



**Artefacts, possessions and home décor: how Punjabi Sikhs residing in the West  
Midlands express their religio-cultural identity in relation to Britishness within the  
home space.**

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I declare that the research contained herein was granted approval by the SPAIS Ethics  
Committee.

List of Images	3
List of Tables	12
Introduction	13
Literature Review	14
Methodology	24
Data Analysis and Discussion	30
<i>Displayed photos</i>	31
<i>Animal motifs</i>	35
<i>The Baba Ji Room</i>	39
<i>Mother figures in the home space</i>	46
Conclusion	50
Bibliography	53
Appendix 1: Interview transcript	58
Appendix 2: List of interview questions	61

**List of Images:**



Image 1: *Individual photos of Mr and Mrs A. p.31*



Image 2: *Couple photo of Mr and Mrs A. p.31*



Image 3: *Mr and Mrs B family photo. p.32*



Image 4: *Mr and Mrs D family photo from son's wedding. p.32*



Image 5: *Mr and Mrs E couple photo. p.32*



Image 6: *Mrs A peacock statue. p.36*



Image 7: *Mr and Mrs A peacock wallpaper, up-close shot. p.36*



Image 8: *Mr and Mrs B living room, with peacock wallpaper. p.36*



Image 9: *Mr and Mrs B peacock wallpaper, up-close shot. p.36*



Image 10: *Mr and Mrs C peacock statue. p.37*



Image 11: *Mr and Mrs C elephant statues. p.37*



Image 12: *Mr and Mrs D elephant statue. p.37*



Image 13: *Mr and Mrs D horse statue. p.37*



Image 14: *Wide shot of entering Mr and Mrs A Baba Ji Room. p.40*



Image 15: *Wide shot of Mr and Mrs A Baba Ji Room. p.40*



Image 16: *Wide shot outside of Mr and Mrs C Baba Ji Room. p.40*



Image 17: *Wide shot inside of Mr and Mrs C Baba Ji Room. p.41*



Image 18: *Wide shot inside of Mr and Mrs E Baba Ji cupboard. p.41*

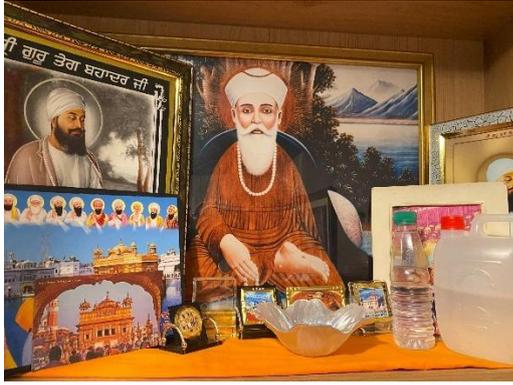


Image 19: *Close-up of Mr and Mrs A Gurus photos in Baba Ji Room. p.42*



Image 20: *Mr and Mrs E Mandir in Baba Ji Room. p.42*



Image 21: *Close-up of Mr and Mrs C Gurus photos and display in the Baba Ji Room. p.43*



Image 22: *Close-up shot of the Gutka Sahib Stand in Mr and Mrs C Baba Ji Room. p.43*



Image 23: *Close-up of Guru's and Hindu deities in Mr and Mrs E Baba Ji Room. p.43*



Image 24: *Mr and Mrs A fridge with various magnets. p.49*



Image 25: Close-up of Mr and Mrs A fridge with magnets of Golden temple. p.49



Image 26: Close-up of Mr and Mrs A fridge with magnets of Golden temple and Gurus. p.49



Image 27: Close-up of Mr and Mrs E fridge with magnets of Gurus images. p.49

### **List of Tables**

Mr A: 51	Mrs A: 45
Mr B: 55	Mrs B: 42
Mr C: 47	Mrs C: 45
Mr D: 66	Mrs D: 63
Mr E: 76	Mrs E: 65

*Table 1: Identifying name for participants and age. p.*

## **Introduction**

Within sociology, studies surrounding identity formation has been a constant and growing topic. Particularly in relation to diasporic and immigrant communities, such as here in the UK, identity becomes a fixation to understand how these communities navigate daily life through an identity formation that stretches across cultures, essentially hybridity. As hybridity and understanding hybridised identities becomes a vessel in identifying how communities manage their complex and at times difficult to understand identities, especially regarding mixture of their homeland and national identity.

Here is where proposing to examine a specific community will be useful in understanding how identity is managed and formulated within the day-to-day. As exploration into the first-generation Punjabi Sikh community of the West Midlands will provide insight into how identity and thus a hybrid identity crossing Britishness is unique to them. As specifically, it is Punjabi Sikhs religio-cultural identity, a mixture of their religion and cultural backgrounds, that intersects with Britishness that creates an interesting identity landscape to explore. Specifically, in relation to understanding how these two aspects of Punjabi Sikh's identity is managed and expressed. As this is where exploration into the home space fits in, as by exploring identity, the home space and communities utilisation of various artefacts, possessions and home décor becomes a focal point. Particularly, how various religio-cultural items within the home not only carry this element of individuals identity, but also how these items may change and adapt to Britishness through understandings of hybridity, belonging and non-belonging and re-memory.

Through qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews and then utilising photography, I will be going into the private homes of 5 Punjabi Sikh couples in the West Midlands, where I will gain insight into how the home space is structured with said artefacts, possessions and

home décor that are related to the Punjabi Sikh identities of participants. But also understanding how Britishness remains a constant theme attached to the items in how these items within the home space navigates both identities.

As this dissertation will follow through on exploring key literature regarding hybridity theory and key studies and theorists attached, by then identifying other concepts of re-memory, immigration students, home-making practices and understanding of gender as well, due to how divided the home space is. Following from that, methodology will be discussed, stating how I will be going around interviewing and taking photos within my research which will then lead to an examination of the data and findings before concluding,

Briefly, with my own position as Punjabi Sikh from the West Midlands, this study delves deeper into a community that is often forgotten within broader sociological studies. As this dissertation will aim to shed light onto a culturally rich community that is fascinating to explore, and understand their complex religio-cultural and British hybrid identity within the private spheres of the home.

### **Literature Review**

In recent sociological research, there has been a fascination with exploring diaspora communities in the UK and their formation of identity, (as seen in: Chamberlain, 2017; Lapshyna, 2019; Saini, 2022), with this reflecting the growing diverse ethnic makeup of the population. As diaspora communities sit in a unique position where there is a question of how Britishness intersects with their multifaceted cultural, ethnic, racial and religious identities. Particularly, research into identity has further transformed into a focused study that looks at how identity is physically manifested and showcased into our everyday lives. For instance, this is shown via the examination of the home space as a vessel of self-expression and identity, being a 'setting for the enactment of self' (Hurdley, 2006) through the display of

material consumption (Hurdley, 2006). Specifically, the visibility of material consumption within the home is present via the various artefacts, possessions and home décor. This interest has been explored in Pechurina (2020) study in ‘researching identities through material possessions: the case of diasporic objects,’ where they look at the relationship between ‘objects, homes and identities in the context of migration.’ Moreover, Pechurina (2020) study showcased how for Russian migrants in the UK, objects and possessions in the home related to Russian food, such as a samovar set, were greatly cherished as they are reminders of the immigration journey, since these sets were carried in the hand luggage. Thereby showcasing how objects like the samovar set within the home transform to hold a double meaning, surpassing the origins of it only being related to Russian food, but now equally symbolising the process of immigrating to the UK. Ultimately, demonstrating that the careful curation of objects and possessions within the home are ways that one chooses to express themselves (Miller, 2008), with diasporic communities capturing themselves within various identities from cultural heritage to nationality and immigrant status. Where singular objects like the samovar set become a unique manifestation of how diasporic communities manage and reflect upon their identity, as artefacts, possessions and home décor become important to exercise their belonging to different identifications, being an intriguing aspect of study to continue.

