

# Contents

## **Preface 7**

### **1 Setting the Scene 11**

- Research Questions and the Trans-Atlantic Contrast 13
- Why Sikhs in Helsinki and Yuba City? 15
- A Brief Introduction to Sikhism 18
- Previous Literature on Sikhs in California and South Asians in Finland 21
- Identities Reflected in Practice 23
- Diaspora and Transnationalism 29
- The Doing of Ethnographies 31
- Some Reflections on the Researcher's Position 36
- Ethnographic Analysis 40
- The Problem of Naming 41
- What about Caste? 43
- Outline of this Book 45

### **2 Migration Histories 46**

- Yuba City and Sikh Migration 46
- The Migration Histories of Sikhs in Finland 55
- Concluding Thoughts 58

### **3 The Meaning of Work 60**

- Working in Yuba City 60
- Sikhs Working in Helsinki 66
- Working out Identities 70
- Prospects for Future Generations of Sikhs in Helsinki and Yuba City 77
- Concluding Thoughts 80

### **4 Identities Negotiated through Dress(ing) 82**

- The Turban as an External Marker of Religious Identity 84
- The Meanings of the Turban in the Aftermath of 1984 86
- Sikhs in the US after 9/11 88
- Cutting the Kes and Taking off the Turban 91
- Situational Dressing 96
- Letting the Hair Grow and Tying the Turban again 97
- Sikhs' Multiple Views on the Significance of the Turban 100
- Concluding Thoughts 102

**5 Religious and Cultural Sites 106**

- (Contested) Religious Places of Worship in Helsinki 106
- Birthday Parties and Bhangra 110
- Cultural Organisations 114
- Yuba City's Sikh Pre-School 117
- The Sikh Parade 126
- Concluding Thoughts 137

**6 Life-Cycle Rituals And (Transnational) Practices 138**

- Birth and Childcare 138
- Naming Ceremony 141
- Weddings 144
- Retirement, the Question of Return and the Experience of 'Going Back' 150
- Bringing the Ashes Back 155
- Concluding Thoughts 156

**7 Final Reflections: The Art of Negotiating Identities 158**

**Glossary 165**

**Appendices 168**

**References 172**

**Index 181**