

CHAPTER 9

Religion, Gender and Identity Construction amongst Pakistanis in Australia

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AUSTRALIA—PAKISTAN: HISTORICAL LINKS

According to official records, the Pakistani Muslim community is classified as one group of Muslims who have migrated to Australia from more than 70 different countries (Saeed 2003). There are two different perspectives on the origin of the Pakistani diaspora in Australia. According to one view, they came to Australia after the easing of restrictions on Asian migration in the 1960s. According to the other view forwarded by Syed Atiq ul Hassan, the history of Pakistani migrants can be divided into three phases. The first phase (1860–1930) is the one in which the British (and later the newly ‘federated’ Australia) brought cameleers from areas (Sindh, North West Frontier Province, Balochistan), that became Pakistan after 1947. The second phase started after the Second World War. In this phase, it was mostly students and professionals who came to Australia under Commonwealth Scholarships and the Colombo plan. And the third phase started from 1973 when the White Australia Policy was abandoned and professionals were able to migrate under a points scheme (Syed 2003). This longer historical perspective is one that is more useful to explore, as it provides a backdrop to the more contemporary migration.

The cameleers that came in the first phase are represented in most written records, according to Syed, as Afghans (Syed 2003). The reason for this, he argues, may be because the majority of them came from the Northern Frontier, close to what is now the Pakistan/Afghan border. Amongst them were also those Afghans who were settled in the areas, which are now part of Pakistan. According to Syed, around three thousand people came to Australia from the northern parts of the Indian

subcontinent between 1860 and 1930, the majority from present-day Pakistan. These cameleers were highly skilled at breeding and training camels and most of them belonged to the Indian armed forces. Syed describes them as 'pioneers in the development of the Australian infrastructure' and states that:

Without them much of the development of the outback and inland Australia would have been very difficult. The construction of roads, tunnels, bridges, towns, mines, railways, fences and pastoral properties was successful largely because of their contributions. They discovered new routes across the country, assisting in the exploration of central Australia and other places. They were instrumental in laying the overland Telegraphic Line that lined Australia with the outside world. They carried merchandise of all shapes and sizes on their camels (Syed 2003: 4).

They were also responsible for bringing Islam to Australia, as they built the first mosque for the Muslim community (Syed 2003). Most of them were brought to Australia under three year contracts after which they were expected to return to their homeland. With the advent of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, only a few could renew their contracts, build their own businesses or marry. The White Australia Policy was relaxed after the First World War, enabling significant migrations from Europe, Asia, Middle East, the Far East, and South East Asia. However, Muslims did not arrive in large numbers until after the Second World War (Syed 2003).

During the 1950s and 1960s Pakistani students started coming to Australia along with other Asian students under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Colombo Plan. A number of Pakistani students, after completing their education, settled in New South Wales, Victoria and Canberra. Their numbers increased during the 1970s with the demise of the White Australia Policy in 1973, the flow of Pakistani professionals and students grew substantially (Syed 2003). According to Australian official figures, between 1947 and 2001 the Muslim population in Australia rose from 2704 to 281,586, of which 11,876 are reported to be Pakistani (Saeed 2003). There are no statistics available on Pakistani ancestry in Australia, as the census reports 2001 only include the data on ancestry of immigrant communities whose population was more than 50,000 (see ABS, *Australians Ancestries* 2001). Therefore, it is impossible to ascertain what percentage of Pakistani Australians are born overseas and what percentage are born in Australia. However, given that only 22.3 per cent of Pakistani Australians speak English at home (ABS, *Australian Ancestries*

2001), one can guess that the majority of Pakistanis still belong to the first generation, as one would expect much higher rates of English-speaking for subsequent generations.

Moreover, if we follow Syed's argument, that most cameleers who are popularly known as Afghans in Australia, were from the areas that became Pakistan after the partition of Indian subcontinent, the question arises whether we should consider a number of Australian born Afghans as Pakistanis as well. Since the Australian census provides no data, to either confirm or deny Syed's argument, and there has been little independent research into the origins and history of the Afghan Cameleers and their descendents, for the purposes of this chapter we will consider only those Pakistani Australians who are counted in the Australian Census Report of 2001, as Pakistanis. The census report does not account for the religious and ethnic background of these people i.e. the percentage of Muslim and non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan and the percentage of different ethnic groups such as Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis, Urdu speaking and Pathans. However, according to many Pakistanis interviewed and based on my observations, it can be safely said that the majority of Pakistani migrants in Australia are Muslims, and ethnically they are mainly Punjabis, Urdu Speaking and Pathans and secondly Sindhis with very few Baluchis.¹