Critically, the concept of belonging is key to understanding how identity is formed and then expressed within the home space for diasporic communities. For instance, ‘belonging’ refers to being a part of a community or collective, whereas the opposing ‘unbelonging’ refers to being positioned as an outsider (Christensen, 2009). This was explored in Sani (2022) study on ‘ethnic minority identity formation across the British South Asian middle classes.’ Where participants stated a clash of their British and South Asian identity and struggled to belong and be accepted to either, through viewing their ‘minority and majority identity as conflictual

and incompatible' (Sani, 2022). Moreover, this study continues to express participants feeling a 'sense of "outsiderness" or "otherness"' (Sani, 2022) in relation to belonging that was particularly racialised. As belonging to a British nationality entails a proximity to whiteness (Garner, 2012), whereas diasporic communities oppose this through 'non-whiteness' (Garner, 2012) regarding race, ethnicity, culture and religion. This would be of particular interest to adapt this in the home space and how diasporic communities express belonging and unbelonging to Britishness and their cultural heritage through artefacts, possessions and home décor, and how one manages their identity across the two supposedly opposing identities. With additional examination on how notions of Britishness is understood and then physically manifested in the home. As diasporic communities typically attribute Britishness of 'being devoid of the rich cultural attributes' (Bhambra, 2021) seen within their own culture, as the 'richness' of culture is important as it links to their expression of identity (Bhambra, 2021). Thus, exploring this in the home space through cultural items would be interesting to show how diaspora groups navigate the supposedly culturally void British with their rich cultural heritage, in ways that may uphold or challenge this idea with material items that reflect their own positioning of belonging or unbelonging identification.

Moreover, feelings of belonging and unbelonging are further expanded within the theory of hybridity. For instance, hybridity refers to cultural mixing, blending and merging (Pieterse, 2001) where diasporic communities combine their "'home" and "host" cultures' (Balaram, 2018), such as Britishness intersecting with their cultural heritage, that results in a hybrid identity that does not belong to a binary. Post-colonial theorist Bhabha (1994) described diasporic hybrid identity to be a 'third space... that initiate new signs of identity,' where diasporic communities are positioned 'in-between' (Bhabha, 1994) of their cultural heritage and national identity. Where instead of trying to fit in or belong fully to either aspects of their identity, the hybrid identity is where they position themselves in. Various studies in the UK

have been conducted to explore the hybrid identities of diasporic communities with particular insight into second-generation immigrants. Such as Moftizadeh, Zagefka and Barn (2022) study on ‘negotiating social belonging’ for second-generation Kurds in London where participants expressed being in a ‘limbo’ state between Kurdish and British identification and instead ‘embraced multiple and hybrid forms of belonging.’ Additionally, Visser (2017) study on ‘belonging among young people from immigrant background in Tottenham’ focus on second-generation immigrants and how their hybrid identity claim ‘multiple identification’ between immigrant and national backgrounds.

Though, in regard to exploring hybrid identities of diasporic communities within the home space through artefacts, possessions and home décor, a shift to first-generation immigrants will provide better insight compared to literature focus on second-generation. Notably, this has already been seen with previously mentioned study by Pechurina (2020), where Russian objects in the home showcased links to Russian identity but also significantly to immigration and how this formed a hybrid identity that stretched across being Russian, British but also significantly an immigrant. As first-generation immigrants sit in a differing position to second-generation, as this group is more likely to experience ‘belonging to different locales’ (Waite and Cook, 2010) by living and experiencing life in their country of origin before migrating elsewhere. Resulting in a stronger claim to their cultural heritage compared to second-generation immigrants who subsequently ‘claim stronger host country identities with associated feelings of belonging to the nation’ (Waite and Cook, 2010) in comparison. Thus, utilising first-generation immigrants within the UK will provide insight into how processes like immigration effects the formation of a hybrid identity. As first-generation immigrants stronger claim to their cultural heritage will be interesting to investigate in how this is held up and the importance of this to their identity, through examining which elements of cultural heritage gets brought over with them. As elements such as cultural food (Pechurina, 2020),

religion (Chiswick, 2015), language (Alexander, Edward and Temple, 2007), values and attitudes (William, Thornton and Young-DeMarco, 2013), have all been studied in relation to first-generation immigrants as various factors that have been brought over in the immigration process. With it noted that the importance of this stems from first-generations settling into new cultural landscapes with the familiarity of their culture, and because these cultural markers are important to first-generations identities (William and Liu, 2022). Furthermore, this would be interesting to adapt to the home space by identifying how elements of cultural heritage is showcased within the home by first-generations. As it would be interesting to see how factors like food, religion, language, values and attitudes and many more markers of cultural identity that come alongside immigrants is physically manifested within the home space through artefacts, possessions and home décor. By recognizing the importance of material items that link to cultural heritage to first-generations and the reasoning to why these items are presented in the home space. Importantly, sociological research has been conducted that explores how first-generation immigrants express elements of their cultural heritage in the home space through material items, with this being a useful starting point for further investigation as the following section demonstrates.

For instance, Ibrahim and Gao (2024) study on ‘how Libyan immigrants have chosen and decorated their house in the UK since the 1980s’ showcased how first-generation Libyan immigrants utilised elements of their cultural heritage in the home with physical items. As they expressed that the homes had ‘art[e]facts inspired by desert nature,’ cushions and floor seating inspired by Islamic culture and tea and coffee tables to serve Libyan tea (Ibrahim and Gao, 2024). This study showcased how various items and décor linking to their cultural heritage were utilised to express cultural identification and origins, by decorating the home with furnishings that reminded them of their North African, Libyan, Arabic and Islamic affiliations. Demonstrating how artefacts, possessions and home décor became vessels to

showcase identity. Particularly though, this study further expressed how other than showcasing culture identity, Libyan immigrants also utilised artefacts, possessions and home décor to ‘recreate the living environment of their homeland... [by] borrowing furniture and art[e]fact pieces to communicate their social identities in the host country’ (Ibrahim and Gao, 2024). This relates to the concept of re-memory which is necessary to understand the significance of cultural items and décor being present within first-generation immigrants homes. As additional studies have been conducted on re-memory, such as Tolia-Kelly (2004) research in ‘locating processes of identification: studying the precipitates of re-memory through artefacts in British Asian home.’ Where this study examines how souvenirs like paintings of elephants and zebras were reminders of East Africa, where some of the participants had migrant to from South Asia before coming to the UK, being ‘processes of remembering this ‘other’ landscape through them’ (Tolia-Kelly, 2004). Thereby, showcasing how artefacts, possessions and home décor were utilised for nostalgia purposes of another time and place, being important to participants as these items communicated parts of their identity that were tied to a home-land, that now they recollect via the items. Moreover, utilising re-memory as a concept for the further study in examining identity seen within artefacts, possessions and home décor in the home space would be useful to uncover another layer in the process of identity formation. Particularly, the more emotive and personal aspects of this study, through understanding the importance of cultural items within the home and how for first-generation immigrants it expresses traces of past lived experiences, through ‘reflective nostalgia [and] glorifying the past home’ (Fathi and Laoire, 2024). However vitally, what both Ibrahim and Gao (2024) and Tolia-Kelly (2004) studies do not consider is the implementation of hybridity within the re-memory process, as both studies lack this critical angle, especially because they were conducted within the UK and explore identity being constructed for immigrants. As it would be interesting to see how Britishness intersects

with re-memory through re-contextualizing the value of cultural artefacts, possessions and home décor, and possibly symbolising an added purpose to re-memory.

