Intergenerational cultural differences among Muslim women in Wollongong

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Intergenerational Cultural Differences Among Muslim Women in Wollongong

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for Award of the degree

MASTER of Arts (HONOURS)

From

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

By

RIFFAT MUNAWAR, MA
University of Punjab, Pakistan

Department of Sociology
December, 1997
DECLARATION

This Thesis is an original piece of research, the main content of which has not been previously submitted for a University Degree or other similar award.

R. Munawar
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Summary

This thesis considers the interrelationship between migration and religiosity of the first and second generation Pakistani women in Wollongong, New South Wales. It addresses the question of why religious commitment becomes a more significant source of social identity for these women. There are two basic manifestations of this greater significance of religion. First, it is manifested in the nature of fundamental ideals; namely, where religious ideals reinforce ethnic allegiance, it is likely to arouse especially fervent expressions of commitment. This expression of commitment rests on the assumption that Pakistani ethnicity relates to religious identity and its people, whereas an Islamic state it has a universal relevance.

The social boundaries which encompass expressions of religious identity among Pakistani women are pervasive and clear-cut compared to relatively permeable ethnic boundaries.

In addition, the overall goal of this research was to identify and describe the inter-generational cultural differences among women. Most cultural elements such as religion, language, in-group marriage and certain customs as well, were maintained by the second generation. However, there are marked changes in the attitude of first generation which are reflected in the jobs taken up by the daughters, in the way the daughters' consent are sought in the selection of the marriage partners. In terms of their own personal development, the mothers who did not want to work when their children were young, shared interest in
advancing their employability by enrolling in computer classes, secretarial courses and other similar skills based training programs.