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# HOSTAGE TO HISTORY

HOW THE CANADIAN SIKH DIASPORA AFFECTED  
CANADA-INDIA RELATIONS AFTER 1984

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## ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

### **Abstract**

The Canada-India relationship held tremendous promise, but its vast potential largely remained untapped. The rigid bipolar system and disagreements over nuclear proliferation severely undermined the development of cordial bilateral relations during the Cold War. Since the unfolding of Operation Blue Star in 1984, however, Canada-India relations were predominantly dictated by the Canadian Sikh diaspora. This thesis examines to what extent the Canadian Sikh diaspora's experience of Operation Blue Star affected Canada-India relations after 1984. By analyzing and integrating scholarly material from a broad range of academic disciplines, this study offers a comprehensive interpretation of Canadian Sikh influence on Canada-India relations. This thesis shows that despite persistent allegations of extremism and the securitization of the entire Sikh community in Canada, Canadian Sikhs were able to raise their voice both nationally and transnationally due to multiculturalist policies, Canada's pay-to-play nomination system and the political wit of the tight-knit Sikh community itself. By clinging to its cherished liberal ideals, the Canadian leadership has been unable to simultaneously woo the electorally significant Sikh constituency and assuage New Delhi's concerns about the omnipresence of Sikhs in Canada's political domain, and has consequently put a potential partnership with rising global power and realpolitiking India in jeopardy.

**Keywords:** *Canada; India; bilateral relations; Sikh diaspora; Khalistan; separatism; Operation Blue Star*

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What to do then, suddenly back home in the Netherlands, where strict supermarket door policies and face mask regulations indicate the rudiments of a *six-foot society*? Thanks to the International Relations in Historical Perspective master's program's swift acting I was able to get underway with my thesis almost instantaneously. I greatly appreciate the master's program's solicitude and efforts to keep its students engaged during these challenging times.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BKI	Babbar Khalsa International
CSIS	Canadian Security Intelligence Service
FDI	foreign direct investment
ICJWGCT	India-Canada Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism
ICSC	International Commission for Supervision and Control
IR	international relations
ISYF	International Sikh Youth Federation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	New Democratic Party
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SAD	Shiromani Akali Dal
UN	United Nations
US	United States

## INTRODUCTION

Can a trip to Amritsar, a city of 1.3 million in India's northern state of Punjab, really be complete without visiting Harmandir Sahib, the holiest *gurdwara* (place of worship) for adherents of Sikhism? It goes without saying that Amritsar has countless other crowd-pleasers which make a visit to this city so worthwhile. One can savor some mouthwatering *parantha thali* at the iconic Kesar Da Dhaba restaurant, see the Partition Museum's unnerving but exquisite exhibitions or attend the spectacular, excessively patriotic Indo-Pakistani dance-off at the Wagah border crossing.

The lion's share of Amritsar's crowds can however be attributed to the sheer magnetism of the Golden Temple, as Harmandir Sahib is popularly known. To approximately twenty-one million Sikhs or 1.7 percent of India's population (*Religion PCA*), the Golden Temple is the most significant pilgrimage site in the world. On any given weekday this gurdwara draws an estimated 100,000 visitors, a number which typically doubles on weekends (Bajwa, par. 5). I happened to be one of them on a cloudless Sunday in March earlier this year. I saw the kitchen halls where devoted volunteers cook and serve tens of thousands of free hot meals every day and was spellbound by hordes of bearded and colorfully turbaned Sikhs. The temple struck me as a place where people care for each other, as the community spirit was almost tangible. To me, the Golden Temple was equivalent to harmony, serenity and peace.

Little did I know that the Golden Temple once served as the backdrop for one of the most violent episodes in Indian modern history. Even before the 1947 Partition divided British India into a Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India and bisected the ethnically homogenous Punjab region as well, Punjabi Sikhs had sought the creation of a separate Sikh state (Axel 128). Calls for *Khalistan*, as the proposed Sikh homeland in Punjab was denominated, grew louder as Sikh political powers in Punjab stepped up their demands for additional autonomy and expatriate Sikhs began to propagate secessionist notions among their peers in the 1970s (Fair 128-134).

The Sikh separatist movement in India gradually became more militant under the leadership of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and many of its members committed acts of political violence in the early 1980s. When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi authorized the Indian army to evict Bhindranwale and his militant cadre from their headquarters on Golden Temple premises in June 1984, hundreds of Sikh militant and civilian lives were



lost in a bloodshed. Operation Blue Star, as this military action was code-named, enraged Sikhs worldwide as they construed the ousting of Bhindranwale and the ensuing brutalities as a desecration of the holiest of temples and a vicious assault on their religion (Westerlund 1276). Two of Prime Minister Gandhi's Sikh bodyguards retaliated by assassinating her later that year, which in turn triggered the widespread killing of Sikhs in the anti-Sikh riots. Diaspora Sikhs who had witnessed these events from afar often resorted to extreme actions in their host countries to avenge the organized pogroms in which their coreligionists were massacred.

Especially in Canada, where the liberalization of immigration policies in the 1960s and 1970s had spawned one of the largest, if not *the* largest, Sikh populations outside of India (Tatla, "Sikh Diaspora" 275; Johnston 1077), diaspora Sikhs generated civil unrest and increasingly turned to violent protest (Tatla, "Demand for Homeland" 113-114). The bombing of Air India Flight 182 en route from Montreal to New Delhi by a group of pro-Khalistan Canadian Sikhs in which all 329 passengers and crew members were killed in June 1985 sparked further fury against Sikhs in both Canada and India and caused bilateral ties to hit rock bottom (Mehta 7). The Canadian Sikh reaction to Operation Blue Star hence not only provided impetus for the perpetuation of the inter-communal conflict in India itself, but had a damaging effect on Canada-India relations, too.

Recently published news articles show that the ostensible revival of Khalistani extremism among Canadian Sikhs is still a highly contentious issue. Thirty-six years after Operation Blue Star, Indian anxieties about Sikh radicalism and the disproportionately strong presence of Sikh representatives within Canada's political domain have not waned and frosty bilateral relations continue to persist (Mehta 22). As a result, both Canada and India miss out on opportunities to improve political, economic and cultural ties.

The role of diasporas in the development of bilateral ties cannot be overstated and the historical impression of Canadian Sikhs on Canada-India relations is no exception. Diasporas occupy a unique position in international relations (IR) since they operate at the "nexus of domestic and international politics" (Shain 127). Moreover, diasporas are known to be "mobilized groups with a strong sense of identity", act as "political and cultural bridges between two countries" and can therefore have a "powerful international voice both as special interest groups in national foreign policy making and as transnational civil society networks" (Diamanti-Karanou, pars. 2-13).

Within IR theory, both liberal and constructivist paradigms recognize the influence of domestic interaction and identity on foreign policy decision-making (Shain 129).

Whereas liberalism acknowledges that non-state actors like diasporas can act as “political pressure groups” domestically and may thus influence the foreign policy of their host state (Diamanti-Karanou, par. 5), Shain shows that constructivism has the ability to account for the process of identity construction which *enables* diasporas to mobilize and play a role in domestic and thus also international politics (136-139). Academic research into the Canadian Sikh diaspora’s experience of Operation Blue Star, its consequences for the Canadian Sikh community and to what extent these consequences impacted Canada-India relations after 1984 would thus not only yield a better understanding of the underlying causes for the feeble condition of post-1984 Canada-India ties, but also lead to greater apprehension of how diasporas can shape the development of bilateral relations more generally.

This thesis’ research question therefore seeks to enhance our comprehension of the Canadian Sikh experience of Operation Blue Star, its repercussions for Sikhs in Canada and how the Canadian Sikh diaspora affected Canada-India relations after 1984. *To what extent did the Canadian Sikh diaspora’s experience of Operation Blue Star affect Canada-India relations after 1984?*

Multiple subquestions need to be dealt with in order to answer the research question satisfactorily, too. First off all, I must look at the historical development of Canada’s postwar foreign policy and Canada-India relations. What was Canada’s position on the world stage during the twentieth century? What did Canadian foreign policy look like before and after 1984? What did Canada-India relations look like prior to the events of 1984? How did Canada’s India policy evolve after 1984?

Secondly, I will delve into the intricacies of the Sikh communities in both India and Canada. Why did Sikhs in India and abroad seek an independent state? How did Canadian Sikhs experience the events of 1984 and what were its consequences regarding the persistence of certain narratives, the securitization of the Sikh community and questions of identity and belonging? What enabled the Canadian Sikh diaspora to become disproportionately well-represented in Canadian politics?

Thirdly, I have to establish the reasons for New Delhi’s ongoing disgruntlement with Canadian political executives. Why has the Indian government continued to be bothered by the political activity of Canadian Sikhs?

In order to adequately answer the research question I will retrieve information from a wide variety of sources. Secondary sources such as scholarly books, publications in academic journals and newspaper articles which deal with the history of Canada-India

relations, the Khalistan movement, Operation Blue Star and the Canadian Sikh diaspora will be critically analyzed at first. By examining and combining sources which cover the separate aspects relevant to this thesis' subject, I will demonstrate that these components are decidedly interrelated and simply cannot serve as discrete explications of such historically complex matters.

Primary sources such as government publications and statements made by political representatives will further help to determine how Canadian foreign policy vis-à-vis India developed over time. These primary sources were selected on the basis of substance and prominence in the public sphere, and include freely accessible documents from the Canadian government's online database and speeches and opinion pieces in which prominent Canadian and Indian representatives commented on the relation between the respective governments.

Although previous research on the Canadian Sikh experience of Operation Blue Star and its impact on Canada-India relations after 1984 remains scant, several scholars have studied the separate components which together comprise the crux of this thesis' research subject. Experts in the fields of IR, political science and religion and ethnicity studies have contributed to the corpus of Canada-India relations and Sikh diasporas, but primarily adopted an either-or approach while studying their research topics. By synthesizing data that experts from distinct disciplines have gathered, I will put forward an overarching explanation which clarifies the causal relationship between the events of 1984 and the evolution of Canada-India relations in their aftermath.

A scholar who belongs to the intellectual core of this thesis subject's historiography is Costas Melakopides, a retired Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Cyprus who taught at various Canadian universities as well. Melakopides has extensively studied Canadian foreign policy and contends that Canada's postwar foreign policy can best be classified as "Canadian internationalism" with a "creative and flexible synthesis of idealism and pragmatism" at its core (3-4). Pragmatic idealism, as Melakopides argues, set Canada's foreign policy apart from that of the realist conceptions of more powerful nations (5). Melakopides furthermore shows that overall coherence and a remarkable continuity characterized Canada's entire postwar foreign policy (3-4). His theory is highly useful as it allows Canadian foreign policy to be explained from an idealist and pragmatic viewpoint simultaneously and shows that the adoption of either perspective does not necessarily exclude the other. On the downside, Melakopides only covered the period up to 1995, which makes an examination of more recent material necessary to

determine whether Canadian internationalism continued to be the hallmark of Canadian foreign policy after 1995.

Darshan S. Tatla is a research fellow at Punjabi University in Patiala, India and is one of the main authorities on the Sikh diaspora's experience of Operation Blue Star and the effects of its struggle for an independent Khalistan. Tatla focuses on the Sikh diaspora's predicament since 1984 and indicates that the tragedies of 1984 alienated diaspora Sikhs from the Indian state and turned them into vulnerable victims who then deemed the quest for homeland essential to their identity ("Unbearable Lightness" 79). The image of Canadian Sikhs as violent troublemakers emerged after the 1985 Air India bombing, persisted and occasionally caused Canada to succumb to Indian pressures to limit the Sikh diaspora's influence in Canada ("Mediating Between States" 181). While Tatla's works delve deep into the underlying reasons for the Canadian Sikh diaspora's bitterness against the Indian government, they largely fail to cover the long-term implications of their actions for Canada-India relations.

