

Sikh and Muslim Conflict in the Global Sikh Diaspora: A comparison of the UK & North America

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ABOUT: The research will provide a comparative investigation by developing my doctoral work examining Sikh and Muslim conflict in the UK context. Conflict between Sikhs and Muslims in the diaspora has been remarked upon but rarely subject to sustained analytical investigation. This research will provide a transatlantic analysis comparing how the conflict has been manifested and represented by Sikhs in the UK, Canada and America. Currently approximately 83 percent of the 27 million Sikhs worldwide live in India, following World War Two many Sikhs migrated to Britain and North America, as a result the UK, Canada and the US represent the largest population of Sikh settlers outside India. The diasporic element of the conflict being examined is central to this research hence the focus on the UK and North America. This project will contribute to theoretical debates on inter-ethnic conflict, ethnic inequalities and socioeconomic mobility, comparative diasporic studies, the politics of the war on terror, and local inflections of global racisms. It will provide new comparative, empirical material on the formation of global diasporic communities.

Like the UK context, while Sikhs and Muslims have been sociologically studied, they have been done so separately, thus little scholarship exists in Canada and the US on specifically Sikh and Muslim relations, as such the research will make a contribution to academic debates on diasporic conflict, race inequalities and racial politics and through its unique comparative lens the research will explore how inter-ethnic relations are shaped by different diasporic histories and experiences.

AIMS: The fieldwork will be conducted in Vancouver, Canada; Irvine, California; & the North of England, UK to develop an international comparative case study. The research will thus set out to investigate the following:

- To compare the demographic, social and economic position of Sikhs in relation to both the Muslim community and the host community in the context of multicultural politics in UK & North America
- To compare the extent to which hegemonic discourses of the conflict have been institutionalized within Sikh cultural, religious and community structures of governance in the UK & North America
- To compare the impact of the war on terror in perpetuating the conflict in the UK & North America
- To support and assist with community based organisations working on interfaith relations and dialogue

METHODS: I will use a qualitative mixed methods approach for this research including:

- ⇒ 45 semi-structured interviews with male and female Sikh representatives aged 18-50. 15 interviews conducted in Irvine; 15 interviews conducted in Vancouver; 15 interviews conducted in the UK
- ⇒ Document analysis of Sikh community/organisational literature and local media accounts in Vancouver, Irvine & the UK

