrants were judged on the basis of a point system, with points granted according to a series of criteria, including education, a personal assessment of adaptability and motivation made by the immigration officer, occupational demand, skill level, age, and arranged employment (Boyd, 1976). Along with earlier immigration reforms that had removed origin criteria for admission to Canada, the 1967 act effectively opened up Canada to a new wave of immigration, primarily from developing countries and, even more importantly, East Asia.

In the early 1980s, the Canadian government passed another set of immigration reforms as part of the new Canadian Business Immigration Program (CBIP), aimed at encouraging immigration by entrepreneurs and businesspeople. Currently, the CBIP applies to two types of business immigrants: investorsand self-employed persons.[5] In order to gain admission as an investor, immigrants must make an investment of CDN $800,000 in Canada and have a minimum net worth of CDN $1,600,000 (Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011a). Self-employed persons must "intend and [be] able to become self-employed in Canada" and must have either "relevant experience that will make a significant contribution to the cultural or athletic life of Canada" or "experience in farm management and the intention and ability to purchase and manage a farm in Canada" (Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011c, n.p.). The implementation of the CBIP has had particularly strong impacts on Vancouver, as the city has been one of the main destinations for new immigrants and the primary destination for those entering as entrepreneurs, most notably from China (Wong & Ng, 2002).

Canada's most recent immigrants are decidedly city-dwellers: as of 2006, 94.9% of the foreign-born population and 97.2% of immigrants who arrived between 2001-2006 lived in urban areas. In contrast, 77.5% of the Canadian-born population lived in these areas. In addition, 62.9% of the foreign-born population and 68.9% of new immigrants were living in three cities – Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver – compared to 27.1% of the Canadian-born population. Although the tendency of new immigrants to settle in these cities has been evident for several decades, this represented a slight drop from

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[5] A third category - "entrepreneurs" – was suspended indefinitely in July 2011.

the 72.6% of new immigrants who had settled in these cities as of 2001. Regardless, the sheer number of new immigrants, coupled with the fact that most are of non-Western ethnicity and come from non-Anglophone[6] or non-Francophone countries, has obvious important ramifications in the cultural reshaping of Canadian cities as well of Canada as a whole. Table 1 shows the foreign-born population as a percent of the total population for Canada's largest metropolitan areas from 1991 to 2006.

Table 1. Foreign-born as percent of total population for largest metropolitan areas, 1991-2006

	1991	1996	2001	2006
Canada	16.1%	17.4%	18.4%	19.8%
Montréal	16.4%	17.8%	18.4%	20.6%
Toronto	38%	41.9%	43.7%	45.7%
Vancouver	30.1%	34.9%	37.5%	39.6%

(Statistics Canada, 2005b; 2007a)

Linked to these shifts in national origins of immigrants, the ethnic and racial make-up of the Canadian population continues to change. In addition to findings on immigration, the 2006 Census found that 16.2% of Canadians belonged to a visible minority, representing an increase from 13.4% in 2001 and 11.2% in 1996 (Statistics Canada, 2008). The proportion of the population that belongs to a visible minority is likely to continue to grow over the next decade, as recent immigrants – of whom 75% were visible minorities – enter into their second generation. Regarding the ethnic origins of visible minorities, the 2006 Census marked the first time that South Asians outnumbered Chinese as the largest visible minority group. Figure 3 shows the ethnic origins of visible minorities as a proportion of the visible minority population for 1996, 2001, and 2006.

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[6] With the exception of India

Figure 3. Visible minorities in Canada by ethnocultural group, 1996-2006
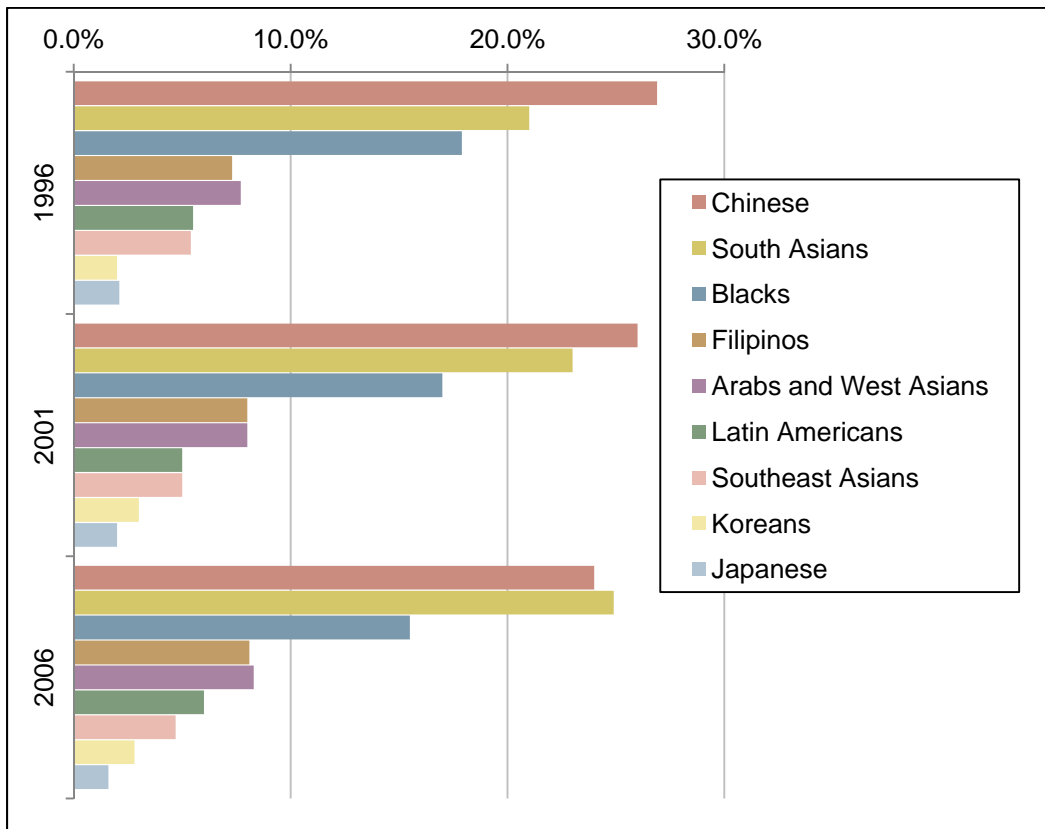
(Statistics Canada, 2008)

In terms of geographic distribution at the provincial scale, visible minorities are most heavily concentrated in British Columbia, where they account for 21.6% of the province's population, and Ontario, where they account for 19.1% of the population. Not surprisingly, these proportions have risen over time, reflecting increasing immigration rates to the two provinces.

Canadian Multiculturalism: Legislative Framework

Immigration and multiculturalism are intertwined issues in the minds of both Canadian policy-makers and the general public. Prime Minister Pierre Eliot Trudeau's 1971 announcement of an official federal policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework," however, came largely out of concerns over the apparent threats to national unity caused by Quebecois separtist sentiment. Trudeau's framework pledged that the federal government would provide support for multiculturalism in four main ways: 1) by seeking to "assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and

effort to continue to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, and a clear need for assistance;" 2) by helping "members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society;" 3) by promoting "creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity;" and 4) by continuing to "assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society" (Canada, House of Commons Debates 8545-46, 1971). Following Trudeau's announcement, in 1972 a new federal ministry was formed to address multiculturalism; the Canadian Consultative Council of Multiculturalism was formed in 1973 (Ungerleider, 1992).

In 1988, Canada enacted the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, becoming the first country in the world to adopt such an legislation. The act provides for individuals' equal protection under the law and freedom from discrimination based on such characteristics as religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, colour and gender, recognizes the rights of Aboriginal peoples, and reaffirms English and French as Canada's official languages. In addition two clauses have been of particular relevance to interpretations of multiculturalism. Firstly, "…the Constitution of Canada recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians." Secondly, "…the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada" (*Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, 1988). The Canadian Multiculturalism Act has been supplemented and supported by several subsequent initiatives, including the Broadcast Act of 1991, the formation of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation in 1996 and the adoption of the Embracing Change Action Plan in 2000 (Ungerleider, 1992).

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act reflects a particular conception of multiculturalism and the position of different groups within society in relation to each other. The prominence given to Canada's two major cultural-linguistic groups in Trudeau's original speech reflect the heightened concern over the Quebecois sepatist movement at the time and the centrality of Canada's "two solitudes"[7] to its historical

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[7] The phrase "two solitudes" comes from the title of Hugh MacLennan's (1945) novel, *Two Solitudes,* and has come to refer to "the anglophone and francophone populations of Canada, portrayed as two cultures coexisting independent of and isolated from each other" ("Two solitudes," 2004, n.p.).

development. Nonetheless the focus of social, cultural, and educational responses to multiculturalism has become 'other' ethnocultural groups – non-white and/or non-European immigrants (Jones, 2000).

The implementation of the Multiculturalism Act in federal policy has undergone a number of shifts since the act was formally adopted by Parliament in 1988. In 1991, federal multicultural programming became the responsibility of the short-lived Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. When the department was dismantled in 1993, the Multiculturalism Program was instituted as part of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Responsibility for overseeing the program shifted from Canadian Heritage to Citizenship and Immigration Canada in 2008 (Dewing, 2009). With this shift, came modifications in the stated policy goals of the program.

Under Canadian Heritage, the Multiculturalism Program focused on three policy goals that included: 1) "identity," or "fostering a society that recognizes, respects and reflects a diversity of cultures such that people of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada;" 2) "social justice," or "building a society that ensures fair and equitable treatment and that respects the dignity of people of all origins;" and 3) "civic participation," or "developing, among Canada's diverse people, active citizens with both the opportunity and the capacity to participate in shaping the future of their communities and their country" (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2004, p. 9). These goals have been revised somewhat under Citizenship and Immigration Canada to include "building an integrated, socially cohesive society," "making institutions more responsive to the needs of Canada's diverse population," and "engaging in international discussions on multiculturalism and diversity" (Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011b, p. 11). These goals have translated into a range of programs and policies including funding community/ethnocultural group arts programs, sponsoring anti-racism conferences, and developing councils to address foreign credential recognition for immigrants.

Canadian Multiculturalism: Theories and Debates

In his well-known work *The Vertical Mosaic* – a study that predated the introduction of multiculturalism as official state policy – Porter (1965) examines how ethnic origin and immigration status relate to social class, identifying a pattern of stratification that places the English and French 'charter groups' at the top of a class hierarchy, followed by

immigrants from other European nations and then those from areas such as China and India. He notes how the concept of an ethnic 'mosaic,' as opposed to the 'melting pot' metaphor used in the United States, served the interests of conservatives and preserved the relative power of the British charter group:

> The melting pot with its radical breakdown of national ties and old forms of stratification would have endangered the conservative tradition in Canadian life, a tradition which gives ideological support to the continued high status of the British charter group and continued entrance status of the later arrivals. (ibid., p. 71)

Even further, Porter goes on to argue, "Segregation in social structure, to which the concept of the mosaic or multiculturalism must ultimately lead, can become an important aspect of social control by the charter group" (ibid., pp. 71-72).

While Canadian multiculturalism has evolved, the concerns that Porter expressed over 40 years ago are, in many ways, still relevant to debates about contemporary Canadian multiculturalism. Subsequent generations of policy actors – both those in government positions as well as a vast range of social actors and institutions – have grappled with the problems he identified. As such, multiculturalism lies at the center of a key debate in Canadian political life: how to manage or balance diversity while creating or maintaining social equity and a unified national identity.

On one side of this debate are those who have argued that multiculturalism is divisive, encouraging social fragmentation and undermining national unity (Bissoondath, 1994; Gwyn, 1995). As Bissondath (1994) argues: "it is here that multiculturalism has failed us. In eradicating the centre, in evoking the uncertainty as to what and who is a Canadian, it has diminished all sense of Canadian values, i.e., of what is a Canadian" (p. 65). From this perspective, multiculturalism impedes immigrant from being incorporated into society and fosters inter-group conflict. Others have argued that, by providing a framework through which to mediate difference, it allows for and encourages immigrants to participate in civic life and to identify as (multicultural) Canadians. In a vehement rebuttal to Bissoondath and Gwyn's perspective, Kymlicka (1998) – one of the key theorists of Canadian multiculturalism – points out that their arguments make little, if any, reference to any actual policy or government document. After reviewing a range of statistical information on naturalization rates, political participation, intermarriage rates, etc. in order to refute Bissoondath and Gwyn's claims that multiculturalism has encouraged fragmentation, Kymlicka argues: "They describe a (non-existent) policy of

promoting 'monoculturalism' among ethnocultural groups, and then blame it for a (non-existent) trend towards 'apartheid' in Canadian society. They have invented a non-existent policy to explain a non-existent trend" (ibid., p. 22). While the two perspectives I have outlined are somewhat simplified versions of complex arguments, they are illustrative of the tension between a desire for economic and political equity on one hand and the recognition and protection of cultural difference on the other – something that appears to be an enduring feature of Canadian political discourse (Kernerman, 2005).

Just as the effects of multicultural policy are debated, so are its guiding principles or purposes. Kymlicka (1995) argues for a form of differentiated citizenship that addresses what he argues have been the two main sources of cultural pluralism: (1) multi-nationality, or "the incorporation of previously self-governing, territorially concentrated cultures into a larger state" (p. 10), and (2) poly-ethnicity, which occurs largely through immigration. According to this perspective, different nations, or "national minorities," of a multinational state generally claim some degree of self-government rights in the form of political autonomy and/or jurisdiction over particular territories. In a poly-ethnic context, however, ethnocultural groups may seek rights such as protection from discrimination and prejudice, public funding for cultural practices, and exemptions from regulations or practices that are in conflict with their religious practices. These "polyethnic rights" can be summarized as "group specific rights…intended to help ethnocultural groups and religious minorities express their cultural particularity and pride without it hampering their success in the economic and political institutions of the dominant society" (ibid., p. 31). The key distinction between 'national minorities' and 'ethnic groups' is that "immigrant groups are not 'nations', and do not occupy homelands. Their distinctiveness is manifested primarily in their family lives and in voluntary associations, and is not inconsistent with their institutional integration" (ibid., p. 14). From this perspective, the purpose of multicultural policy aimed at ethnic groups is to enable them to adapt to and partake in mainstream society in such a way that they are equitably "institutionally integrated" – a suggestion of the 'public sphere' - while still being able to maintain their "distincitive" traits, which Kymlicka suggests are mostly relevant to the 'private sphere.' As Strang and Ager (2010) note, the concept of 'integration' invokes notions of citizenship and rights, which in turn reflect, and are reflective of, ideas about what it means to 'belong' in a particular national context.

While Kymlicka argues that multicultural policy needs to recognize the existence of and distinctions among national minorities and ethnocultural groups, others have

pointed to the inherent power differential that such policy establishes between the two groups. Tempelman (1999) reviews the frameworks of Taylor (1994), Parekh (1994, 1995, 1996) and Kymlicka (1989, 1995, 1997). Characterizing Kymlicka's interpretation of multiculturalism as "universalist," She points out that his approach privileges – and assumes that privilege as proper – the claims of national minorities above those of ethnocultural groups, such that it "institutes a hierarchy between groups closer to, and those further away from, the transcendental core" (Tempelman, 1999, p. 28). Likewise, Kymlicka's framework only allows for groups to maintain culturally distinct practices in so far as they are compatible with the liberal values of mainstream Western society. Tempelman critiques this perspective:

> Throughout the process the 'other' is not recognized as an equal moral partner…Indeed, in Kymlicka's approach there is no way in which the core of the liberal community can be challenged, reflected upon and revised in the light of contact with other cultures. (ibid., p. 29)

Tempelman similarly critiques Taylor's "primordialist multiculturalism" (ibid., p. 19) in which cultural groups deserve to be protected and maintained because group-specific cultural characteristics are seen as inherent aspects of identity. She argues that Taylor's theorization of multiculturalism is restrictive and promotes essentialized understandings of culture and identity, creating circumscribed, rigid routes through which a given group might strive for recognition: "Such a view favours a politics of recognition that actively seeks to impose some form of cultural homogeneity, thereby restricting the cultural options and freedom of individuals to shape their own identities" (ibid., p. 22).

As an alternative to Taylor's and Kymlicka's frameworks, Tempelman favours a "civic" model of multiculturalism, which she attributes to Parekh (1995). A civic model avoids essentializing cultural groups into fixed categories, she suggests, while at the same time allowing for difference and dialogue among different groups. In such a framework, what matters "is not that the community keep its specific 'authentic' identity, but rather that it maintains a sufficient degree of coherence and consistency in its traditions and institutions to survive as a collectivity" (Tempelman, 1999, p. 23). Tempelman notes, however, that a civic model is less suited to handling groups' demands for self-determination – it does not adequately address issues such as Aboriginal and Quebecois calls for a degree of self-government. Tempelman concludes that it may not be possible for any particular theory of multiculturalism to be inclusive enough to address the various ways in which multiculturalism plays out. She calls for the

examination of "different situations of multiculturalism" (ibid., p. 30), perhaps signalling the need to ground discussions of multiculturalism in particular contexts.

Another body of work has taken issue with the concept of multiculturalism more directly, arguing that multiculturalism, and/or its actual implementation in policy, has been inherently flawed since its inception. Like other critiques, this perspective points to the original framing of multiculturalism as primarily concerned with the two founding charter groups, such that multiculturalism was largely enacted to placate 'all the rest' (i.e., non-European immigrants), relegating them to a category that was never meant to be equal with the 'nations' of British and French Canada. Rather than attempting to reformulate or theorize multiculturalism, however, this perspective actively deconstructs the idea of multiculturalism, most notably in its relation to the nation and nationalism. Drawing largely from post-structuralist and feminist perspectives, this perspective notes the assumption that the purpose of multiculturalism is to ensure the fair integration of immigrants into Canadian society presupposes the existence of a coherent 'Canada,' against which immigrants are deemed as 'other.' As Bannerji (2000) argues:

> Official multiculturalism, mainstream political thought and the new media in Canada all rely comfortably on the notion of a nation and its state both called Canada, with legitimate subjects called Canadians, in order to construct us as categorical forms of difference. There is an assumption that this Canada is a singular entity, a moral, cultural and political essence, neutral of power, both in terms of antecedents and consequences…From [the perspective of the "other"] "Pan-Canadianism" loses its transcendent inclusivity and emerges instead as a device and a legitimation for a highly particularized ideological form of domination. Canada then becomes mainly an English Canada, historicized into particularities of its actual conquerors and their social and state formations. (pp. 104-105)

In this sense, multiculturalism is more about the containment and control of difference, rather than its purported mission to allow for the freedom of cultural expression. In addition, multiculturalism is seen as constructing culture in essentialized terms, effectively 'taming' and commodifying the difference in the form of "food, festival, folklore, and fashion" (Meyer & Rhoades, 2006). This argument has been particularly salient to critiques of the ways in which an emphasis on difference in terms of 'culture' masks underlying racial and racist connotations. For example, Razack (1998) uses the term "culturalization" to describe the process through which "culture becomes the framework used by White society to pre-empt both racism and sexism" (p. 60). As Jiwani

(2006) points out, "This process of culturalization entails the internalization and use of the language of culture by which to refer to identities and through which to ascribe behaviours that are seens as endemic to particular groups and collectivities" (p. 92). As such, culturalization can be understood as inherently tied to the 'ethnicity paradigm,' which Sharma (2011) argues has served to bolster the discourse of multiculturalism in part by masking processes of racialization and racism:

> The ethnicity paradigm marries an essentialized, static, and separationist view of culture with the cultural attributes of racialized discourses, such as language, "ethnic" dress, "ethnic" customs, and "ethnic" traditions. Such culturalist views complement the discourse of multiculturalism, as each portrays ethnicities/cultures as existing (unchangingly) in utter isolation from all others while deflecting attention from the process of racialization that is embedded within racial formations. Thus, the refusal to recognize the diasporic spaces and transnational cultures that were created through centuries of encounters...was transported wholesale into the discourse of multiculturalism. (p. 89)

Multiculturalism thus becomes a hegemonic norm and 'culture' becomes the only acceptable framework through which to discuss 'difference.' In order to explain how this norm is effected, Kernerman (2005) draws from Foucault's concept of governmentality, describing multiculturalism as a form of social governance – what he refers to as "multicultural panopticism":

> While multiculturalism may seem to illustrate the functioning of a kind of negative cultural freedom (i.e., freedom from state intrusion), multicultural governance constructs the identity framework within which this freedom may play out, operating on the population so that the spaces of diversity are in fact occupied and ensuring that freedom is expressed in an appropriate manner…Multicultural panopticism encourages certain types of citizen interactions by providing the categories and differences within which individuals and groups of citizens can negotiate their behaviour and their relations with others. (p. 100)

Importantly, Kernerman argues that multicultural panopticism operates through "coveillance" in which individual citizens monitor and police each other's adherence to this "identity framework," rather than through surveillance:

> Multicultural panopticism alters the architectural design [of the panopticon], however, by levelling the guard tower. This changes the mechanisms of surveillance, for there is no longer any single place of observation; there are no "guards" nor are there any "prisoners." Instead, multicultural panopticism replaces the guards with multicultural

citizens...Whereas the prisoners cannot see one another, multicultural coveillance assumes participatory citizens who see and are seen. This is a form of diversity governance. (ibid., p. 99)

Kernerman's argument allows for an understanding of multliculturalism as a social norm created and reproduced though the daily interactions of individual citizens, as well as through relationships between citizens and governing institutions; that is, it is created and reproduced through relationships occuring at multiple scales. As Kernerman suggests, this strengthens multiculturalism's position as the hegemonic "identity framework" used to define and respond to social difference. At the same time the very pervasiveness of "multicultural governance" also suggests that the meanings of multiculturalism are not fixed, but instead are continually being created. For example, Ley (2005) notes that while multiculturalism may have, to some degree, originated as an "aestheticisation of heritage cultures" (p. 5) it has since:

> advanced from its celebratory beginnings and has moved squarely into the territory of citizenship rights...As such, multiculturalism provides an underpinning to rights-based claims before the state and civil society in such domains as welfare, policing, immigration policy, and equal opportunity in employment. (ibid.)

As such, in addition to critiques of the theoretical foundations of multiculturalism, it is also important to examine multiculturalism as an every-changing set of practices.

Kymlicka (1998) argues for the need to understand multiculturalism in terms of *how it has actually been implemented*, making the observation that this implementation has changed – and continues to change – over time. He points out that the original impetus for enacting multiculturalism as state policy was not based on a well-developed theory, but was instead based on the pressing need for a federalist framework that was more inclusive than bi-culturalism. Thus, multiculturalism should first be looked at in terms of how it is practiced. In doing so, he argues, the nature of multiculturalism as a tool for equitable integration becomes clear:

> To understand the meaning of multiculturalism, therefore, we need to look at what it does *in practice.* When we do, it becomes clear that multiculturalism is a response to the pressures that Canada exerts on immigrants to integrate into common institutions. Although the policy was not originally conceptualized in this way, in practice it has developed and evolved as a framework for debating and developing the terms of integration, to ensure that they are fair. (ibid., p. 40, original emphasis)

While Kymlicka's point about the need to look at multiculturalism as it is practiced is well-taken, his understanding of 'practice' is somewhat curtailed, seemingly confined to the realm of 'policy.' He does not necessarily draw artificially defined boundaries around what constitutes 'policy.' Nonetheless, he does not address the ways in which multiculturalism has become embedded in Canadians' everyday understandings of, and encounters with, diversity. The *practice* of multiculturalism may or may not align with the *policies* of multiculturalism, just as the tropes and meanings that Canadians associate with multiculturalism may or may not align with official state rhetoric. Therefore, while actually existing multiculturalism must emphasize practice – including discursive practice – its 'meaning' is far from unitary. For that reason, it is important to examine how that meaning (or meanings) are constructed in particular places, both in relation to 'policy' as well as in relation to wider, hegemonic understandings of multiculturalism.

Actually Existing Multiculturalism

The diversity of programs that come under the general category of 'multiculturalism' reflects the political efforts of various ethnocultural groups to influence policy so that it better serves their needs. Multicultural policy, then, is ever-evolving, and is as much a reflection of social diversity as it is a framework through which that diversity is understood. Similarly, the codified multiculturalism of the state thus represents only a portion of the understandings of multiculturalism as a social ideology – or a societal *value* – that permeate the Canadian popular imagination, and have become part of national identity. Rather, the idea of multiculturalism as a social ideology is created and reproduced through a much wider range of social institutions – for example, the educational system, various forms of mass media and popular entertainment, and the activities of social and political organizations – operating at a range of geographic scales.

Despite this, debates over how best to implement multiculturalism as a political ideology tend to focus on theories of multiculturalism at the scale of the nation-state. What seems to be missing in these debates is a grounding of actually existing multiculturalisms – including multicultural policy – in the lived spaces of everyday life. As Sandercock (2009a) argues, there is a need to address "[p]recisely *how* national immigration policies propelled by an economic and geo-political rationale translate into ways of actually living together in cities and neighbourhoods" (pp. 3-4, original

43

emphasis), an idea that she refers to as the "actually existing practices of multiculturalism" (p. 4).

This idea of actually existing multiculturalism is analogous to Brenner and Theodore's (2002) use of the term "actually existing neoliberalism," which emphasizes "the contextual embeddedness of neoliberal restructuring projects insofar as they have been produced within national, regional, and local contexts defined by the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles" (p. 351). I argue that a similar perspective on the "contextual embeddedness" of multiculturalism can reveal the ways in which understandings of multiculturalism are defined at multiple scales and through networks of interaction – something that an emphasis on the nation-state tends to overlook. In a similar vein, Wise and Velayutham (2009) conceptualize this idea of multiculturalism as multi-scalar in their explanation of what they describe as "everyday multiculturalism":

> For our purposes, we define everyday multiculturalism as a grounded approach to looking at the *everyday practice* and lived experience of diversity in specific situations and spaces of encounter. It explores how social actors experience and negotiate cultural difference on the ground and how their social relations and identities are shaped and re-shaped in the process. While the focus is on the micro-sociology of everyday interaction, the everyday multiculturalism perspective does not exclude wider social, cultural and political processes. Indeed, the key to the everyday multiculturalism approach is to understand how these wider structures and discourses filter through to the realm of everyday practice, exchange and meaning making, and vice versa. (p. 3, original emphasis)

From this perspective, examining the interactions between multiculturalism as defined in national policy and "everyday multiculturalism" as lived in specific places allows for a recognition that the meaning of multiculturalism is continually being negotiated and popular understandings of multiculturalism as well as multicultural policy can, and are, being constantly developed. In this sense, multicultural policy is not simply given from on high in accordance with the state's normative theorizations of the best way to actualize multiculturalism as a political ideology, but can also be seen as the product of iterations, trial-and-error, and negotiation in specific places. These place-specific processes are likewise in constant dialogue with processes occurring at wider scales, feeding back into national policy.

The places through which multiculturalism is constructed are also the sites through which the boundaries of the 'nation' are constructed and contested, as

immigrants negotiate various states of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and un-belonging. When social stability rests in part on the preservation of a discourse of inclusion and accommodation of difference – or cultural pluralism – tensions emerge between the threat posed by 'existential outsiders' and the need to reinforce inclusionary rhetoric. In the case of Canada, inclusionary multicultural rhetoric is disrupted by the conflation of visible minorities with immigrants and the positioning of immigrants as less 'Canadian' than whites: "Common-sense discourses construct people of colour as immigrants, and immigrants as people of colour, thereby implying that white (albeit multicultural) Canadians have a longer lineage that somehow makes them 'more Canadian' than others" (Creese, 2005, pp. 4-5). Tensions thus emerge between the inclusiveness of the multicultural ideal and a sort of social hierarchy between those who can claim an 'authentic' relationship to place (the existential insider, ostensibly the white, non-mobile, non-migrant) and those who cannot (the existential outsider, ostensibly the visible minority, mobile, placeless, migrant). As Creese argues:

> The centrality of the 'pluralist immigrant society' in the national imagination creates a stark disjuncture for immigrants, caught between multicultural discourses of inclusion and exclusionary material practices. Tropes of multicultural inclusion notwithstanding, immigrants have to negotiate shifting boundaries of 'Canadianness.' (ibid., p. 5)

Immigrants – and through the association that Creese describes, visible minorities – are included and excluded, in place and out of place, attached and detached. In terms of actually existing multiculturalism, the concern is to understand how this plays out in lived urban space.

Geographies of Actually Existing Multiculturalism: Multicultural Canadian Cities

Topics related to immigration and multiculturalism in Canada have received a good deal of attention in both academic and policy circles. Over a relatively short period of time starting in the mid-1990s, a substantial body of research has developed concerning new immigration trends and Canada's "new immigrants." This research has involved a fairly broad range of empirical concerns and methodological approaches, including post-structuralist approaches toward ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, globalization and social hybridity (Hiebert, 2000). A number of such studies have pointed to the ways in which the framework of multiculturalism has been shaped at a range of geographical scales. For example, in their analysis of Canadian multiculturalism, Wood and Gilbert

(2005) make the argument that the centrality of the rhetoric of multiculturalism to Canadian national identity cannot simply be attributed to state policies and discourse. On the contrary, they argue that the everyday negotiation of increasing diversity in Canada's major cities meant that urban publics were already forging the beginnings of a framework through which to understand that diversity:

> If multiculturalism as an ideology and as a policy has captured the Canadian imaginary, it is partly because Canadians could relate to the multicultural practices and transformations occurring in their cities and regions. Cultures are not changed or maintained by legislation alone; they are sustained or transformed by socio-spatial practices. Such practices can therefore not be limited to a federal or discursive scale. (ibid., p. 688)

As such, a number of geographers have responded to the need to address Canadian multiculturalism not only in terms of national policies and the scale of the nation-state, but also in terms of people's everyday lived experiences. In particular, a number of authors have examined multiculturalism and multicultural policy at the urban scale by researching actually existing multculturalism in different Canadian cities (Dyck, 2001; Edgington & Hutton, 2002; Goonewardena & Kipfer, 2005; Jackson, 1992; Ley, 1995, 1999; 2005; Ley & Murphy, 2001; Mitchell, 1993, 2001; Salaff & Chan, 2007). This focus on urban multiculturalism reflects the recognition that diversity has become a defining feature of many cities:

> The concept of the multicultural city is significant because it signals a particular understanding of the city that includes cultural difference...The use of the term multicultural city brings cultural diversity to the forefront as a permanent condition. (Hoernig & Walton-Roberts 2009, p. 203)

Given this, a number of researchers have called for the need to consider what multiculturalism means – and could potentially mean – in terms of urban planning and the ways in which different groups live together and organize urban space (Preston & Lo, 2008; Qadeer, 1997; Uyesugi & Shipley, 2005). Sandercock's work has been particularly central to this literature (1997, 2003; Sandercock & Attili, 2009; Sandercock & Lyssiotis, 2003).

