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RELIGION, MIGRATION, AND STATE POLICIES:
SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIMS, SIKHS, AND HINDUS IN THE US

Karen Leonard, UC Irvine – Paris 2005

South Asian Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus in the US confront co-religionists in a new national religious landscape. They bring different national histories with them, coming predominantly from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, where state policies toward religions varied at the establishment of the states (India and Pakistan in 1947, Bangladesh in 1971) and have changed over time.

India began as a secular pluralistic democracy in 1947, but unlike the US the state actively teaches about and promotes all religions to some extent; India is predominantly Hindu but has many religious minorities, Muslims being the largest at 12-13% of the population. Article 25 of the Constitution of 1950 guaranteed freedom of religion to all Indian citizens, while Article 44 stated that a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) would be developed and implemented in the future. Although the Hindu Code Bill of 1955-56 standardized and replaced the multiple caste and regional variations of Hindu law that regulated Hindu domestic lives, the UCC has not been achieved. Sikhs have, controversially, been included as Hindus under the UCC, but India's Muslims (and Christians) still have their own systems of religious law. India's commitment to secularism has waned in recent decades as politicians talk of Hinduism as a way of life, not really a religion, and of "Hindu" as a national identity that all citizens should claim; possibly the Indian National Congress victory over the BJP in 2004 indicates a reversal of this rising tide of Hindu nationalism. But recent Hindu nationalist and indeed other Indian writings about secularism see it not as a solution but as part of the problem in current Indian politics. In India,

secularism is no longer a visionary project but an inheritance. This phrase, that secularism is no longer a visionary project but an inheritance, comes from writers about American politics,¹ and I will try to make the point throughout this paper that India and the US have much in common, not least a concern with religious revivalism in politics.

Pakistan and Bangladesh are majority-Muslims states or republics; both have small Hindu and Christian minorities. Pakistan in its 1956 constitution proclaimed itself not only an Islamic republic but a parliamentary democracy, and it has had periods of democracy alternating with martial law. Pressure from Islamic fundamentalists, particularly in the 1970s and again now, has meant setbacks to recognition of minority rights and reforms of the sharia (the 1956 constitution stated that no law could contradict the Islamic sources of jurisprudence). The word secular was used only in the state's early decades and now signifies to many Pakistanis, as to many other Muslims, the antithesis of religion and of Islam.² Pakistan has seen rising intra-Muslim, particularly Sunni-Shia, conflict. Also, the state turned against the Ahmaddiyya sect in the 1970s, proclaiming them non-Muslim and sending many Ahmadis to the US and elsewhere; at present a similar move is being mounted against the Nizari Ismailis (the followers of the Aga Khan). Bangladesh is a parliamentary democracy, its constitution suspended and amended many times, and it too is experiencing sharp intra-Muslim religious conflicts. Persecution of Ahmaddiyyas is rising there, following the earlier example of Pakistan, and Islamist forces pressure the state.

As immigrants in the US, South Asian Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus confront new issues of religious authority: to what authorities will they turn, those in the homeland or those building new institutions and communities in the US? The demographics are different in these three

religious groups, but all three are responding to what Religious Studies scholars call “congregationalism.” To qualify as tax-exempt religious institutions, with constitutions, membership lists and elected boards of directors, Muslim mosques, Sikh gurdwaras, and Hindu temples have tried to develop loyal congregations of dues-paying members. Congregationalism is said to produce Americanization of religious practices: imams, granthis (Sikh priests), and pujaris (Hindu temple priests) are called upon for counseling on immigration and marital problems, social events take place in the religious buildings, and women often participate conspicuously in activities. Above the local level, some South Asian Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus have formed national organizations to advocate and/or defend religious goals (and these organizations often have strong transnational components, not gone into here).

The South Asian Muslims in the US join a very large and diverse community with people from all parts of the world, including, at least a third of them, African Americans from the US. The Hindus are almost all from India, with small numbers from earlier diasporas elsewhere and small numbers of American converts. The Sikhs are a very small community but include a group of chiefly white American converts to Sikhism. The three religions and their South Asian followers are now situated in a nation whose religious history has been dominated by white Anglo Saxon Protestant men, but a nation whose religious landscape has been undergoing dramatic changes.