Ryan Touhey is an Associate Professor of History at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, Ontario and is specialized in Canada's post-1945 foreign relations with India. Touhey not only carefully outlines the erratic development of Canada-India relations during the Cold War, but explains how episodes of indifference alternated with moments of rapprochement in the post-9/11 era, too. Moreover, Touhey recognizes the pivotal role played by the Canadian Sikh diaspora in the unfolding of Canada-India relations from the mid-1980s onwards. Touhey contends that the historical enmity which arose from events such as Operation Blue Star and the Air India bombing has prevented Canada and India from "cultivating a more multilayered relationship" time and again ("Canada and India" 752). Although Touhey's analyses serve as helpful instruments in obtaining a complete overview of Canada-India relations, they lack the in-depth explanations for the actions of the Canadian Sikh diaspora which studies of religion and ethnicity scholars typically do provide.

On the basis of the aforementioned scholars' arguments, I hypothesize that the Canadian Sikh diaspora's experience of Operation Blue Star had a momentous and long-lasting impact on Canada-India relations after 1984. Although Melakopides asserts that Canada's foreign policy was consistent and determined by the tenets of liberal internationalism during the Cold War, I expect that the idealist component which had characterized Canadian foreign policy for fifty years gradually became replaced by a more realist credo in the post-Cold War era. I moreover expect that despite the persistence of

extremist imagery, Canadian Sikhs grew relatively powerful domestically and were therefore able to leave their mark on Canada-India relations after 1984. Finally, my expectation is that alongside issues which involved Canadian Sikhs, there are manifold other reasons which justify the nondevelopment of a fruitful Canada-India partnership.

Complex issues such as the Canadian Sikh diaspora's experience of Operation Blue Star, its consequences for the Canadian Sikh community and the impact of these consequences on Canada-India relations require extensive but thorough scrutiny and call for more than one single explanation as well. I will hence consider an amalgamation of analytical angles as provided in previous studies in order to approach the research topic through an interdisciplinary lens. In doing so, I will lay the foundation for an integrative research project which seeks to fill the academic void left by others.

This thesis consists of three chapters and a final conclusion. In Chapter One, I will review the evolution of Canadian foreign policy over the past seventy-five years and discuss the episodes of indifference and reconciliation which form the kernel of the Canada-India relationship. Chapter Two will contain an examination of the genesis of Khalistani separatism, the historical development of the Canadian Sikh diaspora, its reaction to Operation Blue Star and the ramifications of this reaction to the position of Sikhs in Canadian society. I will explain why the Canadian Sikh diaspora has continued to perturb the Indian government and illustrate how Canadian Sikhs have effectively taken the post-1984 Canada-India relationship hostage in Chapter Three. Finally, I will suggest that the vast potential of the Canada-India relationship largely remained untapped due to the Canadian national leaders' inability to perform the high-wire balancing act required to appease an electorally significant domestic constituency and simultaneously mitigate New Delhi's concerns over the omnipresence of Sikhs and could-be Khalistani sympathizers in Canada's political domain.

## CHAPTER ONE

### CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND CANADA-INDIA RELATIONS

The foundations of the triangular relationship between Canada, Canadian Sikhs and India were laid long before Operation Blue Star and its corollary events ushered in a new era in Canada-India relations. The postwar evolution of Canadian foreign policy and its impression on Canada's position in the international pecking order not only helped shape Canada-India relations before 1984, but proved to be major determinants of Canada's relationship with India in the thirty-six years after Operation Blue Star as well. To acquire a more profound understanding of the triangular relationship's present condition, we must first review the historical context on which this relationship was built.

#### 1.1. CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY BEFORE 1984

Four decades after the dust of the Second World War (1939-1945) had settled, Canadian foreign policy had undergone a dramatic transformation. Formerly isolated and dependent on London's approval as a dominion of the British Empire, Canada had evolved into an independent, bridge-building middle power heavily involved in multilateral institutions, international peacekeeping, disarmament efforts and foreign aid assistance by the mid-1980s. Although statesmen like Lester B. Pearson, John Diefenbaker and Pierre Trudeau each approached Canadian foreign policy differently, Melakopides illustrates that at least until 1984, Canadian foreign policy was characterized by cohesion and consistency. I will explain how Ottawa defined Canada's place in the global arena and how Canadian foreign policy developed from its postwar heyday up until the end of the Trudeauvian era in the subsections below.

##### 1.1.1. THE GOLDEN AGE (1945 – 1957)

As the Second World War came to a conclusion, Canada was catapulted into the limelight of the world stage. Whereas Canada had only gained autonomy over its foreign policy after the signing of the Statute of Westminster in 1931 and isolationist tendencies subsequently dictated its foreign policy during the remainder of the interwar period, the large-scale manufacturing of military equipment and provision of natural resources to Allied forces propelled Canada to emerge as a major economic power in 1945 (Melakopides 37-38; Moos, pars. 5-8). The successfulness of its participation in the Second World War moreover generated a conviction that Canada was ready to play an active role in shaping the postwar international order (Melakopides 38).

Domestically, Canada's multi-party federal parliamentary democracy has historically been dominated by two relatively centrist parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. Louis St. Laurent and Lester B. Pearson — the Liberal architects of Canada's postwar foreign policy — grasped the opportunity to help organize the new global system with both hands. Canada's contributions to the creation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) four years later and its role in the Commonwealth signified a propensity for "middlepowermanship" (Melakopides 46). Ottawa's "penchant for moderation", bridge-building capabilities and policies of caution and non-provocation were not only instrumental in counterbalancing great powers like the United States (US) in the Western world's relationship with the Soviet Union, but significantly helped to defuse volatile situations like the Korean War and Suez Crisis, too (Melakopides 43-44).

### **1.1.2. THE DIEFENBAKER YEARS (1957 — 1963)**

The golden age established pragmatic idealism and internationalism as the essential tropes of Canadian foreign policy. Conservative prime minister John Diefenbaker embraced the golden age themes and staunchly supported multilateral organizations such as the UN and the Commonwealth of Nations while simultaneously opposing communism and militarism (Melakopides 53). Canadian foreign policy remained profoundly internationalist during Diefenbaker's administration, as Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard Green epitomized Canadian idealist optimism in his crusade for international arms control and nuclear disarmament (Lyon in Melakopides 57).

Canadian support for peacekeeping missions to Lebanon (1958), Congo (1960), West Irian (1962) and Yemen (1963) and the provision of financial aid to Third World Commonwealth nations under the aegis of the Colombo Plan not only substantiated Diefenbaker's claim that the UN was the cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy, but manifested Ottawa's "genuine concern" for Third World development needs as well (Melakopides 58-60). Diefenbaker's propensity to distinguish Ottawa's stance from that of Washington, disagreement with US (mis)management of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and a general anti-American sentiment that permeated Canadian society meanwhile seriously soured relations between Canada and its superpower neighbor (Melakopides 55).

### **1.1.3. THE PEARSONIAN APPROACH (1963 — 1968)**

Diefenbaker's Liberal successor Lester B. Pearson followed the foreign policy course for which he had sown the seeds during his time as minister of external affairs from 1948 to 1957. While internationalism and pragmatic idealism continued to be predominant in

Canadian foreign policy, a changing global landscape presented considerable challenges (Melakopides 66). Although the process of decolonization was nearing its completion and UN member states increasingly considered peacekeeping missions to be concealed military exercises, Pearson — supported by the sociopolitical protests and antiwar demonstrations of the 1960s — remained committed to idealist and internationalist values (Brauer 20; Dobell in Melakopides 66; Whitaker, par. 10). Disarmament was still an important issue, and already in 1965 Ottawa laid the foundations for the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Legault in Melakopides 74). Besides, not only did Canadian development assistance nearly triple between 1964 and 1967, it was expanded to non-Colombo Plan recipients like francophone African states, too (Melakopides 78).

Just as the Third World saw Pearson as one of its best friends in the West, Ottawa also restored relations with both Cold War superpowers through trade agreements and rapid provision of peacekeeping forces to Cyprus in 1964. Undeterred by the infancy of a renewed Canada-US relationship however, Pearson and Minister of External Affairs Paul Martin, Sr. vehemently opposed the American bombing of North Vietnam (Melakopides 71-73). The fact that Martin used the UN General Assembly as his primary vehicle to vent Canadian denunciation therefore symbolically denoted Canada's foreign policy maturity and unrelenting commitment to multilateral institutions.

#### **1.1.4. TRUDEAUVIAN INTERNATIONALISM (1968 — 1984)**

The arrival of Pierre Trudeau at Parliament Hill prompted a reassessment of Canadian foreign policy. The “Era of National Interest”, as critics dubbed the Liberal party leader's period in office, was ostensibly marked by a transition from the pragmatic idealist internationalism which had hitherto characterized Canadian foreign policy to a form of economic nationalism which would allow Canada to become more “self-sufficient” and less dependent on the US (Dewitt and Kirton qtd. in Melakopides 87; Nemeth 173). Melakopides however argues that Trudeau's foreign policy was merely an extension of his domestic policy in which he aimed to protect national unity and enlarge prosperity “in the widest possible sense” (90). As Quebecois separatism had become a burning domestic issue by the late 1960s, a fervently federalist Trudeau was keen to let the world know how Canada championed Nigeria's territorial integrity over outside intervention in the 1967–1970 Biafran War. Trudeau's readiness to provide humanitarian relief to both quarreling factions however manifested the persistence of the idealistic creed (Melakopides 121).

Foreign policy observers furthermore note that Canadian aid assistance received a “quantitative and qualitative boost” during Trudeau's administration and his commitment



to detente and demilitarization became evident in Trudeau's 1969 decision to halve Canadian contributions to NATO, which he perceived had developed into too much of a military alliance (qtd. in Melakopides 93). A state visit to the Soviet Union in 1971 moreover significantly strengthened Canada-Soviet relations. It was only until the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that a setback in bilateral relations arose — including a Canadian boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics — but Ottawa nonetheless responded far less pugnacious than other Western nations had (Melakopides 95). The Trudeauvian pragmatic principle that “engagement was preferable to ostracism” was further reflected by Canada's concurrent condemnation of and trading with South Africa's apartheid regime (Melakopides 111-115). Trudeauvian internationalism hence did not at all discard pragmatic idealism, but demonstrated how it could serve Canadian self-interest as well.

## **1.2. CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER 1984**

Brian Mulroney's inauguration in 1984 not only marked the end of a twenty-year-long Liberal administration, but instigated a period of gradual digression from Canada's international reputation as a pragmatic idealist, compassionate, non-provocative and reconciliatory nation as well. Respective governments would increasingly employ interventionist approaches, reduce contributions to multilateral peacekeeping missions and maintain a more pronounced place for the national interest in their foreign policy narratives. While each government was rhetorically determined to reclaim Canada's global voice as the demise of the Cold War bipolar system had created substantial uncertainties, earnest endeavors to do so were unforthcoming.

Foreign policy observers like Tom Keating, Michael Hart, Graeme Young, Norman Hillmer and Philippe Lagassé suggest that international passivity, political indecisiveness and indifference to multilateral institutions played a pivotal role in the unfolding of Canadian foreign policy from the mid-1980s onwards. Whether incumbent prime minister Justin Trudeau will succeed in awakening Canada's dormant foreign policy however remains to be seen. In the subsections below I will present the most salient changes and continuities in Canadian foreign policy from Mulroneyian conservatism to the potential yet intricate return to liberal internationalism under Justin Trudeau.

### **1.2.1. THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ERA (1984 — 1993)**

A breath of fresh air seemed to permeate Canadian parliament on the brink of Mulroney's election as prime minister in 1984. Michaud and Nossal argue that as opposition leader, Mulroney promised to make some decidedly right-wing alterations to Canada's foreign policy, giving the impression that he would depart from Canadian foreign policy as it had

traditionally been pursued (113). As prime minister, however, Mulroney's approach to foreign policy was rather multifaceted. Refurbishing Canada's relationship with the US, undoing the damage done by Pierre Trudeau and aligning Canada's foreign policy with that of its southern neighbor had Mulroney's priority (Michaud and Nossal 119-120). Still, Mulroney did not shy away from opposing his American counterparts when Canadian interests were at stake, as he did over disputes involving American infringement on Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and US extraterritoriality on Cuba (Michaud and Nossal 121-122).