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

There are many sites of identity construction for the Pakistani diaspora in Australia. However, three stand out as the most important to both external sources of differencing and internal self-identifying: Islamic religion, patriarchal family traditions, and the gender relations that are so often implicated in religious and family matters. However, it would be important to mention that most Pakistanis in Australia see religion as an individual affair and that it should be a sphere separate from the state. For this reason, most Pakistani Muslims, like most other Muslims in Australia, call themselves Australian Muslims. Moreover, most Pakistanis are not orthodox Muslims. Religion becomes important for them to maintain their family traditions. In this context, the overlap of family traditions and religion is observable, where the re-construction of patriarchal family traditions of their country of origin are justified in the name of religion. The result is a disparity between male and female mobility and interaction with wider Australian society.

In this part of the chapter, it will be shown that family traditions impact upon the identity of the Pakistani diaspora in Australia this in turn

impacts upon their interaction with the wider Australian community, and finally the imaginary of the wider Australian community of Muslims also impacts upon the status of Pakistani communities². It can be demonstrated that the wider Australian community sees Pakistani Muslims and Muslims from other countries in general as a problem, especially after 11 September 2001 and the colouring of Australian multicultural policy by the 'One Australia' policy of the current regime. This is articulated primarily in terms of a binary between the way of life of the Anglo Celtic Australian majority and that of Muslims generally (and in our case of Pakistanis). This dichotomy produces reactions in the minorities which further enhances a sense of victimhood and isolation.

FAMILY TRADITIONS AND IDENTITY

Following Tsagarousianou (2004), it can be argued that the Pakistani diaspora is not merely a nostalgic community dreaming to go back to their homeland some day (although some may articulate such sentiments), but is one that, whilst maintaining its religious and ethnic identity, is in a process of negotiating its identity to relate to the wider Australian society on one hand, and on the other, to new ideas and cultural interactions. The following comment, by a Pakistani, is instructive of what they feel about their homeland:

In Pakisran also the joint family system is in a gradual state of dilapidation. There is a change occurring in Pakistan as well but the process is slow. I have observed that there (in Pakistan) also the unity between brothers no longer exists. It was not like this in the past. So people think if they have to live the same kind of life in Pakistan what's wrong here (in Australia). Here at least they have jobs and security. I know two families, which went to Pakistan to settle, but came back to Australia.

The comment is not in agreement with the overemphasis of writers, such as Safran (1991), who argued that diasporic communities have strong nostalgic links with the original homeland. On the contrary, what the comment suggests is that the homeland does not remain the same but changes with time. It is in this context that Hall points out that, the identification of diasporic communities with their past and the 'possible return of these communities to homeland is precarious'. (Hall 1993: 355 as quoted in Tsagarousianou 2004: 56). Tsagarousianou thus argues that diasporic communities should not be seen as backward looking. Following

Morley he maintains that diasporic experiences are 'almost invariably constituting new transnational spaces of experience (Morley 2000) that are complexly interfacing with the experiential frameworks that both countries of settlement and the purported countries of origin represent' (Tsagarousianou 2004: 57). In the case of Pakistani diasporic community in Australia, however, one modification to the above argument needs to be made. This pertains to the male dominated family units that have different sanctions for adopting acculturation strategies for men and women. Too often than not diaspora is assumed to be gender neutral, whereas, the gender aspect of diaspora, it can be argued, at times, has major implications regarding identity construction and acculturation strategies of diasporic communities (Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk 2006).

