

Huma Butt  
Doctoral Student, Faculty of Sociology, University Duisburg-Essen  
PhD Research Project (Working Title)

## **Family, Marriage and Ethnic Identity: A Study of Second Generation Pakistani Immigrants in Germany**

In contemporary era, the patterns of immigrants' mobility and linkages are embedded with transformations in their identity, belongings and constructions of home and place (Morely 2001). The concept of 'home' not only presents the geographical territory but also the symbolic importance of the 'spaces of belonging'. It can be applied at different levels such as domestic, national and transnational communities, where people consider themselves as being 'at home'. It is very important to know group formation processes because through such processes one can thoroughly understand the roles and effects of ethnicity on the human groups. In this context there is need to focus on the social boundaries of ethnicity; despite the fact that it may also have territorial counterparts as well.

In studies of migration; belonging to a specific landscape or geography play pivotal role in the construction of identity among immigrants. The present empirical research deals with the issue of ethnic identity among second generation Pakistani immigrants. I am interested to know how second generation Pakistani immigrants construct the image of 'motherland' and develop their feelings of belonging. How they differentiate themselves as 'Pakistani' migrants and maintain their ethnic identity in Germany. What type of challenges they face in the maintenance of such ethnic belongings.

The second objective of my research is to study how the ethnic identity of second generation Pakistani immigrants influences them to marry in the country of origin. Transnational marriages often focus on immigrants' socioeconomic development and their access to different institutional mechanism (Muttarak 2010). Most of the experts of transnational studies consider these indicators as a sign of integration (Rothon et al. 2009; Heath & Cheung 2007; Nazroo 2003). Though socio-economic accomplishment is a significant dimension of immigrants' integration; however, is not necessarily giving some direct understanding of the nature of relations between the host society and the immigrant's populations (Muttarak 2010).

However, some current literature has also depicted the increasing trend to study different patterns and family dynamics of the immigrants and their descendants (Hannemann et al. 2014). These patterns had included formation and stability of transnational marriages between the immigrants and the natives (Milewski and Kulu 2014; Dribe and Lundh 2012; Kalmijn and Van Tubergen 2006). Marriage with natives is often seen as an indicator of integration (Beck-Gernsheim 2007). If there is an increase in interethnic marriages between the immigrants and the host society then it is seen as indicating cultural integration and a decline in group cohesion

(Rosenfeld 2002; Qian & Lichter 2001). Therefore, to study the partner choice of the immigrants can indicate to what extent they are integrated with the host society (Muttarak 2007).

In the context of Pakistani society, ethnic and religious affiliation like sect and common cultural practices like caste play a pivotal role to take decisions regarding marriage. A majority of Pakistani immigrants follows similar patterns for marriage of their children (Shaw 2001). Such patterns are reproduced through socialization and they play a decisive role regarding marriage among Pakistani immigrants. By promoting marriage with spouses in the country of origin second generation emigrants show that they are abiding by the cultural values of their ethnic community and that they commit to kinship structure (Beck-Gernsheim 2007).

By applying qualitative research design, I shall study how Pakistani second generation immigrants construct their ethnic identity in Germany and how their ethnic identity influence them to marry in the country of origin. While using theoretical sampling, I shall apply grounded theory model to get better understanding of my research questions. Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves (Charmaz 2006).

Pakistani immigration in Europe has a sizeable number; especially in the UK. However; a considerable population also lives in other European countries like Germany, France, Italy and Spain. I have selected Pakistani immigrants in Germany because there studies in this context are rare. There are some studies of Pakistani immigrants living in the UK and Norway but I couldn't find any study on Pakistani immigrants living in Germany; especially on the issue of construction of ethnic identity and marriage among second generation. It is my effort to fill this empirical and literature gap on Pakistani immigrants in Germany.