Bollywood: a ‘Consumer Reacculturation Agent’
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This interpretive research investigates the concept of reacculturation, whereby ethnic individuals focus on adopting the customs and traditions of their ethnic minority culture, within an environment that is not their ancestral homeland. The focus within this research is on how third generation, UK born British Sikhs, consume Bollywood films and how the consumption of Bollywood films lead to reacculturation towards their ancestral homeland culture and customs. To date consumer researchers have tended to focus on the acculturation (Penaloza, 1989, 1994) of migrant communities, however this research is particularly fruitful as it focuses on the role of the reacculturative characteristics of Bollywood films within the lives of third generation British Sikhs. Three key themes emerged, 1) the role of Bollywood in the reacculturation and reconnection with the Indian culture, 2) the role of Bollywood films in bringing the family together and 3) the role of Bollywood in enabling third generation British Sikhs to become aware of their diasporic consciousness and in constructing a hybrid East and West Identity.

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Bollywood: A ‘Consumer Reacculturation Agent’
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This research investigates the concept of reacculturation, whereby ethnic individuals focus on adopting the customs and traditions of their ethnic minority culture, within an environment that is not their ancestral homeland. The focus within this research is on how third generation, UK born British Sikhs, consume Bollywood films and how the consumption of Bollywood films lead to reacculturation towards their ancestral homeland culture and customs. It is not that research relating to the quest for roots in the construction of one’s identity (Nitsch, 1987; Jairath, 1984; Russell, 2007) is new found, but that it previously tended to focus on, individuals experiences as they returned to their ancestral homeland, to get in touch with their roots. However this research focuses on reacculturation that is taking place towards an Eastern (Sikh) culture, within a western (UK) host culture. What’s more with the increasing ‘crossing of borders’ Penaloza, (1994) and diminishing immigrant boundaries it is evident through consumer research within the area of acculturation (Penaloza, 1989, 1994; Oswald, 1999; Askegaard et al., 2005; Ustuner and Holt, 2007), that reacculturation to homeland cultures is becoming a significant factor that influences the consumption processes of individuals from multiple cultural backgrounds. There has been increasing consumer research into the notion of reterritorialization (Askegaard et al., 2005; Ustuner and Holt) whereby migrants “recreate a sense of community and cultural identity in new socio-geographic contexts” (Punathambekar, 2005, p.152); however reacculturation is a term that has been scarcely used by consumer researchers (Wamwara-Mbgua, 2006). I believe the term is particularly appropriate to describe how third generation (i.e. those born in the country to which their family (grandparents and parents) immigrated) immigrants feel a need to reconnect with their roots. To this end I use the 3rd generation of the British Sikh community and their relationship with Bollywood as the research context to generate thoughts in relation to their reacculturation processes.

Significantly Bollywood is recognised as a creative and significant world cinema, the Indian version of Bollywood offers an enormous production output (1000 films/year). It seems the “fascination for all things Bollywood seeped into mainstream Western music, theatre, fashion and television” (Dudrah, 2006, P.17) (e.g. the Westend show Bollywood dreams). According to Prasad (2003) Bombay-based Hindi cinema (Bollywood) has brought “the NRI (Non Resident Indian) decisively into the centre of the picture as a more stable figure of Indian identity” (P.153). Bollywood attempts to convey a “new sense of Indianness” Rajadhyaksha (2003) (p.32), a sense of Indianness that resonates deeply with members of the British Sikh community. There has been little consumer research that examines the impact of this ethnic film medium (Bollywood), especially in terms of how it encourages young British Sikhs to reconnect and reacculturate with the Indian culture. Given the increasing presence of the Bollywood film medium within the UK and the availability of Bollywood films through mainstream chains such as the Odeon, UCI, Vue and Virgin cinemas due to increasing demand from British audiences, it is important to gain insights into the impact of the Bollywood film medium on the third generation of the British Sikh community, in order to understand how Bollywood influences them to reconnect with their ethnic roots and how this may impact their identity projects (Ustuner and Holt, 2007).