In addition to Tolia-Kelly (2004) study, a notable facet was the fact that it focused on the homes of women and their experiences with re-memory through artefacts. This is interesting to point out, as women play a prominent part in the construction of the home space through artefacts, possessions and home décor. As women traditionally take on the role as homemakers, with this being a part of their division of labour (Silva, 2005). Furthermore, study by Zeng (2023) provided ‘an analysis of the diasporic objects of women migrants,’ where they showcased how women felt a ‘responsibility of reproducing the national culture to the next generation’ through various objects like the preservation of cultural dress and attire. With women stating the importance of this aligns with their role as a mother for their children (Zeng, 2023). Building from this, it would be interesting to adapt the importance of women in the home space in the further study of how identity from cultural heritage is showcased through artefacts, possessions and home décor. Particularly in relation to a home being a ‘socio-spatial system’ (Mallett, 2004), where social structures like the women’s ascribed position as homemaker is not only present in the physical space of the home but also how it interacts with other members of the family that hold different social positions, like male and children figures which was not greatly explored in Zeng (2023) study. Additionally, another aspect that was not explored was again hybridity theory, being a constant missing piece in many studies regarding material items and identity. However, instead of just exploring the hybrid identity of women, what would be interesting is bringing the first and second-generation debate surrounding identity within this discussion regarding children. As previously mentioned, first-generation immigrants tend to have closer identification to their cultural heritage compared to second-generation, who are more aligned with their national identity (Waite and Cook, 2010). Thus, it would be interesting to explore how first-generation

mothers who are more likely to decorate the home with the motivation of doing it for their children, as mentioned by Zeng (2023), interact and promote their cultural heritage through artefacts, possessions and home décor in relation to their second-generation children who may be more aligned with upholding a British identity (Waite and Cook, 2010). Providing a deeper insight into the importance of identity and cultural preservation within the household and home space.

Furthermore, to refine the further study of how cultural identity is expressed in the home space through artefacts, possessions and home décor for first-generation immigrants in relation to Britishness and a hybrid identity, focusing on one particular diasporic community will provide a much needed focused lens. Particularly, the Indian diaspora would be beneficial to explore, with this group representing 1.9 million people and being the largest non-white ethnic identity in the UK (Garlick, 2022). As previously mentioned studies like Tolia-Kelly (2004) and Sani (2022) focus on the British Indian diaspora. However, to specify this even more, just looking at the Indian diaspora can be too broad as Indian society itself is ‘multi-cultural by being multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and with multi-lifestyles at the regional levels’ (Qureshi, 2022). Thus, a narrow focus must be considered. For instance, proposing to explore the British Punjabi Sikh community would be beneficial as ‘among Indians, approximately 45 per cent are from the Punjab (largely Sikhs)’ (Sharma, 2012). Specifically, the Punjabi Sikh community is interesting to explore due to the fluid boundary between their cultural and religious identity, where being Punjabi and Sikh are often seen synonymous through historical ties that bound religion and culture together (Oberoi, 1994). As Sikhi was founded in the Punjab region that stretches over parts of modern day India and Pakistan, with the majority of Sikhs coming from the Punjab state of India (Dhillon, 1988). Thus, providing an interesting foundation where exploration of identity for Punjab Sikhs meshes their religion and culture together, formulating a religio-cultural

identity unique to this community that can be further explored through the usage of artefacts, possessions and home décor.

As regarding religion within the home space, religious symbols and items is a way to ‘articulate and promote religion, ritual, values and knowledge’ (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2004), with this being captured in Mehta and Blek (1991) study on ‘art[e]facts, identity and transition: favo[u]rite possessions of Indians and Indian immigrants to the United States’ where there was a particular focus on religious items. As religious items like the ‘family shrine, a family idol, or their guru's photo’ (Mehta and Blek, 1991) were noted to provide connection to not only religion, which was deemed most important to their identity, but also ‘connection to “Mother India”’ for mostly immigrants compared to non-immigrants. Notably linking to Tolia-Kelly (2004) study on re-memory for another time and place through items and how first-generation immigrants like to bring elements of their cultural heritage for familiarity and closeness to their identity (William and Liu, 2022). However, Mehta and Blek (1991) study remains too broad with its research on Indian immigrants religion not capturing the heterogenous quality of Indian society, with its focus more so on participants from western states of India and majority Hindu. Thus, leaving a gap for research on Punjabi Sikhs, where further study on their religio-cultural experience will provide insight into how these two elements of their identity intersect together, with this being another element of Mehta and Blek (1991) study with limited insight. As it would be interesting to investigate how Punjabi Sikhs specifically navigate both religion and cultural elements of their identity, through researching if identifying with Punjabi and Sikh is synonymous to one’s identity, or if they differ, and how this correlates to Britishness. By referring back to understandings of belonging and nonbelonging with Britishness relating to whiteness (Garner, 2012) and Punjabi Sikh non-white religio-cultural identity conflicting this, it would be interesting to see

how this will formulate into a hybrid identity that sees religio-cultural and national identity together.

Although studies on British Punjabi Sikhs religio-cultural identity within the home space through artefacts, possessions and home décor is limited, study by Taylor (2014) on ‘the diasporic pursuit of home and identity: dynamic Punjabi transnationalism’ remains the most prominent regarding this field. Within this study, Taylor (2014) expressed the homes having Punjabi Sikh items such as ‘carpets, rugs, pictures, crockery, ornaments and religious symbols,’ as a way to ‘articulate a longing for an imagined home,’ which subsequently helped to ‘enhance Punjabiness’ within their identity. This crucially refers back to again processes of re-memory (Tolia-Kelly, 2004), with this concept being vital to showcase how Punjabi Sikhs utilise items to express their identity and belonging to regional spaces like Punjab in UK homes and the importance of retaining Punjabi identity. As developing this within further study can be utilised by using re-memory as a framework to understand how Punjabi Sikh homes are constructed with physical items to recreate past lives which subsequently help to strengthen ties to Punjabi identity. Thereby, gaining an understanding of the importance of re-memory for first-generation Punjabi Sikhs for the construction of their cultural identity and the reproduction of past lived experiences through cultural items in the home space, by examining how this helps to strengthen and remain connected to their Punjabi roots. Crucially though, Taylor (2014) study is limited in mainly focusing on Punjabi cultural items, missing the importance of Punjabi Sikhs distinctive religio-cultural identity and how religion plays an equal and possibly bigger part to Punjabi Sikhs identity, and lacking insight into specific religious items within the home. Thus, being an element of further investigation. Moreover, crucially Taylor (2014) study follows the same trend of missing the theory of hybridity within their research, as this again would have provided insight into how Punjabi Sikhs religio-cultural identity interacts in a hybrid space of Britishness through the adoption

of culture. As further study can be utilised to expand on the processes of nostalgia with the longing of past homes in utilising religio-cultural items, with the adoption of Britishness within the hybridised identities of Punjabi Sikh immigrants. As this would allow for a deeper insight into how Punjabi Sikhs navigate their identity across cultural heritage and nationality through understanding how the home space accommodate a hybridised identity through the display of artefacts, possessions and home décor.

### **Methodology:**

Through investigating how Punjabi Sikhs in the West Midlands express their religio-cultural and British identity in the home space qualitative primary social research was conducted.

Qualitative research provided the best suited method for this study, as it allows for investigation into complex topic like exploring the identity of Punjabi Sikh people within the home space. As two methods will be conducted, semi-structured interviews and photography. As the interviews allow for in dept conversation between me and the participants (Mason, 2002), and the photos allowed for the capturing of various religio-cultural artefacts, possession and home décor that participants spoke about.

Particularly, as this research explores the identities of Punjabi Sikh people from the West Midlands, it is important to state my positionality in this, as it helped in conducting the research. As my position as a Punjabi Sikh women from the West Midlands who is able to speak both English and Punjabi helped to facilitate the research. For example, all 10 of the participants were from an immigrant background, coming from Punjab and migrating to the UK, with majority of them preferring to speak in their native language Punjabi over English, or combined both Punjabi and English within the interviews. Since I am fluent in the language, I was comfortable conversating in Punjabi alongside the participants, allowing them to express themselves in a language they were most comfortable with speaking. This

was especially important in relation to describing and talking about specific religio-cultural items, as participants with ease could talk about certain items, like the *Gutka Sahib Stand*, that refers to a specific stand for Sikhi holy books, without needing to break or trying to explain what this item was. As this allowed for participants to instead focus more on explaining the importance of these items to their religio-cultural identity within the home space. As by facilitating an interview process that accommodates to the language abilities of the participants, it gave them the best chance to respond fittingly.