Sandercock (2003) argues for the need to recognize how multiculturalism is actually being negotiated in cities, which, in part, might lead to new theorizations of multicultural policy. In this framework, multiculturalism can be conceptualized as being constantly under negotiation rather than consisting of a fixed set of ideals or policies.

She also notes a paradox at the heart of multicultural policy: on one hand, it is formulated as a reponse to the 'problem' of increased diversity; on the other hand, it attempts to embrace diversity:

> It reflects and addresses a profound unsettling of norms, and fear of change, on the part of the host society, *at the same time* that it appears to celebrate, and perhaps genuinely desires, this change and seeks to move cautiously towards a new national identity. (Sandercock, 2009a, p. 16, original emphasis)

With this in mind, she argues for the need to continually question how multiculturalism actually 'plays out' in the spaces of everyday life so as to reveal – and ultimately address – its shortcomings. As she explains, "multiculturalism is not an entirely altruistic project, and the language of a virtuous tolerance in which it is often couched needs to be constantly challenged by scrutinizing its actual effects in every policy field" (ibid., p. 16).

In addressing how multicultural policy framed at the scale of the nation-state intersects with urban processes, geographers have also examined how multicultural policy is shaped by inter- and transnational processes. This perspective emphasizes the relational nature of place, or the idea that specific places are constituted through multiple relations across space rather than as discrete, bounded entities. Massey (1994) theorizes such an approach in her search for a more progressive, or global, sense of place, pointing out that "what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (p. 154). With this understanding of the relationships between different places and scales, questions of flows, interconnections and links become central to attempting to understand how social space is produced (Brenner 2001; Marston 2000; Smith 2000).

One example of work that illustrates the multiple scales of interaction that continue to shape Canadian multiculturalism is Mitchell's (1993) discussion of multiculturalism as a means of facilitating flows of global capital though Vancouver. Her work examines how Canadian multicultural policy has been shaped and influenced by processes operating at scales both smaller and larger than the nation. In her analysis, she ties the need to present Canada as non-racist and friendly to foreign investors by enacting multicultural policy aimed at combating discrimination. The drive to legislate against racism is thus seen as serving the requirements of global capitalism:

As racism hinders the social networks necessary for the integration of international capitalisms, it has been targeted for eradication. Multiculturalism has become linked with the attempt to smooth racial friction and reduce resistance to the recent changes in the urban environment and experiences of daily life in Vancouver. In this sense, the attempt to shape multiculturalism can be seen as an attempt to gain hegemonic control over concepts of race and nation in order to further expedite Vancouver's integration into the international networks of global capitalism. (ibid., p. 265)

In a later article, Mitchell (1997a) argues that it is not only the state, but also wealthy immigrants themselves who are able to mobilize conceptualizations of multiculturalism to challenge racial boundaries. Mitchell's nuanced analysis of the interaction between processes operating at a range of geographical scales allows her to reveal relationships and interdependencies between the specificities of Vancouver as a place with national policy and international flows of capital and people. Applying this understanding of scale to an analysis of the formation of multicultural policy leads to not only the recognition that multicultural policy has been defined at multiple scales – for example, at the national level as an ideological framework and at the municipal level as social services targeting the needs of specific ethnocultural groups – but also to an emphasis on the ways in which national and municipal policies are directly interrelated, such that they continually interact with and modify each other.

Walton-Roberts (2011) applies a similar sensitivity to scale to her discussion of Canadian multicultural policy as "already unbound" from the limits of the nation-state. Like Mitchell (1993), she links Canadian multicultural policy to the broader context of transnational migratory flows created by the labor demands of the global neo-liberal economy, focusing on transnational networks created by the long history of chain migration from Punjab to Canada. She explains how "the multicultural reality of Canada" (Walton-Roberts, 2011, p. 111) reinforces and has been reinforced by these networks, pointing out how multiculturalism and multicultural policy have been leveraged by transnational actors. For example, she suggests that Canadian multiculturalism has increased Punjab's influence and helped strengthen Punjabi-Canadians' political power, as evidenced by the opening of a Canadian Consulate General in the Punjabi city of Chandigarh:

The Chandigarh case is interesting insofar as it reveals the lack of influence opposing Canadian officials had in the face of demands from a transnational community whose constituents had been emigrating to

Canada for over a century. This event thus stands as an important
example of how the Punjabi diaspora in Canada were able to mobilize
multiculturalism to achieve their transnational aims. (ibid., pp. 111-112)

Another example Walton-Roberts provides of how Canadian multiculturalism is
"unbound" from the nation-state is that of the formation of a transnational, diasporic Sikh
separatist identity. She argues that the Sikh separatist movement – which she explains
is based more a desire for recognition than territorial acquisition – has been partially
facilitated by multiculturalism in that multiculturalism has helped enable Sikhs in Canada
to build a sanctioned collective ethno-religious identity, which in turn can be used as the
basis for attempts to intervene abroad.

Walton-Roberts' discussion disrupts the notion of multiculturalism as bound to
the scale of the nation-state, demonstrating that multiculturalism can and does operate
as a transnational process. In particular, she focuses on transnational migration
networks, arguing:

Multiculturalism as an ideology of state-building reveals the state as being
very careful to prescribe the type of belonging and the extent of inclusion
[of immigrants]. However, these restrictions are constantly challenged by
transnational migrants who incorporate non-citizens into the state in order
to reproduce community, and advance their own agendas from within the
national frameworks of belonging. Imigrants can insert themselves into
the political process and demand recognition not only in Canada but also
abroad, in terms of how their adopted nation officially relates to and
services their homeland. (p. 120)

Her examples thus highlight how immigrants are not only the subjects of multicultural
policy, but can also be active agents who interpret, reinterpret, and deploy
multiculturalism in ways that can challenge state-defined categories of belonging.

While actually existing multiculturalism involves the ways in which
multiculturalism plays out in specific places, those places themselves should be
understood as produced by and productive of multiply-scaled processes and
interactions. Multicultural policies and popular understandings of multiculturalism inform
and are informed by a range of formal and informal institutions and processes, including
education, social services, policing, hiring practices, community organization,
understandings of (and norms about interaction in) the public sphere, and inter-
ethnocultural relations. In addition, multiculturalism affects identity formation for
members of ethnocultural groups socially defined as minorities and/or targeted by

multicultural policies, as well as for members of the hegemonic majority, as both sets of individuals are socialized into understanding themselves as part of a multicultural society.

CHAPTER 4:
EMPIRICAL CONTEXT AND METHODS

An October 2006 front page of the *Province* – a Greater Vancouver area major daily newspaper – warned readers to "brace for gang war" (Ramsey, 2006). In keeping with the *Province's* tendency toward eye-catching, less-than-subtle headlines, the banner text was made to look as though it had been shot through with bullet holes. The accompanying story was about the, then imminent, release of an Indo-Canadian criminal group member from jail, prompting concerns that the release might trigger conflict between two rival criminal groups. The bulk of the story consisted of a detailed history of specific criminal group members, murder victims, and the various vendettas and entanglements linking them all together. A police detective was quoted as saying: "There will be shooting for sure. For the most part, it's bad guy versus bad guy but if you interfere in their business, if you are in the wrong nightclub at the wrong time, you're totally at risk" (ibid., p. A1).

The morning this particular story came out, I was interviewing an RCMP member serving on the Integrated Gang Task Force. He was describing the racism he faced growing up as the child of Indian immigrants in a then predominantly white suburb of Vancouver. He was discussing his concerns that parents do not talk with their children enough about racism, leaving them to rely on their peers for information, when he mentioned the newspaper article:

> And then media headlines of course, the banner headlines. I mean this morning in the *Province*: "gang warfare about to break out" or something. Red, bold, front page…So really, we've all come together and we perpetuate this, this thing about gangs, and we need to talk about it, but we need to talk about it not only publicly, but also within our families as well…But I think we've fed the beast, and now the beast is on, doing whatever it will do, and it's still spewing these sort of ideas about gangs, gang warfare, gang violence: South Asians are bad, Asians are bad, and it just carries on. (Interview with RCMP member, Integrated Gang Taskforce, October 18, 2006)

The nature of this "beast" has been to grow. Over the past decade, several hundred news stories and editorials, either focusing on, or mentioning 'Indo-Canadian gangs,'

have appeared in Vancouver's two daily papers. Numerous others have appeared in other Lower Mainland papers (including ethnic newspapers), local papers from other regions, national papers, and television news. The perspectives taken in these stories are far from uniform. While certain perspectives – in particular, those of the police[8] and public officials – are most prevalent, even these are far from monolithic. The officer quoted above, for example, had a complex relationship with the media. During his interview, he discussed the importance of a high level of communication between the police and journalists, but he was also aware of, and pained by, his own institution's role in "feeding the beast" and contributing to ethnic stereotypes – stereotypes that ultimately complicate police work.

Media depictions of Indo-Canadian youth 'gangs' and concerns over the types of ethnic stereotypes that these depictions may engender are informed by a broader social context of ethnic diversity. Similarly, discussions of ethnic diversity are shaped by the framework through which these social divisions are meant to be accommodated – multiculturalism. As I discussed in Chapter 3, actually existing multiculturalism is grounded in particular places. For that reason, it is important to situate discussions of ethnic diversity in the particular empirical contexts in which they occur.

The goal of this chapter is thus to situate empirically both the overall project, as well as the specific sources of data used, by discussing relevant aspects of the empirical context. In the first section of the chapter, I provide a brief overview of diversity and immigration in Greater Vancouver. I also discuss the Indo-Canadian community in terms of the history of immigration of South Asians to the Lower Mainland and general characteristics of the population. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss my data and methods, including an explanation of critical discourse analysis, descriptions of the interviews I conducted with community actors and those I conducted with young Indo-Canadian men and women, an overview of local newspaper coverage of Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality and, finally, a description of the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) data I examined.

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[8]   Sacco (1995) notes that the "dominant gatekeeper" role of the police "means that crime news is often police news and that the advancement of a police perspective on crime and its solution is facilitated" (p. 146).

Diversity and Immigration in Greater Vancouver

As mentioned in Chapter 3, changes to Canadian immigration laws in the early 1980s have had a profound effect on the country's major metropolitan areas, both in terms of the proportion of the population that is foreign-born and in terms of the main sources countries for immigration. These changes form part of the context of reactions to Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminal groups in Greater Vancouver, as they have contributed to heightened concern over the nature of multiculturalism and the integration of newcomers.

As I also mentioned in Chapter 3, as of 2006, some 39.6% of Vancouver's population was foreign-born – a figure that while lower than Toronto's 45.7%, is still higher than figures for cities such as Sydney, Los Angeles and New York (Statistics Canada, 2007a). The main source for immigration to Vancouver during the 1990s was China, followed by several other, mostly Asian, countries. Figure 4 shows the number of foreign-born immigrants to Greater Vancouver from the top ten countries of birth, for those who immigrated from 1991 to 2001.

Figure 4. Top 10 countries of birth of 1990s' immigrants to Greater Vancouver
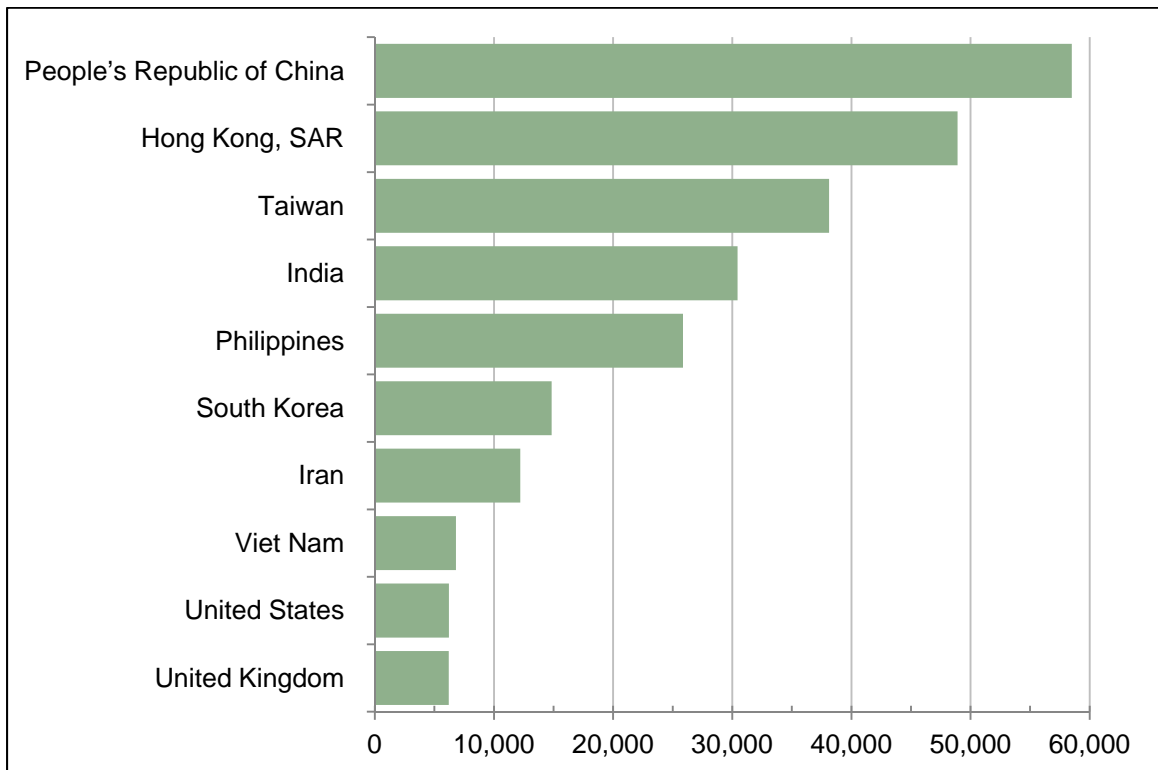
(Statistics Canada, 2003a)

In addition, visible minorities made up 41.7% of the population of Vancouver's census metropolitan area, second only to Toronto, where visible minorities made up 42.9% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2008). The vast majority of visible minorities in Vancouver were Asian, with ethnic Chinese making up 43.6% of the visible minority population (or 18.2% of the city's overall population). As of 2006, South Asians made up the second largest visible minority group in Greater Vancouver at 23.7% of the visible minority population (just under 10% of the area's total population). Figure 5 shows the proportion of the total population of Greater Vancouver by visible minority group for 2006.

Figure 5. Visible minorities by ethnocultural group as percent of total population, Vancouver CMA, 2006
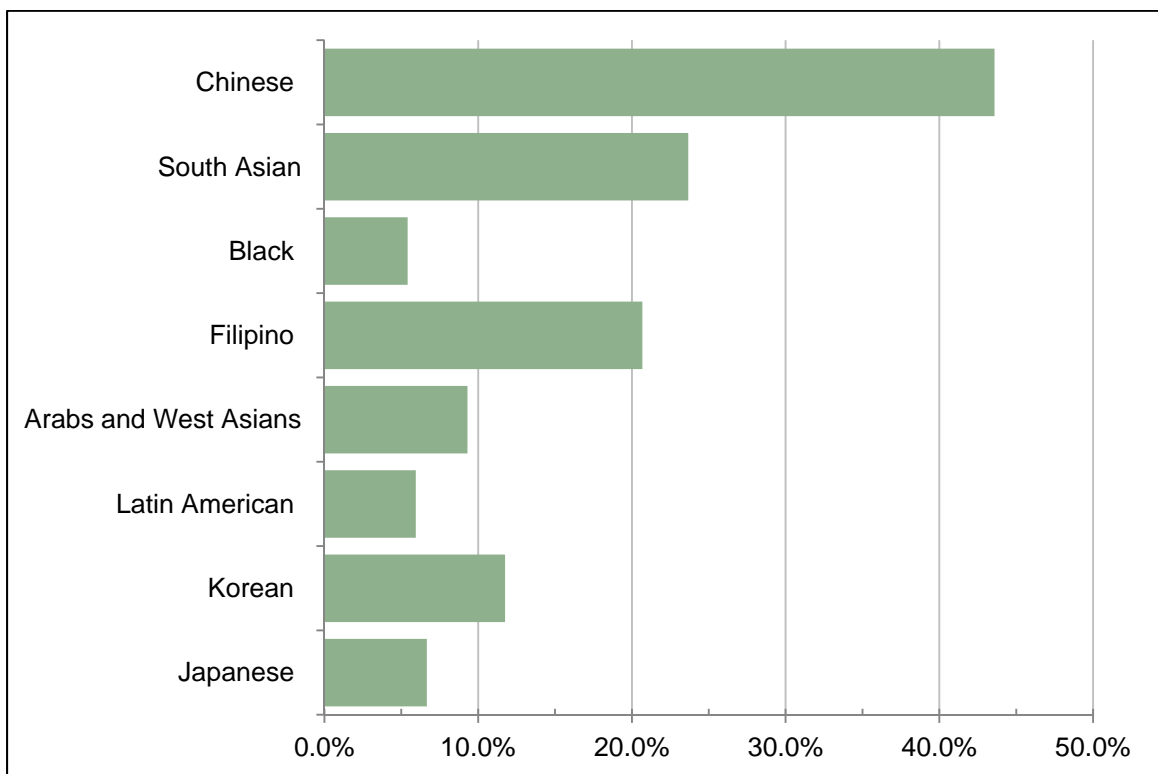
(BC Stats, 2006)

Indo-Canadians in Greater Vancouver

Before discussing some of the general characteristics of Greater Vancouver's Indo-Canadian community, I provide a brief historical overview of the migration and settlement of Indians in the Lower Mainland. In doing so, I should note that I focus

54

mainly on the history of Sikh settlement. At the national scale, in 2001, 28% of South Asians identified as Sikh, 28% as Hindu, 22% as Muslim, 16% as Christian, and 4% as having no religious affiliation (Statistics Canada, 2007b; 2010). On the whole, then, Indo-Canadians come from diverse religious backgrounds. The majority of Indo-Canadians in British Columbia, however, are Sikh immigrants or the descendants of Sikh immigrants from the northern Indian region of Punjab: in 2001, some 63% of South Asians in British Columbia identified as Sikh (ibid.). Table 2 shows the major religious affiliations of South Asians for 2001 for Canada, British Columbia, and Greater Vancouver.

Table 2. Religious affiliations of South Asians, 2001

	Canada		British Columbia		Vancouver CMA	
	Number	% of South Asians	Number	% of South Asians	Number	% of South Asians
Muslim	212,805	23%	24,345	12%	23,165	14%
Hindu	260,535	28%	29,880	14%	26,220	16%
Sikh	272,220	30%	133,190	63%	97,495	59%

(Statistics Canada, 2010)

While it is important to note that the term "Indo-Canadian" encompasses people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, it is also important to note the importance predominate influence of Sikhism and Punjabi culture on Indo-Canadians in British Columbia. In this context I am using the term *Sikh* to refer more to members of a particular ethnic and cultural group, rather than adherents to a particular set of religious beliefs, with the understanding that this distinction – between 'culture' and 'religion' – is an arbitrary one. On the whole, as an *ethnocultural* group, the Indo-Canadian community in the Lower Mainland has largely been shaped by the experiences of, specifically, Sikh immigrants (Chadney, 1989).

Currently, British Columbia is home to approximately one-half of the nation's Sikh population (Todd, 2011). As of 2001 the Greater Vancouver area was home to approximately 36% of the country's Sikhs (Statistics Canada, 2001). Table 3 shows the size of the Sikh population for Canada, British Columbia, and the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) for 1991 and 2001, as well as the proportion of the Canadian Sikh population living in British Columbia and Greater Vancouver.

Table 3. Sikh population in Canada, 1991 and 2001

	1991		2001		% change 1991-2001
	Number	% of total Canadian Sikh population	Number	% of total Canadian Sikh population	
Canada	147,440	100%	278,410	100%	89%
British Columbia	74,545	51%	135,310	49%	82%
Vancouver CMA	49,627	34%	99,005	36%	99%

(Statistics Canada, 2001)

Historical Overview of Sikh Settlement in the Lower Mainland

Anthropologist Verne Dusenbery (2008) traces the development of the Sikh diaspora and the settlement of Sikhs in North America. He divides Sikh settlement into four broad periods, outlining similarities and differences between the experiences of Sikhs in Canada and the United States. The first of these periods lasted from around 1900 to 1920. During this time, approximately 7,500 migrants from the Indian region of Punjab arrived in Canada. These early migrants – nearly all of whom were men – settled almost exclusively in southwest British Columbia, where they found work in lumber mills and railroad construction (Basran & Bolaria, 2003). Dusenbery (2008) points out that at this time, these young male migrants would have identified more as "Punjabi," or perhaps more importantly "Indian," as national origins were a more salient part of their identities than religion. As Indians, they shared a common identity with migrants from other areas of the sub-continent. The shared experiences of disenfranchisement in North America coupled with shared pro-nationalist sentiment, linked Sikhs with other South Asian migrants, despite their religious differences.

During this period, Sikh immigrants faced high levels of racism and discrimination, strikingly marked by anti-Asian riots in Vancouver in 1907 and subsequent legislation restricting immigration to migrants who had traveled to Canada via a "continuous journey" from their home country – a stipulation that effectively banned Indian immigration. In 1914, a group of Sikh immigrants attempted to meet the continuous journey stipulation, sailing from India to Canada on the *Komagata Maru* – a Japanese ship that had been chartered by a Sikh businessman. Upon reaching Vancouver, all but a handful of those aboard the *Komagata Maru* were barred from entering Canada. After a protracted period of two months, the ship was forced to depart and return to India (Basran & Bolaria, 2003; Buchignani & Indra, 1989; Walton-Roberts,

2003). The *Komagata Maru* incident demonstrated Canada's willingness to practice racial discrimination against supposedly equal – at least in terms of formal citizenship – British imperial subjects. As Walton-Roberts (1998) argues,

> This action elucidates the *reconstruction* of nationality, entitlement, citizenship, and the manner in which British subjects were selectively distinguished and disenfranchised on the basis of a racialized discriminatory practice. (p. 317, original emphasis)

This event continues to play an important symbolic role Indo-Canadian history as well as in Canadian politics. In May 2008, the provincial government of British Columbia and the federal government of Canada both passed motions officially apologizing for the event (El-Akkad, 2008; Lindsay, 2008). In August 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper "officially conveyed" the Canadian government's apology during a speech in Surrey attended by close to 8,000 spectators. His speech sparked a controversy, as a number of Indo-Canadian leaders felt that it was inadequate (Hassan, 2008; Jeremy, 2008; Nicole, 2008). In addition, the incident has been relevant to debates over Canada's treatment of other refugee groups: commentators noted the *Komagata Maru* incident as a reminder of the mistakes of the past in 1999, when two ships carrying approximately 250 refugees, from Fujian Province, China, arrived at Vancouver Island (Paul, 1999; Wong, 1999), and again in 2010, when a ship carrying approximately 500 Tamil refugees arrived at the Island (Anonymous, 2010; Harsha, 2010).

A second period of Sikh settlement in North America lasted from around 1920 into the 1960s (Dusenbery, 2008). During this time – particularly after changes in Canadian immigration laws in 1947 – previous migrants were gradually joined by more immigrants from South Asia. Around 7,000 South Asians immigrated to Canada during this time, with approximately two-thirds of them settling in British Columbia. According to Dusenbery, migrants arriving from Punjab in the late 1920s would have already been more sensitized to their identity as Sikhs, due to political movements in India. This was even truer after Indian Partition in 1947, such that migrants after this time were likely to have a much more politicized sense of themselves as *Sikhs*. In Canada, in part due to pressure to afford Indians throughout the Commonwealth equal treatment to Indians living under British colonial rule in India, legislative changes that provided for the political enfranchisement of Indian immigrants were introduced in 1947 (Basran & Bolaria, 2003). Additional legislative changes revoked male-only gender restrictions to immigration, and women and children gradually migrated from India to Canada. At this time, the concerns

of family life began to shape the Sikh community in Canada, and the newly established *gurdwaras* (Sikh temples) became foci for community life (Dusenbery, 2008).

A third period of Sikh settlement in North American occurred between the mid-1960s until the 1990s. At this time, changes in migration laws in Canada meant that the nation experienced a much larger wave of Sikh migration, not only from Punjab, but also from other parts of the Sikh diaspora, such as East Africa and Southeast Asia. At this time, Sikhs immigrants were searching for more political rights and recognition from the state (Judge, 1993). The establishment of Canadian multiculturalism after 1971 led to an emphasis on cultural recognition on the basis on nationality, rather than on religion. This meant that the officially recognized organization representing South Asians, the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India (NACOI), was – and continues to be – dominated by non-Sikh Indians. Attempts by Sikhs to organize as a separate group were discouraged by the state. Dusenbery (2008) argues that this may have fed the Khalistani movement among Sikhs living in Canada: the promise of self-determination promised by multiculturalism went unfulfilled, leaving Canadian Sikhs somewhat disillusioned, and more prone to focusing their attention on the possibility of a Sikh state of Khalistan.

It was in this context that Indo-Canadian community in Greater Vancouver came under close scrutiny following the 1985 bombing of Air India flight 182 by suspected Sikh militants. The flight originated in Vancouver and exploded as it flew over the coast of Ireland, en route to New Delhi, killing 329 people (Major, 2010). Most of the victims were Indo-Canadian, many of whom were from the Greater Vancouver area. It is beyond the scope of this project to discuss the complexities of the circumstances surrounding the bombing, the ensuing years of investigation, and the 2007 trial that ended with the acquittal of two suspected perpetrators, both of whom were residents of Greater Vancouver. It is worth noting, however, that the official Commission of Inquiry paints a fairly damning portrayal of the government's preparedness for such an attack as well as its response, particularly in terms of the treatment of victims' families. Of the latter, the Commission states:

> While the Commission does not feel that the term "racism" is helpful, it is also understandable that the callous attitude by the Government of Canada to the families of the victims might lead them to wonder whether a similar response would have been forthcoming had the overwhelming majority of the victims of the bombing been Canadians who were white. The Commission concludes that both the Government and the Canadian public were slow to recognize the bombing of Flight 182 as a Canadian issue. This reaction was no doubt associated with the fact that the

supposed motive for the bombing was tied to alleged grievances rooted in India and Indian politics. Nevertheless, the fact that the plot was hatched and executed in Canada and that the majority of victims were Canadian citizens did not seem to have made a sufficient impression to weave this event into our shared national experience. The Commission is hopeful that its work will serve to correct that wrong. (ibid., p. 38)

The point that the largest incident of mass murder of Canadian citizens in Canadian history did not make "a sufficient impression to weave this event into [Canadians'] shared national experience" and the Commission's condemnation of the Canadian Government's "callous attitude" toward victims' families are striking statements that not only recognize the social divides that continue to position members of racialized ethnocultural groups outside of the 'nation,' regardless of formal citizenship, but also (apologetically) acknowledge the Government's direct complicity in perpetuating these divides. In addition to this, it is also worth noting that in terms of media coverage of the Air India bombing and coverage of Indo-Canadian youth and criminal groups, Indo-Canadians in Greater Vancouver have experienced the combination of private tragedy made public with negative media representations and stereotypes, first as 'terrorists,' and more recently as 'gangsters.'

The fourth period identified by Dusenbery (2008) started in the 1990s and continues today. During this current period, a more clearly defined sense of 'Sikh identity' has developed both in Punjab and throughout most of the diaspora. Fed by economic decline in Punjab, Sikhs have continued to immigrate to other parts of the world, with Canada, Australia and the United States as the preferred destinations. Dusenbery argues that Canadian Sikhs have used their demographic concentration and economic clout to elect political representatives who – while not explicitly elected to represent the concerns of Sikhs – have nonetheless managed to improve the public image of Sikhs through their roles as prominent members of society. Canadian Sikhs have thus used political parties and parliamentary representatives to promote their concerns, and have recently seen their religious rights recognized.

Current Characteristics of Greater Vancouver's South Asian Population

As an ethnocultural group, Sikhs make up the majority of the Lower Mainland's Indo-Canadian population and their history has shaped both the experiences of Indo-Canadians in the region as well as their portrayal in the media. As a racial group, or

visible minority, Sikhs of Indian descent, and Indo-Canadians more broadly, are generally categorized as "South Asian" - a term that clearly encompasses a range of groups with diverse histories and cultures. Nonetheless, in order to contextualize Indo-Canadians as a visible minority, I turn now to a discussion of some of the general characteristics of Greater Vancouver's South Asian population, keeping in mind that the inter-changeability of various terms of ethnic description is far from precise.

As discussed above, the Lower Mainland was the primary destination for the earliest immigrants from India. While the concentration of South Asians in Greater Vancouver, relative to the total number of South Asians in Canada has, decreased over time, it has increased relative to the total population of Greater Vancouver. Table 4 depicts these trends.

Table 4. South Asians in Greater Vancouver

		Census Year			
		1991[9]	1996	2001	2006
Greater Vancouver	Total Population	1,542,744	1,744,890	1,967,480	2,097,965
	South Asians	65,140	118,595	164,365	207,165
	% South Asian	4.22%	6.80%	8.35%	9.87%
Canada	Total Population	27,296,859	28,528,120	29,639,030	31,241,030
	South Asians	324,840	670,585	917,070	1,262,865
	% South Asian	1.19%	2.35%	3.09%	4.04%
% of South Asians living in Greater Vancouver		20.05%	17.69%	17.92%	16.40%

(Statistics Canada, 2003a, 2008)

Also as discussed above, South Asians make up the second largest visible minority group in Greater Vancouver. Like the largest minority group – Chinese immigrants and their descendants from both Hong Kong and mainland China – the majority of the South Asian adult population was foreign-born, or first generation. Figure 6 shows the number of South Asians age 15 and older in Greater Vancouver, by generational status.

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[9] Census data for 1991 refers to those who reported "East Indian" as their ethnic origin. Census data for 1996, 2001, and 2006 refers to those who reported their population group (or visible minority status) as "South Asian."