The overall research question for this study was how are Bollywood films influencing the third generation of British Sikhs and how is the sense of Indianness conveyed in Bollywood films assisting reacculturation? The study adopts an interpretive research strategy and multi-method research design as advocated by Gill and Johnson, (2002), as a useful means to generate theory-building. It was carried out longitudinally over two and a half years. Stage 1 of the research was conducted through a netnographic approach (Kozinets, 2002), which consisted of online observations of an online film blog known as hindustanlink.com; it involved observations and participant observation of participants (aged 22-35) of the website. Stage 2 focused on the third generation of British Sikhs and involved participant observation, netnography (Kozinets, 2002), in-depth, face to face interviews and autoethnographic accounts. Stage 3 evolved dependent on the emergent constructs from stage 2 and involved online and offline interviews with the third generation of the British Sikh community as well as the participation in the online community of hindustanlink.com. Stage 4, the final stage also involved online interviews with the third generation and participant observation of hindustanlink.com. It adopted a theoretical sampling approach which requires continually comparing and contrasting the data being collected and seeking informants on the basis of the emergent constructs, in line with Cresswell, (2007). Interviews sought to gain in-depth insight into the influence of the Bollywood medium and to encourage informants to explore how the consumption of Bollywood films encouraged them to reacculturate to the Indian culture and traditions. In total the dataset consists of 15 online interviews, 15 face to face interviews, online participant observation, autoethnographic accounts and substantial fieldnotes. The data analysis and interpretation progressed in an iterative and interrelated manner between the online and offline environments, following the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data as recommended by Spiggle (1994) and others (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994).

There were three key themes that emerged in answer to our core research question, 1) the role of Bollywood in the reacculturation and reconnection with the Indian culture, 2) the role of Bollywood films in bringing the family together and 3) the role of Bollywood in enabling third generation British Sikhs to become aware of their diasporic consciousness and in constructing a hybrid East and West Identity.

A prominent theme that is emerging as a result of exposure to Bollywood films is the reacculturation and reconnection with the Indian culture. Young British Sikhs draw on the teachings of Bollywood (Dudrah, 2006; Mehta, 2005) to understand Indian traditions such as how to maintain family honour. Through Bollywood films they also learn about this perfect, once in a lifetime, innocent, Bollywood love and romance. Where the reacculturation to the Indian culture through Bollywood is specifically useful, is in its power to influence the third generation of British Sikhs in relation to their identity projects (Ustuner and Holt, 2007) as Non Resident Indians (Prasad, 2003). Evident from the fieldnotes young third generation British Sikhs became highly self reflexive as they were exposed to scenes from Bollywood movies and questioned their own identity and goals in life. They became highly aware of the importance of their ethnic culture and identity. Third generation British Sikhs were aware of the crucial role of Bollywood in reconnecting them with the Indian culture.
Another important theme that emerged was the role of Bollywood movies in bringing the family together. Bollywood films were consumed and experienced as families and then reflected on as a family (Dudrah, 2006). Though there was an intergenerational conflict between the second generation, India born parents and the third generation, UK born children, Bollywood was used by the second generation to keep their children in touch with the Indian culture. In fact mothers often used the consumption of Bollywood movies to encourage their third generation children to resist acculturation to the Western world and maintain their Indian identity.

The third and final theme to materialize was the role of Bollywood in enabling young British Sikhs to become aware of their diasporic consciousness and therefore understand their hybrid, East/West identities as UK born British Sikhs. The Western and British culture was the dominant culture in the lives of young British Sikhs, however through exposure to Bollywood movies, they learnt about the significance of the Indian culture in their lives and identity. Through exposure to the Bollywood film medium they learnt that they did not have to choose either the Western or Eastern culture and were very aware of their diasporic consciousness and the transcultural mixtures. Young British Sikhs learnt that they were in fact able to adopt traits and characteristics of both the Eastern and Western cultures, therefore enabling them to comprehend and construct hybrid identities they were comfortable with as British Sikhs.

REFERENCES

You make me feel bad about myself: Shaken self-view through observing a merged other act inconsistent with one’s self-view

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Imagine Nick, a PhD student who has a strong belief that eating healthy is an important attribute that one should possess and truly believes that he actually possesses that attribute. One day, on his way to the cafeteria, Nick sees his friend Jeff, another PhD student at Nick’s department to whom he really identifies, carrying a big bucket of French fries and toasted chicken in one hand and a big Coke in the other. How would this observation affect Nick’s choice (healthy vs. unhealthy) in the cafeteria?

The consensus in persuasion literature is that similarity of one individual to another increases the propensity of him being influenced by the other person. Therefore, it would be reasonable to predict that in the previous scenario Nick would be influenced by Jeff and take an unhealthy snack in the cafeteria. Yet, we suggest that exactly due to the high degree of merged identity between Nick and Jeff, Nick is more likely to choose a healthy food in contradiction to the above-mentioned prediction.