Ghuman pointed out that Muslim families are reluctant when establishing relationships with the wider Australian society compared to Hindu and Sikh families (Singh Ghuman 1997, as quoted in Fijac and Sonn 2003). In the light of my own research Ghuman's observation seem to be simplistic. The level of integration of Muslims with wider society in Australia depends on two major factors. Firstly, the nature of the economic status these families enjoy within Australia and the class character of the migrating families. Second, in the case of Pakistani Muslim immigrants in particular, it varies within immigrant families in Australia belonging to various ethnic groups living in different provinces in Pakistan (for example: Pathan, Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi and Urdu speaking). This point of view is shared by the findings of Fijac and Sonn, who examined the level of integration of Pakistani families with wider Australian community and noted that this varies by families belonging to different ethnic communities in Pakistan. For example, they have a view that Pathans are more conscious of maintaining their distinct Pathan culture and family traditions compared to Urdu speaking families. I would add Punjabi families in the latter category as well. This means that Pathans are more reluctant to integrate into wider society compared to Urdu speaking and Punjabis. The reason for such variance might be the uneven economic and cultural development of different ethnic groups belonging to different provinces in Pakistan. The Pathans mostly live in areas, which are still dominated by tribal culture, customs and value system. When they come abroad they bring the same cultural package with them to the host country. Hence, the ethnic background of Pakistani Muslims becomes an important factor in determining the level of their integration with the wider Australian society. Moreover, it depends on the economic status and class orientation of the migrating Muslim families. For example in the

case of Iraqi refugee families in Australia, it has been observed that more than men, it is Muslim women who maintain wider contacts with Australian society. Many Iraqi women drive taxis and even buses and are the main contributors towards family's economic well-being.

On the whole in the case of the Pakistani diaspora in Australia it is evident that there is a process in which Berry's (1999) formulation, that diasporic communities usually tend to practice a mix of 'cultural maintenance' and 'contact-participation' strategies, seems to be true. The former refers to the extent to which people wish to maintain their cultural identity and the latter refers to the extent to which 'people value and seek out contact with those outside their own groups, and wish to participate in the daily life of the larger society' (Berry 1999: 13). Usually the non-dominant groups wish to achieve both (Berry 1999). However, it is observed that at times the two-pronged strategy is gender biased. This is because in Pakistani families it is mostly men's income the family depends on. Moreover, they usually come from middle and in some cases from upper middle classes in Pakistan (Saeed 2003). For this reason, in families that rely more on men's income than women's, men tend to have wider contacts with Australian society compared to women who don't work. However it also depends upon the level of education women have. For example, in the case of women being doctors, psychiatrists and other professions, they are also equally proactive in integrating into wider society.

Although there are no official statistics available regarding the percentage of Pakistani women employed, my interviews in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane offered the view that around 50 per cent of women do work outside the home. However, not all of them are highly qualified professional women. The income of most women is not the prime source of livelihood and is considered extra family income. Moreover, according to some female respondents, women start working outside the home when a family buys a house and needs extra income to pay monthly interest instalments. In families where men's income is the prime source of livelihood, it is they who have greater opportunities and approval of the family to participate in functions organized by the wider Australian community and women seldom accompany them. Moreover, it is rare to observe that women from such families participate in the wider Australian life independently. It is also noted that many Pakistani men even go to bars and drink alcohol beverages such as beer and wines, however, they would never approve of these kinds of activities for women.

Since in most cases, the family's dependence is not on women's income,³ based on Berry's formulation of a two pronged strategy of 'cultural maintenance' and contact-participation' of diasporic communities, it is observed that Pakistani women are mostly supposed to adopt the former strategy and men the latter. Women are usually expected to maintain the cultural traditions within the family and men to establish contacts with the wider society. The following comments from Pakistani women are instructive of this fact: 'More acceptable for men to act western...women are expected to uphold traditions.' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 22); 'man acts westernized is not seen as a big thing, but if a woman acts westernized she is seen as teaching children corruption.' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 22). While sharing her observation about a Pakistani male colleague, one of my female Australian friends made a commonly articulated comment that he acts Australian while at work, but at home he is traditional and has put the burden of maintaining his family values on his wife.

While some Pakistani women do express dissatisfaction regarding the role assigned to them, others mostly accept the differences in gender roles in their families and community (Fijac and Sonn 2004). This can be explained through the comments made by such Pakistani women in the study conducted by Fijac and Sonn: 'we want roles assigned to us'; 'we accept our role as a woman'; 'Muslim women don't want the same rights as men...God has given special rights to them'; 'Men and women who believe in their faith...know gender roles...carry them out with pride' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 22). While these women do adhere to the traditional view of gender roles, an important point needs to be made here, i.e. that like most Pakistani men, most women are not practicing Muslims of the orthodox variety as well. It is not common that a woman prays five times a day, or wears a hijab to cover her neck and hair. Most Pakistani women, when they leave the home for shopping either wear pants or *shalwar kameez* with *duppata* on their shoulders (Pakistani dress). A Pakistani woman wearing the hijab is quite uncommon, even in Pakistan, with the exception of the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP), Balochistan, and other 'tribal' areas where women wear the veil. Moreover, even those Pakistani women in Australia who believe in traditional gender roles, at times resent the pressure put on them by men to uphold family traditions. For example a women while accepting traditional gender roles stated: 'we're happy to have these roles but don't like pressure to keep the family on track (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 22)'. Espin argued that following traditional gender roles within immigrant