Figure 6. South Asians (age 15 and older) in Greater Vancouver by generational status, 2006

Pie chart:
- 2nd generation 19.9%
- 3rd generation and more 1.0%
- 1st generation 79.0%
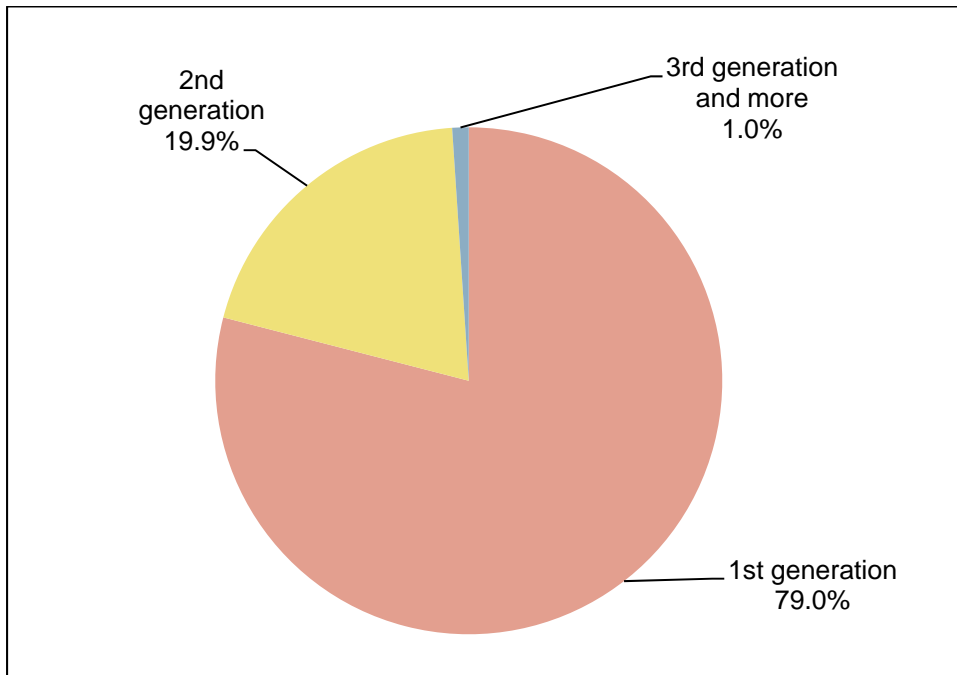
(Statistics Canada, 2011a)

In terms of the geographic distribution, the South Asian population in Greater Vancouver is highly concentrated in a few, specific, areas. In earlier periods, southeast Vancouver was particularly prominent as the centre of the region's Indo-Canadian community. While there continues to be a high concentration of South Asians in that area, the suburb of Surrey has supplanted southeast Vancouver as the area with the densest concentration of Indo-Canadians. As of 2006, more than half of Greater Vancouver's South Asian population lived in Surrey, accounting for 27.5% of Surrey's overall population (Statistics Canada, 2008). Figure 7 and Figure 8 show, respectively, the 1996 and 2006 geographic distributions of South Asians as a percentage of the total population by census tract for Greater Vancouver.

Figure 7. Map of South Asians as percent of total population by census tract, 1996
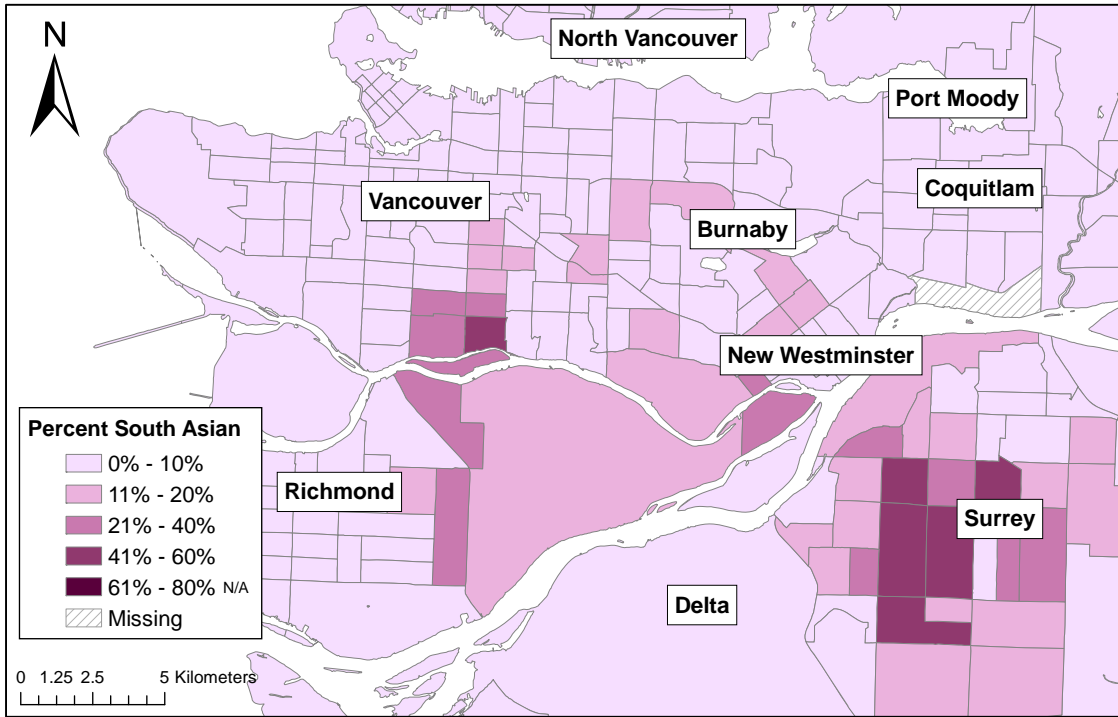
Figure 8. Map of South Asians as percent of total population by census tract, 2006
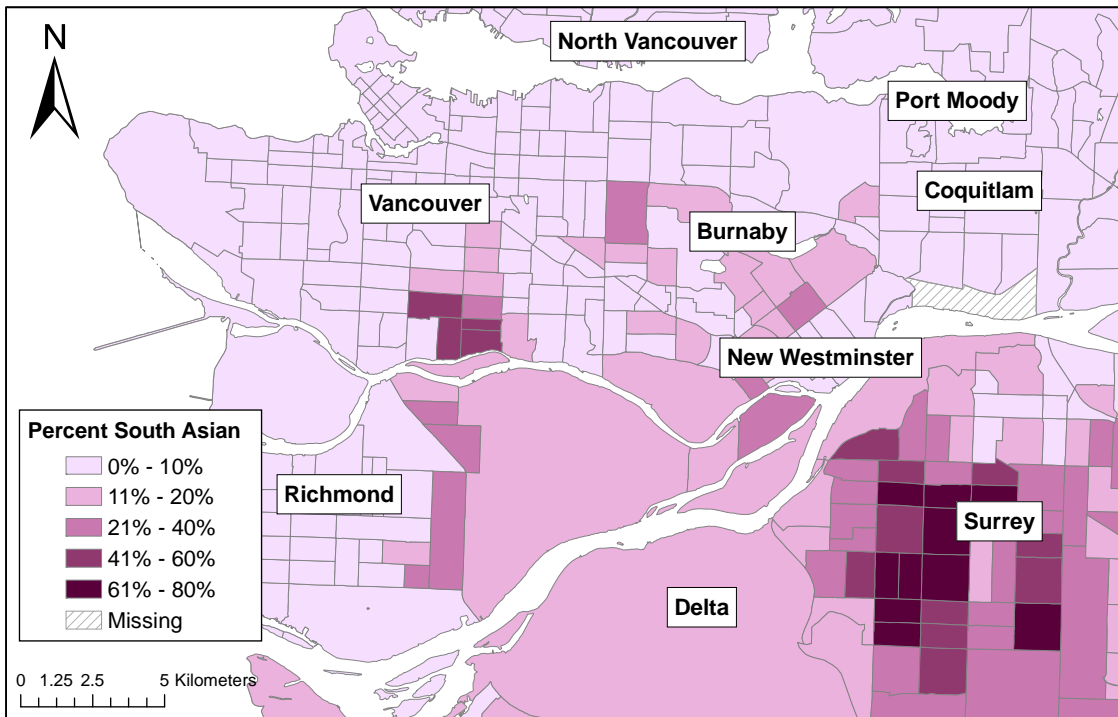
In addition to this pattern of geographic concentration, South Asians are also somewhat demographically concentrated in younger age cohorts. As of 2006, just less than 23% of the South Asian population in Vancouver was under the age of 15, with an additional 14% between the ages of 15 and 24. Figure 9 depicts Greater Vancouver's South Asian population by age group.

Figure 9. South Asians in Greater Vancouver by age group, 2006
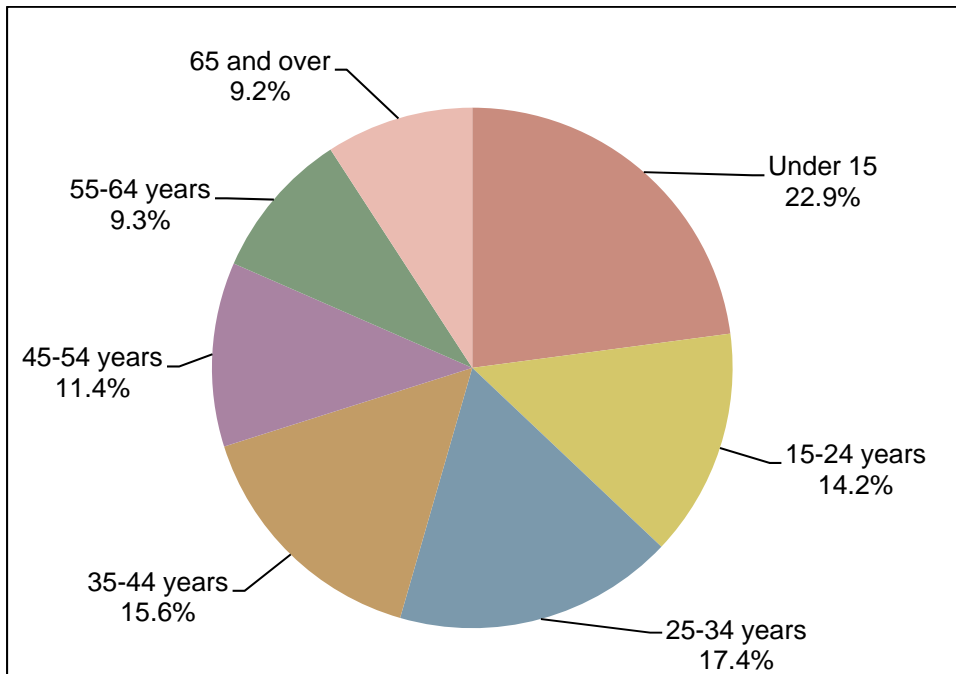
(Statistics Canada, 2011b)

Data and Methods

In this section, I discuss the data and methods used in this project. I first explain the approach I use to analyze archival and interview material – critical discourse analysis. Next, I describe the four key empirical foci of this project and the related data used to address each one. First, I discuss the emergence of various government programs and non-profit organizations aimed at addressing youth violence and gangs. Related to this, I describe the semi-structured qualitative interviews I conducted with members of these groups, including government social services employees, police officers, activists, and members of other community organizations. Second, I discuss the need to understand better the experiences and perspectives of young, second generation Indo-Canadians. Following from this, I discuss the interviews I conducted with individual, non-criminally

involved Indo-Canadian men and women, between the ages of 16 and 25. Third, I discuss at some length the importance of local, news media coverage and discourse. In doing so, I describe the related archival data used in this project: articles and commentary published in national and local newspapers and news magazines, including both 'mainstream' and 'ethnic' publications. Fourth, I suggest the importance of questioning whether there are differences in experiences of belonging between different ethnocultural groups; I then describe the secondary quantitative data taken from the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) that I used to address this. Finally, I reflect on some of the ways in which my own positionality impacted my research process, particularly in terms of my interactions with interviewees.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Archival and interview material was analyzed using critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis aims to identify and interpret linguistic patterns in various types of text – in order to examine what those patterns might reveal about the ideological basis informing the speaker or author (Cameron, 2001). That said, while critical discourse analysis is concerned with the way different uses of language suggest different underlying ideologies, it does not purport to be able to uncover a single, true meaning or interpretation of a text. In using this approach, however, my emphasis is not on discourse as 'text' or language, per se, but on discourse as a social phenomenon embedded in specific geographical contexts, involving communication and contestation over meaning.

The term "discourse" in "discourse analysis," however, has been used to refer to several different concepts. In a more Foucaultian tradition, discourse can be understood as the "frameworks that embrace particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies and signifying practices, each relevant to a particular realm of action" (Barnes & Duncan, 1992, p. 8). Using this understanding, it is possible to talk about various broad 'discourses' that shape and are shaped by social relations. Within linguistics, discourse refers more specifically to units of language; however, those working within a 'formalist' paradigm and those taking a 'structuralist' approach have viewed the meaning of discourse differently. In general, formalists define discourse as "sentences," emphasizing the internal structure of language, while functionalists define discourse as "language use," emphasizing the social functions of language (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 22).

My approach to critical discourse analysis as a methodology draws from Fairclough (1995), who reconciles the divergence between formalist and structuralist understandings by arguing that "'discourse' is use of language seen as a form of social practice, and discourse analysis is analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practice" (p. 7). His approach allows for a framework that includes both the 'micro' of close textual analysis and the 'macro' of the social relations and processes that form the context of any discourse:

> The critical approach has it theoretical underpinnings in views of the relationship between 'micro' events (including verbal events) and 'macro' structures which see the later as both the conditions for and the products of the former, and which therefore reject rigid boundaries between the study of the 'micro'…and the study of the 'macro.'" (ibid., p. 28)

Fairclough also stresses that critical discourse analysis involves, but is not limited to, textual analysis. He emphasizes the point that the 'meaning' of a text is not inherent in the text itself, waiting to be uncovered through textual analysis, but that meaning is socially created through interpretation. As such, the act of 'doing' discourse analysis must be understood as an act of creating meaning – a concept that suggests the importance of recognizing one's own subjective positionality as a 'researcher,' a point that I return to later in this chapter.

Community Organizations

Starting in the early 2000s, a number of non-profit, community-based organizations aimed at combating youth violence and gangs began to emerge in Greater Vancouver. These groups have been somewhat fluid – over time, some of them have merged with others, others have dissolved, and new groups have been formed. The activities of these organizations have varied, but many have engaged in information campaigns and public forums. Others have engaged in small-scale mentorship programs, after-school sports programs, and youth peer-counselling programs. In addition, several artistic productions – including one community play (Diamond, 2005), two independent documentary films (Amar, 2008; Sangra, 2008), and one novel (Dhaliwal, 2006) - have addressed the issue of Indo-Canadian youth violence and gangs. The relative efficacy of these groups and endeavours is unclear, but their proliferation suggests a heightened concern amongst community members as well as an apparent desire for civic participation.

Interview Data

In order to deepen understandings and clarify questions emerging from the archival analysis while also providing primary information on the ongoing efforts to address violence, I interviewed 25 members of non-profit community organizations, government policy and law enforcement agencies, the media, and other groups dealing with issues of youth violence in different capacities. The interviewees were selected using the standard qualitative snowball sampling technique where key informants provided an initial set of contacts. These respondents then served as contacts to identify additional volunteers for interviews. I first contacted potential respondents by email (Appendix A); some respondents were also contacted by telephone as a follow-up to email conversations. I should note that 24 of these 25 interviews were with Indo-Canadians, which is indicative both of the snowball sampling technique I used, as well as the fact that this issue has been framed within public discourse as an 'Indo-Canadian' problem, to be solved by the 'Indo-Canadian community,' a point that I return to in Chapter 6.

The individuals I interviewed were members of a range of institutions and organizations, from youth-oriented non-profits to law enforcement. Table 5 shows the number of interviewees involved in five general sectors: arts, news media, law enforcement, government services, and non-profit organizations, as well as the number of interviewees who had worked directly with youth as a significant part of their activities. Interviewees who had been involved with more than one organization are counted in more than one category. For example, several individuals who worked in government services were also members of non-profit organizations, and are thus included in both categories.

Table 5. Community interviews: Sectors of interviewee involvement

Sector	Profession/Organization	#
Arts	community theatre; documentary film-making; Bhangra dance	5
Government services	multicultural and immigrant services; teaching	3
Law enforcement	RCMP; Vancouver Police Department; probations; forensic psychiatry	7
News media	television programming; newspaper editing	2
Non-profit	Group of Ten; United; VIRSA; Team Izzat	13
Youth workers		9

The topics and questions covered in this set of interviews varied somewhat, according to the particular roles and activities of each respondent. In general, however, I asked each respondent to describe his or her own personal background, the work he or she did with their particular organization or employer, his or her understandings of the root causes behind youth criminal groups and violence, his or her opinions about media coverage, and his or her personal definition of multiculturalism. The schedule of questions I used for these interviews is included in Appendix B.

Based on the interviews, several key explanations emerged: the breakdown of intra-familial communications due to linguistic and cultural barriers between parents and children as well as the lack of supervision of children by immigrant parents working long hours, traditional 'cultural' values that privilege male children over female children such that boys are spoiled (i.e., the "prince syndrome") and allowed a great deal of freedom to do as they wish, alcoholism and domestic abuse, popular culture's over-emphasis on material consumption and youths' desire to "get rich quick" and lead a glamorous lifestyle, and the equation of wealth with social power and status within the Indo-Canadian community.

On the whole, these interviewees located the 'blame' for youth criminal groups and violence at the scale of the individual and the family. Accordingly, they recommended solutions focused on the development of personal empowerment and

choice including: one-on-one mentoring, sports and other youth activities, parenting classes, conflict resolution workshops, anti-gang education in schools, and the establishment of a resource centre/toll-free call-in centre. While such activities – many of which have been undertaken by different organizations – may indeed help to prevent violence and criminal activity, the emphasis placed on the *individual* speaks to fact that the problem is still understood as one *of* the Indo-Canadian community, and thus best addressed *within* the community, rather than being understood as a responsibility of the wider community.

Indo-Canadian Youth

As the children of today's first generation Indo-Canadian immigrants grow into young adults, they are confronted with the growing representation of their generation as being violent and plagued by criminal groups. This has shaped public discourse over the meaning of being 'Indo-Canadian.' As one editorial article in the *Vancouver Sun* eloquently notes,

> Illegal drugs, organized crime and gang violence all made headlines in the media in 2003. So did the term "Indo-Canadian." Those of us who fall into that collective group identity have found ourselves cringing many an evening…The cause of the cringing is twofold. One, because many of us feel that the labels sometimes are unnecessary and somehow, as a minority, we are made to own criminals from our group - whereas the white majority has the luxury of distancing themselves from any bad apples in their midst. Two, there is a genuine sadness and frustration that there are a significant number from our collective group involved in illegal activities…We see our temple leaders scrambling to make appropriate statements and hastily visiting affected families, youth initiatives cropping up all over the Lower Mainland (a little disjointed but welcome) and passionate discussions amongst community members ranging from what has gone wrong with the community to how unfairly the community is being portrayed in the media. We are all confused about what to do with ethnic labels, about our responsibility to challenge them, our role to prevent the actual crimes and the need to distance ourselves from the lawless among us. (Grewal, 2004, p. C7)

Grewal's article points to frustration and confusion over not only the reality of youth violence and criminality, but also over the actions of anti-violence community groups and representations of violence in the media. While there is certainly a need to understand the motivations and experiences of criminally-involved youth, there is also a need to

68

examine how a discourse of 'troubled youth' is impacting the non-criminally-involved majority of young Indo-Canadians.

Interview Data

In order to provide more in-depth data on the perceptions that youth have of themselves, their communities, and the wider urban multicultural context, I conducted a series of interviews with 22 young Indo-Canadians (eight men and fourteen women) between the ages of 16 and 25. Half of these interviewees lived in Surrey, six in Burnaby, three in Vancouver, and two in North Vancouver. Most were born in Canada to parents of Punjabi background and had extended family in Greater Vancouver. and all but two lived with their parents and siblings. All of the participants were university students or university-bound high school students. Three of those interviewed were students that had been enrolled in courses that I was a teaching assistant for; none was enrolled in a course that I taught or assisted with during the semester he or she was interviewed.

As indicated in Table 6, which summarizes some of the characteristics of the youth interviewees, 16 of the participants had both parents of Punjabi Sikh background, and 3 others had one parent of Punjabi Sikh background and one parent of New Dehli Sikh background. In all of these latter cases, the parent of Punjabi Sikh background was the father, and the parent of New Dehli Sikh background was the mother. One additional interviewee identified as being of Nigerian Sikh background, but he also traced back his family's lineage to Punjab, prior to their migration to Nigeria. In general, then, the youth that volunteered to participate in my study came from a very particular subset of the group I identified in my recruitment advertisement, which was persons of South Asian ("Indo-Canadian") descent. This points to the predominance of Punjabi Sikhs in Greater Vancouver's South Asian population, as well as the ways in which the term "Indo-Canadian" has been defined and is used in Greater Vancouver. At the same time, however, one respondent was of South Indian Hindu background and one was on Fijian Hindu background. While both of these respondents stated during their interviews that because their own backgrounds differed from the majority of Indo-Canadians in Greater Vancouver, they did not feel a part of the Indo-Canadian *community*, they nonetheless felt that the discourse about Indo-Canadian youth gangs and violence had impacted their own lives, particularly in terms of how they felt they were perceived by others. I felt their perspectives were important to include in this study, as their experiences destabilize the

idea that all Indo-Canadians in Greater Vancouver are of Punjabi Sikh background, even if the Punjabi Sikhs form the largest – and arguably most culturally influential – group of Indo-Canadians.

Table 6. Youth interviews: Characteristics of participants

Age	#	%	Birthplace	#	%
16-17	2	9%	Lower Mainland	17	77%
18-19	4	18%	Vancouver Island	2	9%
20-21	9	41%	England	1	5%
22-23	7	32%	Nigeria	1	5%
			United States	1	5%
Gender	#	%			
Men	8	36%	Home Municipality	#	%
Women	14	64%	Burnaby	6	27%
			North Vancouver	2	9%
Ethnocultural Background	#	%	Surrey	11	50%
Punjabi Sikh	16	73%	Vancouver	3	14%
Punjab and New Delhi; Sikh	3	14%			
Nigerian Sikh	1	5%	Residence	#	%
South Indian Hindu	1	5%	With parent(s)/sibling(s)	20	91%
Fijian Hindu	1	5%	With sibling(s) only	1	5%
			On-campus residence	1	5%

I initially attempted to recruit youth respondents through contacts I had established while interviewing members of the community organizations discussed above. When this method proved unsuccessful,[10] I approached several students of South Asian decent whom I knew through classes for which I had been a teaching assistant. I also decided to post an advertisement on SFU's "current events" listing, which is accessible on the university website, as well as via email for students who had enrolled in the listserv.[11] The majority of the volunteer interviewees were contacted through this advertisement; others were recruited using snowball sampling.

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[10] Sidhu (2000) reported similar difficulties in her study of adolescent Sikh men, noting that "advertising through media, formal organizations, and flyers proved fruitless after 5 months" (p. 56).

[11] As an alternative method, Mani (2006) found that they most productive means of recruiting young Indo-Canadian men and women for her study was to approach potential participants directly and ask them if they would like to participate.

Interview questions covered interviewees' personal and family background, ethnic and community identifications, social life at school, weekly routine, exposure to and opinions on gangs and violence, exposure to and opinions on media coverage of gangs and violence, and opinions on multiculturalism. The advertisement that I used to recruit volunteer participants (Appendix C) explicitly indicated that this was a study "on the opinions of young Indo-Canadian men and women about identity, community, and the media, as related to youth violence and gangs." As per the wording in that advertisement, interviewees' responses tended to revolve around the themes of Indo-Canadian 'culture' and 'community,' as well as 'youth culture.' Appendix D includes the schedule used to frame interview questions.

As I have described, the youth respondents in my research were all volunteers, and – with the exception of those whom I had formerly taught – they were self-selected. While respondents did receive honorariums, the main motivation for their participation seemed to be that they had a particular interest in the topic of the research, as described in my recruiting advertisement. In other words, they were individuals who had "something to say" about the topic of Indo-Canadian "youth violence and gangs." As they were also all university students or university-bound high school students, their responses cannot be considered as representative of all Indo-Canadian youth. Nonetheless, I felt that they were a particularly important group to interview, as they were positioned to become relatively economically successful and because their willingness to volunteer as participants in research about Indo-Canadian youth suggests at least some degree of willingness to participate in public discourse and possibly to become politically engaged as members of the 'Indo-Canadian community.'

Media Coverage

The Vancouver area is home to two daily newspapers – the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Vancouver Province* – both of which are published by Pacific Newspaper Group, Inc., a subsidiary of Postmedia Network.[12] The *Vancouver Sun* is a broadsheet and is published daily, with the exception of Sundays and some holidays; the *Province* is a tabloid and is published daily, with the exception of Saturdays and some holidays (Postmedia Network, 2010b). In addition to these two daily "sister" newspapers, a

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[12] Postmedia Networked gained ownership over these and other newspapers formerly owned by CanWest Global Communications Corp. in July 2011, following CanWest's entrance into bankruptcy.

number of local, weekly and semi-weekly newspapers are published by another subsidiary of Postmedia Network, Postmedia Community Publishing. These include *Abbotsford Times, Burnaby Now, Chilliwack Times, Coquitlam Now, Delta Optimist, Langley Advance, Maple Ridge Times, North Shore News, Record, Richmond News, Surrey Now,* and *Vancouver Courier* (Postmedia Network, 2010a). The impact of Postmedia's virtual monopoly over local print media is not something that I explicitly examine in this project. Nonetheless, while the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Province*, and the weeklies semi-weeklies maintain their own editorial staffs, the fact that they are all owned by the same company suggests a strong likelihood that the content of newspapers in Greater Vancouver is more uniform than it might be otherwise.

'Gang violence' began to emerge as a recurring topic of local news media in the early 2000s. In October 2000, the *Vancouver Sun* ran a front-page story with the headline: "Gang slayings escalate" and the subheading: "Two years after the murder of notorious cocaine dealer Bindy Johal, an increasing number of young Indo-Canadian men are falling victim to the kind of violence associated with drug dealing and gangs" (Bolan, 2000). In the article, journalist Kim Bolan - who had already made a name for herself by covering the 1985 Air India bombing and subsequent investigation, and who has gone on to become the *Vancouver Sun's* lead journalist on Indo-Canadian criminal groups – called attention to a number of mostly unsolved homicides of young Indo-Canadian men, as well as a spate of shootings involving Indo-Canadian men suspected of being involved in the marijuana trade. Earlier, in May 2000, the murder of a 21-year-old Indo-Canadian man with known ties to Johal had received a good deal of both newspaper and television news coverage, largely because the murder took place outside of a wedding reception attended by former B.C. Premier Ujjal Dosanjh (Armstrong & Lunman, 2000; Bolan & Kines, 2000; Bolan & Todd, 2000; Kines, 2000).

Prior to Bolan's October 2000 story, however, most recent television news coverage of 'gangs' had focused on other ethnic groups, particularly the Vietnamese ("The fight for turf in Vancouver's drug war," 2000; "Vancouver police are calling a deadly shooting," 2000). Despite noting that no one ethnic group could be blamed for criminal violence, Bolan's article effectively put Indo-Canadians squarely at the center of media discourse about 'ethnic gangs.' Her article made detailed links between "known gangsters," victims and suspects, drawing connections between murders and shootings spanning the previous six years. In addition, Bolan ended the article with a list of "gang-related incidents" spanning back to the early 1990s. Each entry in the list included a brief

description of the incident, including the location (if known), the age and name of the victim(s), and whether or not charges had been laid. The description of each incident also stated how the victim was thought to be linked to 'gangs;' for example, by describing him as a "suspected drug dealer" or someone "known to police." In some cases, this link consisted of listing the victim as a friend, relative or "associate" of a particular gangster or victim from another incident. By tying incidents together in this manner, the article contributed to the creation of an increasingly coherent narrative about Indo-Canadian 'gangsterism.'

Bolan's article was an intensively researched account of a situation that had not, up until that point, received thorough overview in the media. She interviewed police, politicians, anti-gang workers and academics to get their perspectives on the issue, and – tacitly, if not explicitly – called attention to the failure of the police to lay charges and obtain convictions in the majority of cases. In doing so, she brought to light an apparent trend and helped galvanize others to seek solutions to criminal group violence. Her role in newspaper coverage of Indo-Canadian violence and criminality continued over the ensuing years. For example, between 2000 and 2009, the *Vancouver Sun* published 208 stories mentioning Indo-Canadian (or South Asian or East Indian or Punjabi or Sikh) gangs, including 41 front page stories, and 67 on the front page of Section B; Bolan wrote nearly half of all of these stories. She also wrote numerous stories on the Air India investigation and trial, publishing a book on the topic (Bolan, 2006), as well as almost all of the stories that the *Vancouver Sun* published concerning the local Indo-Canadian and/or Sikh community. In short, Bolan became *the* reporter covering any and all things 'Indo-Canadian' at the *Vancouver Sun*. More recently, she has moved into a focus on gangs and organized crime groups (such as the Hell's Angels) rather than the Indo-Canadian community per se. Nonetheless, her voice has been particularly prevalent in local mainstream print media coverage of Indo-Canadian gangs.

Certainly, the predominance of a single perspective – in this case, that of an individual journalist working for the dominant local news corporation – has contributed to the consistent tone and content of news articles about Indo-Canadian gangsters over the past decade. Bolan's writing, however, is arguably very much in keeping with mainstream journalism's approach to crime coverage: disembodied, 'fact-driven' accounts that rely mainly on the police for information, supported by comments from witnesses, family members of victims and perpetrators, and analyses from criminal justice experts. Therefore, while it is important to note Bolan's role, it is also important

not to overstate that role. During the same 2000 to 2009 period that the *Vancouver Sun* ran 208 stories that used the term "gang" or "gangster" in relation to the Indo-Canadian community, the *Province* ran 145 stories that specifically mentioned Indo-Canadian gangs. Another 137 such stories appeared in local weekly and semi-weekly newspapers owned by Postmedia Network, and six in Postmedia's national daily, the *National Post*.[13] In addition, 59 appeared in non-Postmedia publications – six in the local weekly, the *Georgia Straight*, and 53 in the national daily, the *Globe and Mail* (Table 7). Of the articles in the *Globe and Mail*, just over half appeared in sections specific to the British Columbia edition of the newspaper, and the other half in Section A as "national news." If the topic of Indo-Canadian gangs has received considerable attention in local mainstream newspapers, it has received even more attention from local 'ethnic' newspapers targeting Indo-Canadians. For example, between 2006 and 2008, the *Indo-Canadian Voice* – a weekly English-language paper – ran 136 stories mentioning Indo-Canadian gangs.