Additionally, my positionality supported participants to be more open within the interview, especially because I was conducting research on a minority religious group. As for those a part of minority religions, negative associations and stereotypes linked with racialisation has often led to discrimination (Singh, 2013), leading to possible fears in expressing religio-cultural identity freely outside of one's religious community. However, by sharing the same religio-cultural and regional background as the participants, this created an environment where participants were more comfortable discussing personal aspects of Sikhism and being Punjabi alongside Britishness, due to sharing a general lived experience through our ethnic, religious and regional identity. Moreover, this became vital to the research as it was conducted within the intimate setting of participants homes, specifically in relation to discussing and examining religio-cultural items and décor. As for ethnic minorities, expressions of religion can provide safety and comfort away from the hostilities of discrimination (Willis, 2006), with items that symbolise religio-cultural identity being very personal and private. Thereby, participants were more trusting in allowing this research to be conducted within their homes and to have insight into very personal items as my position as Punjabi Sikh ensured that I had a greater understanding of how meaningful these items can be, by taking care with the questioning and being sensitive in handling religious artefacts.

The sample selected for this study consisted of 5 Punjabi Sikh married couples, totalling 10 participants. 5 couples, and therefore houses, were used as the data produced could be cross-analysed to find similarities and differences among the type of religio-cultural items in the participants homes. The criteria for this study was for participants to be over the age of 35, be married to their couple and reside in the West Midlands. The age criteria was set because ‘the importance of home increases as people get older’ (Saunders, [1989] 2007), due to more time being spent in the home space with possible factors like retirement and less demanding working hours. Additionally, home possessions are very important to those who are mid to late adults, typically as a result of years of collecting many artefacts and objects. For example, objects and items in the home such as pictures of children who have grown up and then leave home may evoke an emotionally-charged response to specific home possessions (Saunders, [1989] 2007). Thereby, placing a deeper attachment to items in the home, as for mid to late adults, they symbolise a process of re-memory and express certain parts of their identity such as being a parent.

Moreover, married couples were specifically chosen to provide a gendered lens into this study. For instance, participating in home-decorating is a ‘symbol of family-building’ (Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004), with this process being shared between the men, women and children in a heteronormative nuclear family setting. However notably, this responsibility comes with ‘gendered division of labour’ (Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004) with home-decorating being a feminised responsibility given to the women of the household. Therefore, interviewing both men and women will provide an understanding of how gender intersects in the home-space, and how this sits alongside ones religio-cultural and British identity both individual and shared within the household.

The West Midlands was chosen as a geographical focal point due it being an appropriate setting for recruiting participants. As the West Midland has the biggest population of Punjabi

Sikhs within the UK (Maimaris et al., 2023). Thus, recruiting participants would be much easier within an area that has more Punjabi Sikhs there in comparison to the rest of the UK.

Additionally, recruiting the participants was all done through snowball sampling. This method of sampling was best suited to this study due to my own position as the researcher. For example, my identity as Punjabi Sikh from the West Midlands allowed me to have prior connections within this community, giving me access to couples who fit the criteria to participate. Moreover, from the participants, they were also able to give me further connections to other Punjabi Sikh couples living in the West Midlands willing to participate. Overall, providing an adequate participant roster that was utilised in this study.

Below is a table in how each participant will be identified. I decided to give each participating couple a matching letter that would follow after a 'Mr' or 'Mrs' title, for example this can be seen within the table where I have shown this, alongside the age of each participant:

Mr A: 51	Mrs A: 45
Mr B: 55	Mrs B: 42
Mr C: 47	Mrs C: 45
Mr D: 66	Mrs D: 63
Mr E: 76	Mrs E: 65

*Table 1: Identifying name for participants and age*

As with this method in identifying participants, it will allow for an easy follow for identifying which couple belong together, therefore which house contains which specific items.

My sample strategy for taking the photos consisted of me taking between 5 to 15 photos within each household. This was all dependent on what the participants would allow me to take photos of and how many specific religio-cultural items participants had. As I was focused on taking photos of specifically religious-cultural items, such as photos and items related to religion, decoration pieces linked to Punjabi culture as some examples. I decided to take photos of certain items when participants would mention it in the interviews, such as recalling or pointing to a specific item if it was nearby and when we did the house tour, where participants would take me around to certain areas of the house that showcased elements of their religious-cultural identity, such as the prayer rooms. There I would take photos up close of certain items and more far away, gaining a more wide shot of the room layout. For instance, I took several photos between participants homes of their *Baba Ji Room*, the prayer room. Here, I took pictures up close of pictures of Sikhi Gurus and small religious artefacts like statues, and then took a wider shot of the religious space or room. Participants would come along with me and point out specific parts of their prayer space, directing me to certain objects such as a specific photo of their Guru.

For the semi-structure interviews, I prepared a list of question that couple be expanded upon regarding how the participants answered to the question. For example, some of the questions I asked aimed at uncovering the type of religio-cultural items participants had in their home, such as ‘Q: so what type of religious items do you have in your home? This can be things like paintings, art, religious symbols, anything that you have?’ With the same question but for religious items being asked too. Additionally, when participants would point to specific artefacts, possessions or home décor that related to their Punjabi Sikh identity or Britishness, I would additionally ask questions to how this relates to your identity, how you feel about these items, questioning where they got them from and the importance it has in their home. In the actual interview process, it was a very calm and relaxed settings. Since the interviews

were being conducted at the participants homes, I was invited in and sat within their main living room, where they would offer me tea and biscuits, providing a very homey atmosphere. Again, linking back to positionality where my identity of being Punjabi Sikh provided a familiarity in my understanding of the home space and customs like offering tea and biscuits, courtesy of Punjabi Sikh culture.

The chosen method to examine the data was thematic analysis. This was the most appropriate method for this study, as it allowed to analyse specific themes and patterns that cropped up between the participants. Giving insight into the shared experiences of expressing religio-cultural and British identity within the homes of Punjabi Sikhs in the West Midlands. A positive to using thematic analysis was that it and grouped together various themes between the participants homes. For example, like previously mentioned many participants had a prayer room or spaces within their homes, thus using thematic analysis provided a good tool in grouping together shared religio cultural items and experiences with them to participate identity. The downside in using thematic analysis was the problem it could have caused with oversimplifying the richness of the data. Specifically, since I was grouping together photos taken of participants specific religio-cultural artefacts and décor and experiences of the said items, matching this with other participants was generally alike. However, certain instances where some participating couples do not have those said items meant that they were not included within the theme. However, overall this was a limited issue as majority of the items and experiences with them to their identity was generally shared amongst the participants. In the end, I obtained four themes, with three of them referring to the specific items shared amongst the participants, like ‘displayed photos, animal motifs, the Baba Ji Room’ and another theme that specifically looks at ‘mother figures in the home space.’

Within this research, it's also important to understand my positionality when it comes to biases as well. Since I'm going in to the research as a Punjabi Sikh woman, I am already

exposed to the typical religio-cultural setting of the home regarding items and décor, and having a general sense to how first-generation immigrants identity's are typically handled alongside Britishness, with my own experiences with dealing with this and engaging with people within my inner circle. However, steps were taken to ensure that any biases would not hinder this research. Such as actively listening to participants accounts and letting them explain things to me. Such as certain ways they may display particular items and use them in relation to religio-cultural, as this may differ from how I do it. However, by actively listening and going in with an open mind, I ensured that biases were limited as much as possible. Regarding the sample as well, since it was quite small looking at 5 participating couples and 10 people in total, there could have been great value in exploring more houses to gain more insight into differing artefacts, possessions and home décor of Punjabi Sikh households. However, from the 10 participating couples and the 5 houses conducted my research, there was a vast amount of richness in data, as all the houses contained various elements of religion cultural artefacts, possessions, home décor.

