

IDENTITY CRISES AND SOCIAL CAPITAL: INTEGRATION PATTERNS OF AFGHAN IMMIGRANTS IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The study explores the dynamics of social capital for social identity development and integration of Afghan immigrants in Pakistan. The study also examines the different aspects of Afghan immigrants' social identities, with an emphasis on the difficulties they face in their daily lives based on their lived experiences. Establishing and enhancing a sense of belonging to the host society is crucial for accelerating the integration process. The idea that relationships with natives should promote a sense of belonging and that relationships with in-group members strengthen social identity is supported by a number of theories and works of literature pertaining to contact and group identification. Semi-structured interviews (n=12) were carried out to examine how migrants create and maintain their social identities, and how their perspectives on the difficulties and shifts they encounter in relation to group memberships, and ultimately the impact this has on their social identity development and integration process. These interviews built upon the social identity approach and social capital theory. The results indicate that social identities, which give Afghan immigrants in Pakistan a feeling of direction and belonging, improve resilience and aid in their social integration. For Afghan immigrants to successfully integrate, it is crucial to preserve and create a new social identity, deal with dual-identity issues, and endure discrimination and exclusion even after living there for a year. With broader implications for their identity formation in the new society and integration, the current study adds to and strengthens the literature on social capital and the social identity approach.

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan diaspora in Pakistan is largely due to prolonged regional conflict and lack of socio-political stability in Afghanistan. The long standing war in Afghanistan has resulted in a high population of refugees, and there are high populations of individuals who have fled to the neighboring countries because of the effect of the war, violence and political and economic instabilities. One of these host countries to this effect has been Pakistan which has been able to offer shelter, safety, and humanitarian support to many displaced refugees. On the other hand,

immigration of Afghan refugees has also been a humanitarian and security dilemma to Pakistan and the nation has had to deal with intricate problems in a resilient and humane manner (Amnesty International, 2019, Yusoff, Khan, et al., 2013). Pakistan has a current situation of the largest extended immigrant context in the globe with more than 1.7 million registered Afghan immigrants in the nation (UNCHR, 2023), making it the third-largest refugee destination in the world. According to another estimate, the total number of Afghan refugees with or without

registration to range between three to four million and are spread in different parts of the country (Amparado et al., 2021). Although a large number of Afghan immigrants have established a refuge in Pakistan, they are struggling to attain both social and economic acceptance in Pakistani society. Their problems are multifaceted and complicated, and their integration in a destination country requires a doable and sustainable solution. The underlying causes of Afghan diaspora difficulties should be dealt carefully, proper support and protection should be accorded, and efforts should be put on for long term solutions that would enable Afghan immigrants to resume their lives with dignity and respect.

The historical account explores many problems of refugee status of the Afghan in Pakistan with particular focus given to humanitarian and security aspect. Humanitarian aspect includes the crucial aspects of getting access to education, health facilities, and socialization. These challenges are crucial in the overall well-being of the refugees as well as the long term incorporation of these immigrants in their host communities.

The incorporation of immigrants into the host community has over the years been researched on respect to several powerful determinants and attributes. This has become more evident in recent years, with the research showing that subjective perceptions have an important impact in the process of integrating immigrants (e.g. Massey & Redstone, 2006). In the context of migration where people abandon their normal dwelling to live abroad or within their country of residence, there are high chances of destabilizing the group life of the people as well as the social identities underpinning such a group due to the social, environmental and in most cases cultural changes that are inevitable. The way migrants adjust to these shifts is given by a diversity of factors, such as their access to already existing social networks of their former place of origin, the way of adapting to new social identity without forgetting the old identities, the fact that both networks are compatible with each other and the extent to which each could support each other within the new social and environmental setting. Their shift between the societies and cultures can make their

problems dealing with their current identities even worse. New identities are also confronting the immigrants as they enter the new society and hence their identity is a reflection of the repertoire of cultural and social positions as opposed to those of the majority group in the host society. These formed group memberships may become a point of reference, to assist people to retain a sense of identification and affiliation to their former social situation. Since they began, the Afghans diaspora are grappling with their identity, place and position in Pakistan since their inception, they have been the target of racial profiling, inequitable treatment, social exclusion, discrimination, isolation, expulsion and exclusiveness as a result of the 9/11 tragedy, which in their turn did not allow their identities to form and develop in Pakistan. These obstacles may make them unable to integrate into the host societies and instead feel marginalized (Jetten et al., 2013)