**Table 7. Greater Vancouver newspaper articles referring to Indo-Canadian*
        gangs** (2006-2009)**

Newspaper	# of Articles
Postmedia-owned publications	
The Vancouver Sun	208
The Province	145
Community weekly and semi-weekly newspapers†	137
National Post	6
The Georgia Straight	6
The Globe and Mail	53

* or Punjabi or Sikh or East Indian or South Asian
** or gang or gangster or gangsters
† *Abbotsford Times, Burnaby Now, Coquitlam Now, Delta Optimist, Langley Advance, North Shore News, Record, Richmond News, Surrey Now, Vancouver Courier*

Despite the range of perspectives represented in this body of articles, a fairly coherent stereotype of 'the Indo-Canadian gangster' has emerged in the pages of local

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[13] The *National Post* re-publishes articles from other Postmedia Network newspapers. While the articles in the *National Post* were therefore also published in other Vancouver publications, as a national newspaper, the *National Post* has a broader circulation and different readership than local, Greater Vancouver publications.

print media. The explanations given for the stereotypical gangster's existence include his desire to make fast money and live a glamorous life, a breakdown in his communications with older generations and sense of alienation from his 'culture,' and his need to find a sense of belonging and personal empowerment. He may be subject to a "prince complex," in which he has been unduly spoiled by his parents and allowed to roam the streets without supervision or censure, with an overinflated ego making him quick to anger and retaliate against perceived slights by enemies. Sometimes he has been lured into the drug trade by familial or peer pressure and the promise of wealth – a "good boy" gone bad. Other times he is a delinquent with a shady past – someone "known to police." He is, in general, motivated by the desire to be wealthy, but *not* by the desire to escape poverty, as, according to the stereotype, he more than likely comes from a middle to upper-middle class family, which makes his actions all the more despicable and incomprehensible. In short, he is young (under the age of 30), Brown, prone to lethal violence, a threat to the public, and a source of concern, distress and trauma for the Indo-Canadian community, police, and law-makers.

As Canada is a nation that prides itself on being among the "peace-keepers of the world," violence within, particularly public violence, is an uncomfortable topic. Similarly, discussions of race and ethnicity can be highly charged. In the case of Indo-Canadian criminal groups, these two issues are entwined, making for dramatic headlines. Sensationalism has not, however, gone unchecked, as letters-to-the-editor from those concerned about biased coverage, have featured prominently as part of media discourse over this topic. The question is, of course, whether these complaints impact public perception. In 2006, a *Vancouver Sun* article reported on a national public opinion poll, conducted online, in which respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the idea that some ethnic groups are more responsible for crime (Bridge & Fowlie, 2006). When those who agreed with the statement - nearly two-thirds of the Vancouver sample – were asked to list the groups they felt were most responsible for crime, some 56% included "Indian/East Indian," and 45% included "Asian/Oriental" (ibid). In addition, in June 2009, the *Vancouver Sun* reported on an Angus Reid Strategies poll that found that only 30% of Canadians approve of Sikhism (compared to, for example, 72% who approve of Christianity) and that 26% of Canadians feel that Sikhism promotes violence. This number was higher for British Columbia, where 30% of those polled felt that Sikhism promotes violence (Todd, 2009). In reality, of course, the majority of crime is committed by Whites and while the argument that any major religion truly promotes

violence is contestable at best, it is not surprising that perceptions of criminality and violence are so racialized. In Canada, official police statistics on the ethnicities and races of perpetrators and victims are generally not available to the public – a policy that was designed precisely to avoid the stigmatization of particular groups. This has paradoxically meant that for most Canadians, the media is the only source of such information.

Archival Data

For this project, I compiled a database of print media stories containing references to Indo-Canadians and violence. I searched several online, full-text databases – including Canadian Newsstand, CPI.Q, and CBCA Current Events – as well as online archives of individual publications. Stories were first chosen for possible inclusion based on the presence of specific key terms. I then screened out duplicate stories and stories that were not relevant to this project. While stories from some national publications, such as the *National Post*, the *Globe and Mail* and *MacLean's,* were included, the majority of stories came from Vancouver's two daily newspapers, other weekly and semi-weekly newspapers, and weekly ethnic newspapers.

There are several reasons why I focused primarily on print news media, rather than, for example, broadcast media. For one, as mentioned earlier, the sheer volume of stories printed in these papers concerning Indo-Canadian criminal groups and/or criminal violence affecting the Indo-Canadian community is striking. Second, accusations of media bias in coverage of these stories have been heavily focused on local newspaper reporting. For example, while interviewees discussed 'media coverage' in general terms, specific examples were overwhelmingly drawn from local print media. Even further, one specific journalist – the author of the majority of the stories appearing in the *Vancouver Sun* – has become the focus of accusations of bias. To some degree, this does seem to have produced changes in reporting: for example, the less frequent use of ethnic identifiers in crime stories. In this sense, local 'mainstream' newspapers have been seen as biased, but they have also been seen as a medium through which to express dissent. Third, stories from these papers have been widely disseminated and reproduced, not only as syndicated stories in other national and international papers, but also on a wide range of internet sites, particularly in the 'blogosphere.' There are numerous examples of quotations from and links to stories on Indo-Canadian criminal

groups from the *Vancouver Sun*, for example, on sites ranging from blogs on 'gangsterism' and 'gangster life,' to those focusing on the international Punjabi Sikh diaspora (Capo, 2011; Proud Pun, 2007; Student, 2006). As such, local print news stories have proven to be the most widely disseminated media coverage of Indo-Canadian criminal groups.

Diversity and Belonging

In Canada, enduring concerns over tensions between national unity and diversity (see Chapter 2) mean that the state is interested in understanding not only how well the new second generation is doing in terms of socioeconomic indicators, but also in terms of exceedingly difficult to quantify experiences, such as sentiments of national attachment and 'belonging.' This interest has grown out of a recognition that the experiences and attitudes of the descendants of immigrants are as important (if not more so) to the long-term integration of diverse populations as the experiences of their 'newcomer' parents and grandparents. The 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) was in part an attempt to get at some of these more ephemeral aspects of integration and understandings of diversity.

The Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) Data

The purpose of the EDS was to "better understand how people's backgrounds affect their participation in the social, economic and cultural life of Canada" and to "provide information to better understand how Canadians of different ethnic backgrounds interpret and report their ethnicity" (Statistics Canada, 2003b, p. 5). Approximately 42,500 people aged 15 and older in the 10 provinces were interviewed during the survey. Respondents were asked questions on a range of topics, including ethnocultural identity, language use, family interactions, and civic participation. Of particular interest to this research were a series of questions concerning the degree to which respondents' reported feeling a "sense of belonging" in their family, ethnic group, municipality, province, and Canada, which were worded as following:

Some people have a stronger sense of belonging to some things than others. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not strong at all and 5 is very strong, how strong is your sense of belonging to…

…your family?
…your ethnic or cultural group(s)?
…your town, city or municipality?
…your province?
…Canada? (Statistics Canada, 2002, pp. 66-67)

After identifying the relevant questions, I obtained the public-use microdata file for the EDS (Statistics Canada, 2005a) from the SFU Research Data Centre, and analyzed responses to the questions using the statistical software package, SPSS. I used simple cross-tabulations to examine responses to questions concerning participants' sense of belonging. In particular, I looked for correlations between responses to the questions about sense of belonging with birthplace, age, and visible minority group, as well as comparing the responses of South Asians in Greater Vancouver to those in Greater Toronto and Montreal. I discuss my analysis and findings in more detail in Chapter 7.

Positionality

Feminists, including feminist geographers, have called for the need for researchers to examine reflexively the biases they bring to the research process in order to – at least partially – account for the inherent power differentials between researchers and those whom they research, and situate the knowledge produced from research (England, 1994; McDowell, 1992; Rose, 1997). This attention to positionality recognizes that differences between researcher and the researched along lines of gender, class, race, and nationality, for example, create uneven power relationships that influence the production of knowledge and outcomes of research. In this section, I attempt to reflect on some of the elements of my positionality. In doing so, I recognize that, like the people I researched, my own identity is fluid and fragmented, and that given my subjective, limited perspectives, it is not possible to adopt an 'objective' perspective from which to judge my positionality.

Throughout my research, I had occasion to reflect on the ways in which my various identities – as a person of 'mixed' racial and ethnic background, as a dual U.S. and Australian citizen living and studying in Canada, as someone who had lived most of her life in the southern U.S., as a single heterosexual woman, as someone with no

children, as a graduate student, university instructor, and researcher – impacted my research interests and approaches to answering those questions. For example, my empirical focus on Indo-Canadian youth gangs and violence raises a broad range of questions. I recognize that my choice to focus on questions of identity and belonging was as much based on an interest born from my own search for answers to such questions as it was on my disciplinary perspective as a geographer or any obvious feature of the empirical situation. As I began my project, I was also aware that my interpretations of the role that 'race' played in relation to the topic of Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality would undoubtedly be affected by the fact that, having lived in the U.S. almost all of my life, and having been exposed primarily to U.S.-based critical race theory, I saw 'race' through 'American eyes.' As such, I tried to remain aware of some of the pre-assumptions I brought to my interpretations of racial discourse in Canada, in general, and in relation to Indo-Canadians in Greater Vancouver, specifically, including what 'racial discourse' was in the first place. While this initially made me somewhat cautious about framing my project around the idea of 'race,' ultimately, 'race' did become one of the key aspects of my analysis.

In addition to these concerns, I was probably most keenly aware of issues of positionality during my research interviews, particularly in terms of how I feel I 'performed' my identity and my impressions of how this performance was received by interviewees. For example, when interviewing community workers, I tended to wear slightly more formal, feminine clothing than I usually do, and makeup that was obvious but neutral. Similarly, I tried to wear 'younger,' more 'stylish' – though still feminine - clothing and makeup when interviewing youth. My choice to perform over aspects of my gender, age, and class in these ways was, I think, indicative of my inherent assumptions about the people I was interviewing, as well as how I negotiated the unfamiliar role of 'researcher' by turning to the security of conservative norms.

As a non-Indo-Canadian doing research about Indo-Canadians, I was also particularly aware of being an ethnic 'outsider' and concerned that potential interviewees might not be willing to speak with me. Based on advice from my supervisor as well as my various experiences introducing myself to new groups of students, for example, I came up with a few points of personal introduction that I shared with interviewees at the start of each interview. I told them where I was born, what my own ethnic background was, where I had lived and studied, and how long I had lived in Canada. I also felt it was important to give them some explanation for why 'someone like me' was interested in

'someone like them.' I explained that I had an existing interest in second generation youth, and had become interested in Indo-Canadian youth after seeing news media coverage of Indo-Canadian 'gangs.' While I tried to avoid characterizing my response to this coverage too obviously, many interviewees nodded or smiled when I mentioned news coverage, and I am sure that most understood that my interest in media coverage was at least in part about *bias* in that coverage. As such, while it was true that media coverage of Indo-Canadian gangs initially attracted me to my research topic, pointing this out to interviewees was a somewhat strategic act on my part, as, in most cases, it seemed to reduce the 'distance' between us.

Once I began conducting interviews, I found that my sense of my positionality as an 'insider' or 'outsider' relative to interviewees was fairly fluid and complex. For example, after I described by background, one of the community workers I interviewed said: "Okay, so you're South Asian." I responded by pausing and saying "Well, I'm half Indonesian..." He shrugged, nodded, and said, "That's South Asian." As much as I appreciated being so explicitly 'included,' I was admittedly somewhat thrown by what felt like an unexpected shift in power and the difference between how I saw my identity and how this interviewee interpreted and reflected my identity back to me. To me, this served as a reminder of the paradox of asking research interviewees to position themselves relative to various social categories when I myself am somewhat uncomfortable and ambivalent about my own position relative to such categories.

While I did not frame my project as involving specifically feminist methods, my approach to conducting research was very much influenced by my interests in feminism and feminist methodologies. In particular, I was aware of the impossibility of assuming an 'objective,' disembodied perspective. While I tried to avoid overly 'leading questions' during interviews, I recognize that I undoubtedly 'steered' the conversations, sometimes unintentionally. Such "interviewer effects," however, are not just unavoidable: I feel they are an integral part of research. In this sense, Fairclough's (1995) argument that analyzing discourse is about creating, rather than 'discovering' meaning, applies equally to conducting research and gathering 'data.'

Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted some of the key aspects of the empirical context of my research, including the ethnic make-up of Greater Vancouver and some general

characteristics of the Indo-Canadian community. I have also described my data sources and methods as related them to some of the major concerns that frame my topic. The following chapters turn to a discussion of three spatial binaries that have been key to discourses about Indo-Canadian 'youth violence': immigrant (or 'Indian') versus non-immigrant (or 'Canadian') culture, 'ethnic' versus 'mainstream' community, and belonging versus alienation.

CHAPTER 5:
"LIVING BICULTURAL:" 'IMMIGRANTS' AND 'CANADIANS'

Public concern over ethnic criminal groups made up of recent, racialized immigrants is not new. Other groups – particularly the Chinese (Clark & Middleton, 1992; Dawson, 1999; Farrow, 1991; Hall, 2004; Jiwa, 1995; Kines, 1996; Mahr, 1992; Middleton & Berry, 1991; Mitrovica & Sallot, 2000) and Vietnamese (Appleby, 1990; Bellett, 2000; Dawson, 2000a, 2000b; Fong, 2000; Matas, 2000; Morton, 2000; Papple, 1998; Vallis, 2000) – have received similar attention in the Vancouver media. However, one thing that makes so-called Indo-Canadian 'gangs' somewhat different is that, unlike the local criminal groups associated with other ethnicities in the past, there is a general lack of emphasis on perceived ties to international organized crime groups. Chinese criminal groups in Vancouver were often linked to triads and the Vietnamese to organized crime groups operating out of Southeast Asia. In the late 1980s, some alleged that an Indo-Canadian criminal group connected to the Sikh separatist movement was attempting to help fund separatist activities through money made in Vancouver's drug trade (Needham, 1987, 1988). However, with the decline of more radical Sikh separatism and generational changes, current Indo-Canadian criminal groups appear to lack connections to more organized, international crime groups. Nationalist concerns and imagery – expressed through discussions of 'culture' and the cultural traits associated with groups from different national origins – have nonetheless pervaded public discourse over Indo-Canadian violence and criminality.

In particular, the dichotomy of 'immigrant culture' (or 'Indian,' 'Sikh,' 'Punjabi') versus 'non-immigrant culture' (or 'Canadian,' 'Western,' 'mainstream') as an explanatory framework for violence and criminal activity has been a key – if contested – discourse in both the mainstream news media and among community actors engaged in formulating responses and solutions to Indo-Canadian crime and violence. This point of contact between 'immigrant' and 'Canadian' culture is frequently represented through the metaphor of a 'culture clash,' in which cultures come together, not in mutual acceptance – an idealized state of multiculturalism – but in mutual rejection, a state of conflict and discord. While the idea of youth being caught between worlds has generally not been an

explicit explanation given for the emergence of youth violence and crime, it forms an *implicit* part of such explanations, as reflected through the deep concern expressed by research interviewees over intra-familial and inter-generational conflict. In particular, the perceived differences between 'Canadian' and 'Indian' gender norms are pervasive in the interviews, and are a major undercurrent in the construction of 'Canadian' and 'Indian' cultures as binary opposites. At the same time, however, this binary is contradicted, challenged, and dissolved.

In this chapter, I examine the ways in which the idea of 'culture clash' and youth being 'caught between worlds' has figured into the responses to Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality, as well as the ways in which this depiction has been challenged. In examining these concerns I draw from the perspective of critical discourse analysis, which recognizes that the process of interpreting and analyzing discourse is not about revealing an inherent 'truth,' but is instead an act of creating meaning (Fairclough, 1995).

Culture Clash

One notable and much discussed characteristic of Indo-Canadian gangsterism is that those attracted to criminal activity come from a range of economic backgrounds and thus do not fit the more typical model of street gangs in which poverty is seen as a driving motivation for joining such a group. Without poverty as an explanation for criminal activity, 'culture' is frequently used to explain violence that otherwise seems inexplicable. Central to this discussion of culture is the idea of second generation youth being 'caught between worlds,' or struggling with a 'culture clash.' In the case of Indo-Canadian youth, this position of being 'trapped' between India and Canada is often argued paradoxically to leave youth 'detached' – alienated and lacking direction, particularly in terms their moral development, or values:

> Children of immigrants essentially grow up in another culture [than their parents]. The result is a value clash where "parents think in one language and children think and speak in another language," [the head of a multicultural support services organization] says. "The in-depth communication that needs to happen between children and parents doesn't happen. Without strong family guidance, these rudderless children adopt only the most superficial aspects of both Canadian and South Asian cultures," she adds. (Tanner, 2002, p. A12)

The reason for this lack of moral direction is frequently attributed to poor parenting, whether it be due to neglect caused by parents working long hours or by parents failing to bridge the cultural gap between their parenting practices – for example, differing expectations for the behaviour of male and female children – and the implicitly superior practices of 'Canadian' parents. Local newspaper coverage has helped to support this discourse through its emphasis on the perspectives of Indo-Canadian officials, such as former Attorney General of British Columbia, Wally Oppal:

> Part of the problem is a cultural disconnect between Indo-Canadians born overseas and their children who are born here, [Oppal] said. "They are not communicating and that results in a type of distance and the parents are not communicating with their children," said Oppal. "Our community is made up of a lot of achievers and so mother and father are both out working and so what happens is that they don't know where their kids are. And to top it all up, they give the boys more leeway than they give the girls, so what happens is they have free rein, there is no discipline and their values get skewed and they end up dead in ditches." Oppal said parents who immigrated must tune into the values of contemporary Canadian society, connect with the mainstream community and "adapt to values that are Canadian values." (Jiwa, 2003, p. A4)

Similar findings of a report commissioned by the Department of Canadian Heritage on "South Asian-based group crime" (Tyakoff, 2003) was widely reported in local newspapers (Choo, 2004; Gulyas, 2004; "Indo-Canadian lives hang in the balance," 2004; "Indo-Canadians need help with gang problems," 2004; Leslie, 2004; O'Neil, 2004; Sin, 2004). One such story – an article from the *Vancouver Sun* – states:

> Brutal criminal violence by Indo-Canadian male youths over the past decade is being blamed on a culture clash that has driven deep divisions between children and their parents, a federal study says. Immigrants from India are in many cases too focused on making a living to help guide their children, who in turn are struggling with racism, social acceptance, and the mixed messages they receive at home and at school, according to those interviewed for the study. (O'Neil, 2004, p. A1)

This idea of 'culture clash' and the related idea that second generation youth are 'caught between worlds' is central to discourses about Indo-Canadian gangsterism that position 'Indian' and 'Canadian' societies in opposition to each other. The result is often described as a situation in which communications break down between parents and youth, potentially leading some youth to rebel. This idea forms not only part of mainstream media narrative, but was also apparent in interviews with members of anti-

gang organizations. For example, the Sikh Alliance against Youth Violence (VIRSA)[14] 2003 Action Plan identifies several challenges facing Indo-Canadian families as well as factors contributing to the emergence of criminal groups and violence. The first of these, "family discord," is described as following:

> The loss of connection between parents and youth has resulted in youth lacking identity, spirituality, ethical values and therefore self-esteem. This lack of self-esteem, coupled with lack of responsibility, lack of empowerment, and the emphasis on status and power learned from their parents makes some youth vulnerable to involvement with alcohol, drugs and violence. (VIRSA, 2003, p. 2)

The document goes on to describe a second key challenge – "cultural conflict:"

> Youth are caught between two cultures – the one that they embrace at home, and the one that they are influenced by at school or work. Parents often try to enforce their traditional values upon the children in fear of being criticised by the Indo-Canadian community. At the same time youth often resist traditional ways in an effort to assimilate into the Western culture. Being caught between cultures leads to a lack of belonging and impacts youth's self-esteem. The lack of understanding from both perspectives results in both sides fearing, resisting and rejecting the values and lifestyle of the other. This leads to further breakdown of connection between parents and youth. (ibid., p. 3)

During an interview, a VIRSA staff member described this clash of cultures:

> Think about when they go school, they're living in the Western world. And they come home, and it totally changes. And all of a sudden, it's more like Eastern culture…Then there's the in-between, the gray area. And that's what – you know, the kids are trying to say like look, "We do it like this here [in Canada]." The parents are saying: "No, we do it like this here [in India]." So there's like no, you know, there's no meet in the middle. (Interview with VIRSA staff member, September 11, 2006)

A report prepared by the Group of Ten makes several similar statements. The "Group of Ten: Integrated Community Response to South-Asian Youth Violence" was convened under a federal Canadian Heritage initiative and was comprised of ten volunteer representatives of the South Asian community in the Greater Vancouver area. The participants met over a period of several months in 2005 to identify and analyze root

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[14] VIRSA is a non-profit organization founded in 2002 in response to community tension over "gangs, violence, and a general negativity associated with being South Asian" (VIRSA, 2009). The organization focuses on group and individual mentoring, youth sports programs, and family counselling.

causes for South Asian youth violence in order to come up with policy recommendations. In their report, they point out a need to address cultural conflicts within families, but also make a strong argument for the need to situate youth violence in historical and contemporary contexts. The first point that the report lists under "preconditions and conditions contributing to a criminal lifestyle and violence" (Group of Ten, 2005, p. 8) links youth violence to social marginalization, which, the report argues, has resulted in "feelings of anger and despair, and the desire to fight the mainstream" (ibid.), as well as heightening intra-familial tensions and causing some parents to "attempt to limit their own and their children's interactions with non-South Asian Canadians" (ibid., p. 9). The report later describes these tensions as, in part, a result of inadequate parent-child communications:

> Lack of healthy attachment and connection between some youth and their parents, formed by a lack of emotional support, an authoritative environment and an absence of open and honest parent-child communication in some South Asian families [is a contributing factor]. This environment does not allow youth to explore their individual and cultural identities and develop a positive sense of self within the broader Canadian community. (ibid.)

While the Group of Ten's emphasis on broader, structural contexts arguably leads to a more complex, nuanced depiction of cultural conflict within families than the VIRSA document both organizations clearly identify an opposition between 'South Asian' and non-immigrant, or 'Canadian,' cultures. Nonetheless, while most of the community actors I interviewed from both VIRSA and the Group of Ten agreed with the proposition that youth were somewhat caught between worlds, they tended to be careful to explain this as a potential contributing factor to, but not a direct cause of, the emergence of Indo-Canadian criminal groups. For example, several interviewees described cultural, intergenerational conflict as an experience common to the children of many different immigrant groups, not just Indo-Canadians. As the publicist for a community theatre production about criminal groups explained:

> Oh, second generation – I think it's also because you're finding you're between this new culture and your parent's culture and a lot of times they're competing with one another and there's conflict there. Sometimes [the two cultures] may melt [together] easily and slow and so you don't necessarily face all that conflict, but most times I think you do. And that's regardless of what race and where you're from. I think that's something

that's universal. (Interview with Publicist, Headlines Theatre, September 4, 2006)

Despite its universality, the same woman later expressed frustration over the particular ways in which she felt South Asian youth were depicted in academic work on second generation youth:

> Interviewee: Every single [piece of] research, every book you read on identity for South Asian youth at least, they're all "having a crisis." Every single one of them has "problems," [or] "issues." Why am I watching a Bollywood movie? Obviously I have nostalgia for the homelands. It's not because…
>
> Interviewer: You like the music.
>
> Interviewee: I just love the music…It was so frustrating because everything I read from the UK and the States – and there's only a couple of books [on South Asians in] Canada – they all said the same thing. We're caught between two cultures, we don't have an identity, there's all this conflict, our parents don't understand us, our white friends don't understand us, our teachers don't understand us. I think some parts that's true, as much as it irks me and it bothers me to be labelled like that…I mean there is that conflict, definitely. I had people say racist things to me when I was in elementary school and just, you know, parents not understanding Western values and things like that. But at the same time that's not all you're about. My entire life was not cultural. I think I found a normal balance. (ibid.)

The comments made by this interviewee reflect her thoughtful negotiation of her own complex identity. She starts by rejecting academic depictions of the children of South Asian immigrants as caught between worlds, listing various stereotypes associated with this idea, but then concedes that as much as "it irks [her] and bothers [her] to be labelled like that," she can remember examples from her own life when she felt conflict between her parents values and "Western" values. She feels, however, that she has found a "normal balance." A particularly interesting aspect of her explanation is her statement that "[her] entire life was not cultural." In the context of this statement, "cultural" seems to refer to cultural *conflict* over her identity and between the beliefs and practices she associates with her parents' "non-Western" homeland – in this case, Punjab – and Canada. Her use of the word "cultural" to mean "cultural conflict" inadvertently reinforces the idea that "culture" is something contentious, even as she makes her point that her entire life has not been defined by this conflict.

An emotional mix of frustration with discourses about second generation youth as caught between worlds, with (in the above instance) begrudging acknowledgment of the salience of those discourses, was also evident in the responses of youth interviewees. Like the community actors I interviewed, youth respondents tended to avoid explaining the growth of Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality as an explicit, direct consequence of cultural, intergenerational conflict. At this same time, however, when asked what they thought of the idea that second generation youth are 'caught between two worlds,' most agreed with the idea, though the degree to which they felt it described their own experiences varied. The fact that they all seemed at least familiar with the 'two worlds' discourse is, I argue, evidence of its pervasiveness.

Of those who did identify with the idea of being caught, or trapped between worlds, some described the sensation in terms of a desire to be more "Western," or "Canadian:"

> I was living like a bicultural lifestyle. I was going to school, living the Western life, coming home, having the Eastern life, you know? My parents were very liberal in that sense and very accepting and understanding. I've had numerous conversations with both my parents discussing how it's hard that I'm trying to continue my Indian values but integrate new Canadian values. So, it was certainly difficult growing up. Especially because I, again in high school years, I did not understand it. And I think, in general, with a lot of youth, the rebellion years are in high school. And especially because you're living bicultural, you want to live the Canadian life but you're parents are saying: "Don't forget your roots." Because of that there's a lot of rebellion, you know, staying out late, doing this and doing that, because I wanted to be Canadian. But…(Interview with 21-year-old woman, March 20, 2007)

The binary relationship that this young woman perceived between "Indian values" and "Canadian values" is emphasized by her repeated use of the word "bicultural" – a somewhat unusual term that both echoes and challenges "multiculturalism" by describing difference in oppositional terms. In addition, she equates "rebellion" with "living the Canadian life," such that conforming to the norms she associates with Canadian society puts her in conflict with her parents. The conflict is also an internal one between what she seems to identify as her inherent identity (underscored by her use of the phrase "*my* Indian values") and those of wider society (or "*new* Canadian values"). The way that she describes her values as grounded in both in India and Canada points to what might be considered a form of transnational identity. Her connection to India, however, is not only one of traversing space, but also has a temporal element, in that

her use of the term "roots" to describe her connection to India evokes the idea of past origins, while it is the "Canadian life" that she "wants to live." This is underscored by the ways in which her ties to India are mediated through her parents' experiences.

Another young woman had a similar response:

> Yeah, I can see that because there's the Western world and then there's back home. Your parents want you to be the traditional type and then you're going out, you make some friends in the Western world, you have Westernized friends. You have people that have grown up here, their parents have grown up here and you want to be like them. Then you want to please your parents, so it's hard to find the middle ground. Because something that your parents don't want you to do, you want to do it anyways and when your parents find out you get a whole bunch of, you know [trouble], just – yeah. So it's hard…But I've seen that the parents have tried; they are trying to change themselves a little bit. They're trying to understand. They can't just be like – because they have to change themselves as well when they're going out, to learn English, learn how to work here and all that stuff so, they can't just expect us not to. (Interview with 20-year-old woman, September 7, 2007)

Both of the young women describe the difficulties they faced finding a "balance," or "middle-ground" between their parents' expectations and their own desire to be more "Western" and "live the Canadian life." While both seem to have found a means of either resolving or constructively negotiating these conflicts – something they attribute to strong communication with their parents – their experiences are suggestive of the gendered nature of intra-familial relations. In particular, they both describe feeling pressure from their parents to observe and maintain cultural practices: the first refers to her parents telling her not to "forget [her] roots" and the second describes her parents as wanting her to be "the traditional type." The sense of obligation imposed on them by their parents to uphold cultural traditions is in keeping with the gendered nature of cultural reproduction that often allocates such responsibilities to women.

Another young woman who seems to have struggled less with her parents and more with wider society, including other Indo-Canadians, invokes gender and culture somewhat differently:

> Yeah, well I definitely saw myself like that: stuck in two cultures or not being able to fit in. Because I had problems in high school and elementary school fitting in with other kids. And so I always wanted to be part of the Brown culture, so I guess that's why when I graduated I was attracted to a lot of those guys. Even though, I guess, some of them were kind of – some of them were involved in drugs and gang violence and

> stuff. But I felt like it was my culture so I was kind of, I don't know, attracted to it for a while. (Interview with 22-year-old woman, March 12, 2007)

Her experience of feeling caught between worlds involves a desire to feel more a part of an ethnocultural community, and she is not sure that she has – or will ever really be able to – resolve this conflict. Like the young women quoted above, the conflict this woman describes has a distinct, albeit different, gender dimension. She relates her desire to "fit in" with "Brown culture" to her (former) desire for "those [Indo-Canadian] guys." This is interesting in several ways. For one, it invokes the highly gendered nature of discourses around 'gangs' that tend to focus on gangs in relationship to the construction of masculinity. At the same time, it points out how 'gangsterism' is also related to constructions of femininity: in this example, the role of 'girlfriend.' That she describes her attraction to "those guys" in terms of attraction to a sense of cultural belonging also serves to reify ethnocultural identity while negating potentially more subversive forms of identity: she explains her attraction to violent, criminally-involved young men as being attributable to a search for ethnocultural belonging, rather than, for example, as attributable to a less socially sanctioned sexual identity or as a form of thrill-seeking.

Another young woman who expressed ambivalence about being able to resolve her sense of being 'caught between worlds' had this to say:

> I can identify with [the idea of second generation youth being caught between worlds], because I am very Canadian. I'm very Westernized. I don't speak Punjabi properly – I understand it fully, but we didn't speak it as much at home. My parents didn't speak it when I was growing up; they spoke English. I guess they thought I should know English before I went to school because it would be harder if I only spoke Punjabi and then went off to school. I would have had to do [English as a Second Language (ESL)], I guess. [I feel] really kind of disconnected from Indo-Canadian communities because I can't speak the language properly. On the other hand, no matter how much I try to fit in with anyone over here [in a predominately White area], I'll still never truly fit in because there'll always be someone that's got something to say [about my ethnicity]. And that's something I'm kind of in the middle with; not Brown enough, but I'm not White enough either. (Interview with 23-year-old woman, March 15, 2007)

Her response is illustrative of the ways in which the binary between 'immigrant' versus 'Canadian,' which frames difference in terms of the scale of the nation, translates into 'Brown' versus 'White,' which, I argue, frames difference in terms of the scale of the

community – a point that I discuss in more detail in Chapter 6. Her response also highlights the ways in which her sense of connection Punjab is largely framed in terms of her relationship with her parents, in particular her parents' decision not to speak Punjabi at home while she was growing up.