Late twentieth century changes in America’s religious landscape need to be delineated briefly. Euro-American Protestantism, male-dominated, prevailed from the founding of the country. Recently, Catholics and Jews have become part of the mainstream religious culture, the national civil religion. Even more recently, four significant changes in the ideological and

organizational nature of the American religious landscape have taken place.³ First, denominations, so important in the mainline Anglo-Saxon Protestant world, have become less significant as people become more highly educated, intermarry and move to new neighborhoods with different local churches. Christians now change their denominational or church affiliations relatively easily. Second, despite male domination of religious structures and dialogues, it has been argued that women in America constitute the majority of participants in Christian religious activities and institutions, and women have increasingly exercised moral authority in both religious and civic institutions. Third, even as denominations have declined, special purpose religious groups organized along conservative and liberal lines have developed, leading to the passionate mobilization of new coalitions on issues in the public arena like homosexuality and abortion. Fourth, and finally, the public dimensions of religious culture in America, despite the separation of church and state, have grown in importance. And religious beliefs and practices are clearly often central to immigrants' lives in the US, confirming the failure of the secularization paradigm that informed recent decades of social science research and encouraged scholars of migration to overlook religion in their inquiries.⁴

Scholarly discussion of South Asian Americans often concentrates on the highly educated, professional, highly mobile recent South Asian immigrants, people whose privileged class status is assumed to carry with it a certain cosmopolitanism. With respect to religion, the assumption usually is that "religious/ethnic" aspects of identity are stressed more by working and lower-middle class South Asian immigrants, people living lives quite similar to the ones they would have led in their homelands; such immigrants are said to have become transnational but not cosmopolitan. I argue, however, that the many recent middle- and upper-class immigrants

use their resources to retain transnational “religious-ethnic” identities. Their ambition and their decisions to take American citizenship⁵ and to participate in a new religious landscape with new coreligionists of varied numbers, types, and national origins are what pull them toward cosmopolitanism.⁶ It is the Muslims who deal with a wider range of racially and ethnically different co-believers and a wider range of Islamic religious identities, although the Sikhs also have the opportunity to accommodate a vigorous convert community as they seek to establish Sikhism as a world religion. Both Muslims and Sikhs can and do use American legal authority to challenge the transnational extension of religious authority from their homelands. The Hindus are more diffuse and generalizations are more difficult about them.

The post-1965 South Asian Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu immigrants to the US have been very interested in maintaining exclusivism and purity, and they are far more able to do that than were members of the old diaspora.⁷ South Asians in the US born in India had the highest median household income, family income, and per capita income of any foreign-born group in the 1990 Census; immigrants born in India and Pakistan have high educational attainments and are well represented in managerial and professional fields. They are building many kinds of political and social organizations and conspicuously producing and reproducing cultural and religious activities.⁸ Many South Asian immigrants are emphasizing their religious identities in North America, but these diasporic religious communities are not entirely free to constitute themselves as they please. There are American-born converts and other co-believers, and interactions among immigrants and indigenous believers may lead to degrees of cosmopolitanism, even as some of the immigrants may maintain transnational religious networks which can be viewed as, at best, local or ethnic, and, at worst, “ugly” or dangerously essentialist.⁹ Thus the reconfigured

“communities of believers” in the US represent challenges of varying degrees to South Asian Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu immigrants. Issues focused on boundary maintenance, the location of religious authority, gender, and relationships to the American civic religion and to the homeland are particularly challenging. Since in America the separation of church and state has arguably freed religion from state interference and stimulated rather than reduced religious life (Sheikh and Waever, 2005, 8-9), and since secularism as an inheritance is being questioned, what McClay has termed “a growing, intellectually sophisticated, and increasingly ecumenical conservative religious counterculture” is emerging (2001, 53).” McClay was talking about Christian conservatives (as are scholars talking about the trend towards special purpose religious groups organized along conservative and liberal lines, above), but such trends can be seen among South Asian Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus as well. I’ll come back to this at the end of the paper.