Integration of immigrants could also be attributed to the social factor where the degree of social capital is considered. Generally, the literature separates bonding social capital, which is founded on the social networks within the ethnic group, and bridging social capital, which is founded on interethnic social networks (Amit, 2014). Additional social capital and manifestation with the aid of social networks assists in powering the capabilities (Zeib & Tahir, 2022). We also concentrate on how social capital and patterns of communication influence formation of identity of internal migrants in the nation that has a high number of immigrants to challenge the traditional perspective that social identities are not the most pertinent in the case of internal migrants (Wang & Cindy, 2012). The research also highlights that in presence of language barriers, the importance of social capital, whether online or offline, becomes prime concern for immigrants' integration in host societies (Tariq & Zeib, 2023; Zeib, 2021).

Objectives

- To study the experiences of the Afghan immigrants in Pakistan, especially regarding how they socialize.

- To examine how the identity crisis is experienced by Afghan immigrants in Pakistan in terms of cultural, ethnic, and national belonging.
- To investigate how social capital (bonding, bridging, and linking ties with peers, relatives and other community members) influences the outcomes of integration among the Afghan immigrants.
- To explore communication patterns (interpersonal, community, and digital) among the Afghan immigrants and how it affects their integration.
- To examine how the identity negotiation, social networks, and communication practices take place in the daily lives of the Afghan immigrants.

Research Questions

- How do Afghan immigrants pass through settling the identity crises in Pakistan between their cultural and national identity and displacement?
- How much do social capital (both online and offline) reduce identity crises amongst the Afghan immigrants in Pakistan?
- How do immigrants in Pakistan experience integration, based on the type of patterns of their communication?
- To what extent are digital media, social gatherings, and interpersonal networks useful in influencing integration experiences?

Theoretical Framework

This study upholds its standing on Social Capital theory and Social Identity theory. Extending the social capital concept to the creation of the social identity of immigrants, the researchers suggest that the social capital is also vital in ensuring the inclusion of the immigrants in the host society (Henríquez & Urzúa, 2023). Online and offline social capital is potent predictors of the location of people in the world (and their belonging to that location), and they can afford people access to essential social and psychological resources, such as trust and social support, self-esteem and sense of meaning, purpose and control in the world, through the hardships (von Deylen & Wichardt, 2025; Zhang et al., 2023). The recent reference to

the existing body of literature indicates the relevance of social capital on the formation of social identities that stress that the connection with the individuals of the same cultural and social identification and the belongingness to in-groups are critical assets to positive identity formation (Brance et al., 2024; Zeib, 2022). Second, the article builds on Social Identity theory. The social identity depicts individual, interpersonal, and social processes to integrate them into the social structures (Davis et al., 2019). Both sociology and psychology social psychologists have come up with the sound theories of social identity and social integration, which are specifically epitomized in social identity theory. Tajfel and Turner (1979) proposed a new interpretation of group behavior that is social identity theory. The perceived inter-group relationship is a major influence on the decision made by an individual regarding the behavior of people in that, individual recognition of groups is the foundation of group behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Based on the research by Hu & Cheung (2024) and Davis et al. (2019) social identity presumes identity meanings in social contexts and this was found to be positively predictive of social integration. The roles are internalized identities that are assigned to the self as an individual within a particular group. When the social context permits it, individuals have a tendency of instigating high-profile identities (Hu & Cheung, 2024).