In emphasizing these quotes, my point is not that those with strong 'ethnic' backgrounds who try to incorporate 'Western' values are more likely to find a means of resolving conflicts over their own identity than those with strong 'Western' backgrounds who try to incorporate 'ethnic' values. Nor is it to suggest that one struggle is more difficult than the other. They do, however, seem to involve qualitative differences. The first seems to involve reconciling one's relationships with one's family and the other reconciling one's sense of acceptance within a wider social group. In addition, while much of the literature on acculturation in Canada recognizes second generation youth's struggles within their families (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Kwak & Berry, 2001), the idea that the search for an 'authentic' ethnic identity – i.e., acceptance as a member of a socially defined ethnic group – has been less examined. For those interviewed in this project, however, that search for belonging among a group of ethnic peers seems as important as reconciling intra-familial conflict. Importantly, the search for belonging within an ethnic community seems heightened by a sense of marginalization from wider society: to be 'ethnic,' in some ways, means never to be accepted as or included in the wider category of 'mainstream,' a topic that I will return to in Chapter 6.

Youth interviewees who disagreed with the idea of second generation youth being caught between two worlds tended to characterize this argument as a sort of useless complaint or excuse. Instead, they emphasized individual responsibility. For example, one young woman responded:

> I know what people are talking about, but I think it's blown out of proportion. It's just like - parents are way more understanding than kids think they are, especially if you're an outsider. You wouldn't think they'd be so understanding. Like, obviously it's hard, right? But I honestly don't think that this - it's just not that big of deal, you know? So what [that] your parents weren't born here, but moved here, immigrated here? (Interview with 20-year-old woman, July 16, 2007)

She supports her perspective that inter-generational culture clash has been "blown out of proportion" by arguing that parents are understanding. At the same time, however, she invokes the salience of an 'immigrant' versus 'Canadian' binary by using the phrase "especially if you're an outsider," suggesting that her disavowal of conflict is, in part,

based on her implicit acceptance of being 'different.' This binary is disrupted, however, by the point that "*obviously* it's hard:" a normalization of whatever conflict she or her peers might experience. Such normalization allows her to dismiss the 'immigrant' versus 'Canadian' binary as irrelevant: "So what [that] your parents…immigrated here?"

While the example above was from an interview with a young woman, most of the youth interviewees who felt that the idea of second generation youth being caught between worlds was either inapplicable to their own experiences or an excuse used by those who were not 'responsible for themselves,' were male. As one young man explained:

> Well, I know I've thought of it like that before. But the thing is, when you look at it, you've got to suck it up, and you've got to be part of it, and you've got to realize that what you have, what's happening is good for you. The fact that you're even here is a good thing and the fact that you're going to say that you're stuck in between two generations – you're not really stuck, it's just the mind set. It's just the mind, [so] your mind's got to be outside the box, you've got to think outside of the box. So basically if you're thinking that [you're caught between worlds], you're stopping yourself from thinking properly, you're not thinking properly. There's no such thing as me being stuck between two generations because there isn't that gap. There's just an imaginary gap made up by people just because [they] can't handle their own problems. (Interview with 16-year-old man, July 20, 2007)

This young man's response included a discourse of self-determination and empowerment and the characterization of inter-generational conflict as "an imaginary gap." Another young man who drew from a similar discourse of individual agency characterized inter-generational conflict as a real, if personally irrelevant, problem:

> I think [feeling caught between worlds] is definitely an issue. It's not an issue for me personally, I don't think it is for [my friend]; there's no - but I think we're outside of the general consensus on it. So, the general consensus is that yes [it is an issue], from people that I've talked to…I think it has to do with being [second] generation. It has to do a lot with the parenting, because the parents are of the older generation; they don't understand Canadian culture. When I say Canadian culture I'm being very general here. They don't understand Western culture…So I think that's a problem. But at the same time, I think each person is responsible for themselves. There's really no language barrier because if you're [second] generation here you're growing up in English schools. I remember our first language at home is Punjabi and I didn't speak very much English at all until I got into preschool and first and second grade. I remember that and I was in learning assistance. But you catch on very

quickly, right? I don't think there's much of a language problem. (Interview with 23-year-old man, August 7, 2007)

The fact that young men were more likely than young women to reject the 'caught between two worlds' discourse is perhaps not surprising, considering the ways masculine identity is often constructed around ideas of self-sufficiency, agency, and competence. It does however underscore two of the more striking elements of discourses about intergenerational cultural conflict and Indo-Canadian gangsterism: conflict over gender roles and differing parental treatment of male and female children. It also suggests that the types of concerns involved in reconciling 'culture clash' are different for young men than they are for young women.

Gender Norms

A central theme in media narratives about Indo-Canadian violence and criminality is the representation of young Indo-Canadian men as subscribing to a violent masculine ideal with misguided understandings of honour:

> What's behind [murders of Indo-Canadian men]? A whole host of things. Some of the tit-for-tat killings are part of a drug war that can be traced back to the mid-1990s and gangsters such as Bindy Johal and Ron and Jimmy Dosanjh. They usually feature young men, often pumped up on cocaine, steroids and their own testosterone. Some of the killings have been motivated by romantic rivalries, but much of the violence is simply the outgrowth of a culture in which slighted honour must be avenged. (Middleton, 2002, p. A10)

One particularly scathing article emphasizing this idea appeared in a 2002 issue of the national news magazine, *McClean's*. The journalist, a then rookie Vancouver television reporter from a Punjabi background, railed against what she felt was denial on the part of the Indo-Canadian community, arguing "a Punjabi boy's aggression and contempt of the law can be traced to misguided religious beliefs and his family's traditional practices" (Bakshi, 2002, p. 32). She went on to say:

> From the moment a Punjabi boy opens his eyes, his parents hand him the keys to the Porsche of life. From now on, his mother will ride in the back seat, literally and figuratively, putting her son ahead of the world. Her boy will have the privilege of eating a warm meal, without the chore of clearing the dishes alongside his sister. In a fit of childhood rage, he will kick and punch his mother, as his father and grandmother look on, taking great pride in their boy's supposed courage. Eventually, a young boy will

93

become a young man and step into a community that thrives on bravado – a world where everything is a grudge match, a fight to the finish. From Sunday sermons at Sikh temples to Friday nights at bars, police files show that disagreements among Punjabi men are regularly settled with the use of force. The difference is, youngsters have replaced the holy Sikh sword with machine guns…What you have are young men who lack discipline and direction, young men who find adventure in earning fast money in the drug trade. Young men primed for violence. (ibid., pp. 32-34)

In later interviews, Bakshi described why she wrote this article – one that probably gained her at least as many enemies as it did supporters – explaining that she was fed up with the violence she saw in her community. On one hand, her argument could be read as the co-option of an ethnic voice used to legitimate an essentially racist narrative. On the other hand, it could be read as Bakshi's attempt to bring needed attention to a serious problem, even at the risk of exposing herself and her community to external critique. It could even be read as both. Regardless, the idea that this kind of hyper-masculine racialized figure could have emerged from an immigrant 'culture' presents somewhat of a challenge to the notion of multiculturalism as a framework in which 'culture' is something to be preserved, cherished, and protected.

Many of the young people I interviewed expressed frustration over the gender-specific roles they felt their parents expected of them. In the majority of my interviews, young women felt particularly constrained by restrictions on their behavior, such as not being allowed to date, and the importance of upholding a good 'reputation' to being accepted into their future husbands' families. On the other hand, young men were generally characterized as having a high degree of personal freedom, particularly in their day-to-day activities.

This type of depiction was consistent with those made by community actors. For example, according to VIRSA's action plan:

A parenting style which is heavily influenced by Eastern culture is not meeting the needs of youth being raised in the Canadian culture, thereby further weakening the relationship between parents and youth. Gender inequality in some families results in males acquiring unlimited freedom, while females are suppressed. The result is often a lack of discipline for males with no consequences for their negative actions, which reinforces socially unacceptable behaviour. Cultural notions of male bravado and defending one's honour under perceived threat encourage aggression and compound negative behaviours on the part of male youth. A paradigm of parent domination in which decisions may be forced on youth or unrealistic expectations imposed, causes youth to fear for their

individual growth. This further impacts self-esteem and may drive youth to rebel. (VIRSA, 2003, p. 2)

The Group of Ten's report makes a similar argument, albeit one that describes the treatment of male children not simply in terms of a lack of discipline, but also as the "absence of emotional security and structure, particularly for boys, in family life" where "boys experience a very unstructured, permissive and forgiving environment" and "girls experience a very structured, controlled, and unforgiving environment" (Group of Ten, 2005, p. 9).

If young men were seen as having more personal freedom, they were also seen as being affected by the imperative to fulfill certain ideas about masculinity – to 'be like a man.' In some instances, interviewees related this idea directly to violence:

> In high school, all the guys used to go to different schools and then [say]: "Oh, I met this guy, I'm going to go fight him after school." And I'd be like: "Why? Just don't go to that school, don't go there. Why are you going there to start a fight?" I don't know. But they try – and macho, the tough image – that's part of the Indo-Canadian culture I guess. That guys are kind of tough, they're champions and all of that. Which is also true in most cultures so I don't - that whole thing doesn't register with me, I don't understand it. There's lots of thing I don't understand *[laughing]*.
> (Interview with 23-year-old woman, March 15, 2007)

While this young woman characterizes young men's adherence to a "tough image" as "part of the Indo-Canadian culture," she also sees the enactment of this type of masculinity as part of "most cultures." Violence would seem to be less something that she associates with Indo-Canadian culture than it is something that she associates with masculinity in general. Another young woman made a similar link between violence and her conceptualization of masculinity in more direct terms:

> I see violence. You hear about it at every party, there's always at least one fight at every party. Like even - I was at a barbeque the other day [and] you could see [the Sikh temple] from there, and the guys were just saying: "Oh, these are great Sikhs, we have like pay-per-view, we get to see the fights on every night." I used to hang out with some people [who] would rush off to go get involved in some fight. So we thought the guys just are like that. They seem to kind of like it. (Interview with 22-year-old woman, September 13, 2007)

Her quote is interesting in that she frames male violence in relationship to Sikhism; it is unclear whether this is due to the details of the particular story she told or whether she

viewed "Sikh" male violence as distinct from "Indo-Canadian" male violence. Nonetheless, several other linked Sikhism and violence, albeit generally by putting Sikhism – or more specifically, the Indian region of Punjab – in an historical context. For example, during an interview, a forensic psychiatrist who works with youth made the point that most of the immigrants from Punjab to British Columbia have come from more rural, or agricultural, areas. He argued that these origins led immigrants from Punjab to have more conservative attitudes than immigrants from other parts of India, particularly in terms of gender relations. In addition, he linked Punjab's long history of conflict to the creation of a culture of willingness to engage in physical confrontations in the defence of a code of honour:

> For example, [the] Indo-Canadian Sikh community has been persecuted over hundreds and hundreds of years. And that kind of mentality – "Hey I won't, you know, tolerate anything." So that has kind of a macho, machoism, you know, bravado, factor. (Interview with forensic psychiatrist, November 24, 2006)

Another interviewee – a probation officer and participant in the Group of Ten – however, argued it is the *perversion* of "South Asian" cultural beliefs and practices relating to gender that contributes to Indo-Canadian gangsterism:

> I don't believe culture necessarily plays a part but I think culture gets twisted. I think the culture is a healthy culture, but I think people can twist it. And I think twisting does take place, and guys do sort of take – like a lot of these people who are getting into this – take the bad parts of a culture. I think every culture has its [problems]. There was some violence in the past – not necessarily [in] the culture, but in the history of South Asian people. A lot of them, in fact, attend temples and with that they take on some of the imagery – the violent imagery, saving face, the honour, that type of thing – that kind of mixes in. So I think that's twisting the culture; it's part of the culture or there was a reason for violence in the past for whatever reason. And I think again, in a lot of families that I see, boys do have special privileges that girls don't, you know, and so that's there. So, there are easier rules [for boys]. (Interview with probation officer and member of the Group of Ten, January 15, 2007)

Later in his interview, he discusses cultural influences that construct masculinity in terms of violence; this time, however, he uses the term "culture" to refer to (Canadian) popular culture, rather than to (immigrant) South Asian culture:

> I mean, over the years, [what] I've noticed more and more is the way kids are dressing and [how] that very much is influenced by a certain

96

[Canadian] culture. And Indian kids, White kids, sort of the whole spectrum. I think that does play [a role] or has something to do with it. Again, that's an influence, it is kind of that tough guy type thing and for whatever reason it's been taken to a bit of an extreme; where it's not just about fighting, but yeah, they're taking the guns with them…Some of the gruesome ways people have died – that's something that has been taken to that extreme, and I think there was the influence of, say, the [Canadian] culture for whatever reason. (ibid.)

Several other interviewees also made the point that the image of "that tough guy type thing" – male bravado and violence – is an influence on youth of many different backgrounds. In addition, some emphasized the need to address youth culture more broadly:

What I tell my volunteers is: don't focus so much on the skin colour of the students we're dealing with or what religion or culture they belong to. They come as the youth culture because nothing else exists. Youth culture is anywhere from movies to videos to music to clothing to words that they use in school, slang, I mean what's cool, what's not cool, everything. (Interview with VIRSA staff member, September 28, 2006)

The same interviewee made the point that while some of the root influences contributing to male youth violence come from mainstream popular culture, young Indo-Canadian men may be more prone to the desire to fulfill more extreme ideals of masculinity, due to gender norms coming from Indo-Canadian culture:

I mean, you'll see some of our kids at the gym *[laughing]*. There'll be boys – very, very skinny guys – and so they'll hit the gym, just try to get bigger and bigger. And then you throw in the South Asian culture and how a man has to be a man and this is what you stand for and you have to be overt, and you have to be opinionated. (ibid.)

In terms of ideals of masculinity, then, it seems that the issue is not so much a culture *clash*, but one of *compatibility*, in which 'Canadian' and 'immigrant' ideals reinforce and amplify each other. In other words, ideas about what it means to 'be a man' in 'Canadian culture' and what it means in 'South Asian culture' may be different, but are not *opposed*. In this sense, the presumed conflict between 'Canadian' and 'immigrant' culture – the spatial binary that forms the basis of the idea of being 'caught between worlds' – breaks down.

Conclusion

In multicultural Canada, the idea of 'culture' as a marker of social identity is a primary framework through which difference is understood and constructed, often subsuming categories of 'race' and 'ethnicity,' and to some extent, 'class.' As with any such distinctions, the process of categorization involves drawing boundaries around different groups of people – or types of bodies – which in turn involves both inclusion and exclusion as well as a degree of essentialization. If the boundaries between categories are seen as fluid or porous, those somehow positioned at the edges may occur a position of 'bothness,' or of being able to move easily between groups. Conversely, if the boundaries are more rigid and distinct, those at the edges may be 'caught' or 'trapped' or 'torn' between different 'worlds.' As such, emphasis on the idea that second generation youth are caught between worlds can serve to further strengthen categorical boundaries, which can further 'entrap' youth between worlds – a sort of 'self-fulfilling prophesy.'

I argue that just such a process has occurred through the discourses and practices of the media, various state institutions and community organizations concerned with Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality in Greater Vancouver. This is particularly reflected by a pervasive notion of 'culture clash' as part of the explanation behind youth violence and criminality. At the same time, however, exactly which sets of beliefs and practices belong to 'Canadian' culture and which sets to 'Indian' (or 'Punjabi') culture, is not always clear or consistent. In this way, a binary relationship based on metaphors of national difference between 'Canadian' and 'Indian' is called into question and undermined at the same time that it is invoked. In this sense, 'Canadian' and 'Indian' are both fixed and free-floating signifiers of identity.

An alternative to this conflict-based model might come from transnational theory, which, as discussed in Chapter 2, emphasizes the ways in which immigrants maintain on-going connections to more than one country. In addition, transnationalism has been used to theorize the complex, and at times ambivalent sense of connection that second generation youth have toward their parents' country of birth and their own (Das Gupta, 1997; Ghosh & Wang, 2003; Pratt, 2003; 2010; Walton-Roberts & Pratt, 2005; Waters, 2001). Drawing from this perspective, second generation Indo-Canadian youth might be framed as actively and strategically negotiating their positions relative to "Indian" and "Canadian" society, for example, rather than as passive 'victims,' caught at the intersection of competing sets of social norms. In addition, while the discourse around

Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality is specifically framed in the context of Greater Vancouver, youth often invoke narratives of transnational connection as they respond to and negotiate this discourse.

CHAPTER 6:
'BOUNDED' COMMUNITIES

If second generation youth can be said to be 'caught between two worlds,' this argument – however complicated and contested it might be – is shaped by how those worlds are defined. In the case of Indo-Canadian youth, these worlds have been defined in terms of 'national' distinctions between 'immigrant' and 'Canadian,' as well 'community' distinctions between 'ethnic' and 'mainstream.' As Young (1990) points out in her critique of the communitarian politics, the ideal of community is inherently essentialist:

> Any move to define an identity, a closed totality, always depends on excluding some elements, separating the pure from the impure. Bringing particular things under a universal essence, for example, depends on determining some attribute of particulars as accidental, lying outside the essence. Any definition or category creates and inside/outside distinction, and the logic of identity seeks to keep those borders firmly drawn. (p. 303)

While the ideal of community may attempt to 'fix' boundaries and create stable identities, in practice, those boundaries are often unclear and imperfect. As such, the relative difficulty of crossing the boundaries into and between different 'worlds' is fluid. Nonetheless, the growth of Indo-Canadian youth violence, as well as various responses to that violence, have, in some ways, reinforced cultural borders, even as attempts are made to cross them. In discussions surrounding this issue, culture tends to appear as a bounded entity – a means of organizing and categorizing individuals into 'communities' that are ostensibly internally coherent. Culture, then, is an idea whose power "resides in its ability to be used to describe, label or carve out activities into stable entities, so that they can be named an attribute of a people" (Mitchell, 1995, pp. 112-113).

In this chapter, I move from my discussion in Chapter 5 of discourses that define difference in terms of national distinctions – 'immigrant' versus 'Canadian' – to one that focuses on discourses that define difference within the Canadian context in terms of 'ethnic' and 'mainstream' communities. In doing so, I examine the idea of 'bounded' communities and how it has played into responses to Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality. In particular, I note how 'ethnic culture' and 'mainstream culture' are

frequently constructed as an oppositional binary, including the idea of ethnic space being separate from public space. I also point out that these boundaries are not only implicitly racialized but also explicitly racialized, as reflected in the emergence of discourses about 'Brownness' among young Indo-Canadians.

Indo-Canadian 'Insularity'

One means through which 'ethnic' and 'mainstream' have been constructed as mutually exclusive categories is a recurring emphasis on the insularity of the Indo-Canadian community and the apparent unwillingness of Indo-Canadians to assist police. For example, in some news media accounts, this idea is substantiated through quotes or stories in which Indo-Canadians themselves point out the flaws of 'their community' and implore other Indo-Canadians to 'speak out:'

> No more gangsters as role models. No more chasing quick ways to material success. No more violent responses to personal slights. And enough with the conspiracy of silence. (Middleton & Nurmohamed, 2002, p. A4)

The idea of a "conspiracy" not only suggests that potential informants and witnesses are unwilling to help the police, but that their silence is somehow *coordinated* and premeditated. These types of depictions, however, are not without counterargument, particularly in terms of challenging the supposed coherence and homogeneity of members of the Indo-Canadian community. In an opinion piece printed in the *Vancouver Sun*, Grewal (2002) argues:

> I get miffed when the police ask for the co-operation of the Indo-Canadian community to help solve gang and drug-related murders, which have claimed the lives of 50 young people in the Lower Mainland in the last decade. How can ordinary Indo-Canadians, who don't have a clue about what is happening in the world of gangs, help solve those crimes even if the suspects and victims of these crimes were from the same ethnic group? I guess it is a legitimate police process to persuade anybody with any information on any crime to come forward. But implying that an entire ethnic group is withholding vital information is preposterous. I can't imagine the police labelling the entire Euro-Canadian community as being tight-lipped or closed about the crimes of Hell's Angels. (p. A15)

Grewal's opinion article takes issue with what she feels is the police's essentialization of ethnicity. It is not, however, only police statements or media depictions that have

reinforced the idea that blame and responsibility can be attributed to a supposedly coherent ethnic community. While their reasons for doing so may be complicated, anti-gang organizations have largely focused their efforts on the Indo-Canadian community, seeking both causes and solutions as stemming from within. In doing so, they have tended to approach insularity more in terms of the desire for members of the Indo-Canadian community to protect each other as well as arising from a legacy of discrimination at the hands of both the police and the wider public. They have also emphasized a need to protect cultural heritage and to address the problem of youth violence and criminal groups in culturally sensitive ways. As a co-founder of VIRSA explained to me during an interview, "[In order for] any program to be successful, [it] has to be developed with community input and delivered through culturally sensitive ways" (Interview with co-founder of VIRSA, September 11, 2006). While clearly important, one consequence of this type of emphasis on cultural sensitivity has been a tendency on the part of anti-gang organizations to frame the solutions to Indo-Canadian youth violence as coming from within a single community. This situation has led some would-be anti-gang workers to retreat from involvement in community organizations aiming at addressing youth violence and criminality. As a female probation officer explained to me:

> I really try not to get involved with the same group of people that represent our community at these forums or are interviewed because a lot of times they're not informed. And when I hear "Indo-Canadian gang," it bothers me because there is no such gang. There are Indo-Canadian youth that have gang-like behaviours but there is no such gang. And everybody wants there to be one so you can explain why these youth are doing what they're doing, but I think they have these behaviours [for] multiple reasons. But I sometimes feel that the onus has been reverted back to our community to identify the problem, address the problem and make it disappear. (Interview with Indo-Canadian probation officer, October 24, 2006)

She went on to clarify:

> When I say 'our community' I mean Indo-Canadian community [but] it's a bigger community issue and problem. However, because it gets that label, "Indo-Canadian youth gang," then it's kind of handed back to our community and [we're told]: "You guys do something about it." (ibid.)

Her response highlights underlying tensions about the ways in which 'ethnic communities' are seen as *separate from*, rather than *part of*, the 'mainstream community.' This separation is one that she describes as being created from 'within' by

the "same group of people that represent [her] community" as well as from 'without' by those within the "bigger community" who "hand back" the problem of youth gangs to Indo-Canadians. In this way, Indo-Canadian 'insularity' is reinforced from two directions through an oppositional binary, creating the image of a classic 'catch-22' - a cyclical problem that is unsolvable. Her refusal to become involved with the people she describes represents, in part, a challenge to this binary.

'Mainstream' and the Media

In addition to an emphasis on the supposed insularity of the Indo-Canadian community, certain consistent narrative strategies used in news media coverage have helped create and reinforce a sense of Indo-Canadian gangsters as embedded in an internally cohesive social network. Particularly evident is a type of 'seriality' in coverage of Indo-Canadians gang violence, specifically homicide. The term "seriality" has multiple meanings as it is used in disciplines ranging from cognitive science and library studies to communications and visual arts. I primarily use the term to suggest the ways in which individual newspaper stories contribute to an overall narrative, such that each story serves as a sort of 'episode,' or element of a thematic series. Indo-Canadian gang violence thus acts as a "news theme" which "allows journalists to cast an incident as an instance of something" (Fishman, 1978, p. 534). In terms of the reporting of crime, such a theme generally conforms to a "consistency rule" in which "every crime incident that can be seen as an instance of the theme, will be seen and reported as such" (ibid., p. 537).

In addition, to this meaning of "seriality," I also partially draw from Young's (1994) use of seriality to describe gender such that individual women can be understood as serial members of the social collective "women." For Young, seriality is a potentially liberating concept for feminist politics, as she argues that it allows for collective action while avoiding the universalizing tendency of communitarian politics based on the idea of women as a social *group* rather than as *individuals.* She argues that seriality "allows us to see women as a collective without identifying common attributes that all women have or implying that all women have a common identity" (p. 714). My use of seriality, however, is not to describe the willing engagement of individuals in collective political action, but instead the relegation of individuals to a category through media discourses

that position each person as just another example of a 'type,' *despite* his or her individual attributes.

Three components of this seriality are: death counts – presented as running tallies of homicides; incident lists – brief synopses of a string of what are usually described as "recent incidents," and social networks – social and familial links drawn between individuals involved in different incidents. The effect of these narrative strategies is to create a sense of temporal continuity among events, as well as to create a sense of Indo-Canadian 'gangsters' as embedded in a web of underworld social relationships that draw them closer together while separating them from 'mainstream' society.

The use of statistics and numerical tabulations is often a key component of crime reporting in that it both provides the readership with a sense of how specific incidents sit relative to wider trends as well as substantiating claims of newsworthiness. In the case of Indo-Canadian gangs, one frequently used trope is a running total of deaths related to gang violence. In 2002 and 2003, stories reported that 50 or "more than 50" young Indo-Canadian men had died due to such violence (Austin & Middleton, 2002; Bolan, 2002a; Gulyas, 2003). In subsequent stories, this figure was updated, albeit with a good deal of variation. For example, in January 2004, the *North Shore News* reported that since 1994 "there [had] been more than 70 murders directly related to the Indo-Canadian gang war" (Knight, 2004); while in May 2004, the *Vancouver Sun* reported on a "wave of violence that has led to more than 60 murders [of young Indo-Canadian men] in the last decade" (Bolan, 2004b) and in June, the *Richmond News* referred to "Indo-Canadian drug violence which has killed 75 youths in the Lower Mainland over the past 10 years" (Holmes, 2004). In January 2005, a headline in the *Province* read "Violence has claimed 82 lives: Families mourn latest 2 Indo-Canadian victims" (Jiwa, 2005b) (one of the few times that the death count was not reported as a multiple of "5"); by October, the *Province's* count was at "more than 100" (Jiwa, 2005a), with this number apparently revised to "nearly 100" by January 2006 (Jiwa, 2006).

My point is not to take issue with the accuracy of the death counts. After all, what incidents are included in such counts depends on the information available to individual journalists – something that changes over time as police investigations turn up new evidence and discount previous leads. Instead, I am interested in these 'updates' as one aspect of a sort of seriality in which news coverage links individual incidents together as episodes in an open-ended crime saga, or continuous narrative. If individual stories of

104

"body count news" (Chermak, 1994; Duwe, 2000) provide the dramatic content that sell newspapers, then an iterative running tally sustains that drama.

A number, however, is not enough. As such, another aspect of the seriality of newspaper coverage of Indo-Canadian gangs is the repeated use of incident lists, generally appended to the end of a story in boxes, tables, and graphics. Such a list followed Bolan's (2000) story discussed above, and included a list of homicides, attempted homicides and arrest, dating back to 1991. The same list appeared in *Vancouver Sun* articles several times over the next few years (Bolan, 2002b, 2003, 2004a), and a similar list appeared in the *Province* ("The trail of death," 2002), each updated to include recent incidents. By way of example, the following is an excerpt from one of the *Vancouver Sun* articles (Bolan, 2002b):

> Nov. 18, 2002 -- Davinder Davinder Singh Gharu, 21, was shot outside his New Westminster home. He was a close friend of Jaskaran Singh Chima, who was murdered last spring and an associate of Robbie Kandola, murdered in June. No charges have been laid….June 23, 2002 -- Drug dealer Robbie Kandola is murdered by killers waiting for him as he gets out of a cab in front of his Coal Harbour apartment. No charges have been laid. (p. A1)

The continuity created by such a list is serial, not just in terms of its episodic quality and linkages made between incidents (for example, the repeated mention of a specific individual), but also in terms of the consistent format in which each incident is described, creating a sense of equivalence, if not inter-changeability, among events. The 'key' details always include a date, names, location, and whether or not charges have been laid. They also include some kind of rationale for considering each incident as 'gang-related,' though in some cases, this rationale is scant as best. For example, in the June 23 incident above, Robbie Kandola is identified as a "drug dealer," which ostensibly is enough to explain his murder and establish him as a gang member.

A later story in the *Vancouver Sun* was more explicit in establishing the links between specific incident and gangs, often citing police sources:

> April 26, 2004 -- Harjit Ghoman is shot dead in his car in the Pacific National Exhibition's north parking lot. Ghoman, who had been at a concert at the PNE with his girlfriend, is shot in his car by a man wearing a balaclava. Ghoman was a suspect in a September 2000 shooting in Vancouver….March 6, 2004 -- Gerpal (Paul) Dosanjh, 27, is shot to death inside the Gourmet Castle Restaurant on East Hastings. He is a cousin of the original Indo- Canadian gangsters -- Jimmy and Ron Dosanjh -- who

were gunned down in 1994 by suspected associates of Bindy Johal
(Bolan, 2004a, p. C3)

Despite the addition of more details, however, a great deal of assumption is required to tie together these incidents under the story's headline, "A history of organized crime in the Indo-Canadian community." Even if this assumption is warranted – i.e. that being "a cousin of" gangsters or having been a suspect (un-convicted) in a previous shooting is enough to establish someone's link with gangs – such depictions help create the impression of a tightly woven, *organized* network.

This network, constituted by links ranging from concrete to quite tenuous, forms a third aspect of the seriality of news reporting on Indo-Canadian gangs. In addition to the extensive lists included in articles discusses above, subsequent articles in both the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province* frequently made use of brief lists of previous incidents when reporting on new incidents. Relationships between individuals were often used as evidence of a network, effectively tying incidents together, creating, in very clear terms, a continuous narrative of a 'string' of events, and again, bolstering claims to the newsworthiness of particular stories. But while criminal associations and familial linkages form the explicit basis of networks, implicit linkages to race and ethnicity are also made.