I’ll look first at the smallest group, the Sikhs. The Sikhs are primarily a diasporic community still strongly rooted in India, with the North American “white” or “gora” Sikhs forming a very small part of the whole.¹⁰ These US-born converts differ strikingly from the new Sikh immigrants, and, depending on the interpreter, their beliefs and practices can be considered dangerously hybrid or more “authentic (text-based)” than those of the immigrants. The American white Sikhs and the Indian Punjabi Sikhs have had problems relating to each other. The Indian Sikhs have a public profile marked by sharp, public disagreements over their place in India and the nature and extent of Sikh religious authority. Sikh minority status everywhere (they constitute some 2% of India’s population) and specific grievances based in Indian politics exploded in the 1986 demand for a Sikh homeland, or Khalistan, by Canadian and US Sikhs.¹¹ Militant takeovers of North American Sikh gurdwaras, associations, and media followed, but so

did resistance by Sikh moderates. The centralizing institutions of Indian Sikh governance are trying to exercise supreme authority at home and abroad. Some Sikhs in the US, however, have turned successfully to American courts, arguing that gurdwara congregations have always exercised local control.¹² Thus western legal systems are used to resist religious law being extended from India.¹³

The white Sikhs have a shorter, American history. Recruited by Yogi Bhanjan, an immigrant from India who taught yoga to eager young counter-culture Americans in the 1960s and 70s (he has just died, October of 2004), they are not only predominantly white in racial terms, they wear only white clothing, the women wear turbans just like the men, and they consider the practice of yoga and vegetarianism integral to the Sikh religion. These practices are not typical of contemporary Sikhism in India's Punjab, however, and post-1965 Punjabi-speaking Sikh immigrants to the US consider yoga and vegetarianism to be essentially Hindu, not Sikh, practices. Furthermore, the white Sikhs know little of Punjabi language and culture, and they were notably hostile to the political movement for Khalistan that received so much support and funding from overseas Punjabi Sikhs. Yet the American converts must be accommodated and welcomed to establish Sikhism's claim to be a world religion, not just a regional one.¹⁴

The decline of the Khalistan movement has facilitated a closer integration of the small white Sikh group and the Punjabi immigrant Sikhs that, along with converging second generation conceptions of Sikhism as a world religion, has had impacts back in the Punjab. The white Sikhs have become active in India, setting up a school in Amritsar and sending their children to learn Punjabi culture. Meanwhile, pressure for the gender equity promised by Sikhism has increased,

partly because of white Sikh expectations. White Sikh women recently won the right for all Sikh women to perform certain previously male-only services in the Golden Temple in Amritsar.¹⁵

Turning to the South Asian Muslims in America, we see them joining a community rivaling America's Jews in numbers and one extremely diverse in terms of national origin, class, language, race and ethnicity. American Muslims cannot be viewed as a diasporic community but as an American Muslim community in the making.¹⁶ There are national efforts to unify believers across the many internal boundaries (major ones being those among African Americans, Arabs, and South Asians and between Sunnis and Shias). Such efforts must be viewed as cosmopolitan, and they immediately involve competing sources of religious authority, both in the homelands and in the US.

The three major components of the American Muslim community are very different from each other. The earliest Muslims in the US were African Americans,¹⁷ struggling to define themselves as different from, and emphatically separate from, the dominant Anglo and Christian culture. They still constitute some 30 to 42% of the American Muslim population.¹⁸ Interestingly, it was Ahmadiyya missionaries from British India who made major contributions to the African American Muslim movements.¹⁹ African American Muslims have returned the favor by forging legal victories which have broadened the rights of all Muslims in America.²⁰ Arab Muslims, along with more numerous Arab Christians, came to the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and then, after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, new Muslim immigrants came from many more countries, including India and Pakistan.

Islam in the US has been twice-stamped with South Asian influence. After the Ahmadi missionaries in the 1920s came the post-1965 new immigrants of high educational and

socioeconomic status, men who by the 1990s took national political leadership of American Muslims away from the earlier Arab Muslim immigrants.²¹ And where is this leadership headed? As the world has changed with globalization, Muslim immigrants, like others, can better maintain links to their homelands, but American Muslim organizations have chosen to de-emphasize the transnational networks and politics “back home” in order to build strong roots in the US and participate in American society.²² Yet some of the tensions within their coalitions come from an unwillingness to acknowledge fully the historical heritage presented by the African American Muslims and the Ahmadis; the latter are now often regarded as non-Muslims.²³ If American Muslims take a stand against the Ahmadis, however, it means erasing much of the early Muslim history in America, and a history that links immigrant and African American Muslims.