The promotion of human rights and good governance were among the central themes of Mulroney's tenure, in which the provision of Canadian aid became conditional on the recipient's human rights record (Michaud and Nossal 125). Besides, Mulroney remarkably diverted from the stance of both Reagan and Thatcher by heavily criticizing and pushing for harsh sanctions against South Africa's apartheid regime (Michaud and Nossal 124). The Mulroney administration's approach to peacekeeping however noticeably differed from its precursors' after the Cold War had ended and conflicts *within* national borders became common, and shifted to an interventionist position with Canadian involvement in Iraq (1991), Somalia (1992) and former Yugoslavia (1992) (Michaud and Nossal 126). While Mulroney thus departed from some elements of Canada's traditional postwar rationale like continentalism and peacekeeping, he did not radically challenge the pragmatic idealism which seemed to be intrinsic to Canadian foreign policy.

### **1.2.2. A LIBERAL RETURN: STIRRING RHETORIC, TIMID ACTION (1993 – 2006)**

The demise of the Cold War had a profound impact on the geopolitical conditions to which every state in the international system was exposed to. As Stairs argues, it not only "shattered the rigid bipolar structure" in whose margins Canadian mediation often reigned supreme, but also removed the dire necessity for Western powers to align themselves with other nations (482). The uncertainties attached to this post-Cold War security environment, combined with high expectations to honor the Pearsonian legacy, left Liberal leader Jean Chrétien struggling to come up with a clear-cut foreign policy and precipitated an indecisiveness in Canadian foreign policy during his time in office between 1993 and 2003 (Keating 127).

Chrétien hence put foreign policy on the back burner. Reducing the massive deficit which had accumulated under previous governments had his highest priority, and resulted in major cutbacks in foreign aid assistance and defense spending (Keating 125). Domestic affairs like the 1995 Quebec independence referendum assumed greater importance and

Chrétien therefore sought to avoid an activist foreign policy during his tenure. That Chrétien was willing to join American and British forces in attacking Iraq without a UN mandate in 1998 but stressed the necessity of such a mandate before committing any Canadian troops to the American-led invasion of Iraq five years later serves as a prime example of his foreign policy inconsistency (Keating 126).

Observers argue that the Chrétien government not only overrated the importance of its self-professed values (Granatstein in Hart 91), but pushed Canada further down the international pecking order by clinging to a policy best described as “passive internationalism” (Stairs 486; Keating 127). Chrétien’s successor Paul Martin was poised to strengthen Canada’s position on the world stage but achieved little success during his brief tenure from 2003 to 2006. Liberal ambivalence about keeping the US at arm’s length complicated Martin’s promise to restore Canada-US relations, symbolized the perpetuation of the schizophrenic course set by his predecessor and resulted in a foreign policy which was “long on good intentions but short on substance” (Burney qtd. in Hart 91). While the Martin government used some admirable rhetoric, it failed to overcome its timidity when it needed to take the initiative (Hart 96).

### **1.2.3. THE HARPERIAN PRINCIPLE: CANADA FIRST (2006 – 2015)**

The *war on terror* was well underway when Conservative leader Stephen Harper won the prime ministership in 2006. Eager to distinguish his foreign policy from that of his predecessors, Harper adhered to a policy of disengagement and broke away from the Pearsonian traditions of middlepowermanship and multilateralist liberal internationalism (Carment and Landry in Young 162; Schmitz 224). In terms of foreign policy democratization, Harper actively worked to reduce the level of transparency and consultative inclusion that his precursors had striven for (Schmitz 226-227). Policies of compromise and being a “nice” nation moreover belonged to the past as Harper was determined to reclaim Canada’s global voice on the basis of superior principles and moral values (Schmitz 224; Gecelovsky 10).

Shaped by an ethos which favored self-reliance and individual responsibility over the “collective concerns of international society” (Gecelovsky 1), Harper challenged the traditional tenets of Canadian internationalism as the rationale for Canadian involvement abroad became increasingly contingent on its added value to the national interest (Young 162). Moreover, as the assertion of national sovereignty, promotion of Canadian values and financial gain typically underlaid Canada’s ventures abroad, Harper’s foreign policy was marked by imminent militarism and a conspicuous absence of Canadian engagement in UN

peacekeeping operations (Frenette in Young 162). Antagonistic stances toward Russia (2008 and 2014) and Iran (2012) echoed Harper's vision of individual responsibility, which justified the punishment of mischievous states (Clark in Gecelovsky 11; Brodie in Bratt 185). This confrontational, principle-based approach not only typified a radical departure from the reconciliatory diplomacy Canada was traditionally known for, but was susceptible to inconsistencies as well, as Harper's reluctance to condemn the nonobservance of human rights and democratic freedom in China and Saudi Arabia demonstrated (Schmitz 225; Gecelovsky 13).

#### **1.2.4. JUSTIN TRUDEAU: PAST, PRESENT OR FUTURE? (2015 – ?)**

Foreign policy tends to be assessed more easily in retrospect, and that of current prime minister Justin Trudeau — the eldest son of former prime minister Pierre Trudeau — forms no exception. Having started his second term in office last year, the full implications of Trudeau's foreign policy have yet to take shape. After a near-decade-long Tory rule, Trudeau sought to “dismantle” the Harper legacy and re-establish Canadian global leadership by tackling climate change, renewing Canadian involvement in UN peacekeeping operations and reinvesting in development assistance (Hillmer and Lagassé 2-3). A foreign policy which recognized multilateralism and liberal internationalism as the key instruments to secure Canadian interests seemed to make a comeback with Trudeau's arrival (Young 163).

Hillmer and Lagassé observe that Trudeau's welcoming of over 40,000 Syrian refugees to Canada and his progression toward an innovative, feminist and environmentally sustainable foreign policy may have been a signal achievement and encouraging development (8-10), but “creating distance from Stephen Harper” proved to be harder than initially thought (3). Trudeau's promises to resuscitate Canadian development aid and peacekeeping efforts turned out seemingly hollow, as not only did Ottawa's budget for development assistance become stagnant in 2017, the number of Canadian troops deployed in UN peacekeeping missions dwindled to a historic low in 2018, too (Young 165; Hillmer and Lagassé 9). One may not even have to add the turbulence and unpredictability that the Trump presidency imposed on the traditional American allies to realize that Justin Trudeau is in the midst of a wild and challenging ride.

#### **1.3. CANADA-INDIA RELATIONS: UPS, DOWNS AND UPS AGAIN?**

Bilateral relations between Canada and India evolved rather remarkably. Both former colonies of the British Empire, federal democracies and homes to multiethnic populations, Canada and India shared some close similarities at the time of the latter's independence in

1947. Seemingly preordained to become close partners in a postwar world and form the missing link between the East and West, Canada and India however could not live up to the expectations they had of each other. Every relationship has its ups and downs, but the Canada-India relationship unquestionably bore more setbacks than breakthroughs. Canada, often walking the tightrope between proximity to the US and its wish for independent decision-making, and India, vulnerable to the idiosyncrasies of its regional nemeses Pakistan and China, long struggled to find common ground for economic and political cooperation. Relations may have somewhat defrosted over time, but politically contentious issues continue to lurk beneath the surface. Reviews of the evolution of Canada-India relations by political scientists like Arthur Rubinoff, historians such as Ryan Touhey and former diplomat Louis Delvoie will help to identify the mutual areas of interest and issues of discord on which the bilateral relationship is built. I will set out to illustrate the episodes of aloofness and rapprochement which lie at the heart of the Canada-India relationship in the following subsections.

### **1.3.1. HIGH EXPECTATIONS, GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT (1947 – 1984)**

Canada-India relations bourgeoned due to a variety of shared interests shortly after India became independent in 1947 (Delvoie 51). Similarities between the countries were found in their federal democratic character, association with the Commonwealth and rich ethnic diversity and, in combination with the personal friendship between Jawaharlal Nehru, St. Laurent and Pearson, laid the foundations for a close strategic relationship at the onset of the Cold War (Mehta 3-4). As both nations agreed on the need to foster East-West relations, stimulate third-world development and galvanize the prominence of multilateral organizations (Rubinoff 839), Canada perceived India to be an “ideal partner” and “major power” able to preserve the balance of power in Asia (Donaghy qtd. in Rubinoff 839; Mehta 3). As a result, India became the principal recipient of Canadian development assistance during the 1950s (A. Singh, “Current Narrative” 56).

Bilateral tensions however quickly started to build as the Cold War deepened in the 1960s. While a growing number of Canadian critics deemed India’s nonalignment policy to be “too heavily tilted toward Moscow” (Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 911), New Delhi became disillusioned with Ottawa’s political decision-making, which more than often “mimicked that of the United States” (Thakur qtd. in A. Singh, “Current Narrative” 56). India became increasingly annoyed by Canada’s ties to the US, as the latter’s military cooperation with Pakistan and overture to China severely jeopardized India’s position

during its wars with both of these nations in the mid-1960s and early 1970s (A. Singh, “Current Narrative” 57).

Disagreement over the functioning of the International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICSC), which oversaw the peaceful withdrawal of Vietnam from French Indochina, and Canadian outrage over India’s nuclear testing in 1974 (carried out with Canadian nuclear technology provided through the Colombo Plan) were the final blow to any illusions of improved Canada-India relations (Rubinoff 841; Delvoie 54). Having terminated all nuclear cooperation with India in 1976 after it was not prepared to accept any international safeguards on its nuclear activity (Blanchette 29), India “loomed far off on the horizon where it remained a dormant issue in Canadian politics” until the early 1980s (Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 914).

### **1.3.2. CHILLY TIES TURN FRIGID (1984 – 1993)**

While Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan MacEachen’s 1983 visit to India (the first such visit in nearly thirty years) and his desire to improve bilateral relations “across the spectrum” were greeted positively, Canada-India relations were about to hit rock bottom by the mid-1980s (qtd. in Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 913). Lax immigration policies implemented by the Liberal government had led to an influx of approximately 200,000 South Asian immigrants to Canada in the 1970s (Buchignani and Indra in Rubinoff 844). Among them were a number of Sikh militants sympathetic to the Khalistani cause who brought “long-standing grievances against the Indian government” to Canada (Touhey, “Canada and India” 742). As the civil strife in Punjab steadily escalated with the event of Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh violence that happened in its wake, the Canada-India relationship became increasingly dominated by issues of immigration, terrorism and the “divisive Khalistan question” (Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 914).

New Delhi’s concerns for Ottawa’s reluctance to properly address the issue of Sikh terrorism seemed to be justified after a band of Canadian Sikh Khalistan sympathizers blew up Air India Flight 182 in 1985 (Rubinoff 845). Although this event prompted the signing of an extradition treaty in 1987, Canada and India kept blaming each other for responsibility evasion. As New Delhi openly accused the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) of negligence and purposefully slowing down the Air India investigation and Ottawa raised concerns over human rights abuses by Indian security forces against Sikhs in Punjab, Canada-India relations reached their nadir (Mehta 7; Delvoie 56). Mutual distrust marked the Canada-India relationship toward the Cold War’s twilight, especially after the election of Mulroney

caused Canada to pursue better ties with the US whereas India remained closer to the Soviet Union (Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 914). Having failed to seize the opportunity to reanimate ties in their common condemnation of South African apartheid, signs of rapprochement between Canada and India would appear only until after Cold War hostilities had petered out in the 1990s (Delvoie 60; Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 914).

### **1.3.3. THE ROAD FORWARD? (1993 – ?)**

Although the end of the Cold War bipolar structure eliminated the necessity of proximity to either of the ideological blocs, the events of the 1980s had damaged Canada-India relations to such an extent that there was “no basis for [any] meaningful economic or political cooperation” until the mid-1990s (Rubinoff 845). While Canada’s global sway was dwindling, India started to bear the fruits of economic reforms made by Finance Minister (and future Prime Minister) Manmohan Singh (Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 915). With India’s economy prospering, Canadian interest in bilateral trade was revived. A few highly ambitious but largely misplaced attempts to reinvigorate economic ties by the Chrétien government and fury over India’s nuclear tests in 1998 however halted Canada’s efforts to improve bilateral relations with India (Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 917).