Crime stories that receive the most coverage are those with the type of details and tragic elements that engage readers on a more personal basis (Duwe, 2000; Sacco, 1995). As Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti (2006) note, crime reporting is also often "highly repetitive in nature, reflecting reporters' tendency to revive well-known stories that can be used to contextualize related stories or 'new' developments in the original story" (p. 839). As such, it is not surprising that incident lists are common devices in news accounts of violence crime. However, while revealing the personal, embodied stories behind death counts can serve the political end of galvanizing public dissent against atrocity (Hyndman, 2007), doing so can also be sensationalist and even, paradoxically, dehumanizing. One 2004 article from the *Vancouver Sun* (Bolan, 2004a) illustrates this paradox. The full-page article consists mainly of a list of 48 homicide incidents, some of which are "gang and drug-related," and others that "are the fallout of insults between groups of young men." The lack of distinction between the two is telling: the salient point is not that the drug trade breeds violence, but that Indo-Canadian men are themselves violent, and more importantly, homicidally violent. As with other articles that include incident lists, each incident in the *Vancouver Sun* article includes a brief description of the location, people involved, and any information on police charges. For

fourteen of the incidents, the article also includes a photograph of a victim – though many of them are described as themselves being perpetrators of violence. A perhaps unintended – though still notable – consequence of the layout of the story is that readers are presented with a two-page spread of the photographs of 'Brown' faces, This effectively makes clear the racialized nature of the crimes involved without an explicit mention of race in the text – an example of "inferential racism," in which media representations "enable racist statements to be formulated without ever bringing into awareness the racist predicates on which the statements are grounded" (Hall, 1990, p. 13) qtd. in (Allan, 2004, p. 145). In the Canadian context, Jiwani (2006) relates this type of news media discourse to multiculturalism's essentialization of difference and conflation of 'race' with 'culture:'

> The association between immigrants and crime is a common strategy used to both racialize crime and criminalize racial groups. Thus, while the exotic dimension of difference can be tamed and consumed, the threatening dimension of difference tends to be condensed under the sign of criminality whereby it can be Othered, confined, and restrained discursively and incarcerated physically. These moves represent the symbolic violence of race as perpetrated by the mass media. (p. 43)

While public perception of such stories is clearly difficult to gauge, several research interviewees pointed to incident lists as examples of what they felt was biased coverage. For example, an employee of a multicultural services organization noted:

> I also find that in the media one of the [things] that I've really noticed is that if there's been an Indo-Canadian 'incident' let's just call it, they'll bring up all the other incidents of the last year so you know this person was murdered as well or this person was arrested for drug trafficking or whatever the case might be. But that's not the case with the mainstream community; you're not publishing last year's history of who was murdered. (Interview with executive director of a multicultural services organization and member of UNITED[15], December 11, 2006)

This idea of a distinction between a 'mainstream community' and an 'Indo-Canadian' community *within* media discourse was paralleled by a distinction *between* 'mainstream' and 'ethnic' media sources. When asked about their thoughts on media coverage of Indo-Canadian criminal groups, a number of the community actors I interviewed

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[15] Unified Network of Indo-Canadians Together through Education (UNITED) is a non-profit community organization.

positioned 'mainstream' sources as distinct from 'Indo-Canadian.' For example, one young woman who was active in a *bhangra* dance organization said:

> After [a *bhangra* dance organization's] first event in 2005, they had a huge picture of a dance store on the cover of the *Vancouver Sun* and it was literally the first time there was a positive image of anyone from the South Asian community on the cover of the mainstream newspaper, like for years and years. And the organization was actually getting phone calls from people in the community going: "I can't believe this, I can't believe a positive picture of someone [Indo-Canadian]." (Interview *bhangra* dance organization member and participant in community theatre project, September 4, 2006)

An understanding of 'Indo-Canadian' as distinct from 'mainstream' also formed part of youth interviewees' responses to their perceptions of media coverage. Two male friends who were interviewed together expressed their dissatisfaction with news sources from the ethnic press:

> Interviewee 1: And it's also sad to mention that now there's more Punjabi news on the multicultural channel – there's a Punjabi [news] show at 9:30 every night –and they [use the same style as] mainstream journalism.
>
> Interviewee 2: They say it the exact same way.
>
> Interviewee 1: Exact same way. And I find that offensive, you know, more than [the] mainstream because: you are the same as us, why are you falling into the trap?
>
> Interviewee 2: There's Indo-Canadian news[papers]. There was a bit of story in the *Vancouver Sun* – all [the Indo-Canadian newspapers] do now is just copy-paste it into the Indo-Canadian news and they say source: "*Vancouver Sun*" And you just read the same [thing].
>
> Interviewee 1: And you know that really upsets me because if the Indo-Canadian journalists do the same thing as the mainstream journalists…there's no one to object; everyone's agreeing with the *Vancouver Sun*, the mainstream media. (Interview with 22-year-old man and 23-year-old man, August 7, 2006)

In discussions about the media that distinguish between 'Indo-Canadian' and 'mainstream,' there is a common tendency to describe these as mutually exclusive categories. It is not only that to be 'Indo-Canadian' is to be separate from the mainstream, but also that to be part of the mainstream is *not* to be Indo-Canadian, as reflected in the comments above about Indo-Canadian journalists working for mainstream media sources "doing the same thing" as "mainstream journalists." In other

words, these interviewees expressed a general sense that *legitimate* Indo-Canadian voices were missing in news coverage: by 'going mainstream,' Indo-Canadian journalists were no longer seen as expressing 'Indo-Canadian' views.

This sense of being excluded from news media - whether 'ethnic' or 'mainstream' - is significant in that news media has been so central to the formation of the concept of Indo-Canadian gangsterism. For example, when asked how they first encountered the idea of Indo-Canadian criminal groups, the most frequent response from both community actors and Indo-Canadian youth was news media, rather than, for example, direct experience. As such, news media appear to be the main means through which the notion of Indo-Canadian gangsters has been propagated from an earlier period of criminal group activity in the early to mid 1990s to a younger generation of Indo-Canadians. Even further, when asked if they could remember specific instances of first encountering news coverage of Indo-Canadian criminal groups, the majority of respondents specifically mentioned television and newspaper coverage of Bindy Johal – someone who gained a degree of local notoriety in the early 1990s due the mutual love between him and journalists' cameras. A young man I interviewed summed up his first impression of Johal: "So I knew he was an idiot but still you've got to admire a guy that has the balls to do that" (Interview with 16-year-old man, July 20, 2007).

The importance of this individual, or more accurately the myth created around him, is striking. Whether one sees him as an adept manipulator of the media or as its puppet, for many of those interviewed, Johal's 'voice' in the media was decidedly different than the 'mainstream.' He was both unapologetic and Indo-Canadian. The idea, however, that he was *unapologetically Indo-Canadian* (i.e., that he was somehow standing up for Indo-Canadians) is the unfortunate result of media's tendency to strip individuals from the context of their lives and turn them into iconic figures. Several interviewees specifically emphasized Johal's importance in terms of race. As explained by an employee of a multicultural services organization:

> I don't know if you've listened to Bindy Johal but he was all over in the news, kind of making these thuggish comments, and doing all of this stuff. And he became, and still is, a role model for a lot of people…[But] the positive [role models] are more or less - a lot of them have conformed to the mainstream way of doing things. They're the token Indians now, right? So, how [well] regarded are they [by youth]? Because now they're

whitewashed, they're Coconuts, they're Oreos[16] or whatever the term it is you want to use for them. (Interview with executive director of a multicultural concerns society and member of UNITED, December 11, 2006)

Similarly, a documentary filmmaker active in anti-gang outreach had this to say:

Who else was there? Why wouldn't Bindy Johal be fulfilling? What other South Asian was in the media? Or had that notoriety that he reached so many youth? I looked for one, I couldn't find anybody…Who's our local guy? Who's our hero? Negative hero, anti-hero, whatever you want to call him. Who can we relate to? Who is our guy that broke away from the visible minority into the mainstream? Who is he? We didn't have anybody. He was there at the right time, and the media knew about [him], and they used him. (Interview with director of documentary film, May 27, 2009)

The power of news media to turn someone like Johal – who was, by most accounts, directly responsible for several homicides and numerous acts of violence – into a sort of romanticized 'outlaw' is a clear example of the centrality of media discourse to the construction of the 'Indo-Canadian gangster.' At the same time, what allowed for the media to create such a resonant mythologized figure in the first place, was, and is, the continuing centrality of race to individuals' self-identification, multicultural tropes of equality and 'color-blindness' notwithstanding.

Ethnic Violence and Public Space

Related to the idea of bounded ethnocultural communities that positions 'ethnic' in opposition to 'mainstream,' are discussions of 'ethnic violence' occurring in 'public' space. One aspect of Indo-Canadian gangsterism, as it has been described by the police and the media, is the use of firearms and the frequency with which acts of violence are committed in public. According to an RCMP member with the Integrated Gang Taskforce:

In my experience, murders were conducted indoors, or if they were conducted outdoors, there were knives or bats or fists involved. And if there was a gunshot involved, well, that was rare. But now: multiple bullets, spraying bullets everywhere…The statement we use, particularly [in reference to] South Asians is: "easy access to weapons; a willingness to use them." And under that you could put public place. I think these

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[16] These are derogatory terms used to characterize someone as Brown "on the outside" and White "on the inside."

stats are probably a little up: eighty-one percent of the homicides, in relation to the South Asian issue, were committed with a firearm. Fifty-one or fifty-six of those were committed in a public place. There were four unintended victims. So, you tell me, in proportion to other murders within other ethnic communities: why so [many among Indo-Canadians]? Easy access [to weapons]; willingness to use them. (Interview with RCMP member, Integrated Gang Taskforce, October 18, 2006)

These same points are frequently cited in media accounts of Indo-Canadian criminal group violence. For example, a fact box entitled "Deadly Numbers" that ran with a *Vancouver Sun* story included the following:

Violence linked to B.C.'s Indo-Canadian gangs includes: 60 murders in the past six years, half of them occurring in public places. Four shooting victims were innocent. Kidnappings have doubled since 1999. (Bolan, 2005, p. B1)

The public nature of this violence is often described as unusual or somehow unique to this particular group of criminals. For example, a story in the *Province* stated:

Many of the 50 slayings in the Indo-Canadian community have been in *surprisingly public places*: Barber shops, street corners, wedding receptions and even nightclub dance floors. As the violence mounts, so does the fear of those caught in the potential crossfire. (Tanner, 2002, p. A12)

The general, societal threat inherent in violence in public and semi-public places is often emphasized in media coverage of crime. As such stories are deemed more newsworthy and attractive to readers as consumers than are stories about other forms of criminal violence (Chermak, 1994). Discussions of violence as 'spilling out' into public space also invoke the notion of the transgression of behavioural norms. In the case of Indo-Canadian criminal group violence, that violence is 'coded' in ethnic and racial terms: the transgression that occurs is not only of 'private' violence breaking out into public space, but also one of 'ethnic' violence breaking out into the 'mainstream.' That this breaching is frequently represented as particularly perverse is due both to the fact that the breach involves the transgression of ethnocultural boundaries as well as increasing the threat to greater public.

Racialized Categories

Spencer (2006) notes that "in the modern era, ethnicity has come to be generally used as a term for collective cultural identity (while race categorises 'them' from outside, ethnicity is used for shared values and beliefs, the self definition of a group, 'us')" (p. 45). He goes on to point out that this distinction is often arbitrary, arguing that there is also a political dimension to the use of the terms "race" and "ethnicity":

> In the context of western multicultural societies, ethnicity has become the preferred used term to avoid 'race' and its implications of a discredited 'scientific' racism. Ethnicity is generally taken to be a more inclusive and less objectifying concept; indicating the constantly negotiated nature of boundaries between ethnic groups rather than the essentialism implicit in divisions of 'race.' (ibid.)

Given this, I find it striking that while interviewees used different terms to describe their ethnicity, nearly all of them used the term "Brown" – a term that would seem to foreground a physical/biological characteristic – interchangeably with ethnic identifiers such as "Indo-Canadian" to describe themselves and their friends. For example, one young woman described feeling as though she and her friends were judged negatively by strangers due to being Indo-Canadian. When asked whether she thought negative stereotypes were more pervasive in some areas than others, she said:

> Well, here in the Lower Mainland like I think there's a lot of racism towards Brown people, because [of] all the news media [coverage of] Indo-Canadian gangs. But I've noticed when I go to other places, there isn't so much of that animosity towards Indo-Canadians. Mostly I think it's a Lower Mainland problem. That's how I see it. (Interview with 22-year-old woman, March 12, 207)

A young man pointed out that Indo-Canadians were not the only ones involved in gang activity, saying:

> It's not just Indo-Canadians [involved in gangs]. That's one thing that you have to understand. It's not just Indo-Canadian youth in it – everybody's in it. Like I know at [name of a postsecondary school], there's two main guys [involved in gangs]. One is a White guy and one is a Brown guy, right? (Interview with 16-year-old man, July 20, 2007)

Another young woman made a similar point when asked what her thoughts were on the term "Indo-Canadian gang:"

> There are not just Indo-Canadian gangs. There's Asian gangs, [gangs of] different backgrounds, and just regular White gangs. There's gangs of many different cultures…I get really nervous when I'm watching the news because when they say: "A suspect was…" I'm always hoping: "Please, do not let this be Brown people." (Interview with 23-year-old woman, March 15, 2007)

Young Indo-Canadians' use of the term "Brown" is also noteworthy, as, according to a number of older Indo-Canadians I spoke with, the term has only recently come into popular usage and was not a term they themselves had used when they were young.

The blurring of the concepts of 'race' and 'ethnicity' notwithstanding, I would argue that because it refers to skin colour on a literal level, 'Brown' appears foremost to be a 'racial' category and thus acts to name 'race' as a social reality. Of course, like other racial categories, 'Brown' is clearly about more than physical appearance and has ethnocultural connotations. However, 'Brown' does not seem to have imposed by 'outsiders.' In particular, unlike other categories commonly interpreted as 'racial,' it is not a term that has been explicitly defined and codified by the state. In this sense, even as it asserts 'race' as a social fact, 'Brown' destabilizes the notion that 'race' involves an imposed identity and 'ethnicity' involves a chosen identity.

The separation of 'ethnic' from 'mainstream' was often bolstered in respondents' discussions of race and racism relative to Canadian multiculturalism. For example, when interviewing a girlfriend and boyfriend together, I asked what their respective definitions of multiculturalism would be. The young woman responded:

> Different races, different cultures, different people, all living in one community, kind of thing. And personally I think I'm very lucky to live in Canada. [There are] just so many opportunities. We're allowed to go to school, we're allowed to do this, we're allowed to do that, we're allowed to vote. And it is multicultural, I think. Obviously there's going to be a little racism on both, but that's not going to [disappear] simply like that…It's acceptable, you just accept it. Honestly, at the end of the day it's not going to [change]. Because people from India are going to keep coming and they're going to do [things] different[ly]. It's not like we're all going to be second generation, [or] we're all going to adapt to this Westernized thing, because there's going to be immigrants. We're going to keep coming and; face facts – the colour of our skin does matter. People are going to look at that. (Interview with 20-year-old man and 20-year-old woman, June 26, 2007)

Her boyfriend had a similar response:

> I think multiculturalism is, kind of accepting that there's different races. It's not necessarily the equality of our races because there's always the dominant group. Multiculturalism is [that] everyone's accepting or whatever, but there's still the power and aggression and racism. And that, you can expect to experience. (ibid.)

When I asked him whether he thought things might change, he said:

> I wish these idiots would stop doing all this gang stuff. And [in] a couple of years [there would be] no more [news]papers or media saying, "Oh gangs did this, gangs did that." And yeah, eventually we're going to get a better name [for] our community, and this and that. But they're just not going to stop. And now it's continuous – we'll always be perceived with this negative aspect until these people actually stop. And then it's going to take us awhile to get that [good] name back, if we ever even had that [good] name. (ibid.)

These comments are indicative of the ways in which multiculturalism and racism co-exist, and even more importantly, how they may do so without any apparent belief or recognition that they are (or at least, should be) contradictory. For example, the young woman quoted above praises multiculturalism and then immediately points out "obviously" racism can be expected, and even further, that it is "acceptable." Her pragmatic argument to "face facts; the colour of our skin does matter" is particularly interesting in that she normalizes racism as a sort of 'common sense' phenomenon. Similarly, the young man argues that multiculturalism involves the acceptance of different groups but not equality between them, as "there's always the dominant group." Even further, when asked if he saw the potential for the existence of racism to change, his response was to blame those involved in violence and crime for giving Indo-Canadian a 'bad name,' make the implicit argument that racism against Indo-Canadians is, at least in part, a direct consequence of Indo-Canadian crime and criminal groups.

Other youth interviewees also discussed race in relation to violence and gangsterism. For example, a number of respondents likened the experiences of Indo-Canadians to those of African-Americans. In particular, they saw 'Brown kids' in Vancouver as having directly comparable experiences to African-Americans in terms of both the attraction of the 'gangster' mystique and the sense that they are being unjustly stereotyped as subscribing to that mystique. When talking about the portrayal of Indo-Canadians in news stories about criminal groups, the young woman quoted above said

"Aside from the like, not living in ghettoes, we're pretty much comparable to how African-Americans are portrayed in America." When responding to a similar question about the portrayal of Indo-Canadians in the media, another young man had this to say:

> I'm not ashamed of who I am. I'm proud of who I am but it's just
> sometimes that I feel like people might be wondering, "Uh-oh, here comes
> an Indo-Canadian." Like, if one of my friends was walking by you, then
> people might assume "Uh-oh, he's a typical guy from Surrey – he's got
> the gangster clothing on, the expensive jewelry – this guy must be a gang
> guy. You'd better be scared. Oh stay away from him, he might pull out a
> gun or something." So pretty much, [maybe] not to [the same] extent, but
> you can draw similar comparisons to how Black people are treated in the
> States. (Interview with 20-year-old man, July 27, 2007)

Whether or not all of the respondents I spoke with had personally gone through the kinds of experiences associated with popular depictions of racism in the United States, their answers would seem to indicate that race is not only a component of their own identities, but that the notion of social marginalization based on race hold distinct resonance for them.

Several of the young men and women I interviewed described specific incidents in which they felt they had been discriminated against, based on race. Some reported encounters with strangers who seemed to view them as threatening; others described experiences such as being denied entry to nightclubs based– in their opinions – on being 'Brown.' One young woman related an incident in which she and a group of friends were denied service at a restaurant and then asked to leave, ostensibly because one of their party-of-nine was not ordering anything. As they left and walked to their cars, they were surrounded by four police cars. She explained:

> So what happened was the manager went and told the cops that we were
> East Indian and that a fight was disrupting [the restaurant] and that we
> were getting really aggressive and that there was a physical altercation.
> None of which was true...So once we told the cops and the cops kind of
> understood, they're like, well, we realize this call was absolutely bullshit
> [and] that it made no sense. Weeks later when we tried to get in, the
> manager refused to serve us. Now what would I draw from that? Where
> do you think that all came from? I don't know. I could say that it was a
> racist act. I really could say that, but I don't want to, because I don't want
> to believe that it was...Now, it makes you think, it makes you think. You
> have experiences like this and it really makes you think and you're really
> discouraged. Because if you're already getting treated like this by other
> people because whatever is in their brain, and God knows what it is, it's
> unbelievable. (Interview with 23-year-old woman, September 28, 2006)

It is this final sentiment of frustration and alienation that seems to have become particularly troubling to youth workers and others involved in combating youth violence, in that it highlights how some Indo-Canadian youth may feel 'pushed' toward adopting an opposition, anti-social identity.

At the same time, however, most of the youth respondents tended to shy away from explicitly linking the experience of racialization to the emergence of youth violence and criminal groups among young Indo-Canadians, even as they made those links, implicitly. When asked about the appeal of the gangster image to young Indo-Canadian men, one young woman had the following to say:

> I could see wanting to be seen as a gangster, actually…[Guys] want to be seen as a gangster, like a bad boy, you know, almost like a really tough guy, that kind of thing. Even girls – they want to be seen as a tough girl and stuff. So I think the gangster image – I think a lot of Indo-Canadian kids do want to be gangsterized, and even if they're not involved in the gangs they want to look like they are. (Interview with 20-year-old woman, July 26, 2007)

When I asked her whether she thought this attraction to being "gangsterized" was different for Indo-Canadian youth than it was for other groups of youth, she responded:

> Well, I just think it would be African-Americans, African-Canadians, being [attracted to the gangster image]. But then, you know, they've been raised and that's their culture or something, in the ghettos. Well, not [necessarily] in a ghetto, but, yeah. But I don't think other communities are like that. Because I guess maybe because there's [so much] violence that they kind of have to act like that…So maybe they kind of have to as kind of [a] barrier, [or] protection. (ibid.)

In her response, she explicitly uses "African-American" and "African-Canadian" as *cultural* categories, such that 'culture' becomes her explanatory framework for violence. On one hand, this is a means of emphasizing violence as a learned, social, 'cultural' tendency, rather than an inherent, biological, 'racial' trait. Her comment also identifies structural inequities that she feels might lead to violence – people who are violent "have to act like that" due to the social conditions in which they live. At the same time, given the ways in which 'ethnic' and 'mainstream' are often understood as bounded, essentialized categories, locating the blame for violence within the 'culture' of a particular ethnic group, in a sense, re-essentializes violence as inherent to particular group of people.

116

Conclusion

In her discussion of multiculturalism in the United Kingdom, Dwyer (1999) points out that "[f]or the project of multiculturalism, 'minority communities' were recognised as having a shared culture, customs, and place of origin and were defined in opposition to an assumed homogenous hegemonic national community" (p. 53). In a similar way, the presumption that 'ethnic communities' consist of coherent groups of people with discernible boundaries has been a key aspect of multicultural discourse in Canada (Bannerji, 2000). Just as discourses about 'immigrant culture' versus 'Canadian culture' have constructed Indo-Canadian youth identity in terms of a binary at the national scale, discourses about 'ethnic culture' and 'mainstream culture' have constructed them in terms of a binary at the intra-national community scale. The presupposed existence of an identifiable 'mainstream community' and an ostensibly distinct 'Indo-Canadian community' have been central to discourses – especially news media narratives – about Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality. I argue that one consequence of this understanding of ethnocultural communities as 'bounded' has been a tendency for youth violence and criminality to be framed as a problem internal to the 'Indo-Canadian community' – something that was commented on by some interviewees.

I also argue that both implicit and explicit discourses about 'race' form a key element of the binary between 'ethnic' and 'mainstream.' I particularly discuss this in relation to young Indo-Canadians' use of the term "Brown." I argue that, as a reference to skin color, "Brown" seems to reflect the importance of race to respondents' identities such that its adoption stands somewhat in contrast to pervading multicultural discourse that tends to avoid explicit racial categories while reifying the use of 'cultural' categories. In a sense, the term "Brown" works to re-inscribe race onto multiculturalism, asserting its continued salience, even if that salience is a source of frustration and alienation.

CHAPTER 7:
BELONGING

> *This life is as real as any other and there is not much point in saying one does not belong. The problem lies in thinking that belonging only means a happy positivity…Belonging is often long and painful, but it is belonging nonetheless. (Bannerji, 1995, p. 186)*

The idea of belonging carries strong normative connotations. As Bannerji notes in the epigraph above, belonging, whether it be to a particular group or a particular place, is generally framed as a positive state of being. A *lack* of belonging – or alienation – on the other hand, is generally seen as a potentially dangerous, negative state. Relph's (1976; cited in Cresswell, 2004) discussion of "existential insideness," "existential outsideness," and "authenticity" provides a means of understanding how relationships of attachment to place might intersect with identity as well as with the evaluation of certain identities as morally superior or inferior. For Relph, authenticity, or "that which is genuine, unadulterated, without hypocrisy, and honest to itself" (ibid., p. 64), is a quality of the strong identification an existential insider has toward a place. The opposite of existential insideness – existential outsideness – "involves a selfconscious and reflective uninvolvement, an alienation from people and places, homelessness, a sense of the unreality of the world, and of not belonging" (ibid., p. 51).

Being alienated from place is not only a negative state: it is also often constructed as a dangerous one. For example, Cresswell (2001) discusses the historical development of the concept of the 'tramp,' pointing out the importance of social categorizations – in particular those framed through legal discourses – to the construction of bodies. This new category of person was created through the intersection of social issues and the law, such that the tramp became defined as a particular type of vagrant, given to wandering aimlessly. Cresswell uncovers the process through which the tramp came to be identified as a social type by tracing the development of a pervasive discourse about the relationship between the geographical practice of 'roaming' and deviant moral character. He argues that tramps were seen as threatening because, in both literal and metaphorical terms, they had 'no place:' they were unfixed

(presumably by choice) and dangerous. Cresswell's discussion thus highlights the ways in which assessments of one's moral state can be tied to assessments of one's state of belonging.

In the previous two chapters, I have explored the ways in which responses to Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality have drawn from a discourse that positions second generation youth as 'caught between' the 'two worlds' of 'India' and 'Canada,' as well as how these responses have drawn from – and reinforced – bounded notions of ethnicity. Underpinning these ideas are notions of belonging and not belonging: youth involved in gang activity are often characterized as experiencing a sense of 'not belonging' to either an ethnic community or to wider society – adrift in a state in which their moral development is seen to flounder or become misdirected. This state of alienation is seen to make them vulnerable to the lure of a sense of belonging through gang membership, thus becoming entrapped in a social underworld that ultimately only permits exit through incarceration or death.

In this chapter, I explore the notion of belonging in more depth. In order to provide a more general indication of young Indo-Canadians' sense of belonging, I first turn to the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS). My focus is on a series of questions concerning the degree to which respondents' reported feeling a 'sense of belonging' in their family, ethnic group, municipality, province, Canada, and North America. I then turn to the ways in which discourses of second generation Indo-Canadian youth being alienated or feeling as if they do not belong have figured into responses to youth violence and criminality, with particular emphasis on the idea that youth have been positioned as *morally* alienated. In doing so, I draw in part from ideas introduced in the previous two chapters, as well as from additional newspaper coverage and interview material. Finally I explore the responses of youth interviewees, focusing on belonging in terms of geographical space. I discuss how specific localities have become reference points in their understandings of multiculturalism as well as their understandings of 'Brownness.'

Belonging and the Ethnic Diversity Survey

As I discussed in Chapter 4, the EDS was undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of issues of diversity across Canada. In part, it was an attempt to gauge experiences of national attachment and belonging among different segments of society,

including different ethnic and racial groups, as well as different generations within those groups. Some of the most salient issues addressed by the survey included the effects of racial marginalization and discrimination on the children of immigrants. I focused on a series of questions asking respondents to use a five-point scale to rate the strength of their sense of belonging to family, their town or city, their province, and to Canada.

On the whole, the EDS did not reveal significant differences between immigrants and non-immigrants or visible minorities and non-visible minorities in terms of their stated strength of belonging to any of the categories above. First generation immigrants – including both visible minorities and non-visible minorities – tended to report higher levels of strength of belonging to ethnocultural communities than other groups. Contrary to concerns that such attachments might lessen the strength of belonging to Canada, the survey revealed that belonging to ethnocultural groups and Canada were positively correlated – people who reported a strong sense of 'belonging' in one category tended to report the same for other categories. Even where there seem to be distinctions between how the visible minority second generation and the non-visible minority second generation responded, other factors – specifically age – correlate more strongly with these differences than race. For example, if generational status is considered without accounting for the age of respondents, the visible minority second generation appears to have reported significantly lower degrees of strength of belonging to Canada than the non-visible minority second generation (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Belonging to Canada: Respondents born in Canada (i.e., second generation) by visible minority status

(Statistics Canada, 2005a)

120
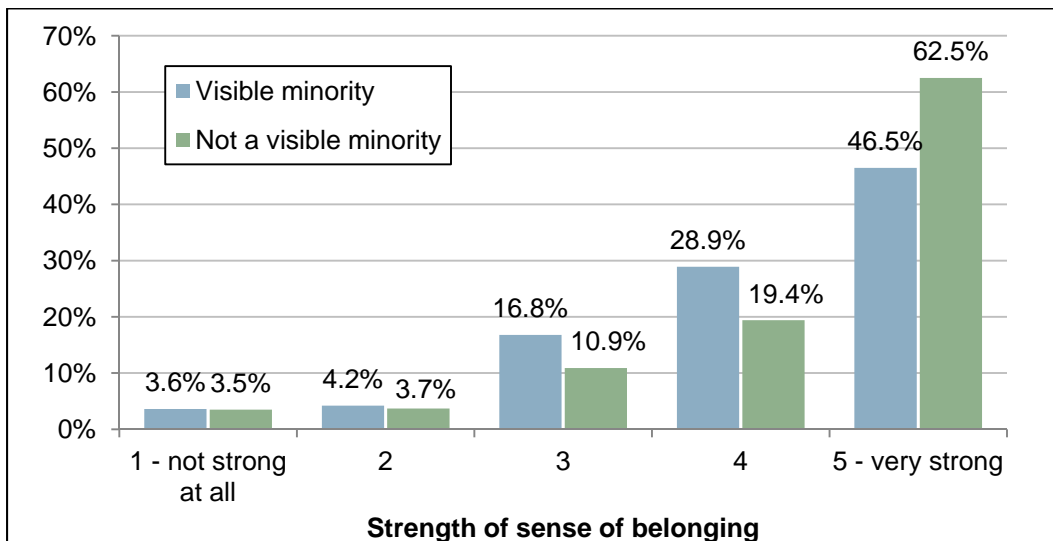
However, as most people immigrant while they are young, the population of recent, predominately visible minority immigrants is younger than the population of earlier, predominately non-visible minority immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2007a). As their descendants are also younger, the visible minority second generation is younger than the non-visible minority second generation. This means that any differences between groups based on generational status (immigrants vs. non-immigrants) or visible minority category are not independent of age. Because the average age of the visible minority second generation (the so-called "new second generation") is younger than that of the non-visible minority second generation, differences between the two groups' responses to EDS questions may have had more to do with age than they did with visible minority status. When looking at the same question on sense of belonging to Canada by age cohort instead of birthplace, the differences between visible minorities and non-visible minorities suggested in the previous chart proved not to be significant (Figure 11). Instead, it seems that responses to the question were positively correlated with age, with both visible minorities and non-visible minorities showing a similar pattern (see also: Jedwab, 2008).

Figure 11. Belonging to Canada: Average response of persons born in Canada by age and visible minority status
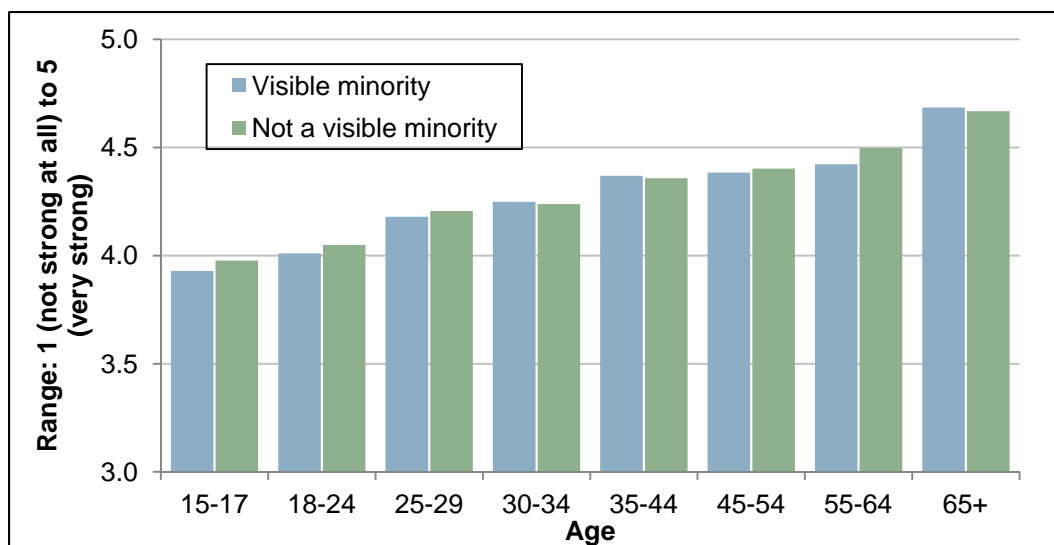
(Statistics Canada, 2005a)

While the EDS did not establish clear differences between visible minorities and non-visible minorities in strength of belonging to the different geographical scales of city, province, or nation, it did reveal significant differences *among* visible minorities. In

general, South Asians reported significantly stronger feelings of belonging than both other visible minority groups and non-visible minorities to all three scales. These results differed according to age, following the same trend found in the general population of positive correlations between age and strength of belonging (Figures 12, 13, and 14).