## **Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **Overview:**

In conducting this research through semi-structured interviews and photography, four main themes were uncovered using thematic analysis. From this, the first three themes notably link to specific types of artefacts, possessions and home décor found within the homes. As this ranged from photos, animal motifs within the items and the Baba Ji Room linking to religion. The final theme discusses more so on the role of mothers within the home, as this cropped up since the female participants shared similar sentiments in how they took charge of the home space through decorating. Throughout each theme, hybridity will be discussed as this was a

common aspect found within all themes, alongside with feelings of belonging and unbelonging and re-memory.

**Displayed photos:**

Within the homes of the participants, a common item used for home décor was photos. Particularly, family and couple photos of participants and their family members was seen across the homes during this research, as these photos became important tools for expressing religio-cultural identity in relation to Britishness. For example, the photos displayed within the homes of participants were essentially used to provide visual affiliation to their Punjabi Sikh identity. As seen within *Image 1* through *5*, photos displayed of participants and their family members all showcase elements of them wearing a type of Punjabi Sikh religio-cultural attire, from traditional clothing like *Punjabi suits*, *lehengas* and *saree* worn by some of the female participant and participants Mr A and Mr E wearing a *pagg*, or what is commonly known as a turban in English, within their photos. Moreover, participants further went on to state the significance and reasoning to why they chose these images specifically to display within the home space, firstly from the female participants and then the male.



Image 1: *Individual photos of Mr and Mrs A*

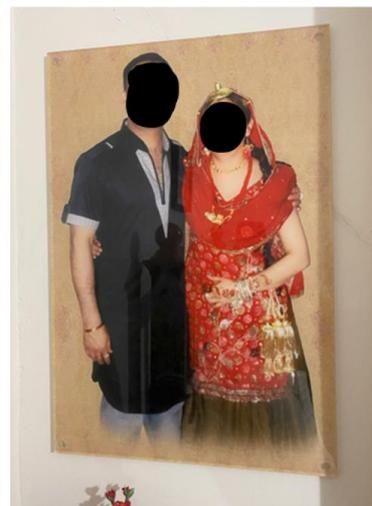


Image 2: *Couple photo of Mr and Mrs A*



Image 3: *Mr and Mrs B family photo*



Image 4: *Mr and Mrs D family photo from son's wedding*



Image 5: *Mr and Mrs E couple photo*

*'I chose picture without the short clothes and open hair, you know I wanted something that shows this house belong to Punjabi because daily I wear English clothes jeans top like that. And yeah like I wanted something more special with the photos because everyone sees me in English clothes. But Punjabi clothes just for like Punjabi events and those photos are nicer in the home because it shows me a Punjabi women.'* (Mrs A)

*'I pick that photo because I'm wearing the full Punjabi suit for some wedding... looking like a proper Punjaban... I don't really get to wear things like my Punjab suit all the time more so like normal English clothes.'* (Mrs B)

*'I love that wedding photo, it's our son... shows the Punjabi Sikh wedding with my daughter-in-law traditional lehenga and my saree and my daughter yeah wearing a Punjabi suit. It's nice you don't really get to dress up like that every day.'* (Mrs D)

Here, the female participants begin to reveal how they exercise concepts of belonging and unbelonging in relation to choosing photos to display within the home space that enhance aspects of their Punjabi Sikh identity and remove elements of Britishness. For example, this links to Sani (2022) study in showcasing a clash of British and South Asian identity, where for these participants, displaying photos that showcase their Punjabi Sikh identity through wearing affiliated attire played an important role that symbolically and materially 'shows this house belongs to Punjabi' and emotively feeling 'like a proper Punjaban.' With Punjaban being the feminine noun of Punjabi, linking to ideas of being a strong women (Khan, 2023), showcasing how these displayed photos within the home provide positive interpretations of how participants feel about their Punjabi Sikh identity, that is then physically manifested through using these photos as décor within the home space. Furthermore, the usage of photographic artefacts have been captured as 'tools for display' (Finch, 2007), where careful selection of photos within the home space help to illustrate messages from identity, relationship and belonging (Finch, 2007). For these women, the use of photos that captures their religio-cultural identity serve as important markers of their identity they feel as though they do not get to express daily, compared to their everyday clothing practices in following British social norms like wearing English style jeans and top. Instead of choosing any type of photos, the female participants actively express fondness over these photos as they are deemed 'more special' in showcasing the Punjabi identities of these women. Thereby,

showing their dedication to curating the home space through these photos that shows their belonging to the wider Punjabi Sikh collective (Christensen, 2009).

Moreover, this does not take away the fact that the women do not see themselves linked to a hybrid identity between Britishness and Punjabi Sikh, linking this again to how they do wear English style clothes daily. More so, it is the home space that the women prefer to show-off their religio-cultural identity through the photos, almost as if making up for the fact that they do not get to wear these style of traditional attire daily, with it being reserved for events like weddings. Thus, the use of the photos within the home space ‘fix on what they depict’ (Roberts, 2012), with the female participants particularly choosing to centre their religio-cultural identity. Highlighting clear distinctions between the exercise of their hybrid identity within and out of the home space.

Regarding the male participants, they provided an interesting perspective in relation to wearing the *pagg*. Unlike the female participants who showcased photos of them wearing Punjabi Sikh attire that were related to events like weddings, the *pagg* opposes this as it is something that can be worn daily by men and it closely ties to a showcase of religio-cultural identity more so on a daily practice (Kaur et al., 2024). Notably within the interviews, both Mr A and Mr E did not wear a *pagg*, unlike their displayed photos within the home space, as seen in *Image 1* and *5*, where it visually shows both men wearing the *pagg* within the photos. Instead, both participants expressed how wearing the *pagg* was something they do not wear on a daily basis.

*‘no no I don’t wear the pagg daily anymore, back in Punjab I used to always but then coming here I stopped... mostly I wear when going out to special places like family friend wedding.’*

(Mr A)

*'Long time ago I used to wear, that photo is back in India ... coming here I wear no more because when I first come to UK I remember people would you know look at you strange with the pagg on...'* (Mr E)

Here, both participants touch upon similar themes of again belonging and unbelonging like their female counterparts, and additionally re-memory. Specifically, both men state how the *pagg* was something they used to wear back in Punjab, but coming here to the UK they stopped wearing it. Mr E goes into more detail, explaining the painful memory of when first coming to the UK and wearing the *pagg*, he would be looked at as 'strange.' Particularly, this relates to notions of unbelonging that was racialised, related to British identity, where distinctions of whiteness and non-whiteness come forth (Garner, 2012). As for Mr E, the *pagg* being a visual representation of his religio-cultural identity was mocked, leaving him to abandon this aspect of his religio-cultural identity within his daily life. Whereas now imagery of his *pagg* live on in the home space, where he is able to utilise 'reflective nostalgia' (Fathi and Laoire, 2024) to re-memorise and re-imagine his *pagg* from times he worn it in Punjab. As the home space essentially becomes a safe haven for participants to display elements of their religio-cultural identity without the interference of negative associations like feelings of unbelonging to Britishness.

### **Animals motifs:**

Throughout this research, a common motif that cropped up in various artefacts, possessions and home décor was the use of animals. Particularly, the homes displayed various things from peacock wallpaper to animal statues like elephants, horses and peacocks. Notably, participants stated how these motifs reminded them of Punjab, linking to not only re-memory, but also because these animal motifs are widely associated within broader India through

peacocks being the national bird, elephants being a native animal and horses being tied to Punjabi Sikh culture.