communities helps maintain traditional culture, but at the same time it isolates women from the host society (Espin 1995, as quoted in Fijac and Sonn 2004). In the case of Pakistani families Espin's observation applies more to women than men. On the whole, however, gender disparity impacts upon the integration of the whole family into the wider society; though men do have opportunities and the family's approval to independently interact with the host society.

As mentioned elsewhere, most Pakistanis are not orthodox Muslims and do not engage in the ritual practices of Islam. In most cases, this is even true for those women who accept the traditional gender roles. Religion is usually rediscovered by men as part of a diasporic revanchism that involves maintenance of patriarchal family values and gender hierarchy. It is commonly observed that Pakistanis at times become more religious abroad than they were in their own country. Men advocate religion within their families to justify gender roles. While this might be true in their country of origin as well, advocating religion and justifying patriarchal family traditions through religion becomes even more important in a western society. This is because in their country of origin the patriarchal norms are given and are part of the polity, whereas in Australia, they have to be reiterated due to different norms and values regarding gender roles, male-female relationships and sexuality. In an interview, this was effectively explained by a young Australian born Pakistani girl who commented that, 'in Pakistan, the Pakistanis live in their culture. Here they have to construct it'. In Australia, therefore, the perceptions of patriarchal family traditions acquire a new context and families at times are more conscious to follow them. In short, in Australia the family values of most Pakistani families stand in conflict with the wider Australian norms regarding gender roles and status and religion and in this context becomes instrumental in specializing gender hierarchy within the home. It acts as an anchor point to construct boundaries to contain women's behaviour.

Werbner had argued that the transnational migrants try to preserve some of their cultural traditions while 'sinking roots in a new country', not for the sake of it, but because they have certain stakes in particular aspects of their culture (Werbner 2003: 7). Such stakes pertain to power relations and 'culture as a medium of social interaction confers agency within a field of power relations (Werbner 2003: 7). Referring to the power struggle between men and women in Britain, Werbner discussed the case of Pakistani families joining their male members in Britain in the 1960s. As wives joined their husbands, they 'struggled to recapture their

control over a quite different form of social exchange: the Punjabi gift economy, *Lena Dena*, 'taking and giving' (Werbner 2003: 7). Moreover, they also started neighbourhood Quran readings followed by food offering. These practices, which Werbner calls 'female-dominated cultural symbolic complexes', were brought to Britain from Pakistan. Their husbands usually regarded 'ritual feasting and gift-giving as wasteful' (Werbner 2003: 8). She thus pointed out that 'the translocation of cultural practices to Britain was not automatic, a matter of nostalgic clinging to 'tradition', but the product of locally grounded power struggles—in this case, a gendered one between married women and their spouses' (Werbner 2003: 8). In this context Werbner argues that women 'recreated the domestic and inter-domestic domains under their control. Through such culturally grounded transactions, they came over time to dominate familial sociality. The men worked, the women networked' (Werbner 2003: 8). Unlike Britain, such a struggle is not visible in Australia. This might be because such processes only occur where transnational migrants are considerable in number and form huge clusters of families within certain localities. Within Australia this is not true generally, as in most cities we don't find clusters of Pakistani families concentrating in some particular localities. Moreover, there is another difference between Britain and Australia that pertains to the class dimension of Pakistanis in both these countries. The Pakistanis who were discussed by Werbner came out of predominantly peasant backgrounds in Pakistan and became petite bourgeoisie in UK, whereas, in Australia most Pakistanis are professionals. The Punjabi gift economy of *Lena Dena* (give and take) is more entrenched into rural polity than urban locations from where the Pakistani professionals come. The reoccurrence of gift economy within the Pakistani community in the UK, therefore, might be because of the class background of these immigrants.