Only after the turn of the millennium did Canada reassess its India policy. Canada’s sanctions for India’s nuclear tests were extremely harsh compared to those of other countries (Rubinoff 849-850), and its strategy to isolate New Delhi ultimately proved to be more detrimental to Canada than to India (Touhey, “Canada and India” 744). In a major policy reversal in 2001, Canada expressed that despite persistent concerns over nuclear proliferation, it wished to pursue “the broadest political and economic relationship with India” (Manley qtd. in Touhey, “Canada and India” 745).

This change of attitude was much appreciated by New Delhi and allowed the bilateral relationship to progress. As a number of agreements in the fields of science, technology and education greatly enhanced bilateral engagement, the Harper government also demonstrated that Ottawa had finally overcome its “historic allergy to dealing with a nuclear India” by reaching an unprecedented agreement on civil nuclear cooperation (Touhey, “Canada and India” 750; Mehta 10). This deal moreover exemplified the positive trend in bilateral trade and investment. Between 2007 and 2015, Indian foreign direct investment (FDI) in Canada averaged 4.2 billion dollars annually and even exceeded six billion dollars in 2008 and 2009 (*International Investment*). Although Canadian FDI in India only topped the amount of one billion dollars twice, it also more than doubled from

506 million to 1.3 billion dollars over the same period (*International Investment*). During Harper's tenure, Canada-India bilateral economic ties ballooned like never before.

Desbordes and Vicard demonstrate that FDI serves as an adequate indicator of the condition of interstate political relations (383). Between 2016 and 2019, Indian FDI in Canada dropped dramatically to an average of two billion dollars per year (with just 971 million dollars in FDI in 2019, the lowest annual amount in thirteen years), while Canadian FDI in India solely increased and averaged two billion dollars annually during those same years (with a record 2.5 billion dollars in 2019) (*International Investment*). This downturn in bilateral economic activity therefore seemed to be reflective of the significant deterioration in political relations between Canada and India in the latter half of the 2010s. Why the advancement of Canada-India relations did not endure under Justin Trudeau's leadership will be explained more elaborately in Chapter Three.

#### **1.4. INTERIM CONCLUSION**

The image of Canada in the world remains inextricably tied to the perceptions of its foreign policy masterminds, most notably those of Lester B. Pearson. Liberal IR theorists would argue that a profound respect for the jurisdiction of multilateral institutions, the application of peacekeeping as a way to gain political goodwill and international prestige and a penchant for behind-the-scenes bridge-building were the defining linchpins of Canadian foreign policy. Each Canadian statesman, without exception, nevertheless struggled to find a balance between honoring this legacy and challenging the status quo. The international Good Samaritan's foreign policy was — and to some degree still is — based on principles, values, virtues and good intentions, but has become less and less rewarding in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing international environment.

Caught off guard by the “tectonic shifts in the global landscape”, Canada has slowly but surely turned into an “impotent country caroming off the pinball rails of international politics” (Mank 93-96). The careful weighing of liberal virtues like the championing of global causes against the realist proposition of protecting the national interest more often than not led to political indecisiveness, and it remains to be seen whether Ottawa will be able to make up the arrears. Canada's persistent attachment to its cherished liberal principles moreover caused its relationship with global power-hungry India to degenerate so rapidly that it essentially gave New Delhi a license to start dating someone else. While Ottawa might have finally recovered from its inner struggle at the start of the 2020s, it may well have to bite back its disappointment when it finds out that the party in New Delhi already started years ago.



## CHAPTER TWO

### OPERATION BLUE STAR AND THE CANADIAN SIKH DIASPORA

The historical overview of Canadian foreign policy and Canada-India relations presented in the previous chapter showed that despite valiant efforts to unlock its tremendous potential, the bilateral relationship tended to oscillate between mere indifference and mutual animosity. On top of that, the non-fulfillment of the relationship's early promise may to a certain degree be attributed to events involving Sikh separatists. Although Operation Blue Star can be perceived as the catalyst for increasingly vociferous calls for an independent Khalistan, the Sikh separatists' rationale did not magically materialize overnight. Similarly, the history of the Sikh diaspora in Canada dates further back than 1984. Hence, in order to understand how the Canadian Sikh diaspora was able to leave such an indelible mark on Canada-India relations after 1984, we must first closely examine the unfolding of Sikh separatist sentiment in India and abroad, the historical development of the Canadian Sikh diaspora, its response to the climactic events of 1984 and the repercussions that this response has had for the position of Sikhs in Canadian society.

#### 2.1. SIKH IDENTITY, KHALISTAN AND OPERATION BLUE STAR

Sikhism was founded as a religion by Guru Nanak in the Punjab in the late fifteenth century and has been associated with the region ever since (McLeod, par. 1). Punjab's history was contoured by myriad foreign invasions, but it was only until the Indian independence movement's efforts to defy British colonial rule progressed toward the Partition of 1947 that a Sikh identity tied to the Punjab territory began to take shape (Tatla, "Unbearable Lightness" 63). As a collective Sikh identity materialized, calls for political and fiscal autonomy of Punjab grew louder. Deteriorating socioeconomic circumstances and long-standing grievances against the federal government engendered the emergence of a violent militant struggle waged in the name of an imagined independent Sikh state, Khalistan. Operation Blue Star ultimately kick-started a bloody feud between irate Sikh insurgents and a federal government desperate to preserve the territorial integrity of the Indian Union. Drawing on analyses from political scientists like Kristin Bakke and Jugdep Chima, experts in South Asian politics such as Virginia Van Dyke and Rajshree Jetly and esteemed Sikh historians like Darshan S. Tatla and Harjot Oberoi, I will shed a light on the process of Sikh identity formation and the dynamics of violence in the Sikh self-determination struggle in the subsections below.

### **2.1.1. SIKH IDENTITY AND THE PURSUIT OF AUTONOMY**

Constructivist IR theorists posit that the conceptual birth of a collective Sikh identity is inextricably tied to the emergence of the Indian nationalist movement for independence from British colonial rule (Singh in Dhillon 2). Participation in the First World War (1914-1918) had exposed Indian colonial troops to “Western ideas of freedom and equality” and was therefore crucial to the development of Indian nationalism in the interwar period (Philpott, ch. 10). Education played an equally consequential role in cementing nationalist ideas into the minds of colonial subjects. Tatla hence argues that when Western-educated Hindu elites spread the Westphalian conception of India as a “delimited geographical entity” across the subcontinent, Punjabi Sikhs started to define themselves through a common religious, linguistic and cultural heritage which was purposefully distinct from that of Punjabi Hindus, too (“Unbearable Lightness” 63).

Territory was not yet a key component of Sikh self-definition (Tatla, “Unbearable Lightness” 63). However, as Sikh leaders recognized the imminence of a British withdrawal from the subcontinent and the creation of a Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India in the early 1940s, the pursuit of a separate Sikh state began to crystallize (Oberoi 27). Relatively few in number and geographically dispersed though, Sikh appeals for a separate state proved futile and prompted them to reluctantly join the Indian Union in 1947 (Singh in Dhillon 2; Jetly 62).

Despite having grown from a mere thirteen percent to a substantial thirty-five percent of the population in Indian Punjab, Sikhs were still concerned about their minority status and desires for a separate homeland hence did not subside in the post-Partition period (Dhillon 2; Bakke 295). Requests of Punjab's principal Sikh-centered political party, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), for a Punjabi-speaking state were repeatedly rejected by the secular Indian government during the 1950s since it perceived the requests to be based on religious grounds. It was only until the 1966 Punjab Reorganisation Act that the federal government caved in to the demands of the SAD and a Sikh-majority Punjabi-speaking state was being created (Jetly 63; Kapur 1211; Bakke 294-295; Tatla, “Unbearable Lightness” 66).

### **2.1.2. LONG-STANDING GRIEVANCES TURN INTO CALLS FOR KHALISTAN**

The reorganization of Punjab however also had some unfavorable ramifications for the Sikhs. The exclusion of Punjab's state capital Chandigarh to federally governed territory and the centralized regulation and redirection of Punjab's river waters exacerbated Sikh resentment toward the Indian government in the early 1970s (Dhillon 3; Bakke 295; Jetly

63). Concerned about the consequences of the federal water regulation on Punjab's agricultural sector, the SAD demanded greater autonomy for Punjab in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973 (Jetly 64). Unable to garner the support of the entire Sikh community and therefore impelled to expand its voter base if it ever were to rule Punjab, Bakke argues that the SAD's resolution was not secessionist in nature but merely called for increased autonomy over policies which impacted the socioeconomic position of Punjab's farming population (301).

In hindsight, the SAD's stance toward the federal government proved to be relatively moderate (Fair 128). As Prime Minister Gandhi's Congress Party wanted to reduce the SAD's political capacity, it supported fundamentalist Sikh religious leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to fend off the SAD's propaganda. This strategy later turned out to be a major misjudgment (Jetly 63; Dhillon 3; Fair 128; Shahed 328). When the economic prosperity of the Green Revolution — which Sikhs had perceived to be a “miracle in their own backyard”, reinforcing their belief that Punjab naturally belonged to them, as a “gift of God” — began to level by the late 1970s, Sikh farmers and skilled workers blamed both the SAD for its “inability to represent their interests” and the federal government for its unwillingness to invest in the development and diversification of Punjab's industries (Oberoi 39-40; Bakke 301-302).

Therefore, as the Sikh collective consciousness appropriated Punjab as the “fatherland” and Bhindranwale gained mass support from economically deprived Sikh farmers and skilled workers by capitalizing on their grievances toward the local and federal authorities (Oberoi 40; Dhillon 3), the discourse on Punjabi self-determination had free rein to morph into a full-blown militant struggle for an independent and religiously pure Khalistan by the early 1980s.

### **2.1.3. THE TIME BOMB DETONATES: OPERATION BLUE STAR**

Joined by the SAD, which had reluctantly recognized his preeminence in Punjab, Bhindranwale continued to push for the implementation of the forty-five demands as formulated in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and did not shy away from using violent means to obtain his ultimate goal, a separate Sikh nation (Van Dyke 985). While Bhindranwale's involvement in two politically motivated murders caused him to take shelter in Amritsar's Golden Temple complex, the federal authorities refrained from pursuing his arrest since they did not want to risk further incitement of the Sikh community's religious sentiments, for a string of violent protests from Bhindranwale's militant followers had already weakened the federal government's bargaining position

(Van Dyke 986; Chima 72). Successive negotiations between the SAD and the federal government came to nothing as neither side was willing to make concessions, making a violent confrontation seem inevitable (Chima 76).

Prime Minister Gandhi perceived Bhindranwale's demand for the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution as a threat to the national unity of India and justified a military operation to oust Bhindranwale and his followers from the Golden Temple premises on the need to prevent the "balkanization of India" (Tatla, "Morning After" 64-65). Moreover, Bhindranwale's militia was allegedly financially supported by and received arms and ammunitions from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, warranting resolute measures to thwart Pakistani-contrived "schemes for dismembering India" for the federal government (Tatla, "Morning After" 66). Although Operation Blue Star's main objective was to remove Bhindranwale and his militia from the heavily fortified Golden Temple complex, the week-long siege resulted in the destruction of the Sikhs' holiest religious center and a total of — according to the official count by the Indian government, estimates from independent observers run much higher — eighty-three army men and 493 civilian and militant casualties as collateral damage (Van Dyke 986; Tatla, "Morning After" 62).