Figure 12. Average sense of belonging to municipality by age and visible minority group
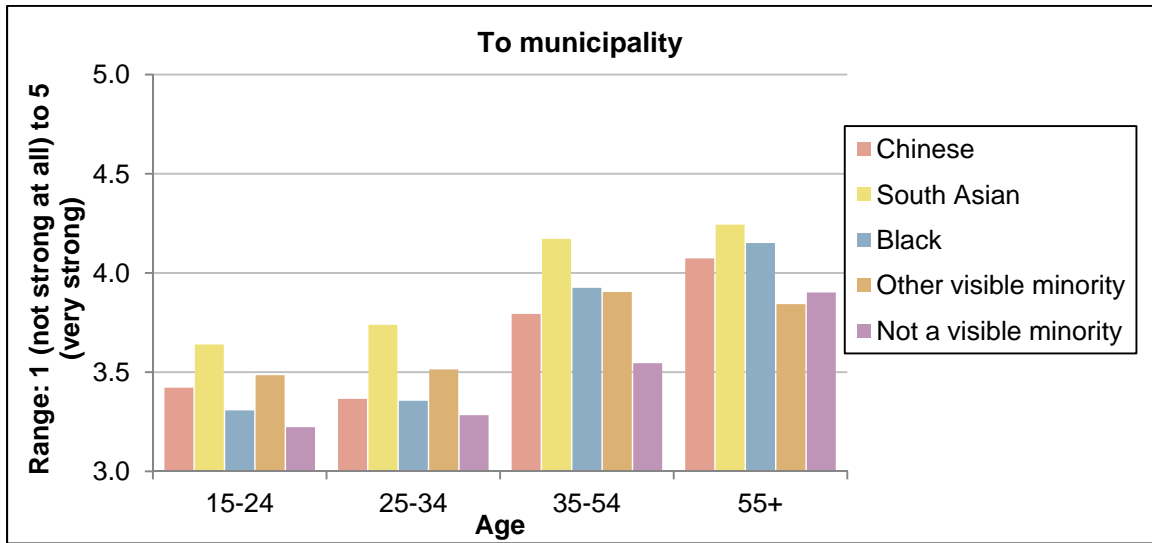
(Statistics Canada, 2005a)

Figure 13. Average sense of belonging to province by age and visible minority group
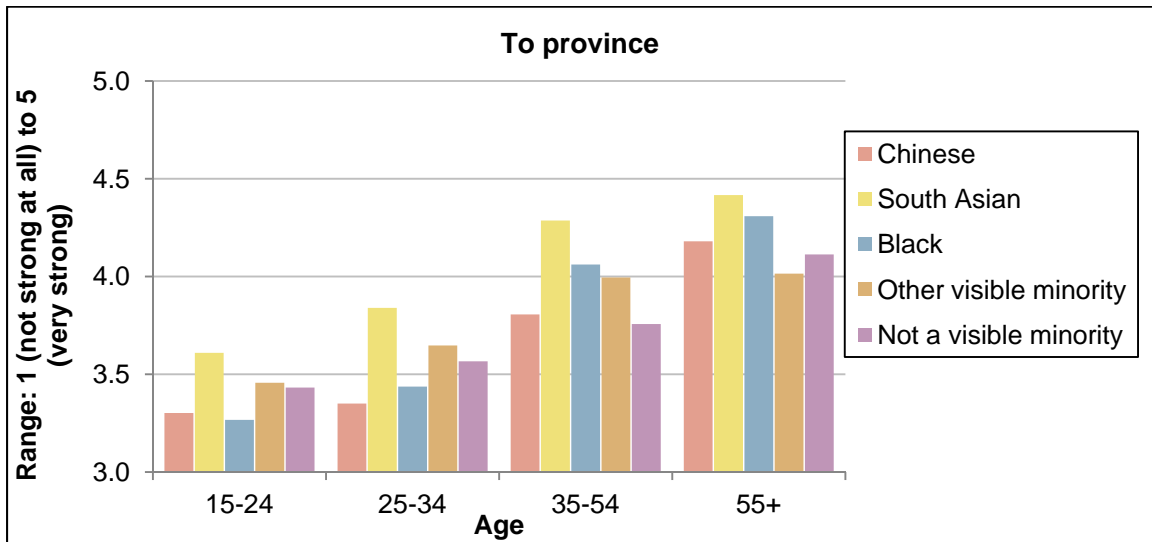
(Statistics Canada, 2005a)

Figure 14. Average sense of belonging to Canada by age and visible minority group

(Statistics Canada, 2005a)

In addition, when looking at the youngest age cohort (15-24), both Chinese and Black youth reported weaker feelings of belonging to their province and to Canada than non-visible minorities. This highlights the point that while it is difficult to see significant differences between visible minorities and non-visible minorities in a general sense, there do seem to be differences between specific visible minority groups and non-visible minorities. The category "visible minority" includes a vast range of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and racial diversity, refl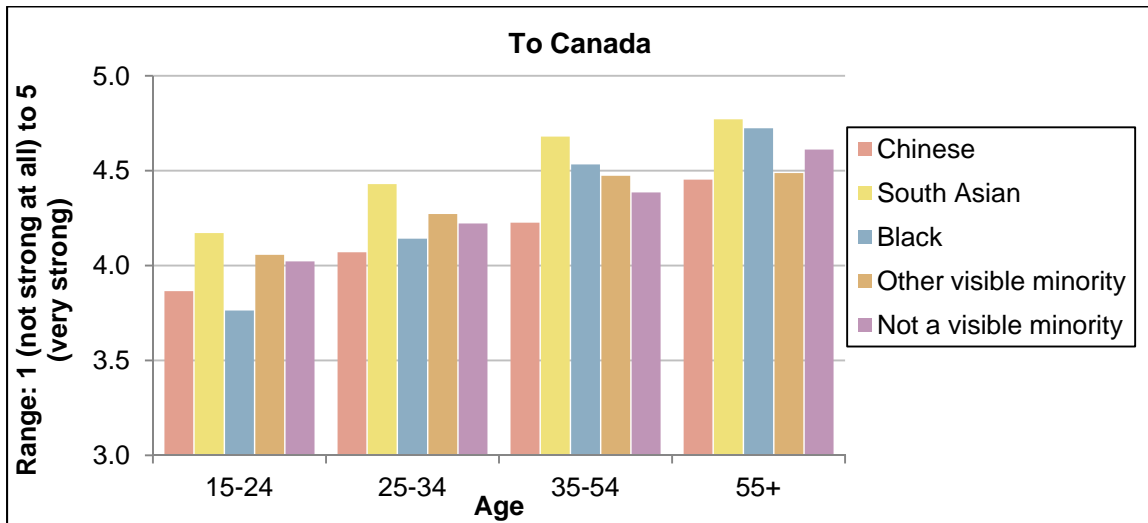ecting that fact that the purpose of "visible minority," as an official category, is more about ensuring social equity and reducing discrimination, than it is about representing one unified segment of society. Thus, arguing for the existence of underlying commonalities between various visible minority groups beyond being a 'minority' and somehow 'visible,' is difficult and problematic. While discourses about race may share certain commonalities, the ways in which individual groups are racialized is always specific, contingent, and contextual.

Within the South Asian population, there were differences between responses to questions of belonging according to the census metropolitan area (CMA) in which the respondents lived. On the whole, South Asians in Vancouver reported higher levels of strength of belonging than those living in other CMAs or non-CMA areas (Figure 15). This is not necessarily surprising, as the Vancouver CMA is home to the largest concentration of South Asians in Canada – a context that might lead respondents to

report a stronger sense of belonging to an ethnocultural community, which, as mentioned above, correlates with stronger degrees of belonging in other categories.

Figure 15. South Asians' average sense of belonging to different scales by CMA
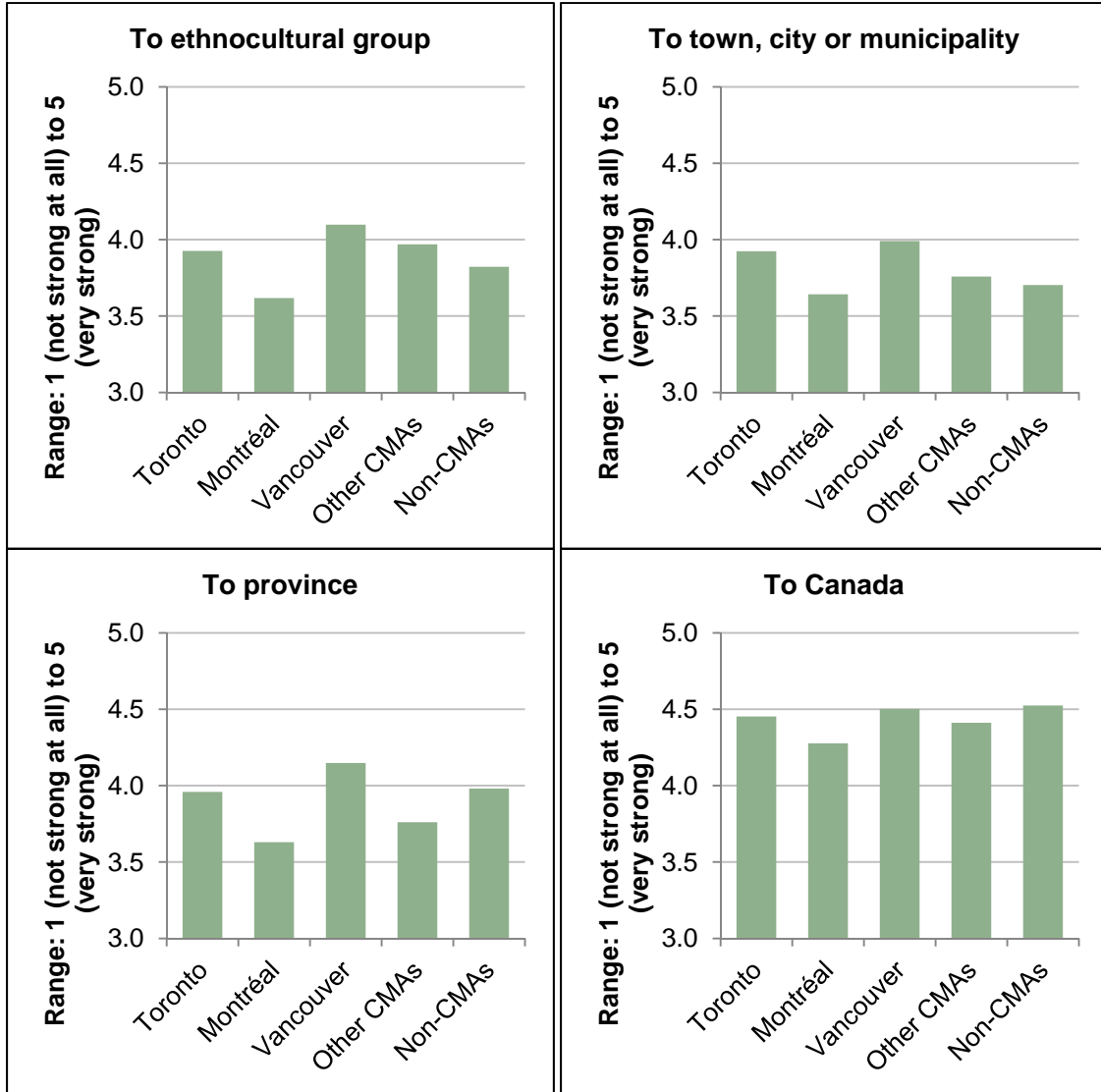
(Statistics Canada, 2005a)

Rethinking Belonging in the EDS

There are obvious difficulties involved in analyzing data from surveys such as the EDS. In addition to issues shared by all surveys, such as possible interviewer effects, there are also unavoidable differences in how respondents interpret questions. Questions such as those on belonging involve highly subjective concepts: after all, what exactly

constitutes 'belonging?' If differences in definitions of belonging were truly idiosyncratic –
that is, random – this variation could potentially be accounted for, as is other random
variation. It seems likely, however, that ideas about at least some aspects of belonging
would be shared by different groups of people. For example, for immigrants, answering
the EDS question about strength of sense of belonging to Canada would likely entail
comparing their sense of belonging to Canada with their sense of belonging to their
country of origin. The opposite of belonging to Canada could thus mean belonging
somewhere else. For non-immigrants, this seems less likely to be a factor. For them, the
opposite of belonging to Canada might mean belonging *nowhere*. Whether or not 'not
belonging to Canada' means having a strong attachment to another place or whether it
means not having a strong attachment to any place seems to be a fairly significant
difference in interpretation – a difference that might very well differ systematically by
group.

There is, however, a more fundamental question: even if it were possible to
insure that all respondents interpret the questions on belonging in the same way, what
exactly does "strength of belonging" indicate? Whether or not respondents report a
strong sense of belonging to Canada, for example, does not negate nor necessarily
diminish experiences of marginalization or discrimination. In addition, one's sense of
belonging might vary not only according to geographic scales such as city, province and
nation, but also might fluctuate day-to-day in a way that is not easily captured. Moreover,
strength of belonging need not be defined by a dichotomy, as belonging may be an
ambivalent, even contradictory state. For example, one might feel a strong sense of
belonging to a particular nation but also feel alienated by overt expressions of
nationalism or by certain practices of one's national government – experiences that are
not reducible to 'averaging out' as a "3" in a range of "1 to 5." In short, "it is clearly
possible to belong in many different ways at many different scales" (Mee & Wright, 2009,
p. 72). For these and other reasons, an attempt to understand the sense of belonging of
different groups to different geographical scales should draw from more in-depth
qualitative data in addition to data such as that derived from the EDS.

Materialistic Consumption and Moral Alienation

To paraphrase an interviewee – an anti-gang activist and former gang member – given
the relative economic success of the Indo-Canadian community, criminality among

young Indo-Canadians, especially involvement in the illegal drug trade, seems to be more about wealth than poverty.[17] At the same time, however, deep cultural anxieties over being too materialistic arguably go hand-in-hand with high levels of consumerism: it has become almost commonplace to equate being materialistic with a loss of traditional ethical norms among Indo-Canadian youth. For the second generation, the idea that youth are trapped, or 'fixed' between two worlds leads to a paradoxical positioning of them as 'detached' and alienated, particularly in terms of morality.

This type of discourse has figured into mainstream newspaper accounts of Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality. In addition to the newspaper articles I discussed in Chapter 5 referring to youth as "rudderless children" who "adopt only the most superficial aspects of both Canadian and South Asian cultures" (Tanner, 2002, p. A12), and describing favouritism toward boys leading to a situation in which "there is no discipline and [boys'] values get skewed and they end up dead in ditches" (Jiwa, 2003, p. A4), a 2005 article in the *Province* quoted a high-ranking Vancouver police inspector as using the phrase "lost generation" to refer to young criminally involved Indo-Canadian men:

> "There are some members of the East Indian community right now that
> are a lost generation and we have to face that. There are certain
> members of young Indo-Canadian males right now that seem to love this
> gangster lifestyle … They want to have the fancy car, they want to have
> the money. They want to go out to the nightclubs, they don't want to earn
> this responsibly like our parents did, working hard, investing and bringing
> up the profile of the family that way." (Jiwa, 2005a, p. A11)

For the inspector quoted in the article, to be "lost" is to be removed from the ranks of hard-working, law-abiding, family-oriented members of society, and instead to chase 'fast money' and lead a hedonistic lifestyle: at least for him, this is equated with a lack of moral depth. This moral 'superficiality' is similarly depicted as making second generation Indo-Canadian youth vulnerable to the superficiality of excessive materialism in an article about two ex-gangsters now involved in anti-gang education notes:

> For immigrant kids who didn't fit in, being connected with others who had
> gang affiliations – or aspirations – gave them a sense of security, identity
> and respect. It was a lifestyle that was thrilling and provided all the things

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[17] This is not to discount the role that poverty undoubtedly plays for many involved gangs and the drug trade, but more to account for the seemingly inexplicable involvement of many other young men from wealthier backgrounds.

pop culture tells young people are desirable – money, nice clothes, beautiful girls. (Bennett, 2009, p. 1)

In this particular case, the irony of a newspaper article – a mass media source – blaming popular culture for misleading youth, seems lost.

While the presentation of this type of argument in mainstream newspaper articles echoes the common assertion that second generation youth are caught between worlds, in the first of the two examples above (as well as others), these arguments are almost always made by quoting expert Indo-Canadian sources. A number of such experts have made similar arguments in the 'ethnic' press. For example, a guest editorial in the *Indo-Canadian Voice* written by one of the founders of an anti-gang organization speaks to parents, states:

How do we measure success in Western and Punjabi cultures? We measure success with money, status and power. No wonder many of our young boys are involved in drug trafficking in order to become rich overnight. As parents, we are exhausted [from working all the time] while our children are neglected. (Kandola, 2006, n.p.)

In a similar vein, one interviewee – a retired teacher, former employee of the (since dismantled) British Columbia Ministry of Multiculturalism and member of the Group of Ten – linked an excessive desire for wealth to what he felt was a misplaced sense of cultural identity:

And if you take a look at [Indian immigrants who migrated after 1970], the primary focus of this particular group is not their kids and the way they get educated, it's, "how much economic wealth can I accumulate and it doesn't matter how." And I say what's happened is that we've, this group, has lost its moral compass. They have no idea what ethics are or morality is anymore…And they don't identify themselves as Canadian. They identify themselves as Indian first and Canadian second…But you know we're now into identity politics, that's all we're into. (Interview with retired teacher, former Ministry of Multiculturalism employee and member of the Group of Ten, January 30, 2007)

While the previous quote from the *Indo-Canadian Voice* characterized *both* Western culture and Indian culture as focused on materialistic consumption, this interviewee seemed to link materialistic consumption to what he felt was an over-attachment to an Indian identity and a lack of a grounded sense of morality. Other community actors I interviewed described youths' feelings of alienation as making them more vulnerable to gang recruiters. When asked why she thought that some young men might get involved

in crime and gangs, a youth worker who had been involved in several anti-gang initiatives explained:

> I think there's [a] lot of attractions. I think there's sort of this stereotype from things that they see in the media: fast money, flashy cars, girlfriends – you know all that kind of hype that [revolves] around criminal activity. I think some kids are drawn to that. I think people who recruit kids into this behaviour are very good in terms of recruiting kids who don't really fit anywhere. Kids who are reaching out and trying to find a place of belonging. I think they're good at doing that. Kids that they know can be easily manipulated and brought into it. Kids sometimes who are left unsupervised. So I think that's the pull, is that there's lot of vulnerable kids. (Interview with member of the Group of Ten and participant in community theatre project, September 28, 2006)

A forensic psychiatrist who works with youth explained this vulnerability as arising from the social isolation felt by immigrant parents – something that shapes their children's sense of belonging:

> If you look at lots of [new Indian immigrants], only maybe ten percent knew English when they came to this country. Nothing like writing or anything – they didn't know anything. And they didn't have any social [groups or chance to] hang out with people, 'cause they felt awkward and all those kinds of things. So they, kind of, were withdrawn. So children, when they grow up with them, they feel also kind of withdrawn. They feel kind of [like] second class citizens. Not that somebody tells them [that], but there are social situations [that] show them, "Well, you have nothing in common with these guys." And I think that could lead to some kind of sensitivity, right? So when they grow older, they want to fight that sensitivity. And [if they] hear [insults], or somebody [makes] comments [about] them, they just turn around and beat the shit out of them…Like people there [in India], they were well-to-do. But here [in Canada], they are at the bottom of the pile. So that also creates lots of stress for people. Then the kids want to belong to each other, so they form their own, loosely, 'gangs.' And then they want to show off, then they do drugs, and all that kind of thing. (Interview with forensic psychiatrist, November 24, 2006)

The idea that the acquisition of material wealth might be particularly valued among members of an ethnic minority, especially those who have recently immigrated from another country, is, in some ways, logical, as the desire for improved economic opportunities is often central to the decision to migrate. Likewise, economic attainment is often used as an indicator of an immigrant group's relative success in integrating into their new home. In many ways, the social power that goes along with having wealth – or

128

more importantly, property – can also be understood as a form of belonging. Beyond simply the desire to escape poverty, for some, the desire to acquire what might otherwise be considered 'excessive' wealth may very well represent an attempt to counter social marginalization due to racial and ethnic discrimination.

At the same time, newcomers' economic successes may trigger resentment from other members of a host society, aggravating those levels of discrimination. While Canada would seem largely to have escaped the more extreme forms of anti-immigrant backlash that have occurred in many other Western, multicultural countries, it has certainly experienced more subtle expressions of anxiety over the wealth of immigrants. For example, several geographers have examined conflicts in different Greater Vancouver neighbourhoods over the construction of so-called "monster houses" (Ley, 1995; Mitchell, 1997a; Ray, Halseth, & Johnson, 1997). The term "monster house" generally refers to opulent, multi-storey homes built to the maximum area allowed by municipal bylaw on lots where smaller, single-family homes stood previously (Ley, 1995). "Monster homes" have often been discursively linked to recent immigrants from East Asia - the presumed owners and/or inhabitants of such houses. Geographers have noted how conflicts of the construction of "monster homes" have involved a complex interweaving of narratives about place-identity, 'heritage,' citizenship, immigration, and race. Discourses about race have been particularly volatile. For example, in their study of "monster houses" in Richmond, Ray, Halseth & Johnson (1997) note that racial fears and comments are rarely expressed in direct terms; they argue that housing has been used as "a medium and metaphor for the expression of concern about neighborhood level ethnic change" (p. 83).

In both media stories and the responses of interviewees, definitions of what exactly constitutes 'Indian' values, what constitutes 'Canadian' values, how those value sets play into Indo-Canadian youth gangs and violence, and which set is to 'blame,' are constantly shifting. At times, the source of youths' apparent excessive materialism, for example, is blamed on the dominance of Canadian (or American) consumerist society and the loss of 'traditional' family structures inherited from India; at other times, excessive materialism is ascribed to Indian society, brought over by immigrants and inculcated into their children. Even further, blame is at times attributed to a lack of a sense of belonging – the moral compass pointing to some void, in between supposedly bounded ethnic cultures; at other times, it is the strong attachment to a particular set of

cultural values – the compass pointing to a value set that is deemed backwards and foreign, but coherent nonetheless.

The various non-profit workers, law enforcement personnel, government employees, and other anti-violence workers I interviewed had different ideas about exactly where to 'place blame.' Regardless of this indeterminacy, 'blame' – or more specifically, a sense of being blamed – was evident in the responses that a number of youth interviewees gave when discussing news media coverage of Indo-Canadian violence and 'gangs.' For example, some felt that media coverage reflected a negative assessment and cursory dismissal of Indo-Canadians in terms that were laden with moral judgment. When asked whether he felt that media coverage affected how other groups saw young Indo-Canadians, one young man responded:

> Yes, it has…I see even more emphasis [on Indo-Canadians than other groups]. [When] I see our Indo-Canadian group; [news stories] usually show all the evil things they found in there. It's like "Indo-Canadian gang violence" [and] who killed who. It's just [reported as] an open-and-shut case that way: "Just throw [Indo-Canadians] aside; it's not really that important." (Interview with 20-year-old man, July 27, 2007)

Others admitted that news media's emphasis on Indo-Canadian gangsterism had affected how they viewed their peers. For example, one young woman said:

> I guess it kind of has changed the way I see other Indo-Canadian youth. Sometimes I wonder: what if they're involved in drugs and stuff? Not so much the girls, but the guys. Every time I meet a guy I'm always wondering in my head is he involved in [that] kind of thing. (Interview with 22-year-old woman, March 12, 207)

Another young woman made a similar point:

> If you see a bunch – even myself, if I see a whole bunch of Brown kids together, I'm always like, "Oh – I wonder what they're doing!" *[laughing]* Right?…Like if a whole bunch of Brown kids walk into a grocery store together, you know, everyone would be like, "What the -?" Right? Now everyone would just *think* that they're up to something, right? I'd probably do that too. (Interview with 20-year-old woman, July 16, 2007)

The youth I interviewed were all aware of the potential for news media coverage to contribute to negative stereotypes about Indo-Canadians. This awareness, however, did not necessarily preclude them from at least partially internalizing such discourses, even as they critiqued them. I argue that this tension is one that informs and complicates their

130

understandings what it means to be 'Indo-Canadian' and their own sense of belonging relative to such categories.

Local Geographies of Belonging: The 'Surrey Effect'

Belonging is an experience inherently rooted in specific contexts of geography and history: it is created through intersections of identity, experience, place and time. In order to explore these intersections, and following roughly from the geographical categories used in the EDS questions on belonging, I asked the youth interviewees how important to their identities it was that they were from their municipality, British Columbia, and Canada. I also asked them what communities they felt a part of and what, if any, ethnic identifier they would use to describe themselves (see Appendix D). On the whole, although respondents differed in their opinions of different ethnic indicators, with some preferring "Punjabi," others "South Asian," others "Indo-Canadian," and others simply "Canadian," all tended to report a strong sense of identification as "Canadian." On the other hand, being "British Columbian" was somewhat less important to their identities, though several pointed out that this varied depending on the context (e.g., if visiting another province, being British Columbian might be more important; if visiting another country, being Canadian would likely be more important than other categories).

Perhaps the most interesting responses concerned the importance to respondents' identity of being from a particular city. In particular, many respondents had strong opinions about the municipality of Surrey, regardless of which city they themselves called home. A number discussed the association of Indo-Canadian gangsterism with Surrey as a reality, a stereotype, and/or something that they themselves had sometimes unwittingly come to assume. For example, when asked about how important her municipality was to her identity, a young woman who was from Vancouver but currently living in Surrey had the following to say:

> I never say Surrey. I say Vancouver. And I guess that has its own kind of [connotation, which I notice] because everybody I know is from Surrey. But everybody here [in Burnaby] – it's sort of just, already got this – you're looking in the room and you're like, where do you think I come [from]? Where do you think I live? Indian – Surrey. Any Asian, automatically, so I don't really identify from Surrey as much because of the negative things it's associated with. (Interview with 23-year-old woman, March 15, 2007)

When I asked her to elaborate on the "negative things" associated with Surrey, she gave the example of a recent murder that had occurred in Whistler, BC, pointing out that the suspect was from Surrey. She went on to say:

> And I'm going to bet that he's also East Indian. They haven't released it yet so we're waiting on that one. And I had the same sort of: "Oh please, oh please where is this person from?" as soon as [the news] said two groups of men [were involved]. Okay – maybe [media coverage] has affected me because I automatically think that they are going to be Indo-Canadian. So I think that either both [people involved] are going to be two Brown guys or they're both going to be like Asian, Vietnamese groups, or one of each. Automatic. (ibid.)

Several other interviewees expressed similar sentiments, emphasizing that it was important to them that other people knew they weren't from Surrey. As a young woman from North Vancouver explained:

> Whenever I go anywhere I always say I'm from North Van because since I'm Brown a lot of people kind of assume, "Well, she must be from Surrey." So that's the first thing I say when I meet people: "I'm from North Van." So that they know I'm not from – they're like: "Oh, okay, so she's not from Surrey." (Interview with 22-year-old woman, March 12, 207)

She later explained that she felt friends who had grown up in Surrey had been exposed to more gang activity and violence than she had, specifically because of the density of the Indo-Canadian population in Surrey:

> I know people that have grown up in Surrey, where their whole neighbourhood was, I guess, Brown, essentially. And I think their experiences are a lot different than mine, and they definitely know more about the whole gang [issue] than people like me who grew up in mostly White neighbourhoods. It's like the different experiences. (ibid.)

A young man from Burnaby made a similar point:

> [Whether] you're from Surrey [or] Burnaby; [it's] huge – somewhat of a difference. People from Surrey are more associated – they have more Indian friends and then they know more people who are involved in the drug trade and the gang violence, [and things] like that. But since I was in Burnaby, I really didn't know many – I didn't have any Indian friends there. But now most of my friends are actually from Surrey [and are] mostly people I've met at university. So whenever they ask: "Where from Surrey are you?" I always say: "No. I'm from Burnaby." (Interview with 20-year-old man, July 27, 2007)

The association of Surrey with Indo-Canadian gangsters is such that the slang term for a young man who dresses and acts like (and may sometimes actually is) involved in a gang is "Surrey Jack," (or "Surrey *jat"* – a reference to a Punjabi farming caste). A young woman who was born in Vancouver but had grown up mostly in Surrey – which she described in quite positive terms as a place that she felt at home – tried to explain the term "Surrey Jack" to me:

Interviewer:	Yeah, so what's it about Surrey? Because it's one thing I've been curious about.
Interviewee:	Everyone, *[laughing]* well because, *[laughing]*, Surrey Jack? It's very stereotyped, so…
Interviewer:	I'm sorry, what?
Interviewee:	Surrey Jack? Word for a guy…
Interviewer:	j-, j-..jack..
Interviewee:	Surrey Jack.
Interviewer:	I don't know that one.
Interviewee:	No!? *[laughing]* Most – like all Brown guys – you can tell if they're a Surrey Jack or not…They're pretty easy to identify. *[laughing]*
Interviewer:	How?
Interviewee:	Well, usually you're Brown, [have a] goatee…you can tell. *[laughing]*
Interviewer:	Okay, so it's kind of style and like an identity…
Interviewee:	Yeah, yeah.
Interviewer:	And people from Vancouver don't have that same kind of thing?
Interviewee:	No, because, the thing with Surrey is cause it's mostly East Indians, you pretty much – you just act differently [than] if you're from Vancouver. I even notice that about my friends. Like, my friend, she went to [a high school in Vancouver] and she was pretty much – like, primarily a white school, there was like five Brown kids in her class. And she barely even hung out with them. And then there was me; all my friends were pretty much Brown. A couple of them weren't, right? But, it's a big difference between how we act with other kids.
Interviewer:	So what…?
Interviewee:	Yeah like, I don't know, it's just different. You can really tell. I know it's sort of kind of hard to explain, but you can sort of tell that, well this kid's from Surrey or not, you can tell. Pretty easy.