On the whole, it can be argued that the whole process of identity formation lies in-between the needs to relate to the new culture whilst maintaining the actual or newly perceived patriarchal family traditions. Espin had argued that the immigrants in western societies are caught between the expectations of the host society and the ones of their own community (Espin 1995, as quoted in Fijac and Sonn 2004). In this context as mentioned earlier Pakistani men (not always but most of the time) in Australia are in a position to fulfil the expectations of the host society, however, women usually are not. This is also because the families in which both men and women have integrated well into the wider society have to face community pressure. They are seen as westernized and away

from their own culture. For example, few Pakistani women and men even have Australian husbands and wives and few Pakistani families have integrated fully into the host society, other families within the Pakistani community see them as being too westernized. Such families are therefore at times isolated from their own community. They have more interactions and relations with Australians than Pakistanis. Community pressure, therefore, also impacts upon the integration process and identity formation of individual immigrant families. This is at least true for the first generation of the Pakistani diaspora; with the second and third generations the situation changes. The second generation is surely more Australian than the first. This, however, causes frustration within the first generation as they find themselves helpless to do anything to keep the next generation linked to their family traditions.

ANGLO-CELTIC PRIVILEGE AND PAKISTANI INTEGRATION

Another important aspect in the context of the integration of Pakistanis with the wider Australian community is the vision of the Australian public in general and that of the Australian state in particular about different ethnic communities and especially Muslim communities. This vision overlooks the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity within the Muslim community and the diversity of ideas about religion and culture within an ethnic group. In the context of the Sydney riots, between white Australians and Lebanese Muslims, the anthropologist Professor Andrew Dawson argued that these events and the commentary that accompanied them 'provide an important window onto the state of contemporary cultural politics in Australia. In this context a number of key processes can be identified' (Dawson 2006: 146). One of the processes, according to him, 'involved ethnic homogenization and specification, whereby the diversity of riotous factions was progressively representationally expunged and replaced initially by a conflict between Anglo-Celtic Australians and others and lastly by a conflict between Australians and Muslims' (Dawson 2006: 146). This comment highlights two points: one, that Australian nationalism is still dominated by the Anglo Celtic community, and the other, that any notion of multiculturalism produces ethnic communities as homogenous or more appropriately as a homogenous 'Other'. This fact is also verified by a telephonic survey of 5056 residents in Queensland and New South Wales that examined the attitudes to 'cultural difference, perceptions of the extent of racism, tolerance of specific groups, ideology of the nation, perceptions of Anglo-Celtic cultural privilege, and belief in

racialism, racial separatism and racial hierarchy' (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, McDonald 2004: 1). Kevin M Dunn, et al. conducted this survey and in the concluding paragraph of their research findings, they stated:

The social construction of cultural groups as problematic, by dint of supposed or generalised cultural practices, is a key aspect of the new racism. Another is the culturally exclusive construction of what constitutes the mainstream, the normal, or indeed the nation. There are more respondents who denied there was Anglo cultural privilege in Australia than there were those who recognized it. Recognition of privilege was especially associated with those born overseas, and with those who used a language other than English. Preparedness to make judgments on whether some groups do not belong to Australian society was itself culturally uneven. This culturally varied recognition suggests that privilege itself is culturally uneven. Given the findings on out groups and privilege, the degree of fit of cultural groups was most likely judged along an Anglo (or Anglo-Celtic) yardstick. This provides yet another indicator of the unevenness of national belonging. The survey findings reported here generally suggest that the Australian national imaginary still remains very Anglo-Celtic (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, McDonald 2004: 11).

In light of the above, it can be argued that the homogenization of ethnic communities (and especially of Muslims) and at times the intolerance to accept the cultural values of immigrants, especially the varied cultures of Muslim immigrants, makes it difficult for the former to integrate in the dominant culture of the host country. Muslims in this context feel uncomfortable with the way they are seen and at times are resentful of how the dominant Australian community sees them and portrays them in the media.