Operation Blue Star "embittered and alienated" Sikhs across India even more (Chima 96), as the "implicit trust" between the Sikh community and the federal government which had been in place since 1947 was damaged irreparably (Tatla, "Morning After" 63). The Indian army's raid of the Golden Temple moreover signified the start of a series of violent retaliation. Through the assassination of Prime Minister Gandhi by two of her Sikh bodyguards and the anti-Sikh massacres in which over 3,000 Sikhs were killed in New Delhi alone, the conflict escalated into a decade-long ethno-nationalist Sikh insurgency in Punjab in which approximately 80,000 Sikh lives were lost in vicious confrontations with the Indian security forces (Van Dyke 986; Tatla, "Morning After" 62).

## **2.2. THE CANADIAN SIKH DIASPORA AND OPERATION BLUE STAR**

Punjabi Sikhs were not the only populace affected by the cataclysms of June and October 1984. Sikh communities around the globe were enraged at the Indian government for desecrating the Golden Temple and grieved for the deaths of friends, family and other coreligionists. Particularly in Canada, where the Sikh diaspora had burgeoned over previous decades, disbelief and rage generally seemed to translate into support for the creation of a separate Sikh state. Yet, despite the "opportunities for social cohesion" and "high degrees of solidarity" that the shared experience of Operation Blue Star precipitated

and which constructivist IR scholars deem vital to ethno-religious diasporas' ability to become "quasi-political units" in their host states (Ogden 4), internal division and factional conflict often subverted the Canadian Sikh diaspora's capacity to present a united front to the quelling of the Sikh insurgency in Punjab by Indian security forces.

Bringing into play comprehensive studies by researchers of nationalism, ethnicity and South Asian politics such as Kalam Shahed and Simrat Dhillon and analyses from political scientists like Bidisha Biswas and Laurent Gayer, I will delineate the most salient episodes of Sikh settlement in Canada and the sudden rise and ostensible decline of the Khalistan movement among the Canadian Sikh diaspora in following subsections.

### **2.2.1. EARLY SETTLEMENT, THE MIGRATION BOOM AND MOBILIZATION**

Cries for Khalistan not only resonated with Punjabi Sikhs but obtained a hearing among the global Sikh diaspora, too. Especially in Canada, where the history of Sikh settlement dates back to the early twentieth century, the Khalistan movement was met with a broad response (Jetly 69; Shahed 329). Of the nearly four million Sikhs who are currently believed to reside outside of India, roughly half a million live in Canada (Nesbitt in Shahed 329; Statistics Canada in Shahed 330). Shahed contends that the Sikh diaspora's foundations were laid by the "colonial administrative process in the Indian subcontinent which created a transnational labor market" and precipitated the "migration of ethnic communities to the colonial labor markets in the West" (329). Early Sikh migration to Canada seems to have been a product of this colonial framework. Sikh immigrants typically worked in British Columbia's lumber mills, but as hostile attitudes of host communities persisted and discriminatory immigration policies were implemented, the distinctly visible Sikh minority became marginalized, alienated and isolated from the larger community (Shahed 330; Dhillon 5).

Despite the *Komagata Maru* incident of 1914, in which a steamboat carrying 376 passengers from Punjab was denied from docking and letting its passengers disembark at the port of Vancouver by Canadian authorities and was forced to return to Calcutta, Canadian Sikhs were able to mobilize and establish community institutions like the Khalsa Diwan Society, which would play a pivotal role in Sikh claims to voting rights in the 1940s (Tatla, "Unbearable Lightness" 64; Nayar 229). Pushed out by the scarcity of employment opportunities due to Punjab's industrial underdevelopment during the Green Revolution and pulled in by Trudeau's liberalization of immigration laws, large groups of young, educated and highly skilled Sikh professionals moved to Canada (and the Toronto

metropolitan area specifically) to pursue better livelihoods in the 1960s and 1970s (Gayer 6; Dhillon 5).

Parallel to the “ethnicization of politics” and magnification of Sikh autonomy claims in Punjab, Canadian Sikh community leaders increasingly wished to establish separate forums “to address Sikh issues” as the number of Hindus in Canada rose as well during the 1970s (Shahed 329; Biswas 282). Long-distance nationalists tried to further mobilize the North American diaspora community, as former Punjab finance minister and Khalistani sympathizer Jagjit Singh Chohan’s 1971 *New York Times* advertisement, in which he called for support for an independent Sikh homeland, exemplified (Biswas 282). Whereas the distinction between ‘Sikh’ and ‘Indian’ had become more explicit in Canada and extremist organizations like Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), which were “actively involved in collecting funds and organizing training camps” for Sikh militants, had taken root on Canadian soil by the early 1980s (Jetly 69; Shahed 333), Tatla argues that mainstream Sikhs were “unwilling to engage with the Sikh homeland issue in any serious way” (“Unbearable Lightness” 71). It was only until *after* Operation Blue Star that the Canadian Sikh community at large became embroiled in cries for a sovereign Sikh state by their coreligionists in Punjab. Prior to June 1984, as Tatla put into words so fittingly, “the theme of a Sikh homeland attracted no more than a fringe audience and only the Indian state’s blunder in ordering armies into the Golden Temple forced the issue into ordinary Sikhs’ homes and minds” (“Unbearable Lightness” 71).

## **2.2.2. THE CANADIAN SIKH RESPONSE TO OPERATION BLUE STAR**

While Khalistan may not have been a dominant theme among the majority of diaspora Sikhs before 1984, the unprecedented Indian army blitz on the Golden Temple surely sent a major shockwave through the global Sikh community. Operation Blue Star prompted protests among diaspora Sikh communities almost instantaneously and caused Khalistan to become the “focal point” of Sikh diaspora discourse (Gayer 20; Biswas 283; Dhillon 7). Especially in Canada, where a substantial Sikh diaspora had been able to congregate through a plethora of gurdwaras, Sikh leaders called on the community to protest the atrocities in Punjab (Biswas 283). Countrywide rallies against the Indian state were peaceful at first, but quickly turned violent as Canadian Sikh leaders propagated the news about the Indian government’s continued repression of Sikhs in Punjab at their gurdwaras (Dhillon 8).

Not only did the mass outrage lead to a temporary shutdown of the Indian consulate in Vancouver (Shahed 331), Khalistani sympathizers also targeted individuals who were

critical of their violent acts. Physical attacks on moderate Canadian Sikh politician Ujjal Dosanjh in 1985 and Tara Singh Hayer, a Canadian Sikh journalist who covered the Air India investigation, in 1988 and 1998 demonstrated the Canadian authorities' unpreparedness for the "emotional impact" of Operation Blue Star on Canadian Sikhs and underlined that the Khalistan movement did not eschew violence (J. Singh 6). The fact that members of BKI, the "most militant and notorious of the Khalistan groups" in Canada which "openly espouse[d] the use of violent means to attain Khalistan", were held responsible for the Air India bombing showed that at least a marginal minority of the Canadian Sikh community was willing to go to great lengths to avenge the tragedies of 1984 and "affirmed the presence of Canadian Sikh terrorism" to the general public (Gayer 27-28; Razavy 80; Biswas 285).

Although pro-Khalistan organizations like BKI, the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), the Khalistan Council and Dal Khalsa (in)directly lent "moral and financial support" to the armed struggle for an independent Sikh state specifically (Gayer 27-28), the financial support from the majority of the Canadian Sikh diaspora was primarily motivated by "compassion and sympathy for the victims of the violence in Punjab" and the need to "help their fellow brethren" (Dhillon 10). Besides that, the Canadian Khalistan movement in itself was never a single homogenous entity. Upper-class *Jat* Sikhs, who belonged to the traditional landowning caste, were the most adamant supporters of the Khalistan movement due to their religious devoutness, strong economic, cultural and political ties to Punjab and well-established relations with the media and authorities in the host state, and were therefore the sole translator of less-privileged Sikh immigrants' grievances (Gayer 22).

Other Sikh minorities meanwhile became deeply critical of the Khalistan movement, which they perceived as just another vehicle for Jat elites to reinforce their dominance upon them (Gayer 22-23). Disagreement over the use of violence, "factional in-fighting" and a "lack of collective responsibility" moreover severely undermined the pro-Khalistan groups' ability to strategize collectively (Biswas 281). When the Sikh insurgency in Punjab waned due to "successful Indian counter-terrorism operations" and political settlements between the federal government and the major Sikh parties were reached in the mid-1990s (Shahed 334), large sections of the Canadian Sikh diaspora lost interest in the Khalistan movement (Dhillon 10). Still, the memory of Operation Blue Star would continue to "weigh heavily like a nightmare upon the minds" of Canadian Sikhs for decades to come (Singh and Shani 277).

### **2.3. RAMIFICATIONS FOR THE CANADIAN SIKH DIASPORA**

The reaction of some of the BKI members to the traumatic events of 1984 in the form of the Air India bombing had far-reaching consequences for the entire Canadian Sikh diaspora. As Indian and Canadian newspaper headlines caused Canadian Sikhs to be placed under public scrutiny, the Canadian Sikh community became the direct object in a dispute which would smolder beneath the surface of Canada-India relations for decades. The framing of Sikhs as extremists moreover not only justified the securitization of the Sikh diaspora in Canada, but also engendered ambiguity among large parts of the Sikh community about their identity and position within Canadian society.

Detailed analyses from experts in the fields of religion, media and Sikh studies such as Loveleen Kaur, Jasjit Singh and Doris Jakobsh give valuable insight into the ramifications that the much-publicized reaction of a small group of fringe Khalistani sympathizers had on the Canadian Sikh diaspora at large. I will expound on these closely interrelated consequences, whose role in the development of Canada-India relations simply cannot be overstated, in the subsections below.

#### **2.3.1. PERSISTENT NARRATIVES: SIKHS AS EXTREMISTS**

Although images of Sikhs as fanatic, militant extremists already emerged in the early twentieth century when Sikhs non-violently protested British rule in India but were labelled as anti-colonial “terrorists” by the Raj in order to depoliticize “the revolutionaries and their goals” (Kaur 70), it was the 1985 Air India bombing that reanimated concerns over Sikh extremism in the diaspora in contemporary times (Kaur in J. Singh 6). Extensive, mostly negative media coverage of the Air India bombing put Canadian Sikhs in the spotlight, whether they had anything to do with militant organizations like BKI or not (Jakobsh 164). Even though the majority of Canadian Sikhs dissociated themselves from the actions of the radicalized few, the Sikh community as a whole remained subjected to discrimination invoked out of “fear and domination” which persisted among members of the broader society (Kaur 81; Jakobsh 184).

Jasjit Singh moreover argues that despite the “general non-violent nature of Sikh militancy” beyond the incidents of terrorism in Canada in the 1980s, narratives of Sikhs as extremists continued to linger in the post-9/11 environment (10). The racialization of the Sikh Other in a normatively white Canada, an “underlying anxiety about anti-assimilationist religious others”, the repeated framing of Sikh secessionists as extremists in Indian media and legislation and the securitization of ethno-religious minorities in the West all facilitated the perpetuation of this stereotype (J. Singh 8-12). Narratives of Sikhs



as extremists managed to persist because the Indian definition of terrorists not only targeted organizations and individuals who questioned the sovereignty of the Indian Union, but foreign policy-makers and media agencies continually replicated this definition, too (J. Singh 8). As a result, the position of the Sikh community in Canadian society has been severely compromised in the thirty-five years since the Air India bombing.

### **2.3.2. THE SECURITIZATION OF THE CANADIAN SIKH DIASPORA**

The transformation of the Sikh diaspora into a matter of security by Indian lawmakers and media enabled the Indian government to actively pursue alleged Khalistani sympathizers in the Sikh diaspora as if they posed a threat to the very survival of the Indian Republic. Four years before the Air India bombing, Prime Minister Gandhi already touched upon the issue of Sikh diasporic extremism with Pierre Trudeau during a Commonwealth meeting in Kenya (Milewski in Shahed 336), but only since the Air India disaster did the Canadian government begin to regard the Sikh community as a supporter of international terrorism and a national security threat (Gayer 33). The 1987 extradition treaty furthermore emphasized that Canadian authorities, partly driven by what realist IR scholars would call “economic rationality”, had become “more receptive to India’s plight against overseas terrorists than to Sikh immigrants’ denunciation of the human rights violations that were allegedly committed by Indian armed forces on Punjabi civilians” (Gayer 32).