Image 6: *Mrs A peacock statue*



Image 7: *Mr and Mrs A peacock wallpaper, up-close shot*



Image 8: *Mr and Mrs B living room, with peacock wallpaper*



Image 9: *Mr and Mrs B peacock wallpaper, up-close shot*



Image 10: *Mr and Mrs C peacock statue*



Image 11: *Mr and Mrs C elephant statues*



Image 12: *Mr and Mrs D elephant statue*



Image 13: *Mr and Mrs D horse statue*

*'Things like my peacock wallpaper and this statue always remind me of India, that is why I choose it...'* (Mrs A)

*'This statue is great. It really does look proper Punjabi Indian style... the colours the animal design of it all... I like those elephants as well over there, they look really Indian royal style.'*  
(Mrs C)

*'elephants are yeah Indian style, we like to have little things like statues here and there'* (Mr D)

*'... horse statue, this is a strong symbol of Sikhi... our Gurus and warriors fight on horses.'*  
(Mr E)

However crucially, when inquiring further in understanding if these items and décor pieces of the animal motifs are replicas of their homes in Punjab, the general consensus was no.

*'Nah. With Punjabi home, it was more plain not many things peacock things.'* (Mrs A)

*'not really no, never had any things like this there with decoration.'* (Mr B)

*'hmmm, more small things only little but overall, we never had anything with lots of animals.'*  
(Mr D)

This prompted an interesting position, where the usage of these items within the home were noted as reminders of Punjab, India and a religio-cultural identity, highlighting re-memory. But likewise, also were not personable elements from their past homes. Within the broader context of hybridity and material culture, imagery of peacock and elephant motifs have strongly been associated with more 'stereotypical images and clichés' (Shabanirad and Marandi, 2015) of India, being rooted in colonial legacy set by the British. As the use of these items within the home space can link to 'commodity markets' (Tolia-Kelly, 2004), where these items are 'products of the mass market' (Tolia-Kelly, 2004). Notably, first-generation

immigrants experience a ‘belonging to different locales’ (Waite and Cook, 2010), determined by living and experiencing life in different countries to their homeland, leading to a longing for connection to their homelands religio-cultural identity done so in any way possible. As this can be interpreted from the participants utilising various animal motifs within their home. As items related to this, ultimately does express a religio-cultural identity within the home space, however one that is more so built on material cultural remarks set by the British, where participants express no personal connection to these items. As this sets out an interesting layout of hybridised identity, where the usage of these more so stereotypical items related to being Indian more broadly, is done so by participants to maintain any elements of connection to their religio-cultural roots, remaining a sense of belonging.

### **The Baba Ji Room:**

When exploring the religio-cultural identities of Punjabi Sikh participants, it became apparent that religion became a crucial aspect of identity, especially when expressing this within the home space. For instance, out of the five couples that partook in this study, three of the participant couples household had a room or space dedicated to their religion, Sikhi, where they would pray and keep important Sikhi artefacts, possessions and décor, named the *Baba Ji Room*. The *Baba Ji Room* was a really important aspect within the homes of the participants, as they expressed the great significance this room had with connecting themselves with Sikhi. As all three *Baba Ji Rooms* and spaces between the participants differed in where they were located within the homes, from Mr and Mrs A utilising a room upstairs in *Image 14* and *15*, Mr and Mrs C using an outdoor shed in *Image 16* and *17* and Mr and Mrs E using a cupboard in *Image 18*. However crucially, all three rooms and spaces still served the same purpose in providing connection to God.



Image 14: *Wide shot of entering Mr and Mrs A Baba Ji Room*



Image 15: *Wide shot of Mr and Mrs A Baba Ji Room*



Image 16: *Wide shot outside of Mr and Mrs C Baba Ji Room*



Image 17: *Wide shot inside of Mr and Mrs C Baba Ji Room*



Image 18: *Wide shot inside of Mr and Mrs E Baba Ji cupboard*

*'This is my favourite room in the house... I come and pray every morning and feel at peace.*

*This space I feel very connected to God and feel good.'* (Mr A)

*'Every morning come here pray first then do my day, that order... can't start the day without coming here'* (Mr C)

*'For me this is the centre of the house, without this no Punjabi Sikhi home'* (Mrs E)

Here, participants state the overall importance the *Baba Ji Room* has within their day-to-day lives, stating how they utilise this room daily to pray and gain connection with God, and the overall importance the *Baba Ji Room* has for Punjabi Sikh people as a whole. Particularly, the rooms and spaces were furnished with various religious artefacts and décor. For instance, each *Baba Ji Room* and space contained various photos of Sikh Gurus, Hindu deities and the *Sri Darbar Sahib* or commonly known as the Golden Temple in English. Artefacts and ornaments like flowers, candles, the *Gutka Sahib Stand*, a stand for Sikhi prayer books, and a mandir are some examples of things that were kept within the participants *Baba Ji Rooms* and spaces to furnish them.



Image 19: Close-up of Mr and Mrs A Gurus photos in Baba Ji Room

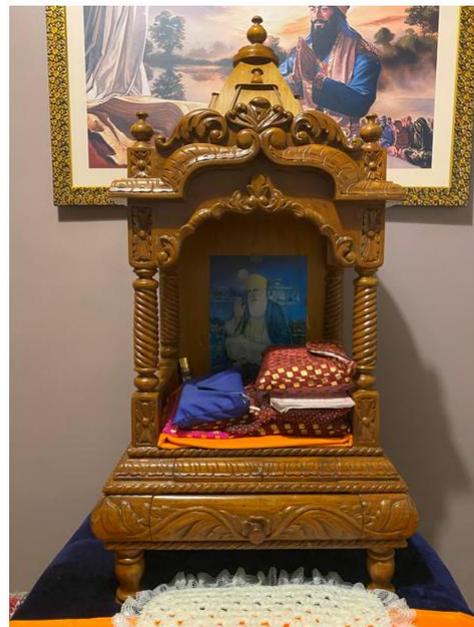


Image 20: Mr and Mrs E Mandir in Baba Ji Room



Image 21: *Close-up of Mr and Mrs C Gurus photos and display in the Baba Ji Room*



Image 22: *Close-up shot of the Gutka Sahib Stand in Mr ad Mrs C Baba Ji Room*



Image 23: *Close-up of Guru's and Hindu deities in Mr and Mrs E Baba Ji Room*

Moreover, participants went on to state the importance in furnishing the *Baba Ji Room* with all of the various Sikhi artefacts and décor.

*'For us it's about respect. Keeping this room clean and putting nice furniture it is respectful and part of being Punjabi Sikh duty... This is for all Baba Ji room we had from India to here we respect all.'* (Mrs A)

*'Religion is very important to all Punjabi Sikh, decorating with all this showing connecting to God.'* (Mr C)

*'...respecting and showing love to God... I decorate this Baba Ji room with all of the things I bring from Punjab like photos, statues all the things. For me it's also like remembering that.'*  
(Mrs E)

From these statements, participants uncover two key attributes of the *Baba Ji Room*. Firstly, participants understand the importance of upkeeping the *Baba Ji Room* as a wider duty for Punjabi Sikhs, as contributing to religious Sikhi practices helps to 'enhance Punjabiness' (Taylor, 2014). Linking to the wider understanding of Punjabi Sikhs intertwined religio-cultural identity. Secondly, participants express sentiments of re-memory, explaining how practices of the upkeeping and furnishing the *Baba Ji Room* is something they have carried on from Punjab and utilising décor brought over from there. Critically, this links back to literature regarding re-memory from Tolia-Kelly (2004) and Ibrahim and Gao (2024), where re-memory becomes a powerful tool in connecting diaspora communities to homelands, especially regarding religion. Specifically, the performance of religion has been regarded as a part of 'memorywork' (Sather-Wagstaff, 2015), where the enactment of religious routines, such as participants praying daily, is a way they are able to connect to broader aspects of their identity through memorising homelands. However crucially, it is the setting of the *Baba Ji Room*, through the utilisation of religious artefacts, possessions and home décor that allow for participants to continue their religious practices as a part of re-memorising their past lived experienced in Punjab, that help to strengthen their religio-cultural identity and connection to God.

Moreover, participants also stated the importance of the *Baba Ji Room* within the wider context of Britishness, expressing elements of a hybridised identity.