Literature Review

Generally, one can describe identity as how an individual perceives herself/herself compared with the existent groups or social categories in his/her society. The identity literature demonstrates various points of view to the identity concept. Other researchers dwell on the individual identity and its connection with various social groups (Tajfel, 1974); others pay attention to how people manage their multiple identities (Shah et al., 2025). However, according to diverse views it is visible that people possess more than one identity and identity is multidimensional and dynamic concept. The higher chances are the acceptance of immigrants when they belong to cities or nations that are deemed identically and

culturally similar to the host society (Wimmer & Soehl, 2014). At the individual level, the extent of identity assimilation to the host society leads to the social integration into the host culture (Traunmüller & Helbling, 2022). It is the process of social integration as social identity transforms to fit the local surrounding world by embracing and inhabiting different spaces and establishing new relations in accordance to the condition that identities are not fixed and given.

The variation in dialect can influence the local identity of the migrants due to a number of reasons. People can experience psychological expenses of their communication with people of other dialects or be discriminated, which can become an obstacle to their assimilation with the host community. Besides the cultural influence of dialects on identity, they can also have communication influence to their integration process (Heilbrunn et al., 2016).

Ideally, the migrants come into a host place with a greater sense of attachment to the social environment of the place they come out of and lesser sense of attachment to the host society. Nevertheless, the migrant social identity is capable and will be transformed in face of the social situation of the people receiving them (Cai & Zimmermann, 2024). Social identity can be influenced by such aspects of the local environment as culture and institutions. Nonetheless, the trends of their reciprocal communication with online and offline social capital can also contribute to their integration identity formation in host society. Additionally, the research highlights that the heightened ethnic identification has been revealed to lead to resilience to negative impacts of discrimination (Romero et al., 2014).

In most cases, social capital is formed on the basis of mutual relationships between people in terms of trust, norms, and social networks (Yoon and Lee, 2019). In fact, social capital is manifested as the resources embedded in its association with others. Focus is placed on the perceived or real value of a network of formal and informal relationships of an individual with other members (Al-Gharbi, 2021). Individuals whose network of contacts is diverse and extensive have access to

higher social capital only and possess a better life than those with narrow and less rich networks. Investing in social networks further, individuals gain standards about reciprocity and trust and do have opinions and expectations that converge on people and life in a positively converging way (Yoon & Lee, 2019).

The social aspect could also be attributed to the integration of the immigrants as indicated by the degree of social capital. The literature tends to make a distinction between bonding social capital, formulated on the basis of the social networks inside the ethnic group, and bridging social capital, formulated on the basis of the social networks that do not exist inside the ethnic group and may be between two ethnic groups (Vacca et al., 2025). Past studies describe the identity formation in terms of social networks (Davis, 2014). The social networks serve as a means of mediating between the key social categories on the one hand and interpersonal relations on the other hand. Pre-existing studies have opined that a correlation exists between social networks and social identity (Davis, 2014; Yoon and Lee, 2019). That is, one of the homogeneous social networks gave rise to categorical social identities, whereas relational social identities existed in social networks between heterogeneous groups of people. In fact, the homogeneity and heterogeneity of social networks influence the identity exclusivity degree (Lubbers et al., 2010). In addition, the elements of social capital play a leading role in identification: the more the heterogeneity of the social networks, the more likely to know other people (Yoon & Lee, 2019). Previous researches show that social capital is a determining factor of identity of immigrants. Bulled (2025) observe that racial minorities tend to make identity and friendship decisions within the group (bonding social capital) more than the members of the majority group. In Park & Gerrits (2021) there was a shared tendency of identity presentation, meaning the immigrants experienced strength and competence and at the same time were ready to receive the new identity symbols of the host population. However, on the other hand, Lin et al. (2022) is also true, meaning that the migrants could not be easily assimilated

into the host city regarding identity change. Straiton et al. (2019) also emphasized that it is important to build an affiliation with the host country rather than just maintaining the belonging to the country of origin. In their investigation, they established that immigrants who retained their connection with their home country and acquired a sense of belongingness to host country for better integration outcomes.