Shahed however argues that despite the Indian and Canadian media’s repeated efforts to link Sikh diasporic nationalism to militancy and extremism, the activism of Canadian Sikh organizations has only become more civic in character while violent militancy dwindled steadily (339-340). India nonetheless remained convinced that Canada’s efforts to confront Khalistani extremism have been wholly insufficient (Shahed 336). New Delhi shared its concerns about a “marked resurgence of pro-Khalistan elements in Canada” with Ottawa on several occasions over the past decade, most notably during prime ministerial meetings and state visits in 2010, 2012 and 2018 (Kaur 76; Shahed 337).

Justin Trudeau and other previous prime ministers have tried to pacify Indian concerns by stating that Canada does not support or condone anyone who threatens the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Indian state (Patel in Prasad and Dikshit, par. 25). However, as public policy professor Anil Varughese contends, there is an “electorally significant minority of Sikhs back home whose interests [Trudeau] also cannot ignore” (qtd. in Quan, par. 2). The fact that the removal of references to Sikh extremism from the Public Safety Canada report on terrorism — as it “unintentionally impugns an

entire religion” — led to Indian astonishment at Trudeau’s “capitulation to pressure” demonstrates that the current Liberal government is compelled to walk a tightrope between Indian appeasement and preventing the estrangement of a sizable part of its electorate (Quan, pars. 10-12).

### **2.3.3. QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING**

Recurring images of Sikhs as extremists in Canadian media and the subsequent securitization of the Sikh community provoked discussions among the mainstream public about the degree of belonging of Sikhs to the Canadian nation (Kaur 71). The results of these discussions are often dichotomous. As Kaur explains, the image of Sikhs as extremists is often refuted by the image of Sikhs as integral to the “fabric of Canadian society”, a polarity which emphasizes the rupture of Sikh identity within Canada (71). Postcolonial IR theorists like Kaur moreover posit that while a Sikh in Canada may either be the extremist, un-Canadian Sikh or the good Sikh Canadian who abides by Canadian values, each possibility is still inherently different from but yet created by the dominant culture (70).

In an effort to get rid of the negative marker and extremist imagery which had been placed upon them, Sikhs were in “constant need for an overt display of their patriotism to prove their value as Canadians and to actively embrace the role of the model minority” (Kaur 77). This model minority was often perceived to be “upwardly mobile, law-abiding and integrated into the host society’s culture and values” (Sian in J. Singh 10), but membership came at a cost. Whereas Jakobsh argues that Sikhs have been remarkably successful in distinguishing themselves from other ethno-religious minorities within Canadian society (185), Vijay Prasad contends that the price of this success — “being perceived as better than the other troublemaking minorities” — is paid for by “political estrangement” (qtd. in Kaur 77). Accepting the model minority role made it essentially impossible for Canadian Sikhs to disagree on domestic and foreign policies because as soon as they pushed the “boundaries on their levels of approved citizenship” or the normative hegemonic population thought they “stepped out of line”, the extremist and terrorist labels would reappear (Kaur 77).

### **2.4. INTERIM CONCLUSION**

The complexity and interrelatedness of the multitudinous justifications of Khalistan supporters for an independent Sikh state, the heterogeneity of the Canadian Sikh diaspora itself and the diversity in experiences of Operation Blue Star among its members make it essentially impossible to assign an absolute *the* Canadian Sikh experience of Operation

Blue Star and the events that happened in its aftermath. What can be said however, is that fueled by old myths, glorious memories of the past and long-standing grievances, a small minority of the Canadian Sikh diaspora channeled its rage toward avenging the sight of a demolished Golden Temple and brutal slaughter of their friends, family and coreligionists through committing violent acts of terror like the bombing of Air India Flight 182. The majority of Canadian Sikhs however dealt with the traumas of 1984 through civic activism and spreading awareness of the Punjab issue in their host state. The experience of the few nonetheless had a major impact on the future of the entire Canadian Sikh community and caused increased scrutiny by the media, security forces and Canadian society in general. As a result, many Canadian Sikhs have held the mentality that they are part of a community which has been “perpetually under siege” (Jakobsh 178). Whether that siege has primarily been laid by politicians at Parliament Hill, Canada’s flawed multicultural society, *Big Brother* New Delhi or even the diaspora community itself remains open to debate.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CANADIAN SIKH DIASPORA AND CANADA-INDIA RELATIONS

Now that I provided a historical background on Sikh separatism in India and abroad, analyzed the Canadian Sikh diaspora's experience of Operation Blue Star and established the ramifications of this experience for the Sikh community in Canada, we must determine how the Canadian Sikh diaspora was able to shape the general tenor of Canada-India relations after 1984. Confronted with intense public scrutiny and incessant terrorism allegations, the Canadian Sikh diaspora appeared to be the weakest side of the transnational trinity. Despite its underdog status though, the Canadian Sikh diaspora disrupted the relationship between Canada and India over and over again. Which factors enabled the Canadian Sikh diaspora's hostage-taking of Canada-India relations after 1984, and why, despite an affirmed mutual commitment to improve bilateral ties, did Indian concerns over a revival of Sikh extremism in Canada persist?

#### 3.1. PUNCHING ABOVE THEIR WEIGHT: SIKHS IN CANADIAN POLITICS

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the events of 1984 precipitated a perpetual need among Sikhs in Canada to display a certain *Canadianness* in order to defy the extremist labels that were put on them by the media and legislative bodies. Kaur's hypothesis that when Canadian Sikhs cross the boundary of their approved citizenship, accusations of Sikhs being terrorists would reappear seemed to ring true in recent years as well. Through large-scale immigration, Canada's commitment to multiculturalist policies and the efficacy of the community's *gurdwara politics*, Canadian Sikhs have become a powerful voter bloc and are markedly overrepresented in Canadian legislatures (Wyeth, "Sikh Sensitivities" par. 14). Some 500,000 Sikhs currently call Canada home (1.3 percent of the national population), but as of March 2019, Canada's House of Commons has eighteen Sikh members (5.3 percent of all 338 parliament seats), of which three are part of Justin Trudeau's cabinet (8.1 percent of all 37 cabinet ministers).

Among them are Harjit Sajjan, who was born in Punjab, moved to Vancouver in the mid-1970s and is Canada's current Minister of National Defence (Geddes, par. 2), and Jagmeet Singh, a Canadian-born former criminal lawyer for Sikh activist groups who became the first non-white leader of a major opposition party in Canada, the New Democratic Party (NDP), in 2017 (Arora, par. 9). Although Indian concerns about the

Canadian Sikh community's political clout flared up time and again since 1984, the issue really took off after Justin Trudeau appointed a disproportionately high number of Sikh ministers in 2015. A better comprehension of the grounds for India's uneasiness demands a closer look at the factors which facilitated the Sikh community's advancement in Canada's political domain over the past decades.

### **3.1.1. FEDERAL MULTICULTURALISM AND IMMIGRATION POLICY**

Although postcolonial IR scholars like Kaur challenge the image of multiculturalism as a phenomenon that celebrates inclusivity and equal opportunity (72), the formal adoption of multiculturalism as a federal policy in 1971 incontrovertibly allowed Canada to build a reputation as a nation whose society resembled a cultural mosaic marked by abstract notions like equality and "unity in diversity" (Day 152). While the federal implementation of multiculturalism initially served as a way to quell rising francophone nationalism in Quebec, it also functioned as an institutional framework to manage growing cultural diversity nationwide (Jedwab, par. 1). Canadian multiculturalism not only encouraged ethnic minorities to preserve their distinct identities but also legitimated such "politics of identity" in both private and public spheres (Gayer 25). Although the ongoing academic debate about the benefits and detriments of Canadian multiculturalism is beyond the scope of this thesis, it can be argued that for the vocal leaders of the Canadian Sikh community, multiculturalism offered an opportunity to have their grievances acknowledged by state authorities (Gayer 25).

Lenient immigration laws occupied a prominent place in Canada's multiculturalist policies, too. As the Immigration Act of 1976 gave the provincial governments more control over their immigration policies, refugees were recognized as a priority class of migrants for the first time in Canadian history (Dirks, par. 17). Family reunion and refugee immigration through private sponsorship by ethnic community organizations allowed the Sikh population in Canada to double in size between 1981 and 1991 and again between 1991 and 2011 (Dirks, par. 18; Buchignani, par. 8). The vast majority of Sikh immigrants settled in the urban areas of British Columbia and the Toronto-Windsor corridor, where they established a network of gurdwaras and community centers which would play an equally important role in the Sikhs' ascension to the higher levels of Canada's political hierarchy.

### **3.1.2. GURDWARA POLITICS**

Even though they served as platforms for factional in-fighting, fostered relentless competition for control between various pro-Khalistan Sikh organizations and complicated the Sikh community's ability to establish a collective movement, gurdwaras were crucial in

establishing democratic engagement, community building and grassroots empowerment into the ethos of the Canadian Sikh diaspora (Sandhu in Shukla, par. 27). Since most local gurdwaras are not regulated by any umbrella organization but act as autonomous institutions, elections to join the gurdwaras' boards and management committees are serious matters (Singh and Mann in Jakobsh 175-176). Those who control a gurdwara not only have access to millions of donation dollars but are able to exert influence on the voting behavior of up to fifty extended families as well (Todd, par. 14). Gurdwara elections hence generate widespread exposure for its contestants throughout the Canadian Sikh community and serve as a stepping stone to further engagement in mainstream politics.

Besides elections, the political fervor of Canadian Sikhs is reflected by community-oriented events like charity fundraisers and food banks that are coordinated by the gurdwaras (Singh in Shukla, par. 23). For those vying for gurdwara control, grassroots activism proved to be instrumental in gaining the necessary support from sections of the Sikh community, which is known to be incredibly tight-knit. Jaskaran Sandhu moreover argues that these grassroots networks are "very sophisticated and layered" and are deeply engrained in the Sikh community (qtd. in Shukla, par. 21). Because many Canadian Sikhs grow up in an environment which stimulates volunteerism and community-based activism, they acquire a deep-rooted comprehension of election mechanisms and government in general (Sandhu in Shukla, par. 26). It can thus be said that the gurdwara acts as a microcosm of the political games played in each and every tier of Canadian government.

### **3.1.3. ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT AND THE SIKH LOBBY**

The fruit borne by their involvement in gurdwara politics translates particularly well into the Canadian Sikhs' access to different levels of government. In Canada, parliamentary candidates are appointed through a pay-to-play nomination system in which voters must register and pay a membership fee to put forward their preferred representative. As effective mass recruitment is one of the chief assets of aspiring Canadian Sikh politicians, this nomination system has allowed "small, well-organized special-interest groups" like Canadian Sikhs to "gain influence completely disproportionate to their size" (McCullough, par. 13). Especially to politically-minded members of the dominant Jat caste, whose high socioeconomic status allowed them to assure the loyalty of friends, family and other acquaintances more easily, Canada's pay-to-play structure has been a "shortcut to outside power" (McCullough, par. 14). The fact that the Khalistani ideology was most prevalent among Jat Sikhs may thus be one of the key reasons for India's suspicion toward the

presence of a relatively high number of Sikhs within the upper echelons of Canadian government.

Outside government circles, diaspora organizations like ISYF and the World Sikh Organization were the main protagonists of the Canadian Sikh lobby after 1984 (Gayer 27). Especially after the conflict in Punjab subdued in the mid-1990s and the 9/11 attacks delegitimized violence as a means to achieve political goals, diaspora Sikh organizations lobbied intensively with transnational NGOs to attain more awareness about the human rights violations that were allegedly happening in Punjab (Gayer 31). However, as I demonstrated in Chapter Two, despite the professional and economic success of Sikhs in Canada, Sikh lobbyists were largely unable to reconstruct international public opinion as images of Sikhs as “terrorists or fundamentalists” persisted (Gayer 31). The Canadian Sikh lobby nevertheless emerged triumphant from other issues which would drive the wedge between Canada and India even tighter. I will elaborate on these issues in section 3.3.