Importantly, many first-generation Pakistani and Indian Muslims work to expand the basic definition of America’s civic religion, the Judeo-Christian tradition, to the Abrahamic (Judeo-Christian-Muslim) tradition. Thus the discourse of immigrant Muslim American leaders asserts that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are monotheistic “religions of the book” with shared origins, prophets, and values. American Muslims also write about the compatibility between Islam and democracy and increasingly pay attention to the political sphere.²⁴ Historically closely related to western culture, Muslims are at the same time very critical of it; worse, they are at a power disadvantage and must hopefully seek “common ground.”²⁵

American Muslims wrestle with issues of religious authority and gender.²⁶ They may battle together against the stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists, but they acknowledge no single source of religious authority. American Muslims follow divergent beliefs and practices rooted in

many countries (Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, etc.) and in many sectarian traditions (the dominant Sunnis, the various Shias, Ahmadis, Druze, etc.).²⁷ Sufis, who practice a mystical strand of Islam, also figure in efforts at community-building, for charismatic Sufi leaders have been recruiting followers in America since 1910.²⁸ And of course the predominantly African American “new Muslims” and the immigrant “new Americans” do not always relate well to one another or even interact much in mosque, residential, or organizational settings.²⁹

Muslim mobilization in the US involves the development of fiqh or Islamic jurisprudence in the new context rather than transnational applications of fiqh from various homelands. A National Fiqh Council established by the Islamic Society of North America “is overwhelmingly composed of naturalized Muslims,” men who know little about US family law and inheritance rights, according to an African American Muslim scholar (and the Council is not accepted as authoritative by all American Muslims).³⁰ Leading fiqh scholars do agree that the context should strongly shape decisions about Muslim practices in America.³¹

Gender issues loom large in American Muslim community discourses.³² Many immigrant Muslims uphold patriarchy and gender complementarity (different male and female roles) in family and community, perceiving the dominant American values of gender equality and freedom of sexual expression as transgressive hybridity,³³ serious threats to a Muslim way of life and indeed to all ordered social life. Such gendered and generational tensions are largely shared by immigrant Sikhs, Hindus, and others as well, as they worry about emerging “problems” involving their children and families and whether these should be attributed to cultural and religious values brought from the homeland or to those of the host society.³⁴

Turning finally to the Hindus, we see a primarily immigrant community and one still strongly rooted in India; there are few North American converts, and those chiefly stem from pre-1965 “new religious” movements in the US like the Ramakrishna Mission, the Transcendental Meditation movement, and the Hare Krishnas. Hindus are probably the largest and most privileged of the new South Asian religious populations, and, as in India, those who follow Hindu beliefs and practices are extremely diverse and authority is decentralized. Until quite recently, there was little in the way of Hindu politics focused on goals in North America, and even now efforts to build a unified Hindu community in the US appear insignificant.

Hinduism has not been promoted as a universal or world religion in the US in the same ways that Sikhism or Islam have been promoted. This is perhaps because the diverse religious beliefs and practices designated as Hinduism have relied primarily on family- and caste-based rituals, and new temples in the US have been financed, at least initially, by particular regional and sectarian groups. Yet Hinduism is undoubtedly flourishing in America,³⁵ and many new congregations and temples are being established in urban centers, fueled by relative prosperity and the ease of securing the necessary physical and cultural materials (and artisans to put them together) in this era of global trade and travel. Even though Hindu groups are chiefly reproducing rather than reconfiguring congregations in the diaspora, this can be seen as a way of becoming American,³⁶ if not consciously hybrid, and in fact changes from homeland practices are occurring in Hindu homes and temples in the US.³⁷