The results affirm the rich tradition of social scientific research that has been connecting the concept of social capital to positive social identity and improved migrant adjustment in society.

Measures and Methods

Quantitative data was collected to identify broad trends and patterns, whereas qualitative data was thematically analyzed to discover some more profound insights into experiences and issues, which were faced by Afghan immigrants since they left their motherland. A snowball sampling method was used to recruit 12 respondents speaking Urdu, English or Pashto, aged 18 years and above who were to take part in semi-structured interviews. In the case of Pashto speaking interviewees, translator was organized so as to facilitate the conversation. The first-generation migrant sample was composed of 9 male and 2 female respondents of Lahore and Faisalabad who, irrespective of the reasons behind the migration and the duration of their stay lived in Pakistan at the time of the interview (Afghan women did not want to take part in research). The interviews were done between August 2025 and October 2025. Interviews were conducted via Zoom and in person in a language of respondent's choice. Interviews in the Pashto and Urdu language were transcribed and translated into English. The mean duration of the interviews was 40 min (range: 21-53min). The interviews were semi structured so that the participants were not confined by the questions, but guided by them to give them the flexibility to give their experiences. The topics guides of interviews were worked out before the interviews due to the comprehensive analysis of available literature and a clear definition of the objectives of the ongoing study.

Variables

Integration

In terms of the measurement of social integration of the migrants, representative studies primarily categorize social integration into economic integration, political integration, cultural integration, and social participation (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2005; GORDON, 1964). The social integration index of the migrant population was built by us in the light of four dimensions, economic integration (EI), cultural integration (CI), and behavioral integration (BI). Regarding the aspect of economic integration, we posed the questions in terms of income and expenditure and their experience regarding the initiation of a business, finding employment or becoming a member of other businesses. The cultural difference in beliefs and lifestyles is a significant factor of cultural integration. The more the cultural assimilation, the greater is the integration of the migrants in the native culture. The cultural integration measurement emphasizes on the variation of the life views of the migrants and locals. Behavioral integration manifests itself in the form of social participation. In order to assess the behavioral integration, we employed the items associated with the social involvement of the migrant population. We gave the respondents specific items on whether they had done certain activities since 2016 which included: providing suggestions or overseeing management at their workplace, community or village, reporting situations or making policy suggestions to government departments, and taking part in donations, voluntary blood donation, and volunteering.

Social Capital

Bonding social capital is defined as ties that occur in similar or closely related groups, like when there is a bond between family, relatives, and close friends; where it focuses on tightening internal networks, emotional support, and resource sharing. Bridging social capital is the ties and networks among the various social groups which may help in the flow of information and the expanded sense of identity; it accentuates

inclusiveness and relations that transcend social lines.

Social Identity

Social identity refers to the identification of individuals towards social groups, cultural affiliation, and the community connectivity, particularly these are reconstituted in the context of migration (La Barbera, 2015). It puts emphasis on dynamic processes of identity formation, negotiation and transformation that migrants undergo in new social situations. The component of individual self-concept based on perceived belonging of social groups (i.e. ethnic, national, religious or linguistic groups) is called social identity. In migration research, it focuses on the bargains of belonging to the native land and that of a host nation among migrants (Hu & Cheung, 2024). The structured and semi structured questions during the interviews were aimed at probing our main interest in research, which was; the social identity of the immigrant and the factors behind it.

Control Variables

Control variables were included considering various aspects, including sociodemographic as well as migration specific characteristics. Besides age, length of their stay in Pakistan after migration from Afghanistan, gender, language proficiency and level of education were included into the analyses.