### **3.2. CANADA-INDIA RELATIONS AFTER 1984: HOSTAGE TO THE SIKH DIASPORA?**

The overrepresentation of Sikhs and, by extension, potential Khalistani sympathizers in Canadian politics has become a major irritant to New Delhi’s ability to respond positively to Ottawa’s insouciant reconciliation attempts over the past five years. The Canadian Sikh diaspora seriously affecting the mood of Canada-India relations is not an exclusively recent phenomenon, though. Ever since Operation Blue Star, the Canadian Sikh diaspora assumed a prominent place in Canada-India relations through its dramatically increased visibility in Canadian and Indian media, activity in transnational lobbying platforms and presence in Canada’s legislative bodies. The perceived threat of residual expressions of Khalistani extremism within Canada’s Sikh community and higher political circles continued to frustrate efforts to move beyond politically contentious issues and establish a strategic partnership based on mutual interests. In the subsections below I will illustrate how seemingly isolated moments of post-1984 Canadian Sikh contention developed into a thirty-six-year period of Canadian Sikh sway over Canada-India relations.

#### **3.2.1. RECOGNITION REPLACES NAÏVETÉ, BUT INDIAN CONCERNS PERSIST**

As might be expected, Canada-India relations bore the mark of the Canadian Sikh diaspora most prominently in the period directly following the events of 1984. The 1985 Air India bombing incited New Delhi’s annoyance at Ottawa’s lethargic approach to tackle Sikh terrorism on Canadian soil after repeated warnings and expressions of concern and supplied the Indian government with a “powerful sense that it had been wronged” by Canada (Touhey, “Periphery to Priority” 915). The Indian government was however not the

only party whose feathers were ruffled by the Mulroney government. After the Air India disaster, Mulroney was quick to offer his condolences to his Indian counterpart Rajiv Gandhi, but failed to reach out to the relatives of the Indo-Canadian victims first (Razack in Failler 158). Mulroney's actions mimicked public sentiments that the Air India bombing was essentially not a Canadian tragedy, but merely took the lives of "foreign victims of a foreign conflict" (Brethour, par. 2). The CSIS' inability to properly investigate this fundamentally "Indian tragedy" therefore not only piqued New Delhi even further, but alienated many Indo-Canadians from the Canadian state as well (Brethour, par. 9).

Canada's "enduring denial" of Indian accusations was gradually replaced by official recognition of and concerted efforts to address Sikh extremism, as Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark approved the exchange of information between Canadian and Indian intelligence agencies on a visit to New Delhi in December 1985 (Brethour, par. 24; Dobell 136). At the same time, Canada lifted its moratorium on the deportation of Sikhs (Royal, "1986" 166). The May 1986 assassination attempt by four Canadian Sikhs on Indian cabinet minister Malkiat Singh Sidhu gave even more cause for Indian agitation. As a way to formally recognize the threat of Sikh extremism and eager to cultivate better relations with India, Clark signed an extradition treaty with the Indian government in February 1987, and even asked Canada's provincial authorities to boycott activities organized by Sikh organizations later that year (Royal, "1987" 153; Keeble 115).

New Delhi's concerns appeared to be alleviated, but hopes of improved relations evaporated quickly as Ottawa allowed the SAD to open unofficial consulates in Canada in the 1980s and the Air India investigation dragged on ploddingly (Dobell in Singh and Singh 158). Dobell's argument that although initially divisive, Sikh extremism "ultimately brought the two governments closer together" (142), proved to be prematurely optimistic, as the Sikh issue would continue to cause a real headache to Canadian and Indian decision-makers in the decades to come.

### **3.2.2. A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY, RIDDLED WITH OBSTACLES**

As the Cold War drew to a close and India began to implement reforms to liberalize its economy at the onset of the 1990s, Canada was keen to renew bilateral relations with India. Through a string of trade missions between 1994 and 1998, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien aimed to revive Canada-India relations as they had come to a near standstill after the altercations on the Air India investigation in the late 1980s (Heuillard 84). Canada's efforts to reengage with India were reciprocated, with the establishment of the India-Canada Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (ICJWGCT) in 1997 as one of the most



tangible results (Kumar and Narain 179). Through the ICJWGCT, Canadian and Indian professionals cooperated to investigate the Air India disaster and contrive bilateral security and counterterrorism strategies. Even though India's 1998 nuclear testing temporarily sabotaged the bilateral relationship, the ICJWGCT continued to meet (Kumar and Narain 179). The ICJWGCT's encounters seemed to indicate that for the first time ever, the issue of Sikh extremism functioned as a connecting factor in common security interests and was able to defy Ottawa's higher-level nuclear concerns.

Especially after Canada lifted its sanctions against a nuclearly-armed India in 2001 and the 9/11 attacks instilled an awareness among Western nations about the imminent threat of terrorism, opportunities to reinvigorate bilateral cooperation in areas of security and counterterrorism seemed to resurface. Although the Canadian government's listing of BKI and ISYF as terrorist entities in 2003 was much to New Delhi's delight, promising joint statements which announced that Canada and India were committed to "deepen their bilateral dialogue" never really materialized (Touhey, "Periphery to Priority" 919). As Purewal argues, the 9/11 attacks delegitimized violence as a method to attain political goals, and Sikh organizations in Canada began to focus on Indian human rights violations as a way to frustrate India's international aspirations (1139). Sikh human rights advocacy, combined with the Canadian government's "moral posturing" and official suspension of its relations with the Indian state of Gujarat after a period of inter-communal riots in 2002, prevented Canada-India relations from gaining meaningful ground in the first half of the 2000s (Mehta 9; Singh and Singh 162).

### **3.2.3. A CAREFUL BALANCING ACT AND UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS**

When the Air India trials finally reached their conclusion in 2005, the two suspects were acquitted due to a lack of evidence. The verdict caused a major uproar among the Indo-Canadian community, which called for an inquiry into the RCMP's mishandling of evidence and the performance of Canada's judicial system in general (A. Singh, "India Policy" 81). Despite prior announcements of inquiries into the Air India investigation by Chrétien and Martin, none were conducted during their tenures (Spearin 60). The Harper government insisted on launching such an inquiry shortly after its installation in 2006, giving the impression that Ottawa was determined to act upon its pledges to improve its relationship with India. To achieve progress in a nearly dormant bilateral relationship, Harper actively worked to obtain the support of the entire Indo-Canadian community; Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims alike.

What followed was a careful balancing act in which the Harper government tried to look beyond past issues of contention and included the interests of the Indo-Canadian community in its strategy to enhance economic and political relations between Canada and India (Singh and Singh 164). Not only did Harper apologize to Canada's Sikh community for the Komagata Maru incident in 2008, he also issued an official apology to the Air India victims' families in the House of Commons after the completion of the final inquiry report in 2010 (Singh and Singh 156-164). Harper's visit to India in 2009 had meanwhile laid the groundwork for a Canada-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, while Manmohan Singh's visit to Canada yielded a breakthrough agreement on civil nuclear energy in 2010 (Mehta 10).

Though prudent, significant steps seemed to be taken toward a lasting strategic partnership. Indian concerns about Sikh extremism however continued to exist and were voiced by Prime Minister Singh on his 2010 visit to Canada (Purewal 1140). On his second state visit to India in 2012, Harper skipped the Golden Temple, which he had already visited three years prior, but made sure to visit India's second-most visited Sikh shrine in Anandpur Sahib. When confronted again with Indian warnings of Sikh extremism in Canada, Harper said that the federal government "cannot interfere with the [Sikhs'] right of political freedom of expression" (qtd. in Champion-Smith, par. 4). That Harper and Prime Minister Narendra Modi managed to close a deal on a uranium consignment for India's nuclear power plants when Modi visited Canada in 2015 however served as a sign for a bilateral commitment to repair Canada-India ties beyond divisive ethnic identity politics. By carefully balancing Canadian and Indian interests and including the Indo-Canadian community, Harper's positive influence on Canada-India relations was unparalleled.

### **3.3. A REVIVAL OF SIKH EXTREMISM IN JUSTIN TRUDEAU'S CANADA?**

Why then, if the Harper government made such great strides toward improved ties, have New Delhi's concerns about Sikh extremism in Canada flared up again since Justin Trudeau assumed office in 2015? The increased visibility of Sikhs in Canada's highest representative bodies certainly compounded India's nagging anxiety, but New Delhi seemed to have other justifications for routinely reprimanding Ottawa. New Delhi's claims that Trudeau failed to distance himself from Khalistani elements in Canadian society may ring true from an Indian perspective, but from a Canadian viewpoint, the national leader merely tried to secure the Sikh vote. Trudeau nonetheless had to walk a fine line between protecting the interests of the Canadian Sikh diaspora — and, by extension, appealing to a

large and potentially decisive part of the Liberal voter base — and maintaining a constructive dialogue with India. But how fine is this line, really? What are the reasons for India's most recent bursts of disquietude, and what has the incumbent Canadian government done to assuage Indian chagrin and prevent the bilateral relationship from spiraling down any further?

### **3.3.1. ATTENDING THE KHALSA DAY PARADE**

Khalsa Day, also known as *Vaisakhi*, is celebrated by Sikhs across the globe to mark the Sikh new year. Events organized by Canada's Sikh community on Khalsa Day not only involve cultural elements like the tasting of ethnic foods and playing of Sikh music, but are excellent opportunities for Canadian politicians to step into the Sikh limelight and gain access to potential voter blocs, too. What also happens on Khalsa Day, however, is the portrayal of flags, banners and posters that glorify historically notorious pro-Khalistani militants like Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, Talwinder Singh Parmar (who is considered the mastermind of the Air India bombing) or the Sikh bodyguards who killed Prime Minister Gandhi (Bhattacharyya, pars. 1-10).

Trudeau's decision to attend the Khalsa Day parade in 2017, after Harper had declined to do so during his tenure and it was only a year before Trudeau planned to visit India, set alarm bells ringing in New Delhi (Haidar, par. 3). Trudeau's subsequent reluctance to explicitly distance himself from Khalistani elements in Canada's Sikh community was yet another red flag to the Indian government. Although Trudeau's 2018 India trip caused him to skip the Khalsa Day parade that same year (Bhattacharyya, par. 1), his presence at the 2019 Vaisakhi celebrations in Vancouver just so happened to coincide with the deletion of the Sikh extremism reference from the Public Report on Terrorism (Sagan, par. 8). While New Delhi's concerns about a potential revival of Sikh extremism in Canada's Sikh community and its facilitation by Canada's political leadership may seem out of proportion to some, Trudeau's hesitation to dissociate himself from Khalistani segments in the Sikh community does not seem to suggest that he is doing everything within his power to take away India's doubts and break the spell of the bilateral relationship's downhill motion.

### **3.3.2. THE ATWAL AFFAIR**

Trudeau's attendance at the Khalsa Day parade did not prevent him from visiting India in February 2018. However, Trudeau was not as warmly welcomed as world leaders usually are. Prime Minister Modi, who had expressed hope that the Canada-India partnership

would finally outgrow its status as a “promise on a distant shore” in 2015 (par. 2), did not personally welcome Trudeau upon his arrival but sent a junior minister for agriculture to greet him at the airport (Vij, par. 3). Overshadowed by headline-grabbing wardrobe blunders, Trudeau’s week-long India visit went “from bad to worse” and was generally perceived to be an “absolute fiasco” and a “diplomatic disaster” (Wu, par. 1; Dutt, par. 2; Malcolm, par. 5). Trudeau himself even called his India visit “the trip to end all trips” at Canada’s annual Parliamentary Press Gallery dinner later that year (qtd. in Bansal, pars. 1-2). The incident which laid at the heart of the controversy, however, stemmed from the turbulent period in Canadian history in which Sikh extremism reached its zenith, the mid-1980s.