Hindu religious authority is decentralized in India and in the diaspora, and gender issues are equally diffuse and difficult to analyze. Some Hindu sectarian or caste groups in India extend authority over members overseas, and Hindu religious specialists are recruited from India

to staff the new temples in America. There are parallels to the Sikh court cases involving contested leadership of particular Hindu temples, but such cases are not part of a national or transnational pattern contesting the nature and extent of religious authority exercised from India. Changes in gendered practices are occurring among American Hindus. Some scholars find women's empowerment and greater gender equality in the new context, while others see Hindu families and communities instituting more inegalitarian and restrictive models of womanhood than in India.³⁸

As with Sikhism, American converts to Hinduism often contrast conspicuously with the immigrants in styles of dress, home and temple decoration, music and dance, and degree of commitment to meditation, yoga, and vegetarianism.³⁹ Some groups of American-born Hindus (the Hare Krishnas are an example) actively orient themselves to India, seeking legitimation in teachers, texts, and traditions grounded there. In other cases, a longer history in the US has led to largely white American communities whose connections to India have become somewhat attenuated (the Ramakrishna Mission, the Transcendental Meditation movement). In still other cases, a charismatic guru from India has built a transnational following that includes both Indian immigrants and other Americans (Maharishi MaheshYogi, Satya Sai Baba, and others).

In the twenty-first century, however, vigorous pro-Hindu organizations have sprung up in the US. After September 11, 2001, many of these groups have increased their activities and added strident anti-Muslim rhetoric, seeking Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist support for an "Indic" civilizational concept pitted against "South Asian" pluralism. Some such groups originated as overseas wings of Indian political organizations like the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), some as defenders of Hinduism against western academic interpretations of it (the American

Hindus Against Defamation, the Hindu International Council Against Defamation, the Infinity Foundation, the Educational Council of Indic Traditions),⁴⁰ and some as lobbyists for Hindu rights in the public arena (the Hindu American Foundation).⁴¹ These Hindu organizations and activities work for understandings of subcontinental religious and civilizational traditions that privilege “indigenous” or “Indic” religions over “foreign” ones like Islam and Christianity, and they oppose pluralistic border-crossing movements using the umbrella term “South Asian” in the US.

To conclude, given this short time, South Asian Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus have all entered the American mainstream political arena. All deal with issues of boundary definition and maintenance, sources of authority, gender,⁴² and both homeland politics and the American nation’s expanding but increasingly politicized civic religion. These cases and others⁴³ suggest that where immigrant numbers are small and/or indigenous convert communities are large, communities of co-believers have been pressured to develop cosmopolitan rather than transnational religious communities. Where the possible sources of authority are many, in terms of national or sectarian traditions, and where traditions of gender relations are being challenged, again cosmopolitan rather than transnational communities are being constructed, albeit at different rates. Where there are few converts and immigrants are well-off, essentialist notions of religion, reflected in both homeland and US politics, develops; some Hindu mobilizations in the US exemplify this. Problems involving gender and the location of religious authority are particularly challenging to people both inside and outside of these newly configured US-based religious communities.

¹ Mona Kanwal Sheikh and Ole Waeber, “Lines in Water and Sand: Comparative Secularism as Analytical Tool for Conflict Containment,” paper at International Studies Association, Hawaii, March, 2005, 27; Wilfred M. McClay, “Two Concepts of Secularism,” Journal of Policy History 13:1 (2001), 52 f)

² Talal Asad, Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity (Stanford University Press, 2003); Abdulkader Tayob, “Reading Religion and the Religious in Modern Islam,” ISIM Newsletter (spring 2005), 56; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change (Princeton University Press, 2002).

3. For a fuller discussion of these changes, see ed. Thomas A. Tweed, Retelling U.S. Religious History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), especially Ann Braude’s article, “Women’s History Is American Religious History,” and Robert Wuthnow, The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

4. Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations (Walnut Creek, Ca.: AltaMira, 2000); R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner, eds, Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1998); Karen Leonard, Alex Stepick, Manuel Vasquez, and Jennifer Holdaway, eds, Religion, Migration, and Civic Life (forthcoming, Altamira Press).