Results and Analysis

The data was analyzed in several steps (1) data familiarization: transcripts and debriefing notes and audio recordings were carefully read to learn more about the effects of immigrants' social identities and their online and offline social capital on their integration; (2) the systematic coding was used throughout the data; (3) preliminary coding was classified into possible themes; (4) themes were narrowed down by working with a source of second researcher, and a thematic map was obtained; (5) continued refinement resulted in clear story behind every theme and (6) extracts were selected in order to build up and emphasize major points and themes.

Some of the interview scripts related to main themes and variables are sorted below.

Interview Scripts

Some of the participants were of the opinion that no matter how much they have managed to integrate into the host society, there are things that remind them that migrants are not like the natives. *I have been living here for many years, learned language, studied here, participated in many activities and now doing job. I am about as local as I can be, but I cannot stay here. They are as though reminding you that you are different. It is so stressful. The system is ghastly and unjust.* (Participant 4)

I do not have very close friends like in Afghanistan. When all of this is new to you, it is really a challenge finding friends. I have plenty of people to communicate with, but it is not identical. (Participant 6)

I certainly have adjusted well here despite the fact that until my final inhalation. I feel more Pakistani than Pakistanis themselves. But I will always be acknowledged as Afghani because I was raised there. and it is painful. (Participant 9)

Friendships constitute a significant aspect of the life of people, and, as the literature of the past has shown, This is because healthy friendships are the common source of the major social resources, such as social support; they give people a sense of belonging and meaning to the world.

In my opinion, it is all about our childhood, customs, and even language. I am not chasing after this feeling of my country. It's inside of my blood. We share common background, music tastes and history. To me, it is highly crucial to maintain this relationship. (Participant 3)

With regards to the national identity of migrants, this would mean that migrants who are in touch with natives develop a better attitude to the host society. This might then infect their national identity as they are more likely to do so in as much as they are concerned with positive attitude is deemed as social identity theory requirement to be identified with a certain group (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Respondents regarded the behaviors of natives as the determinants of their integration in Pakistan

The issue of language was a problem when I first arrived. Gradually, I could learn Urdu from neighbors and shopkeepers, and this made me feel a little closer.

However, I occasionally feel that I am perceived by people as an Afghan, not necessarily as an ordinary resident. (Participant 7)

I am an Afghan, I will be an Afghan, I can not be Pakistani; this is what I feel sadly. (Participant 12)

My children attend local schools, and they are more integrated than me. They are fluent in Urdu and they have Pakistani friends. It is their personal identity, as they are Afghan and Pakistani at home and in school respectively. I believe education is the connection that assists us in assimilating. (Participant 10)

The process of assimilation and the integration of the refugees are enhanced as the refugees are integrated in the civil society and other community organizations that enable the active participation of the refugees in the host society, which enables them to be active in sharing their skills and experiences and tackling the prevailing problems collectively.

The Afghan community gets together in meetings, in which we prepare our customary food and use our language. These experiences take us back to our identity. However, when going outside, we get adjusted with the Pakistani traditions. It is like walking in two worlds, between the Afghani heritage and the Pakistani world. (Participant 8)

Sometimes I feel invisible. Our efforts and plight are not always appreciated by people. In my case, social identity is concerned with being visible not merely as a refugee. (Participant 12)

Nonetheless, respondents reported that although the process of forming new group memberships was not effortless, it was their desire to do it, but the impossibility of gaining new identities resulted in making some of them feel out of place in the foreign country. Though the number of instances when new acquaintances are met is quite often, the participants described that they rarely displace the already existing group memberships. People are used to close and meaningful relationships and these are some of the relationships that new acquaintances are not able to give.

I strongly identify myself as an Afghan, yet I have spent years here and this has added another dimension. I happen to belong to a population of refugees in Pakistan. I do not identify myself as only a national person, which is framed by our struggles and strength. (Participant 3)

Occasionally, when I do visit the market people address me as Afghani in a manner that I consider to be dismissive. It reminds me that I am considered different, though years have passed since I started living here. (Participant 7)

The impacts of cultural stereotypes that shape the perception of the immigrants (an example is the Afghan immigrants are engaged in mal-practices) may be harmful and devastating to the integration process, particularly where the host society employ them as a rationale of not trusting them.