Fijac and Sonn in their study on Pakistani women living in western Australia reported that their participants in the study 'believed that perceptions of them as Muslim women held by the western host society are severely distorted and unfounded, perhaps encouraged by misinformed western media' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 23) The following comments of these women are instructive of what they think about the perceptions of the wider Australian community towards them: 'Westerners believe Asian women...are incapable'; we are frustrated with white society, they perceive us to be brain dead, brainwashed...outside people, so ignorant' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 23). While rejecting ethnic homogenization these women were critical of how the wider Australian community overlooks the diversity within the Muslim community and reduces their cultural diversity and identity into a stereotypically one-dimensional identity of

being Muslims. For example they were of the opinion that, 'not all Muslims are Pakistanis and not all Pakistanis are Muslims (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 17). They believed that westerners confuse the Pakistanis with other Muslim cultures perceiving Muslim identity as a race and not a religion (Fijac and Sonn 2004). The argument of these women can be extended further in the light of cultural differences that can exist even within the citizens from one country but belonging to different ethnic communities. For example, as mentioned earlier, Pakistan being a federal state contains various ethnic communities such as Punjabis, Sindhis, Urdu Speaking, Pathans and Baluchis. These ethnic communities that belong to the same country possess different cultural traditions and values, which affect the process of their assimilation in a western country.⁴

Though, it might be true that the wider Australian community perceives Muslims as a homogenous community, the perceptions of the Pakistani community towards them are also somewhat the same. They also take the Australian wider community as practicing 'one western culture', assuming that people belonging to such a culture probably are highly individualistic/selfish, materialistic and sexually free. For example, a Pakistani respondent, while differentiating between Pakistani and Australian culture, commented that in Pakistan, 'when someone grows older, his views about family matter command more respect, while in Australia when someone grows older his views become less important because he becomes retired and economically poor'. This comment is surely too general and puts all westerners in Australia in one basket, as one can witness many families amongst them that equally value and care for their elders the way Pakistanis do. Moreover, it is observable that not all Pakistanis follow this norm. Another view by a respondent about a Pakistani student whom he found drinking and having a girlfriend in his atms seems again to generalize the host community in Australia. While explaining this he showed his disappointment in deteriorating Pakistan youth and said: 'some Pakistani students belonging to rich families become totally westernized. The other day a Pakistani student came to me who was drunk having an Aussie girlfriend in his arm'. What he was implying was that some Pakistani youth have become as perverted sexually as Australians are. Here he could not distinguish between different moralities and took the issue of morality as constant around the world.

Despite the need to acknowledge that minorities also hold homogenous views of majorities, it does not divert from the fact that the dominant ethos in the social and political landscape is created by Anglo-Celtic Australians. Their views of Muslims as a homogenous community and the

notion that 'cultural diversity to be deleterious to a strong and harmonious society' has significantly more impact on Australian multiculturalism, compared to the opinions of a few Muslims who view the wider Australian community in the same manner. In this context Dunn et al., while agreeing with Jayasuriya's (2002: 43) analyses of racism, suggested that 'the confrontation of this sociobiological and pessimistic understanding of nation remains an unfinished public policy imperative of Australian multicultural policy' (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, McDonald 2004: 11). The Multicultural policy in Australia, it can be argued, is still at the state of adolescence and needs to be further developed and strengthened through education and mass media.

On the whole it can be argued that the process of identity formation of Pakistani diaspora in Australia has three main dimensions: gender; religion; and, Pakistanis perceived as homogenous Muslims and not as Muslims belonging to a specific socio-cultural background. The gender dimension is reflected in the process of acculturation, where Pakistanis tend to have a mixed strategy of assimilation, while maintaining their distinct cultural traditions. However, in this process the burden of maintaining such tradition mostly lies on the shoulders of women. Religion also becomes important, and at times more important than it would be for them in their country of origin in the context of maintaining family tradition. Otherwise most families are not orthodox Muslims in their daily life and are moderate. In the end their identity is considerably influenced by the way the wider Australian community perceives them. This has become significantly more important after 11 September 2001 and the attacks on the World Trade Centre in the USA.

EFFECTS OF 11 SEPTEMBER

There would be rare examples in the entire history of mankind of a day such as 11 September 2001 that changed the entire world. Its main consequence—the US 'war on terror' divided 'the world into friends and enemies' (Humphrey 2005: 133). Yet this divide is not based on cultural or geographical separation (Humphrey 2005). International migration in advance countries has made the cities of these countries transnational places and 'thus while the war on terrorism rhetorically divides the world, it at the same time declares war everywhere (Humphrey 2005: 133). The impact of 11 September, therefore, should be seen in the context of a globalizing world, which has become interconnected through mass migration from the South to the North (Humphrey 2005). While