*'The Baba Ji Room is important for blessing the whole home, family children... keeping life in the UK blessed since we came 20 years.'* (Mr A)

*'When we first move to this house, or actually UK I wanted Baba Ji Room definitely... this space to thank God for getting me here'* (Mr C)

*'...coming from Punjab was hard especially in 89. You know I always prayed in my prayer room to God to give me good life here and now I can say yes, God did that... That show important of respecting God with Baba Ji Room here.'* (Mrs E)

Within this segment, participants vocalise an added importance of the *Baba Ji Room* in relation to when they first migrated here. Particularly, highlighting how the use of the *Baba Ji Room* in the home space became a sanctuary for participants to pray and be thankful for a good life in the UK, and to bless aspects linked to Britishness like their home and family living with them. This was greatly insightful, as it links back to how diasporic communities will combine “home” and “host” cultures’ (Balaram, 2018) to hybridise them, especially in this case regarding religion as it is typically used by immigrants as a device to help build ‘perspectives on the new country’ (Chiswick, 2015) and build their religion around (Vásquez, 2011). For these participants, the *Baba Ji Room* still remained an important element of religio-cultural identity, with the room being a showcase of religious artefacts and décor mainly. However, participants went on to further symbolise its relation to Britishness through linking the importance of maintaining and having a *Baba Ji Room* as a blessing to British aspects of their identity, such as living here and establishing life and home. Linking to Bhabha (1994) third space in hybridised identities, as for these participants the *Baba Ji Room* essentially evolved to capture ‘new signs of identity’ (Bhabha, 1994). Thus, the material space of the *Baba Ji Room*, where elements of religious artefacts and décor remain, becomes a symbol of a hybridised identity, where although there may not be any visible symbols of a

Britishness through items present within the room, the space itself hybridises symbolically where practices like praying, upkeeping and establishing a *Baba Ji Room*, become embedded within respecting and giving thanks to British elements of their lives.

**Mother figures in the home space:**

Lastly, the final main theme of this study has less so to do with any particular recurring artefacts, possession or home décor found amongst participants homes and more so with the enforcer of presenting a religio-cultural identity, with that being the female participants. Particularly, the female participants stated how firstly they were the main ones to decorate the home space.

*'I'll tell you. it's me not him. He doesn't do anything...'* (Mrs A)

*'I think I can be mixed. Sometimes yeah? Mostly it is me...'* (Mrs B)

*'I would say me.'* (Mrs C)

*'Definitely me.'* (Mrs D)

*'I say myself. He helps, sometimes but honestly it really is me.'* (Mrs E)

As stated within the literature, decorating and housekeeping is very much linked to women's responsibility within the division of labour (Silva, 2005), with participants aligning with this. Crucially, the female participants notably mention responsibility in upkeeping religio-cultural artefacts, possessions and home décor within the home space for the family but importantly for their children, as two participants state.

*'I think it's a women job yes. For me being a mother and having children I need to check the house is good for them... I decorate the home in mind of them knowing they don't know about the Punjabi Sikh like we do, so they can see these Punjabi things and pictures of our Gurus and know about it.'* (Mrs C)

*'...mother, grandmother all my women in my life they do this job... it's important. For me decorating the home in Punjabi Sikh items and decorations is like a love language especially for my kids and grandkids. Showing them our culture is important because if I don't show then who will?'* (Mrs D)

Here, sentiments shared amongst participants highlights how practices of decorating the home space is greatly important as it links to showcasing aspects of religio-cultural identity.

Aligning with Zeng (2023) study where the importance of decorating the home came at the importance of the mothers role in showcasing these elements of culture to children.

Specifically, mothers roles are further extended to being 'positioned as religious and social educator of children' (Aran and Nayebkabar, 2018) where for the participants, they expressed this through artefacts, possessions and home décor within the home space. As the participants expressed how they decorate the home space keeping in mind of their children, stating 'so they can see these Punjabi things and pictures of our Gurus...' and expressing how if they do not show their children their religio-cultural identity then no one will. Therefore, showcasing the huge responsibility these mothers have in providing a showcase of religio-cultural identity for their children's sake. Additionally, this also taps into arguments about generations and hybridity, with mothers insistence in ensuring their children are exposed to their religio-cultural identity linking to generational differences between first and second-generations religio-cultural alignment and how second-generations are more inclined to their national identity, like Britishness (Waite and Cook, 2010). Thus, the insistence and responsibility of first-generation mothers in decorating their home for their children comes out of a fear in possibly losing their children to a solely British identity, as participants did understand that their children's identity did differ from their, as seen within the next statement.

*'The thing is my kids are British first and it's yeah hard to always explain Punjabi Sikh things to them because their culture first is British. But I always try and show them Punjabi Sikhi things here and they see and understand that is the goal.'* (Mrs C)

Thus, these mothers sit in a complex form of hybridity, as their children for them become an embodiment of a British identity, whereas their responsibility is not reverse this but encourage a religio-cultural identity alongside this. Interestingly, some female participants expressed utilising the hybrid identity of their children to influence the purchase of particular items, such as fridge magnets. For instance, as seen within *Image 24* and *25*, two participants Mrs A and Mrs E express how the purchased of these fridge management, that showcase imagery of Sikhi from the Golden temple and their gurus, were deliberately placed there so their children and grandchildren could see them.



Image 24: Mr and Mrs A fridge with various magnets



Image 25: Close-up of Mr and Mrs A fridge with magnets of Golden temple



Image 26: Close-up of Mr and Mrs A fridge with magnets of Golden temple and Gurus



Image 27: Close-up of Mr and Mrs E fridge with magnets of Gurus images

*'...I got these from Punjab last time I went and I put them here because well it looks nice but also so my children can see it and understand yes this is our Gurus and Golden temple, holy site...' (Mrs A)*

*'I put this on the fridge for my grandkids, they always come here all the time and straight to the fridge. So I put it here so every time they can see the Gurus... understand who they are.'*

(Mrs E)

Thereby, showcasing the strategical placement that these female participants put these fridge magnets to ultimately ensure that their children and grandchildren get to interact with these items and understand aspects of their religio-cultural identity. As by placing them on the fridge, somewhere visible for the children to see, next to other magnets highlighting family holidays and pictures, it continues to showcase the hybridised identity of participants family as a whole, by mixing elements of their religio-cultural identity alongside other elements of their identity such as Britishness. As practices like taking part in holidays are seen as a performance of Britishness (Yuval-Davis, 2011), highlighting narratives to belonging with hybridised identities (Christensen, 2009). As ultimately, the mothers take on the role in managing the hybridised identity of the family, particularly via children, by demonstrating this within the home space through using things like magnets, they are able to create an environment where encouragement of a religio-cultural identity is upheld next to the hybrid identity of the children.

### **Conclusion:**

In this study, it set out to explore how first-generation Punjabi Sikhs express their religio-cultural identity within the home space through artefacts, possessions and home décor, particularly in relation to Britishness. As by utilising semi-structured interviews and photography, the findings demonstrate how the home space is a sacred area in showcasing identity. Particularly, main themes this study uncovered was how many homes had similar religio-cultural items spanning from the use of displayed photos, animal motifs and the Baba Ji Room. As these items, décor and spaces within the home all demonstrated how participants

would showcase their religio-cultural identity proudly within the home, with showcase of Punjabi Sikh identity being greatly important for the participants. However, underneath this, aspects of a hybrid identity emerge as Britishness also comes out as an element a part of the said artefacts, possessions and home décor. As it may not be as clear cut and obvious how Britishness intersects the home space with these religio-cultural items, however through interviewing participants and their shared experiences with the usage of items and décor, identity with Britishness comes out in more symbolic ways, something not quite tangible. As participants express how the various items and spaces become a reaction to their British identity, from utilising photos that visibly show-off their Punjabi Sikh roots as they do not get to express this within their daily British lives, to animal motifs that are material commodities of British interpretation of Punjabi Sikh culture and the Baba Ji Room being the centre-point for the British homes. All of this showcases how key points like hybridity, alongside memory, become important outcomes of this study, as an understanding of Punjabi Sikh hybrid identity of religio-cultural and British within the home space shows how the two essentially interact to formulate an identity unique to them. Additionally, another theme regarding gender should be highlighted separately, as essentially this study reinforces the narrative of women being the main responsible home-maker especially in regards to children. However fundamentally regarding hybrid identity, the formulation of this within children and women decorating hybrid spaces like using fridge magnets, showcased how décor of religio-cultural items becomes a tool for women to teach future generations, embodying their hybrid identity within the home space.