It is also hard to find a job since most employers are reluctant to employ Afghans. I usually make use of informal contacts. I am useful yet not entirely accepted. My personality is defined by the fact that I am a worker here and an Afghan refugee. (Participant 7)

Employers tend to hire Pakistani workers. They are reluctant to hire me even though I have the skills since I am an Afghan. This causes me to feel like an outsider and reduces my possibilities of developing a sound life. (Participant 8)

It is discrimination that causes me to cling to my Afghan identity. In case I am not completely accepted here, I remind myself of my origins. However, simultaneously, I would like other people to view me as a member of this society as well. (Participant 12)

I make efforts to forget about the discrimination and concentrate on the establishment of good relations with neighbors. There are people who are good and encouraging and this would compensate the bad experiences. (Participant 10)

The other new aspect of social identity among all people who migrated is the level of belonging that one is able to develop towards the host country. As stated above, the respondents have acknowledged that they need to change to fit the host culture and allow changes to be made to their identity by incorporating aspects of the host culture. This follows the literature on biculturalism where they identify with the host country and retain the sense of belongingness to their country of origin with positive social identity and increased adaptation to the host society (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). The mosque is where I get to meet the majority of the people. It is a reunion point of the Afghan and Pakistan families. These interactions enabled me to make friends and have networks to rely on. (Participant 9)

My children have friends at school and through them, we get access to the Pakistani families. Having friends exposes us to the rest of the community. (Participant 10)

We hold Afghan cultural festivals, such as Nowruz, and invite Pakistani neighbors. Eating together and exchanging our customs and customs brings us closer to one another and bonds us. (Participant 4)

When one of our community members is ill or has money issues we raise funds. These solidarity acts bolster our social capital and also help us to remember that in exile we are not by ourselves. (Participant 5)

Afghan diasporic communities have developed a variety of communication strategies for both their networks back home and within the Pakistani network. The world's diasporic populations now communicate differently due to the digital media ecosystem. Respondents discussed how they used media in their Afghan communities to interact with one another and assimilate into Pakistani society.

Majority of our communication is in person. We get together in community centers or in mosques or when we are having family functions. Face-to-face communication brings us closer and preserves our culture. (Participant 3)

The use of WhatsApp groups is very widespread in Afghan families here. They assist us in spreading news, job adverts as well as emotional support in a very fast manner. (Participant 9)

When we are together we speak Pashto or Dari mostly. Speaking our own language also enhances our connection and we feel home. (Participant 4)

Facebook pages and community groups enable us to maintain contact with Afghans in other nations, too, and not just in Pakistan. It is a means of retaining our greater diaspora. (Participant 2)

Elderly individuals like to engage in a face-to-face communication or through a phone call, whereas young Afghans utilize Instagram and WhatsApp more. This keeps us connected in one way or another. (Participant 6)

We have many relatives and friends in Afghanistan whom we connect on daily basis through phone calls and now WhatsApp video calls. We want to connect with them because it is our identity; it reminds us of our identity. (Participant 11)

Our results propose that the identity gain pathway is significant to the migrants in the sense that the development of new identities enhances the probability of having a sense of belonging and grounding in the new society, therefore, having resources to assist them upon resettlement issues.

Discussion

The research contributed to the knowledge on the social identity of migrants, their attachment to important social groups and how they affect social integration. The principal aim of the study was to investigate the unique life experiences of the Afghan immigrants. This discussion revealed that the ad online offline social capital is significant in social identity as well as positive integration. To the individuals that were in significant groups in their home country, migration implies the loss of the feeling of association with group members. However, individuals attempt to preserve their membership in such pre-migration entities as family and friends and at the same time enhance their sense of belonging to their own culture.