5. Stuart Hall, “Politics of Identity,” in eds. Terence Ranger, Yunus Samad, and Ossie Stuart, Culture, Identity, Politics: Ethnic Minorities in Britain (Brookfield, Vt: Avebury, ca. 1996), 131-132; Pnina Werbner, “Exoticising Citizenship: Anthropology and the new citizenship debate,” Canberra Anthropology 21:2 (1998).

6. In the formulations by Werbner and Hall, ideas about identity and citizenship interact with ideas about transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. In an ongoing debate about class and global subjectivity, distinctions are being drawn between cosmopolitan and transnational behaviors and attitudes. Drawing on definitions proposed by Ulf Hannerz and Jonathan Friedman, Werbner defines cosmopolitans as people who familiarize themselves with other cultures and know how to move easily between cultures; she defines transnationals as people who, while moving, build encapsulated cultural worlds around themselves, most typically worlds circumscribed by religious or family ties. Pnina Werbner, “Global Pathways, Working class cosmopolitans and the creation of transnational ethnic worlds,” Social Anthropology 7:1 (1999), 19-20. Hannerz defines cosmopolitans as “willing to engage with the Other” and transnationals as frequent travellers who carry with them meanings embedded in social networks: Ulf Hannerz, Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organisation of Meaning (New York: Columbia University

Press, 1992): 252. Friedman shows the encapsulation of cosmopolitans as well: Jonathan Friedman, “Global crises, the struggle for cultural identity and intellectual porkbarrelling: Cosmopolitans versus locals, ethnics and nationals in an era of de-hegemonisation,” in eds. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural identities and the politics of anti-racism (London: Zed Books, 1997), 84-85.

⁷ I argue elsewhere that the members of the old diaspora, the pioneer Punjabis in California, moved to hybridity: Karen Isaksen Leonard, Making Ethnic Choices: California’s Punjabi Mexican Americans (Temple University Press, 1992).

8. Karen Isaksen Leonard, The South Asian Americans (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), 77-81, 88-96, 131-143.

9. Gita Rajan and Shailja Sharma, in their introduction to The New Cosmopolitans: South Asians in the US (Stanford University Press, forthcoming); Werbner, “Introduction,” where the transnational but not cosmopolitan movements are in danger of slipping into anti-hybrid or essentialising discourses, or some combination of these.

10. Best on the white Sikhs is Verne A. Dusenbery, eg. “Punjabi Sikhs and Gora Sikhs: Conflicting Assertions of Sikh Identity in North America,” in eds. Joseph T. O’Connell, Milton Israel, and Willard G. Oxtoby, with W.H. McLeod and J.S. Grewal, Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century (Toronto: Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1988), 334-355, and “A Sikh Diaspora? Contested Identities and Constructed Realities,” in ed. Peter van der Veer, Nation and Migration (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 17-42.

11. The violence of 1984 was the spark: Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi sent the Indian Army on Operation Blue Star, an assault on militants in the Amritsar Golden Temple, and she was subsequently assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. The Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada formed, with US Sikhs, the World Sikh Organization at a New York International Convention in 1984; the WSO, with a new International Sikh Organization, demanded Khalistan in 1986.

12. In fact, many gurdwaras in the US and elsewhere have some sort of caste basis, and there is an untouchable Sikh gurdwara in New York City, despite the abolition of caste in Sikhism.

13. N. Gerald Barrier, “Controversy among Sikhs in North America: the Implications of Conflicting Views of Tradition and Power for Scholarly Discourse,” mss, 1999. The centralizing Sikh institutions in the Punjab are those constituted under colonialism in the early twentieth century, the Akal Takht (head council) and a jathedar [custodian or high priest]). See also N. Gerald Barrier, “Authority, Politics, and Contemporary Sikhism: The Akal Takht, the SGPC, Rahit Maryada, and the Law,” 194-229, in eds. N. Gerald Barrier and Pashaura Singh, Sikhism and History (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004) for more on these disputes.

14. Verne A. Dusenbery, “‘Nation’ or ‘World Religion’? Master Narratives of Sikh Identity,” 127-144, and Karen Leonard, “Second Generation Sikhs in America,” 275-297, both in eds. Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier, Sikh Identity: Continuity and Change (New Delhi; Manohar, 1999).