For broader academia, these insights showcase the unique and interesting position of Punjabi Sikh people, where their identity is an interesting mix of their religio-cultural affiliations and Britishness, and how the home space is an interesting vessel to explore this. As crucially

studies on Punjabi Sikhs, especially in the West Midlands, remains limited in research, as hopes of this study is to shed light on an often unknown community.

Limitations regarding this study can be reflected in utilising couples. Although great amounts of data was gathered using couples within interview processes, it was clear regarding data collection that despite the home space being shared, and generally couples agreed upon the usage of various religio-cultural items and décor, gender differences prevailed. So much so that a whole theme dedicated to female participants came out of it. Thus, for future research, utilising couples can still be fit, however a greater regard on how gender affects the home space and construction of identity can be taken further.

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## **Appendix 1:**

Transcripts from Mr and Mrs A interview:

**Now I am going to ask you question specific to your house and the decoration of your home. Just firstly how do you feel about your home and do you like decorating it?**

Mrs A – I like decorating my house, its

**What about you how do you feel?**

Mr A – hmhhh

Mrs A – he never decorate the house. It's my responsibility. I'll tell you. It's me not him. He doesn't do anything with the home and decorating. Always me

**Is it more so your responsibility**

Mrs A – yes, decorating the house is to do with me, he doesn't really do much

Mr A – yeah I agree, it's all her. Yeah

Mrs A - I buy stuff and have all the ideas, but always discuss with him. But it is me

Mr A – yeah I have say, similar taste?

Mrs A – yes similar taste.

**What type of similar taste would you say you have?**

Mrs A – Things like my peacock wallpaper and this statue always remind me of Indian, that is why I choose it but for him he likes it as well because he also think the same.

Mr A – yeah I would say I taste is same same like... yeah no difference really.

**So for the both of you would you say you like the peacock wallpaper and that statue because it remind you of India?**

Mrs A – yes... India and also like Punjab. I think of my house back in Punjab, we had lots of birds, so much nature and peacocks are very Indian. I feel like it belongs in my house I really like having things like this. Like the peacock statue as well. Wow I have so many peacock things-

Mr A – lots of peacock things

Mrs A – hahaha but you know it makes me happy having these things I like it. It things to my taste and looking at them I feel like I am showing my Indian and Punjabi culture

Mr A – yes they are very her, but I agree. I think of Punjabi looking at the peacocks I think of my house there.

**Is there other things you have in your home that remind you of that?**

Mrs A – yes so many. Like this clock (pointing to a clock in the living room) it looks like a royal. Like an Indian King, Maharaja. Bronze, big, metal work.

**Yeah it's really nice, did you get that from Punjab?**

Mrs A – no no, all here in the UK. I just bought them here because they remind me of that. Lots of decoration you can get here. Like all of my plants, why I put lots of plants in my living room and everywhere in the house, because we had a big garden, our house in Punjab and we lived we was living in greenery. So much nature

Mr A – I think too. I like she chose the plants because I also think of my house we have lots of nature like this too. It's nice. It feels like a proper Punjabi house.

**You feel these decorations make your house look and feel Punjabi.**

Mr A – yes definitely. Like all of this decoration and things we have in the house that we use, its really Punjabi and makes you think of your house back in India and that's important. I, you know we come from Punjab, we are used to having the house that way. So we bring this over and make this house in the UK look Punjabi because this is who we are an what we are used too. We are more comfortable like this.

Mrs A - I feel comfortable decorating my house like a Punjaban, having it Punjabi style makes me happy and my family and children, I like it like this. I grown up with this too. I want to have this for my family and myself

You have mentioned this before that you (referring to Mrs A) decorate the house more, and are more responsible in this. So do you think there is a difference when it comes to gender, between man and women when it comes to decorating the house

Mrs A – Yes. Women show more interest according to men

Mr A – Yeah

Mrs A – I notice not only here but with my friend circle when we talk with each other, we talk about decorating and where we buy certain things but never the husband. I notice its more a women thing, wife and mother do this job more. Like he supports me in buying stuff for the house and decorating like I want too-

Mr A – yeah

Mrs A – but it is mostly me. And woman job to decorate the house you know I like it.

**So you also agree that women are the main ones to decorate the house and have this responsibility?**

Mr A – yeah I agree, you know she has more time to decorate, I have no time. I am working. She likes these things and I have interest, yes, but women like this.

Mrs A – yeah, he is happy with anything I do with decorating, he doesn't mind, because it's like give her the responsibility. Wants to keep happy wife and life.

**Why do you think its important that women are the main ones to decorate the home?**

Mrs A – women have more interest in these things. Mostly I think. Yeah like. I think of my friends and family all women who like this and its common you know. These things we do. I like decorating because for women, we do it not for just us. Children, family, guest when people come we have to look good. If house not look nice, people think bad of you. They think oh gosh she doesn't know how to decorate. The women, wife is blamed. I take care of my house in Punjab since I was little, so its natural to me.

Mr A – hmhhh

Mrs A – making the house look nice its nice for the children to see and make a nice home for them to grown up in. Always do it for them.

**Ah kay so children are a big part of why you also take on this responsibility?**

Mrs A – Definitely for me that are the number one reason. You know I want to show them our culture the importance of it and why it is important. Er growing up Punjabi Sikh you need to understand these as well so I want to show them this

**Would you say you use any décor like Punjabi Sikh specific for this?**

Mrs A – hmm yeah

Mr A – yeah she always does

Mrs A – hahaa. So yeah I always try and do little things here and there so the children can see. Like you know you seen all the house and it is very Punjabi Sikh, like the photos wallpaper state all that

**Hmm yeah like all the things you said**

Mrs A – But also I do little things whenever I go to India like back to Punjabi I always get things like... er what are they called the you know little

Mr A – oh like keychain, magnet-

Mrs A – yes! I get little things like that so the children can use them and you know understand the importance of this. Like um with the magnets you see over there

**Err that one on the fridge**

Mrs A – yeah sorry we have lots hahaha

**No no its okay they're all really nice**

Mr A – those two on top the Golden temple one, yeah

**Ah yeah I see like the top corner one right**

Mrs A – hmm hmm yeah so I got these from Punjab last time I went and I put them here because well it looks nice but also so my children can see it and understand yes this is

our Gurus and Golden temple, holy site and understanding it all. You know they always come into kitchen and it is open space so they can see things like that. You know small fun things like magnets just put there

**Ah okay yeah that's really nice so children are a big motivator for you to like decorate the home especially in Punjabi Sikh things**

Mrs A – of course, as a mother they are my number one priority and you know I want to continue showing them the culture and so that is why I do.

## **Appendix 2:**

Sample of some questions used in this study:

- Background of where they are from, did they immigrate to the UK, are they born here or in Punjab/ elsewhere?
- When it comes to the decoration and style of your home, how do you feel about it?
  - o Do you like decorating your home? Why?
- Who decorates the home more out of you two?
  - o Why do you have this responsibility/ why not you?
- What type of religious items do you have in your home? This can be things like paintings, art, religious symbols, anything that you have?
- what type of cultural, so Punjabi, items do you have in your home? This can be things like paintings, art, religious symbols, anything that you have?'
  - o Where do you get these items?
  - o Where are these items, is there a certain place you keep them or around the house?
- How would you describe the style of your house, Like a Punjabi style British style anything that you think, and is there any items you think reflect that style?