Interviewer: *[laughing]* Easy for you…

Interviewee: Yeah. *[laughing]* (Interview with 20-year-old woman, July 16, 2007)

The young man quoted earlier gave me a more straightforward, though perhaps less interesting explanation:

> There's, loosely, a term: Surrey Jack…The stereotypical image is [that] the guy has got the goatee, chin strap goatee, and then wears all kinds of jewellery on him, trying to be all gangster. Pretty much that's what it is. (Interview with 20-year-old man, July 27, 2007)

The stereotype of the "Surrey Jack" is one that several of the young men I interviewed were particularly concerned with countering, in part by creating themselves as a sort of counter-example.[18] One young man from Surrey whom I interviewed together with his friend explained this:

> I want to say that I'm from Surrey because once that you say you're from Surrey, it's good that you [also] have community involvement. Once you have strong community involvement - actually positive community involvement - that makes [the] community vision stronger. The community foundation becomes stronger. So I think it's better that we say that we're from Surrey…Because you know, Surrey's image isn't a very [good one]. [For example], Surrey Jacks whatnot, gang violence, Indo-Canadian [gangs] – that is true, but I think it's our duty as individuals to step in and try to change the image, because if you don't, we'll just say, 'some people' will try to move out of Surrey to Delta and Vancouver and then you're really just making the problem worse… And it's also important to say that we should not adapt to people's stereotypes. That's what makes the community downfall. [Because of] the people who are Surrey Jacks, people stop saying they're from Surrey. That's not really solving the problem. I think the important thing is that you can't adapt into people's stereotypes. It's not good.

His emphasis on the idea of 'community' and his own personal 'duty' to become involved in making "the community vision stronger" suggested a fairly developed sense of political self-awareness and degree of engagement – something that was not surprising, given

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[18] Frost (2010) makes a similar observation in her study of Indo-Canadian teenage boys from Surrey, noting "many of the brown boys blame the Jacks and their aggressive behavior for fuelling negative mainstream perceptions of Surrey's Indo-Canadian males" (p. 222).

his allusion to being the son of a politician early in his interview. [19] He later went on to elaborate that stereotypes about 'guys from Surrey' were prevalent among young Indo-Canadians themselves:

> And also I think it [applies] to our own culture. Now, for example at Simon Fraser University when I was studying, I remember even girls, who were Indo-Canadian too, would look at me kind of like: "This guy's [from] Surrey - this guy's a typical guy," [maybe because of] the way I dress, maybe my hair is gelled up just right, maybe I have a moustache, which I did have before, right? They assume, they stereotype you…Once they get to meet you they find out you're not like that, you know, you have values. (Interview with 23-year-old man and 22-year-old man, August 7, 2007)

For him, being "from Surrey" was both a burden – in the sense of feeling as though he encountered negative stereotypes, as well as a sort of opportunity – in the sense of providing him a chance actively to challenge those stereotypes by presenting himself as a counter example. He described this as, "our duty as individuals to step in and try to change the image" – an image that he later pointed out existed not only in the minds of non Indo-Canadians, but also in the minds of some young Indo-Canadian women. Interestingly, he related this sense that some Indo-Canadian women have negative perceptions of young Indo-Canadian men back to the idea of morality, in the last sentence of the quote, when he said: "Once they get to meet you they find out you're not like that, you know, you have values." His comment highlights his sense of being judged as lacking morals - not 'having values' – due to a mistaken reading of his body. In addition, his comment links being seen as lacking morals to being anonymous, or not being 'known' – the detached position of an 'outsider.'

Multiculturalism and 'Brown Space'

One of the questions I asked respondents was what their own definition of multiculturalism would be. Some of the interviewees gave responses that seemed in keeping with multicultural policy's emphasis on preserving and enhancing cultural different cultural heritages. For example, one young woman described multiculturalism

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[19] As I discussed in Chapter 4, it worth noting the positionality of the youth I interviewed as university students with a particular set of educational aspirations as well as motivations for participating in this research project.

as a framework through which different groups could live in the same communities while maintaining their distinct identities:

> Multiculturalism is, for me, a way to have different people in different groups who live in one community together where they can still preserve parts of their own culture but at the same time be members of the greater community…I grew up in a community that was mostly Caucasians but there [were] still people in the community from India, East India, and all that kind of stuff. And we all still kept our familiar values; like being East Indian we still promoted our culture, the good things, traditions. (Interview with 23-year-old woman, July 25, 2007)

Others, however, defined multiculturalism as something more akin to tolerance:

> Basically the fact that you can have kids, little kids, playing in a park together, no matter their race, and the parents are sitting there, they don't care that their kid is playing with other kids. Just the fact that you can do that, that's called multiculturalism, right? You have people working together, people living next to each other without complaining. (Interview with 16-year-old man, July 20, 2007)

While these two definitions of multiculturalism are in some ways different, they do both include the idea of different groups 'living together' in one place. This understanding emphasizes multiculturalism as it 'actually exists' in that it focuses on how multiculturalism plays out in peoples' everyday lives

While most of the respondents' definitions of multiculturalism involved the idea members of diverse groups living together peaceably in the same community, when asked whether Greater Vancouver or their home municipality was multicultural, a number associated different municipalities with different ethnocultural groups. One respondent described this geography of segregation as part of her explanation for why she felt that multiculturalism was an unrealized ideal:

> I think the usual definition that people automatically come up with is multiculturalism is just a whole bunch of different - so many different ethnicities, cultures, all living in the same area. Vancouver is a really diverse city because it has groups. But if you really look at Vancouver…it's not multicultural as in all different kinds of people living together. Surrey is all Indo-Canadian, Richmond is all [East] Asian, Langley is sort of a mix but it's largely Caucasian. . . . Everybody happy and living's great. I think that's what everyone thinks of multiculturalism: everybody's living together, everything's fine; there are no really big, concrete groups, everybody's just together. When in reality I don't think that's the case at all. And now even it's not just different ethnic groups

[and] the majority. Now there's all the infighting [within] different ethnic groups. (Interview with 23-year-old woman, March 15, 2007)

Her concerns about ethnic segregation and 'infighting' were echoed in the responses of several interviewees. When asked whether they felt different municipalities in Greater Vancouver were 'multicultural,' a number of respondents answered by naming Surrey as a place that was *not* multicultural, due to large Indo-Canadian population. For example, one interviewee explained that, compared to Burnaby and Vancouver, she felt Surrey was not multicultural:

> It seems like the whole Indo-Canadian community is there [in Surrey]. When you're in Surrey, you basically have contact with other Indo-Canadians. But I live in Burnaby, so I mostly have contact with others too. And I'm always listening to what they're saying and what their values are and, you know, it's opening my horizons, kind of. And also Vancouver, I think it's pretty multicultural too. And I don't' know – Surrey seems so, I don't know, backward…Indo-Canadians living there are straight from India, they have barely any education, that kind of thing. So I don't think there's much multiculturalism there. (Interview with 20-year-old woman, July 26, 2007)

For this young woman, multiculturalism seemed to be less about the right of immigrant groups to maintain their heritage and traditions than it was about diversity and the lack of a clearly dominant majority group: multiculturalism was about contact with 'others' and even the 'incorporation' of 'other values.' She went on to elaborate on why she felt Surrey was not multicultural:

> [People who live in] Indo-Canadian communities in Vancouver or Burnaby [have] been here for a while and usually they have some kind of education. Like both my parents have degrees and stuff and they came here, right? [But] the people who are living in Surrey [have] just come from really small villages [in] India and they come straight to Surrey. So their values and traditions are really, really ancient *[laughing]* and they don't really like to incorporate other values. They don't see Surrey as a multicultural city themselves; they just see it as a little India. ..It's really different in Vancouver and Burnaby. We have contact with a lot of other different nationalities and stuff. (ibid.)

Her comments highlight generational and class differences within this one 'community,' challenging the notion that ethnocultural groups are internally homogenous. At the same time, however, her characterization of people 'straight from India' as uneducated and

backward serves to reinforce the stereotyped binaries between 'immigrant' and 'Canadian,' and 'ethnic' and 'mainstream' that align 'modernity' with 'the West.'

Her response also raises an interesting issue. One of the unspoken motivations behind multicultural policy is to counter the 'tyranny of the (White) majority' over (non-White) minorities while avoiding the overt recognition of the racialization of society. As Sandercock (2009b) points out:

> What is common in the sociological content of the term [multiculturalism] in the West – but never spoken of – is that it was formulated as a framework, a set of policies, for the national accommodation of non-white immigration. It was a liberal response that skirted the reality of the already racialized constitution of these societies and masked the existence of institutionalised racism (p. 216)

However, in contexts where ethnic minorities form the majority of a population, multiculturalism may take on different and more complicated meanings. In other words, what constitutes multiculturalism depends on the places in which it is practiced.

The implication that, as a 'Brown space,' Surrey was not only 'not multicultural,' but also a 'bad space,' came out in other interviews as well. For example, during an interview that took place on the SFU campus in Surrey, an SFU student who took most of her classes on the Burnaby campus referred to Surrey as being too 'Brown:'

> I don't like coming here [to Surrey] because there's so much - I'm just not used to being around so much Brownness. I'm just not used to it. When I come here it's just a new thing *[laughing]*. But [in] Burnaby, there's lots of everyone there. (Interview with 20-year-old woman, September 7, 2007)

When I asked her what she meant by "Brownness," she elaborated:

> [In Surrey] where the temples are, there's just grandmas walking on the road in their Indian dress, and grandpas, and they'll be talking in Punjabi, and you don't want to talk to them, whereas they'll call you over. You'll be walking down the road and there'll be 'Brown music' playing everywhere or in cars, and you'll get the honks and it's just annoying…In Surrey there's so [many] Brown people, there's so much competition. You have to have a big house, you have to drive the fanciest car, you have to have so much property and so that's what makes people just turn to [selling] drugs or to illegitimate businesses or whatever. (ibid.)

Her comments clearly reflect the importance of performances of class and generational differences within ethnocultural groups. In addition, they suggest coercion and even alienation can go hand in hand with ethnic 'belonging.' When asked if there were any

138

places that she tended to avoid, another young woman spoke of her dislike of 'Brown' places in a similar manner:

> Yeah – I would have to say Surrey, because, well, somebody might see me [and my friends] or something like that…If they see us or something, they'll tell our parents: "Oh we saw her," but [maybe] we [were] just like eating or something. Like I try to avoid any Brown places *[laughing].*
> (Interview with 20-year-old woman, July 26, 2007)

Earlier in her interview, she mentioned the "Indo-Canadian community" when I asked her what, if any, communities she felt a part of. At the same time, however, when I asked her what, if any, ethnic identifiers she would use to describe herself, she responded: "Well, I actually think of myself as Canadian. And I think of myself as Indo-Canadian after that. I don't know, I feel like I'm Canadian first." In light of these responses, I think that her comments about "Brown places" reflect a complicated 'sense of belonging.' She feels a sense of belonging to an ethnic group, but points out that this is secondary to her identity as a 'Canadian.' In addition, although she, like other respondents, used the term "Brown" to describe herself and other Indo-Canadians, she explained that she avoided "Brown places."

The responses of youth interviewees reveal not only a strong identification of specific places as 'Brown space,' but also strong levels of differentiation between different *types* of Brown space. Regardless of what municipality they were from, nearly all of the youth respondents mentioned the predominance of Indo-Canadians in Surrey. This suggests that, as a place, Surrey has become a reference point in their understanding of what it means to be 'Indo-Canadian.' In other words, as a 'Brown space,' Surrey is a place with which they felt some degree of connection. This connection, however, was for some, a source of self-consciousness and resentment. Most notably, many of the interviewees depicted Surrey as a more 'traditional,' socially repressive, less 'modern' space, where they felt more subject to the disciplinary gaze of Indo-Canadian elders. They also frequently referred to stereotypes about Surrey as the home of Indo-Canadian gangsters. The frequency with which interviewees laughed while discussing Surrey seemed to reflect an almost apologetic embarrassment about the predominance of Indo-Canadians in Surrey, discomfort about their own negative responses to that predominance, and discomfort over the association of Surrey with 'gangsters.'

139

Conclusion

Approximately two-thirds into Mani Amar's (2008) documentary on Indo-Canadian gangs, a male youth counsellor being interviewed says:

> This is the question that we have to ask: what is pushing people into gangs? That's the fundamental question people need to be asking. What is driving them into joining a gang? And no matter which race a person comes from, what religion they are, what gender they are, what nationality they are, it all boils down to one thing – wanting a sense of belonging.

While the counsellor was referring to the search for a sense of belonging as a factor leading some young men to join criminal groups, I argue that questions of belonging have also been heightened and complicated for young Indo-Canadians in Greater Vancouver *not* involved in criminal activity, due to the stereotypes created by pervading discourses of troubled 'Brown' youth. For some, this has led to conscious efforts to fight these stereotypes or to fashion themselves as counter-examples. For others, this has created a sense of alienation from the Indo-Canadian community and a desire to distance themselves from their co-ethnic peers. As acts of belonging, the "matter" being connected to "place" (Mee & Wright, 2009) in these different responses consists of their own bodies and the bodies of their friends and families.

The experience of a 'sense of belonging' is difficult to define, in part because it consists of emotions that are often shifting and even contradictory: it is not always or only "a happy positivity" (Bannerji, 1995, p. 186). However, it is not just that belonging is often complicated, but that the ways in which it is complicated – the conflicts over specific aspects of identity – reveal underlying tensions. In this case, repeated emphases on the idea that youth lack morals moral alienation and the emergence of racial categories such as 'Brown' are indicative of concerns over inter-generational differences, the loss of 'traditional' values, and the racialized nature of broader Canadian society.

CHAPTER 8:
CONCLUSION

Summary and Contributions

This project has sought to analyze how responses to violence and criminality among some Indo-Canadian youth have drawn from discourses about second generation youth as lacking a strong sense of place attachment. In addressing this, I have focused on the ways in which different socio-spatial binaries have become central to the discourses around, and reactions to, Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality. I have argued that while these binaries – including 'immigrant' versus 'Canadian,' 'ethnic' versus 'mainstream,' and 'alienation' versus 'belonging' – have been dominant elements of discourse and practice around this issue, they are often unstable, subject to challenge and contradiction. In addition, I have noted the importance of discourses about gender – particularly gender roles within the family – to perceived differences between 'immigrant' and 'Canadian' society, as well as the ways in which the categories of 'ethnic' and 'mainstream' have been racially coded, both explicitly and implicitly. I have also looked at ways in which the discursive positioning of second generation Indo-Canadian youth as 'caught between worlds' has been equated with a state of moral alienation, ostensibly contributing to violence and criminality among some members of this group.

Throughout my discussion, I have examined how young Indo-Canadian men and women understand their own positions relative to these various binary categories, given the broader context of discourses on Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality. I argue that the construction of Indo-Canadian 'gangsterism' as a 'social problem,' predominantly through news media discourse, has impacted young Indo-Canadians' own understandings of what it means to be Indo-Canadian, how they feel they are perceived by others, and how they perceive their peers and themselves. I argue that narratives about Indo-Canadian 'gangs' and 'youth violence' have also impacted young Indo-Canadians' understandings of multiculturalism and the 'place' of ethnocultural groups relative to the 'mainstream' by reinforcing the notion of communities as 'bounded' and by contributing to their sense of being racially marginalized.

An example of how young Indo-Canadians' sense of their ethnic/racial identity has been impacted by discourses about Indo-Canadian violence and criminality came at the end of one of the youth interviews I conducted. After her interview, a young women reflected on how her awareness of Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality as a 'social problem' had her perspective on other young Indo-Canadians. To paraphrase, she commented that whenever she met another Indo-Canadian for the first time, she'd think to herself, "Are they Brown, or my kind of Brown?" I argue that making *sense* of such categories is an inherent part of making *a sense* of belonging: figuring out "[her] kind of Brown" and who does and does not 'fit' is, ultimately, an act of creating her own sense of belonging.

A sense of belonging is always relative to a particular place or space, and thus varies in different contexts. The contextual nature of belonging is inherently related to the contextual nature of identity. Sundar (2008) discusses this conceptualization of identity as fluid in her study of second generation South Asian-Canadian youth by drawing from the idea of "identity capital." She argues that young South Asian-Canadians perform their ethnic and racial identities *strategically*, as a means of negotiating diverse social situations:

> Youth actively negotiate various aspects of their environments and draw on their "identity capital" to make deliberate, strategic choices about whether to "brown it up" or "bring down the brown" within different human interactions. This reflects youths' resiliency in dealing with the potentially oppressive situations that arise when living in ethnically/racially heterogeneous environments. (pp. 251-252)

Expanding on this perspective, I argue that strategic performances of ethnic/racial identity that Sundar describes are also acts of creating a sense of belonging that is inherently unfixed and contingent. In addition, I argue that both belonging and 'unbelonging,' or alienation, may involve ambivalent and seemingly contradictory emotions. In doing so, I respond to calls for the need to conceptualize belonging as inherently spatial (Mee & Wright, 2009) and multi-scalar (Antonsich, 2010; Dowling & Blunt, 2006).

An understanding of belonging as ambivalent and contextual has the potential to inform scholarship on second generation youth identity, particularly work that focuses on a "sense of belonging" as an indicator of the relative 'success' or 'failure' of a particular immigrant group. I argue that while belonging is a key concept through which to examine

to second generation youth identity, what belonging *means* cannot be taken for granted. In this sense, I argue that the importance of the idea of belonging to research on second generation youth is as a subject of investigation rather than an assumed category of experience.

Questions of belonging are central to practices of actually existing multiculturalism. As I noted in Chapter 4, a key stated goal of the current Canadian Multiculturalism Program is "building an integrated, socially cohesive society" (Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011b, p. 11). While there are multiple, contested ideas as to what exactly constitutes "integration" (Ager & Strang 2008), Kymlicka (2010) suggests that the centrality of 'integration' to Canadian multicultural policy is based on the belief that "immigrants do best, both in terms of psychological well-being and sociocultural outcomes, when they are able to combine their ethnic identity with a new national identity" (p. 10). Given this, if multicultural policy is a framework for promoting integration and integration involves taking on a "new [Canadian] national identity" while retaining an "ethnic identity," the question arises as to what exactly constitutes "ethnic identity." I argue that coming up with answers to this question is a fundamental component of actually existing multiculturalism. In other words, actually existing multiculturalism can be understood as the contestation and negotiation over what constitutes a given 'ethnicity,' which sets of traits, beliefs and practices are categorized as 'immigrant' and 'Canadian,' 'ethnic' and 'mainstream.' Further, actually existing multiculturalism involves determinations about which 'ethnic' practices are legitimate and acceptable expressions of identity and which practices must be 'left behind' in order for integration to proceed. Actually existing multiculturalism thus involves normative contestations over 'good' and 'bad' ethnic identities, what (and who) belongs or does not belong.

Limitations and Future Research

In thinking through and attempting to negotiate the limitations of this research, a number of themes emerged that I feel merit further investigation. In this section, I address some of the constraints imposed by my data sources, specifically issues related to my focus on print media news articles and semi-structured qualitative interviews. In doing so, I suggest additional or alternative types of data to those that I utilized, as well as possible directions for future research.

<u>Media and Indo-Canadian 'Gangsterism'</u>

I feel there are a number of important questions remaining in terms of relationships between different forms of media and Indo-Canadian 'gangsterism.' In this project, I focused on widely-circulated, local, 'mainstream,' English-language print journalism. In addition to the sources I used, however, there are other similar print publications, including Vancouver's two free daily newspapers, *24 Hours Vancouver* and *Metronews,* neither of which is currently indexed in a bibliographic database. While these two papers predominantly include syndicated news articles, the 'visibility' of their front pages and headlines is quite high, particularly to riders of public transit, and their impact on public discourse is worth considering. In addition, while I drew somewhat from television news broadcast material, I feel that further research could be done on not only television broadcasts, but also radio broadcasts, including Punjabi-language programs.

   Beyond this, I feel that others forms of media – particularly electronic media such as discussion boards, chat rooms, and various forms of social media – could potentially offer a rich source of information for examining how the image of the 'Indo-Canadian gangster' is constructed and proliferated. For example, over the course of my research, I came across a number of blogs either devoted to the topic of Indo-Canadian gangs or that included entries and commentary about it. A number of these blogs were written by individuals located in other parts of the Sikh and Punjabi diasporas, particularly the United Kingdom and India itself. In addition to blogs, I found a number of discussion boards with extensive archived conversations about Indo-Canadian gangs on sites dedicated to seemingly unrelated topics. Such media are inherently fluid and blur boundaries between 'public' and 'private' conversations. The relative anonymity enjoyed by contributors to such sites undoubtedly impacts the kinds of opinions they express, and it seems likely that this anonymity is particularly attractive to those with more 'extreme' opinions. While such sites therefore seem unlikely to represent 'average' opinions, they nonetheless have the potential to be key 'nodes' in the discursive construction of the 'Indo-Canadian gangster,' and therefore merit closer attention.

<u>Interview Material</u>

A second set of data constraints involves the interview material I collected. As I discuss in Chapter 4, the youth I interviewed were volunteers recruited through an advertisement on SFU's "current events" website and listserv, as well as through snowball sampling.

Obviously, this process resulted in a self-selected sample of university students with an interest in the topic of this research – a very particular subset of young Indo-Canadians. While I feel that this was an appropriate group to interview due to my interest in non-criminally involved youth, I also feel that there is a need for additional work that draws from a larger, more diverse sample. In addition, the majority of respondents were women. While the reasons for this are likely complex and it is beyond the scope of this project to hypothesize causes for the low rate of response I received from young men, given the importance of gender as a central theme in many of the youth interviews, more work is needed on the experiences and perspectives of Indo-Canadian men, particularly in terms of understandings and performances of masculinity. Such research would, ideally, draw from a more 'gender-balanced' sample, to the extent possible.

Related to this, a more focused examination of Indo-Canadian 'gangsterism' as a form of hyper-masculine, racialized identity, could contribute to a growing body of work that examines masculinities in relationship to race, class, and violence. Such research could also focus on the role that particular interpretations of religion play in understandings of masculinity – something that I have only touched on in the project, but that I feel deserves closer attention. In addition, I feel that further research is needed on a pattern of young Indo-Canadian women 'turning away' from 'Brown guys' and seeking potential partners from other ethnic groups. Such research could potentially examine this phenomenon in terms of its impacts on gender conflict or the continuance of 'Indo-Canadian culture,' among other possible avenues.

In addition, while I feel that my use of semi-structured qualitative interviews was productive, I also think that it would be useful to include additional forms of data, such as solicited diaries in which research participants made note of their daily activities and reflected on their own emotions in different contexts. This is not to suggest that solicited diaries would be any more "objective" than other forms of data such as interviews. On the contrary, "they are negotiated between researcher and researched and it is likely that the text reflects an awareness of what the researcher wants to read" (Meth, 2003, p. 196). Nonetheless, I feel that solicited diaries could offer more nuanced insights into how individuals create and experience 'belonging' in their daily lives as they would allow participants to reflect on their own experiences over a longer period of time than interviews alone.

In terms of the particular topic of Indo-Canadian youth, violence, and criminality, it would be especially useful to examine the perceptions held by members of other

groups – for example, other ethnocultural groups – about the Indo-Canadian community. Such research might also examine popular notions of multiculturalism, including identifying what, if any, differences exist in how different groups understand and enact multiculturalism. Related to this, I feel that additional work that examines how a sense of belonging is constructed within and across multiple groups is needed. This would be particularly useful for work such as mine that attempts to deconstruct binaries between 'immigrant' and 'Canadian,' and 'ethnic' and 'mainstream.'

Conclusion

As Pratt (2003) points out, "Ethnic identification involves a sense of belonging that emerges in relation to a complex weave of state and non-state, institutionalized and everyday, cultural practices and is imposed by everyday experiences of racial exclusion" (p. 49). This project has sought to examine some of these processes of ethnic identification in the lives of young Indo-Canadians in Greater Vancouver. In order to do so, I have centred my discussion on responses to the perceived 'social problem' of Indo-Canadian youth violence and criminality – an issue that has heightened discussions about what it means to be 'Indo-Canadian.' On one hand, this has been divisive, with different groups and individuals disagreeing over the root causes of, and appropriate responses to, youth violence and criminality. These responses, including news media coverage, have contributed to some young Indo-Canadians' sense of ethnic marginalization, from the 'mainstream, and others' sense of marginalization from the 'Brown' community. On the other hand, the issue of youth violence and criminality has brought members of the 'community' together, motivating some to become involved in grassroots organizations and programs aimed at combating Indo-Canadian youth 'gangs' and violence. In either case, it has stimulated discussions – to which this project contributes - about what it means to be Indo-Canadian in Greater Vancouver. Ultimately, this is an open-ended process, as are the processes of multiculturalism, actually - and potentially - existing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Email used to recruit community organization members for interviews

Subject: Request for research interview

Dear ---,

I am a Ph.D. candidate in human geography at Simon Fraser University and am researching questions concerning Indo-Canadian youth and violence. My interests include 'second generation' youth, identity, and sense of belonging, as related to the representation (and reality) of violence in the context of multiculturalism, particularly in terms of the activities of community groups, policy-makers, the police and the media. --- gave me your email address and recommended that I contact you.

I was wondering if I might be able to interview you about your work with ---, as well as your experiences and thoughts concerning youth and violence. Research interviews generally last about 45 minutes to one hour, but, of course, I am very flexible in terms of timing, format, etc.

Please let me know when I might be able to speak with you and if you have any questions about me or my project. I appreciate your help and hope that we can meet.

Sincerely,
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Appendix B: Questions used for community organization member interviews

Background
First, I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about your background and the work that you do at [organization]

"Indo-Canadian youth violence"
The phrase "Indo-Canadian youth violence" seems to be coming up more and more frequently among politicians, community leaders and the media. I'm interested in your own understanding of what this means.
- How would you describe the problems that the phrase is referring to?
- What is the extent of the issue?
- What kinds of youth do you think get involved in violence and gangs and why?
- What factors do you feel are the most significant in terms of the perpetuation of violence?

Community responses
I'm also interested in the activities of different groups that are attempting to combat violence.
- What are your thoughts about how the community and community organizations are handling these issues?
- What about policy-makers and the police?
- Do you think these actions will be successful?

Media coverage
A lot of people seemed concerned about the ways in which violence has affected how Indo-Canadian youth and how Indo-Canadians more generally are viewed by other groups.
- How do you feel about the media's coverage of violence and gang activity?
- Do you think this has affected how Indo-Canadians are viewed by wider society?
- How do you think media coverage affects how young Indo-Canadians see themselves?

Multiculturalism
I also have a few questions are about the broader social context of multiculturalism.
- What would your own definition of multiculturalism be?
- Do you think that youth violence can tell us something about multiculturalism?
- Can multiculturalism tell us something about violence?

Concluding Points
- Do you know anyone else who might be interested in participating in this research? If so, would you be willing to give me their contact information? If not, would you be willing to give them my contact information and ask them to email me?
- Is it okay if I contact you again to clarify your points, if need be?
- Can you think of any other issues I should be considering or any anything you thing I should read?

Appendix C: Advertisement used to recruit youth for interviews

Opinions of <u>Indo-Canadian Young Adults</u> Needed for Study on Youth Violence

<u>Research participants are needed</u> for a study on the opinions of young Indo-Canadian men and women about **identity, community, and the media, as related to youth violence and gangs**. Volunteers will participate in a confidential, approximately 45-minute interview, ***<u>and will receive $20 for participating.</u>***

Interested participants should be of **South Asian ("Indo-Canadian")** descent, and between the **ages of 16 to 23**. The time and the location of each interview will be arranged so as to be convenient for the participant.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact Rini Sumartojo, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, by email at **wsumarto@sfu.ca** or by phone at (**778) 895-8049.**

Appendix D: Questions used for youth interviews

Background
First, I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about you and your family.
- Where were your parents born? (Elaborate on family history)
- Where were you born? How old are you? (Elaborate on personal history)
- Do you have brothers and sisters? If so, how old are they?
- Do you have extended family in the Lower Mainland? What about other parts of Canada?
- Do you live with your family?

Identity, Place
When they're talking about their own identity, people often use different labels to describe things like nationality or ethnicity.
- How would you describe yourself? (Elaborate – what term(s) and why)
- Are Indian cultural traditions important to you? If so, which ones and why? What about other family members?
- How important to you is religion? What about other family members?
- How important to your identity is being from (Vancouver/Burnaby/Surrey/etc.)? What about British Columbia?
- Do you feel like you're part of a community or communities? If so, which one(s)?
- Sometimes second generation youth are described as being caught between two worlds or as if they don't belong. What do you think of these descriptions?

Social Life/School
Next, I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about your day-to-day life.
- What is/was your high school like? Are/were there lots of Indo-Canadian kids? How do/did different groups get along?
- (For high school grads/older youth)
- What about now? Do you have the same friends? If not, how have your friendships changed?

Belonging in Place: Day-to-day Life
I also wanted to get a sense of what your typical week is like.
- What do you do? Where? With whom?
- Are there particular places you feel the most comfortable going? Why?
- Are there particular places you feel uncomfortable? Why?

Gangs and Crime
I'd like to get your thoughts on gangs and crime.
- Can you remember when you first heard about Indo-Canadian gangs? (Elaborate – who, what, when, where)
- What did you think?
- What about now: have your thoughts changed? Why?
- Do you talk about these issues with your family? Friends? Others (i.e., at temple, school)?
- Why do you think some people get involved in crime and gangs?

- Most of time, when people talk about gang members, they are talking about young men. Where are the young women? Are they avoiding these activities or involved in some other way?
- How much of an impact has gang violence had on your own life? (Elaborate)
- Have you ever been concerned about your own safety or the safety of your friends?

Media

One thing that I'm interested in is the role of the media in covering stories on gangs and violence.
- How much attention do you pay to media coverage of gangs?
- What do you think of the media coverage that you have seen or read?
- Do you think the media has affected how other groups see young Indo-Canadians? Examples?
- Do you think the media has affected how young Indo-Canadians see themselves? Examples?

Multiculturalism

I also have a few questions about the broader social context of multiculturalism.
- How would you define multiculturalism?
- Is (Vancouver/Burnaby/Surrey/etc.) a multicultural city? Why or why not?

Concluding Points
- What do you think needs to be done to deal with the problems of youth crime, violence and gangs?
- Is there anything else you wanted to add?
- Do you know anyone else who might be interested in participating in this research? If so, would you be willing to give them my contact information and ask them to email me?