15. Interview, Guru Ram Das Gurdwara, Los Angeles, 1998, Karen Leonard. See Doris R. Jakobsh, Relocating gender in Sikh History: transformation, meaning and identity (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁶ See Karen Isaksen Leonard, Muslims in the United States: the State of Research (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003).

17. The very earliest, slaves from Africa, did not leave descendants who knew Islam so it had to be rediscovered or reinvented: Allan D. Austin, African Muslims in Antebellum America (New York: Routledge, 1997); Sulayman Nyang, “Islam in America: a Historical Perspective,” American Muslim Quarterly 2:1 (1998), 10-11.

18. One estimate puts African Americans at 42%, South Asians at 24.4%, and Arabs at 12.4% (with smaller groups of Africans at 6.2%, Iranians at 3.6%, Southeast Asians at 2%, European Americans at 1.6%, and “other” at 5.4%): Fareed H. Nu’man, The Muslim Population in the United States (Washington D.C.: American Muslim Council, 1992), 16. Another puts “Americans” at 30%, Arabs at 33%, and South Asians at 29%: Ilyas Ba-Yunus and M. Moin Siddiqui, A Report on the Muslim Population in the United States (New York: CAMRI, 1999).

19. The Ahmadis brought an English translation of the Quran in 1920, published the first English language Muslim magazine in the US, and told the African American groups about the five pillars of Islam and headed them toward mainstream Sunni teaching. For the early hybrid movements, see Ernest Allen, Jr., “Identity and Destiny: The Formative Views of the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam,” eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, Muslims on the Americanization Path? (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998), 201-266.

20. Kathleen M. Moore, Al-Mughtaribun: American Law and the Transformation of Muslim Life in the United States (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

21. Karen Leonard, “South Asian Leadership of American Muslims,” in ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Sojourners to Citizens: Muslims in Western Diasporas (New York: Oxford, 2001).

22. This decision, already taken, was strengthened by the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

23. The Ahmadis were regarded as Muslims in the US by both African American and immigrant Muslims well into the 1960s, when C. Eric Lincoln found that “the Ahmadiyah were generally accepted as a legitimate sect of Islam”: The Black Muslims in America (Boston: Beacon Press,

1961), 221. Whether the Ahmadis consider their founder a Prophet is contested, and there are differences among Ahmadis too. But they were only outlawed in Pakistan after the third of three court cases, and the two earlier decisions, based on the same body of textual material as the third, did not find them unorthodox. The third decision was reached only under extreme political pressure: Tayyab Mahmud, "Freedom of Religion and Religious Minorities in Pakistan: a Study of Judicial Practice, Fordham International Law Journal 19:1 (Oct. 1995), 40-100.

24. American Jews are a constant reference group, seen as monolithic and both envied and feared by American Muslim leaders. Political activists striving to bring American Muslims into public life achieved conspicuous successes under the Clinton administration, have experienced setbacks after 9/11, but are increasingly involved in mainstream American politics.

25. R. Radhakrishnan, "Culture as Common Ground: Ethnicity and Beyond," Melus 14:2 (summer 1987), 5-19.

26. See my "American Muslim Politics: Discourses and Practices," Ethnicities, 3:2 (June 2003), 147-181 and Muslims in the United States: the State of Research (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003) for much more on these issues.

27. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith, Mission to America: Five Islamic Sectarian Communities in North America (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993).

28. Marcia K. Hermansen, "In the Garden of American Sufi Movements: Hybrids and Perennials," Peter B. Clarke, ed., New Trends and Developments in the World of Islam (London: Luzac Oriental Press, 1997); Larry Poston, Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

29. Aminah Beverly McCloud, African American Islam (New York: Routledge, 1995); Linda S. Walbridge and Fatimah Haneef, "Inter-Ethnic Relations within the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the United States, in ed Carla Petievich, Expanding Landscapes: South Asians in Diaspora (Delhi: Manohar, 1999), 123-140. For "new Muslims" and "new Americans," see Robert Dannin, "Understanding the Multi-ethnic Dilemma of African-American Muslims," eds. Mehdi Bozorgmehr and Alison Feldman, Middle Eastern Diaspora Communities in America (New York: Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at New York University, 1996), 163.