As New Delhi had already criticized Trudeau for being too close to Khalistani sympathizers, the invitation of Jaspal Atwal, an Indo-Canadian businessman and former Sikh separatist who had been convicted for the attempted murder of Malkiat Singh Sidhu in 1986, to two receptions on the India visit only added fuel to the fire. Atwal’s presence might have likely been a plain administrative mistake, but others have argued that his presence was a conspiracy set up by “rogue factions” in the Indian government in order to embarrass Prime Minister Trudeau (Clark, par. 3). Though India strongly denied these accusations and the actual reason for Atwal’s presence remains unclear (Tunney, par. 1), the Atwal affair did certainly not contribute to the dilution of Trudeau’s ties to Sikh extremists but merely prompted yet another hitch in the already strained Canada-India relationship in the second half of the 2010s.

### **3.3.3. THE ANTI-SIKH VIOLENCE OF 1984: RIOTS OR GENOCIDE?**

Another event from the past which played a major role in dictating the present condition of Canada-India relations are the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Representatives of the Canadian Sikh diaspora have been working intensively to have the Canadian government classify the 1984 anti-Sikh riots as a genocide for ten years already (Arora, par. 5). Whereas Sikh lobbying efforts have not yet been successful at a federal level, the Ontario provincial government already passed a motion which classified the 1984 anti-Sikh riots as a genocide in April 2017. This motion subsequently invoked an adverse reaction from the Indian government, which called the legislature “misguided” and a “misunderstanding of India’s history and legal system” (qtd. in Blackwell, par. 14). Besides that, the Ontario government referred a bill to proclaim the first week of November as Sikh Genocide Awareness Week to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, which has had the bill under review since March 2020 (P. Singh, par. 1). The fact that this bill was presented by the brother of NDP leader

Jagmeet Singh — himself a “prominent advocate for Sikh rights in Canada” — exacerbated Indian concerns about the genocide issue spilling over onto Canada’s federal domain, too (Wyeth, “Sikh-ing Trouble” par. 7).

Although it appeared to be a mere matter of definition at first glance, New Delhi has understandably taken offense to the Canadian Sikhs’s efforts to have the Canadian government recognize the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 as a genocide. Such heated terminological debates may seem pedantic from an outsider’s perspective, yet many Canadian Sikhs still suffer from the trauma caused by the events of 1984 (Singh in Blackwell, par. 9). Having the Canadian federal government henceforth classify the anti-Sikh riots as a genocide would be a major step towards holding those responsible for the atrocities accountable and bringing them to justice, as the latter’s definition implies a sense of deliberateness and organized killing of particular ethnic groups, which members of the then-ruling Congress Party have been accused of (Blackwell, par. 3). At the same time though, the potential passing of the Sikh Genocide Awareness Week bill is likely to further antagonize a Modi government which already suspects Trudeau of being too soft on Sikh separatists.

#### **3.3.4. REMOVING SIKH EXTREMISM FROM THE TERRORISM REPORT**

One of the latest moments of contention occurred in April 2019, when the Canadian government updated the 2018 Public Report on the Terrorism Threat to Canada. For the first time in history, the report had included the mention of Sikh extremism as one of the five most significant extremist threats in Canada (Rabson, par. 2). After fierce lobbying efforts from Canada’s Sikh community however, explicit references to Sikh extremists were recast into mentions of “extremists who support violent means to establish an independent state within India” (*2018 Public Report* 5). Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale warranted the amendment owing to the fact that “entire religions should never be equated with terrorism” (qtd. in Rabson, pars. 3-5). That the report still includes explicit references to Sunni and Shia Islamic extremism merely serves to indicate the outsize influence of the Sikh community on Canada’s federal government’s decision-making relative to other ethno-religious minorities.

New Delhi saw the removal Sikh extremism reference as a stab in the back, since Trudeau had signed an agreement to cooperate with the Indian government in the battle against terrorism, including the extremist threat from already banned Sikh organizations like BKI and ISYF, on his 2018 India trip (Rabson, par. 14). An enraged Chief Minister of Punjab Captain Amarinder Singh hence not only described the report’s revision as an “ill-

considered move”, but argued that Trudeau was “playing with fire” by succumbing to domestic pressures and therefore “blatantly ignored the adverse impact this could have not only on Canada’s relations with India but also on geopolitical stability” (qtd. in “Punjab Slams Canada”, pars. 3-10). Yet, while India perceived Trudeau to be “pandering to fringe Sikh interests” and caving in to demands of the Sikh community way too easily (McCullough, par. 16), others turned the accusation around and pointed to the fact that there even *was* such a reference to Sikh extremism in a Canadian terrorism report said enough about the leverage that the Indian government has had in its relationship with Ottawa.

#### **3.4. INTERIM CONCLUSION**

The tenets of Canadian multiculturalism, an attested political shrewdness acquired through gurdwara elections, the relative ideological uniformity of the Sikh political elite and Canada’s pay-to-play nomination system have allowed the Canadian Sikh community to amplify its voice on Canada’s political stage over the past few decades. Although Canada’s post-1984 India policy was shaped by numerous other concerns like trade, investment and nuclear proliferation, the issue of Sikh extremism continuously lurked beneath the surface. The perceived Sikh extremist threat cast a gloom over the Canada-India relationship, but also exposed potential areas of bilateral cooperation such as security and counterterrorism. Whether Canada and India will be able to turn these mutually beneficial opportunities into a strategic partnership seems to depend on their preparedness to move beyond past episodes of contention. New Delhi wanted to have a reliable partner which could keep those who challenged the sovereignty of India in check, but as Trudeau’s minority government needed to secure the votes of this very same constituency in order to survive the next election, the boundaries of an already fragile Canada-India relationship were pushed to new extremities.

## CONCLUSION

The Canada-India relationship seemed bound for success at its inception in the mid-twentieth century. Canada, which had recently become one of the world's major economic powers and eagerly wanted to help shape the postwar international order using liberal notions of multilateralism, moderation and non-provocation, and India, newly independent and nonaligned, shared some close similarities at the onset of the Cold War. Both associated with the Commonwealth as former colonies of the British Empire, federal democracies and homes to ethnically diverse populations, Canada and India seemed destined to form a solid bridge between the East and West.

Yet, the bilateral relationship's enormous potential largely remained untapped. During the first half of the Cold War, the rigidity of the bipolar structure, the performance of the ICSC in Vietnam and India's nuclear proliferation proved to be major sources of vexation and confounded the high expectations that Ottawa and New Delhi had of each other. Bilateral relations were virtually nonexistent toward the beginning of the 1980s and were only about to resume for the worse.

Operation Blue Star was the figurative glass of water in the face of a dormant Canada-India relationship in 1984 and caused bilateral relations to be predominated by issues and events involving the Canadian Sikh diaspora ever since. Fueled by deep-seated historical grievances against the Indian government, the reaction of an extremist fringe prompted ceaseless public scrutiny and the securitization of the entire Canadian Sikh community.

Still, in spite of the extensive media coverage and muffling legislation that induced the perpetuation of the Sikh extremist narrative, Canadian Sikhs were able to leave their mark on Canada-India relations after 1984. Lenient multiculturalist immigration policies, the intrinsic properties of Canada's political system and the idiosyncrasies of the Sikh community itself enabled Canadian Sikhs to raise their voice not only domestically, but transnationally as well.

The political clout of Canadian Sikhs was, ironically enough, the principal reason for the nondevelopment of a fruitful Canada-India relationship in the 2000s and 2010s. Although opportunities for bilateral cooperation in areas of security and counterterrorism arose in the post-9/11 era, respective Canadian and Indian governments were unable to wrap a bandage around the festering wound that Operation Blue Star has been to the

Canadian Sikh community. Recently sprouted controversies suggest that the prospect of a Khalistani revival among Canadian Sikhs will continue to frustrate the development of a stable bilateral relationship in the years to come.

The foreign policies of Canada and India each developed in a different way, but played pivotal roles in how both nations interacted with each other over the past thirty-six years. India's foreign policy progressively centered on realist conceptions like national security and self-preservation. Throughout its history, India has had to deal with regional adversaries challenging its territorial integrity. Moreover, as a nation whose domestic populace presents a patchwork quilt of distinct ethno-religious groups and has embedded the catastrophic 1947 Partition in its collective consciousness, India simply cannot afford to let any inside or outside force question its territorial integrity. New Delhi hence deems the prevention of the Khalistani threat paramount to the survival of the Indian union.

Canada, on the other hand, had other factors influencing its post-Cold War foreign policy. Except for Stephen Harper's period in office, which was markedly more national interest-driven than any other prior premiership had been so far, Canadian policy-makers struggled to honor the Pearsonian tradition on which Canada's foreign policy was built and secure the national interest at the same time. The inability of Canadian leaders to perform the balancing act needed to win over an electorally significant domestic constituency and simultaneously allay Indian anxieties about the ubiquity of Sikhs in Canadian politics has put a prospective partnership with rising global power India in jeopardy. By sticking to its laudable but dogged principles, Canada has taken a back seat in a global arena in which the realpolitik of Trump, Xi and Modi often reigns supreme.

The findings presented in this conclusion hence verify the hypotheses stated in the introduction. It is important to note, however, that the idealist component of Canadian foreign policy was only *temporarily* replaced by more realist tendencies, and *only* during Stephen Harper's premiership: the arrival of Justin Trudeau was accompanied by similar idealist rhetoric as had been the case during the Liberal tenures of Chrétien and Martin.

This study moreover solidified the suppositions of both liberal and constructivist IR scholarship. I demonstrated that, in line with liberalism's recognition of the role of non-state actors in IR, the Canadian Sikh diaspora had a cardinal role in the (non)development of Canada-India relations after 1984. Besides, I evinced the veracity of the constructivist emphasis on identity as a fundamental influence on IR by showing how the social construction of a Sikh identity in the interwar period ultimately led to the divisive Khalistan question dictating the course of the Canada-India relationship for decades.



By adopting an integrative approach to the research topic, I not only contributed to a more comprehensive interpretation of the Canadian Sikh impact on Canada-India relations, but corroborated the need for both academia and the general public to look beyond single-cause explanations for the Canadian Sikhs' dominance over Canada-India relations after 1984 as well. To acknowledge the multitudinous motives for diasporic activity in IR would be the first step to a more sophisticated understanding of the rapidly polarizing global environment we currently find ourselves in.

Had travel restrictions not been in place at the time of conducting this research, I would have visited cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary myself to talk with Canadian Sikhs about their personal experiences as one side of the transnational triad. Although I enjoyed the privilege of retrieving my information entirely from online libraries, some authentic firsthand experiences with the main protagonists of this study would certainly have had additional value. It would have been incredibly interesting to see whether their experiences resembled those of whom I read about in various academic journals and newspaper articles over the past four months.

That being said, this study opened up many opportunities for other researchers to delve into diaspora-state dynamics and the reasons for and consequences of diaspora command over bilateral relations in particular. First of all, it would be highly fascinating to have a look at Canada-India relations from a decidedly Indian perspective since it will help to explain the decisions made by the Indian government even better. Other interesting possibilities to research the domestic and transnational power of ethno-religious minorities based in Western liberal democracies are furthermore provided by sizable, politically active diasporas like the Armenian diaspora in the US and the Kurdish diaspora in Germany, communities both fated to watch the independence struggles in their homelands play out from afar.

Even though the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic caused the already scheduled 2020 Sikh referendum for the secession of Punjab from India to be postponed to 2022, the Canadian and Indian governments may need every single second of this much-needed breathing space to set their priorities straight and determine in which direction they will take the Canada-India relationship. Will a strategic partnership in security and counterterrorism ever materialize, or will they continue to allow events from past to obstruct the fulfillment of the promise their relationship once had? Now is the time to decide.

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## PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

### **Fraud and Plagiarism**

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism



entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.

Name: Sem Verrijt

Student number: 6761348

Date and signature: August 10, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S VERRIJT". The letter "S" is large and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right, underlining the name.

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.