The results of the present study indicate that the possibility of reducing the difficulties related to migration and trying to achieve an adjustment in the host country is connected to the preservation of already existing group identities. One can note that first-generation migrants are highly likely to identify with the place of birth otherwise known as national identity. National identity tends to indicate a person's background such as the places one originates, in which environment they were brought up, yet it can also indicate traditions, beliefs and values. Some of the participants also said that their birth place makes them who they are.

Remarkably few respondents selected the integrated concept of their social identity. Respondents were questioned about the significance they place on upholding their original custom in addition to the direct identity questions. This proved crucial for all immigration. Afghan immigrants' poor experience of seamless integration in Pakistan may be a contributing factor in the increased significance they place on maintaining their customs.

Relocating to a new residential location entails interaction with new individuals and the creation of new identities which may be more difficult than the continuation of former group affiliation. Even though individuals are likely to form the notion of belonging to new groups, such as student groups or neighborhoods, these groups are not always internalized to an internal part of the self. Rather, they act as an intermediary to the assimilation into the host society. The very process of integration is a problem of itself, complexities and obstacles which are existing in the inclination of the host nation to view migrants as foreigners instead of part of their community.

Consistent with the primary aim of investigating the effects of social identity on the social integration of migrants, the research advanced the knowledge on the influence of social identity and migration barriers on the social integration of Afghan immigrants in Pakistan. The results let us determine the factors that promoted (e.g. university community) or inhibited (e.g. discrimination and language) the change in the developing of migrant social identity and their integrating. Our study findings, that there should be an increase in contact to natives, which results in a growing sense of belonging and an increased degree of identity, explicitly endorse the theoretical framework of the study (Dekker & Engbersen THEMIS, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In this regard to the mutual social identity, the participants are inclined towards creating a boundary between themselves and immigrants to defend and preserve their identity and tend to call them others when speaking about the host society, as concluded in by Kadianaki & Andreouli (2017) in Greek national context. Othering also provided an arena to create various cultural stereotypes about the Afghan immigrants in Pakistan, in which the stereotype of the immigrant population was that of hostility and aggressiveness. Here, it is essential to point out that the degree of migrant integration does not only hinge on the willingness and capability of migrants to integrate but it is also based on how much the host society is ready to welcome and embrace them as productive members of the society. On the one hand when

the social capital of immigrants is able to impose positive outcomes of integration, the continuity of negative social relations between immigrants and the natives can establish an obstacle to the integration of migrants into the host society. The social support is also not possible because of the low levels of language proficiency that require limited social interactions with the majority. Concern of fitting in and awareness of divergent identities to that of peers was found out to be consistent throughout all the interviews and led to the emergence of shame towards identity development among the participants.

It asserts that social interactions shape people's identities. People's perceptions of themselves are reflected in how other people react to them, therefore one can learn about oneself by seeing how others perceive them. Heilbrunn et al. (2016) also articulated this understanding, which highlights the social context of identities and the participation of other members of society.

Their identity crisis is not which of the previous or new identity to hold but how to balance and integrate two co-existing identities. They typically encounter problems with accommodation, as well as with internal conflicts regarding ethnic identity, depending on the role of the host society in terms of its attitude and prejudice. Their experiences are characterized by the difficulty in finding meaningful connections in the new environment and sometimes longing for the deep relationships they left behind. In general, the results of the current study contribute to and reinforce the approach of social identity toward migrant integration showing that group life, such as online and offline social capital, are one of the main determinants of making social identity.

Our study was not without limitations. One of the main weaknesses of this research is the fact that it is difficult to approach a volunteer sample of Afghan immigrants in living in Pakistan. This limitation made the semi-structured interviews the major data source of the research. Although such interviews were valuable sources of information, the lack of a larger volunteer base could have limited the diversity and representativeness of views that were incorporated in the analysis.

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