30. McCloud, African American Islam, 126-127.

31. These include Khaled Abou el Fadl, Professor of Islamic Law at UCLA, and Taha Alalwani, President of the (ISNA) Fiqh Council of North America and head of the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg, Virginia. See Khaled Abou El Fadl's insightful book, The Authoritative and Authoritarian in Islamic Discourses: a Contemporary Case Study (1st and

2nd editions, by MVI, 1996, and Dar Taiba, 1997), now in a third edition entitled And God Knows the Soldiers (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2001).

32. For an overview, Khaled Abou El Fadl, Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001).

33. The vigorous defense of gender complementarity is also found among some African American Muslims, and Christian fundamentalists. For African American Muslims, McCloud, African American Islam, 55 et passim. For US Christian fundamentalism, see Manuel Castells, on a "crisis of patriarchalism" brought on by the women's movement, the gay and lesbian movement, and the rising incidences of divorce, separation, family violence, children born out of wedlock, and a general rejection of patriarchal authority: The Power of Identity (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 25-27. See also Karen Armstrong, The Battle for God (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), on Jewish, Christian, and Muslim fundamentalisms.

34. There is a fear of "American individualism," which is interpreted not as a moral ideal but as egoism, an amoral phenomenon and a sign of family and societal breakdown. Charles Taylor, "Two Theories of Modernity," Public Culture 11:1 (1999) makes this important point in note 3, 159. Margaret Abraham, Speaking the Unspeakable: Marital Violence among South Asian Immigrants in the United States (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), exemplifies a tendency to blame both sending and receiving societies.

35 Hinduism has had a major impact on popular culture in the US through numerous yoga and "new age" meditation movements, ones often so hybrid that they are no longer recognizably religious in nature.

36 Prema Kurien, "Becoming American by Becoming Hindu: Indian Americans Take Their Place at the Multicultural Table," in eds. Stephen Warner and Judith Wittmer, Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 37-70, exemplifies this argument, advanced chiefly by sociologists.

37 Shampa Mazumdar, "Sacred Spaces: Socio-Spatial Adaptations of Hindu Migrants" Ph.D. dissertation, Boston: Northeastern University, 1995

38 Prema Kurien discusses this contradiction in the literature on immigrants and provides further references: "Gendered Ethnicity: Creating a Hindu Indian Identity in the United States," in American Behavioral Scientist 42:4 (Jan., 1999), 648-670.

39 Studies tend to be on a case-by-case basis rather than comparative; I found no accounts of significant interactions between Indian- and American-born members of a Hindu congregation.

⁴⁰ See Prema Kurien, "To Be or Not To Be South Asian: contemporary Indian American Politics," 261-288, Journal of Asian American Studies 6:3 (2003), for more on these.

⁴¹ The HAF was founded in 2003 to educate the government, media, academia and the public about Hinduism and issues of concern to Hindus locally and globally. It has deplored the victimization of Hindus in Bangladesh, Pakistani activities in Kashmir, the tearing down of a Hindu temple in Saudi Arabia, and statements by Cardinal Ratzinger prior to his papal election; it also filed the only amicus brief representing non-Judeo Christian religions (Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains) in two US Supreme Court cases concerning displays of the Ten Commandments on government property (February, 2005). See the website www.hinduamericanfoundation.org.

42. I link these because women present an emerging challenge to traditional male sources of authority in many cases above as in the traditionally mainstream religions in America. The feminists writing about Islamic law and jurisprudence include indigenous and immigrant Muslim women. The so-called “gender jihad” is one of the most exciting developments in American Islam and has become even more central and controversial after a Muslim woman, Amina Wadud, led the prayers in March of 2005 in New York City (see Muslimwakeup.com for coverage of this).

⁴³ See Karen Leonard, “South Asian Religions in the US: New Contexts and Configurations,” in eds. Gita Rajan and Shailja Sharma, New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the United States at the Turn of the 21st Century (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005) for discussion of South Asian Buddhists, Christians, and Parsis in the US as well.