11 September raised new questions about international security and about the issue of addressing non-traditional threats, it also significantly impacted Muslim communities in states such as the UK, Germany, France, USA and Australia. As elsewhere, in Australia too a heated debate began, especially in the media, on the issue of Islam and the Muslim community (Saeed 2003). Two main points of views emerged. One argued for the need of taking a hard look at 'Islam and the potential threat it poses to Australia, its society and values' (Saeed 2003: IV). The others argued that the Muslim community in Australia is not a homogenous community but has diverse Islamic practices and origins and not all are extremists or could be called terrorist (Saeed 2003). On the whole, however, 'their institutions, beliefs and norms became the focus of the media and Australian security services' (Saeed 2003: IV). A small but vocal segment of Australian society saw Islamic symbols with hatred, 'which was often directed at Muslims' (Saeed 2003: V).

The situation led to a reaction in which immigration policy was reviewed and restricted, resulting in major amendments to existing legislation. One such amendment was the introduction of the Form 1190 for applicants applying for permanent residence in Australia (Hugo 2002: 4). This form asks questions about whether the applicant had any military background or training in weapons (Hugo 2002: 4). Another form being introduced pertains to a character assessment of applicants. The applicants are required to present a Police Clearance Certificate from their home country. If the applicant has been in Australia for the last twelve months he has to submit Police Clearance Certificates both from his home country and the Australian Federal Police. In general there has been an increased cancellation of visas because of these issues (Hugo 2002: 4). However, apart from facing hassle, this particular legislation will not affect Pakistani applicants, as most of them are either former students, who acquired their education in Australia, or professionals coming from Pakistan. In contrast, another change that occurred after 11 September was an 'increased activity in immigration compliance with hard line programs to locate, detain and depart people who are without visas in Australia or people who are in breach of their visa conditions' (Hugo 2002: 4). This has certainly affected Pakistani students, as cases of them being detained and deported from Australia, for breaching their visa condition regarding 'work eligibility as a student in Australia', have been reported. Indeed, the areas where Pakistanis are most affected by the new policies are those relating to student or visitor's visas. In granting a student or visitor's visa, the immigration policy is marked by differentiation. For example, the students

of certain countries such as Pakistan and China are placed at assessment level 4 and countries such as India and Iran are placed in 'assessment level 3 for getting student visa for higher education.'⁵ This implies that it is very hard for students from these countries to secure a student visa for Australia as 'there are virtually impossible benchmarks set in terms of financial capacity' (Hugo 2004: 9). On the other hand for rich and developed countries, much lower standards are set. As for visitor's visa, obtaining such a visa is also extremely difficult. Visitors from those countries marked as high risk, in most cases, are not granted visitor's visa unless a sponsor lodges a security bond 'ensuring that all visa holders would keep their visa conditions' (Hugo 2004: 9). In this regard, Pakistan is considered to be one of those countries that are rated as high risk.⁶ This certainly affects Pakistanis in getting student as well as visitors visas.

The above changes in immigration policy can be seen in the light of Humphrey's argument. He argued that 'the Australian Government has shifted from a perspective of reconciliation to one of risk, from a future premised on social inclusion of diversity to one premised on social exclusion, based on suspicion of the dangerous 'Other'(Humphrey 2005: 133). According to Humphrey, the period of reconciliation in Australia was the one when immigrants and indigenous Australians got their cultural difference and rights recognized (Humphrey 2005). This recognition was reflected in the policy of multiculturalism for immigrants and the recognition of land rights and cultural heritage of Aboriginal Australians (Humphrey 2005). The post 11 September situation that transformed the policy of reconciliation to the one of 'risk' is reflected in the 'One Australia' policy of the present regime. In this context, Humphrey stated:

This shift to a risk perspective has changed the terms of participation of Muslim immigrants in the West (especially in Western Europe and Australia). They had already been regarded as socially problematic and even culturally incompatible with multicultural values because of their social marginality and their conspicuous cultural identification through public Islamic rituals and symbolic dress. The effect of the Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks in the United States was to deepen racism towards Muslims in Western societies everywhere through the collective fear the attacks engendered (Humphrey 2005: 134).

Fijac and Sonn's observations are in line with the above statement, they argue that 11 September 'had a significant impact on the daily functions of individuals with this community' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 16). Their research findings suggested that while Pakistanis in Western Australia were

already experiencing some discrimination, but since 11 September racism no longer remained concealed, 'but more overt in the form of violent threats and attacks' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 16). The following comments are instructive of this fact: 'Racism, threats, discrimination increased dramatically since September 11'; 'Since September 11 people have become even more violent than before'; there are more incidences of racism because of negative stuff on T.V'; and 'People were always racist... now they are more violent and aggressive' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 16). Elaborating further, Fijac and Sonn stated: 'these findings suggest racism experienced by participants and other Muslims are primarily based on the fact they are Muslim rather than being Pakistani'. One of their research participants in this context commented that: 'Racist attacks against Muslims in Australia has gotten much worse since September 11' and 'Attacks since September 11 are on Muslims'; 'Since September 11, Western society now has a reason or justification to display hatred against Muslims' (Fijac and Sonn 2004: 17).

CONCLUSIONS

There is not much written on the life and history of the Pakistani diaspora in Australia. The above account was meant, therefore, to be an overture that presented themes for future study, rather than a definitive statement. The chapter was divided into three sections. Section one shed light on the historical links between Pakistan and Australia. Section two focused on the issue of identity construction of Pakistanis in Australia. In this context, the focus was on three key factors in the identity construction of Pakistani Muslims in Australia: religion, gender, and family. On the basis of empirical evidence, it has been argued that the single most important of these three sites for identity construction is religion, which often provides the lens through which the cultural traditions of their native land are interpreted and justified for their maintenance. Moreover, it has been argued that religious identity becomes a significantly more important factor for most Pakistanis in Australia than it would be in Pakistan, where their strong patriarchal family traditions are not forced to stand face-to-face with the dominant western culture. In particular, Pakistani women become the crucible on which relations with the host society are tested, thus restricting their adjustment and integration, and at times, impacting on the interaction of the whole family with the wider community. On the whole, therefore, the process of acculturation and adaptation is gender biased and built around stereotyping that impacts on the perceptions of

the wider community and upholds the intolerance of those who believe in protecting the Anglo-Celtic Australian culture, from the habits and beliefs of other nations and cultures. Like other Muslim communities, Pakistanis face cultural racism in Australia.

Finally, section three examined the particular impact of the events of 11 September 2001 on the interplay between Pakistani and other Australians, particularly the dominant Anglo-Celtic hegemon. 11 September further increased intolerance on the part of Australians as a whole, and raised fears among Pakistanis that they are not only considered foreign, but also dangerous, due to their origin in a predominantly Muslim country. While nobody can argue against the issue of security and the threat of terrorism, one aspect that needs to be kept in vision is that increased emphasis on potential risk leading to the 'One Australia' policy might in the long run lead Australia to what Andrew Dawson has feared. In one of his concluding remarks in his chapter on the Sydney riots he stated: 'Certainly, in the era of the 'war on terror' and the 'home grown terrorist' one cannot discount the possibility of a return to an old style 'white Australia' approach of highly targeted immigration in which Islamic people are regarded as the most undesirable' (Dawson 2006: 147).

NOTES

1. The information presented in this chapter is based on semi-structured interviews with several individuals chosen by purposive sampling, in Melbourne, several telephonic interviews in Brisbane and Sydney -, as well as my own observations during three years of doctoral study in Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Melbourne between 2003 and 2006, this chapter endeavours to present a few of the key motifs of the life of Pakistanis in Australia.
2. Such imagery essentializes Muslims as extremists and reluctant to adopt modern values and way of life. It also sees Muslims migrating from various countries as one ethnic community and not as communities having the same religion but different social and cultural backgrounds.
3. Excluding those families where women are highly qualified or are professionals, as in such families even if men have more income than women, women do assert themselves.
4. As mentioned elsewhere, Pathans are more reluctant to assimilate with the wider Australian community compared to other ethnic communities coming from Pakistan.
5. There are four risk assessment levels for various study levels. Most countries from Western Europe and other rich countries such as Canada and Japan are listed in the most favourable assessment level (Hugo 2002: 9). Applicants from these countries have the privilege of lodging more informal onshore applications via the Internet, a service not available to assessment level 4 applicants (Hugo 2002: 9).

6. Such country ratings were already in place even before 11 September, and Hugo had predicted in 2002 that there 'would be stronger reliance placed on such classifications in future'. (Hugo 2002: 4)
7. They are few but very vocal.



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