



Research Paper

Bogie Number, Migration and Cultural Identity through Generations

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Abstract

Bogie Number is a research study inspired by the migration history of the researcher's ancestors and the cultural influences that emerged through generations of movement across different regions. Tracing a family journey from Afghanistan, India, and Bengal to Pakistan, the study explores how migration shapes cultural identity, family traditions, languages, values, and the sense of belonging. The title Bogie Number? Draws inspiration from a train bogie, where people from different cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds travel together while carrying their own histories and identities. Similarly, migration brings individuals and communities into contact with diverse cultural environments, creating opportunities for cultural exchange and transformation. As families move from one place to another, they adopt new practices while preserving elements of their ancestral heritage. Using family narratives and historical migration experiences, this study examines how repeated migration influences identity across generations. It investigates whether a family's original cultural identity remains unchanged or gradually evolves through interaction with different societies and traditions. The research suggests that identity is neither fixed nor singular; rather, it is continuously reconstructed through memory, adaptation, and cultural exchange. The findings highlight that migration is not merely a movement from one location to another but an ongoing process that reshapes personal and collective identity while preserving traces of multiple cultural roots.

Keywords: Migration and Cultural Identity, Identity Transformation and Family Heritage, Cultural Memory, Intergenerational Identity, Belonging

Introduction

Migration has been one of the most influential forces in human history, shaping societies, cultures, languages, and identities across generations. Throughout time, individuals and communities have moved from one geographical location to another in search of security, economic opportunities, political stability, or a better quality of life. While migration involves physical movement from one place to another, its effects extend far beyond geographical boundaries. It influences how people think, communicate, practice traditions, and understand their cultural identity. Cultural identity is often considered a reflection of an individual's heritage, language, traditions, values, and collective memory. However, identity is not a fixed or permanent concept. It continuously evolves through social interaction, environmental influences, and historical experiences. Migration plays a significant role in this transformation by exposing individuals and families to new cultures, languages, and ways of life. As a result, migrants often find themselves negotiating between preserving their ancestral heritage and adapting to new cultural environments. This study, *Bogie Number?*, is inspired by the migration history of the researcher's ancestors belonging to the Yousafzai tribe. Historical records and family narratives indicate a migration journey that connects Afghanistan, India, Bengal, and Pakistan. Through generations of movement and settlement, different cultural influences became part of the family's identity. These influences can be observed in language, customs, social practices, values, and everyday lifestyle. Such transformations raise important questions regarding the nature of identity and the extent to which migration reshapes an individual's sense of belonging. The title *Bogie Number?* Functions as a metaphor for the migrant experience. A train bogie carries passengers from different cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds who temporarily share the same space while travelling toward different destinations. Similarly, migration places individuals and communities in environments where diverse cultures interact, influence one another, and contribute to the formation of new identities. The train journey therefore symbolizes movement, transition, adaptation, and cultural exchange. The Yousafzai tribe is one of the major Pashtun tribes with historical roots in Afghanistan and significant settlements across Pakistan and India. Over centuries, migration has contributed to the geographical spread of the tribe and influenced its cultural practices. In many migrant communities, ancestral languages gradually decline as newer generations adopt the dominant language of their surroundings. This phenomenon can be observed among several Yousafzai families whose descendants identify with their tribal heritage while no longer speaking Pashto as their primary language. Such examples demonstrate how migration can preserve certain aspects of identity while transforming others.

One of the most significant aspects of migration is the creation of hybrid identities. Individuals who experience migration often carry memories, traditions, and cultural values from their place of origin while simultaneously adopting characteristics from their new environment. Consequently, identity becomes a combination of multiple cultural influences rather than a reflection of a single origin. This process can be observed not only at the individual level but also within families, where different generations interpret and express cultural heritage in different ways. The present research explores the relationship between migration and cultural identity through an auto ethnographic and qualitative approach. By examining family narratives, ancestral migration routes, and cultural practices passed down through generations, the study seeks to understand how migration contributes to identity formation. Particular attention is given to the influence of migration on language, traditions, cultural memory, and the sense of belonging within the family. The significance of this study lies in its ability to connect personal family history with broader discussions of migration and identity. While many studies examine migration at national or community levels, fewer studies explore how generations of migration influence the identity of a single family. By focusing on lived experiences and ancestral narratives, this research provides insight into the complex ways in which migration shapes cultural identity over time. Ultimately, this study argues that migration does not necessarily erase cultural identity. Instead, it transforms identity through continuous interaction, adaptation, and cultural exchange. The resulting identity is neither entirely traditional nor entirely modern; rather, it represents a combination of memories, experiences, and cultural influences accumulated across generations. Through the metaphor of the train bogie, the study highlights migration as an ongoing journey in which identity remains in motion, constantly evolving while maintaining connections to its historical roots.

Literature Review

Migration has remained one of the most significant social and cultural phenomena throughout human history. Beyond the movement of people from one geographical location to another, migration represents a continuous process of cultural interaction, adaptation, negotiation, and transformation. As migrants travel across borders and settle in new societies, they encounter unfamiliar languages, customs, beliefs, and social systems that influence their ways of living and understanding the world. Consequently, migration not only changes physical locations but also reshapes identities, memories, and cultural expressions across generations. Scholars of migration studies argue that cultural identity develops through a combination of heritage and experience. While individuals inherit certain traditions, values, languages, and beliefs from their ancestors, their identities continue to evolve as they interact with different social environments. For migrant communities, this process becomes particularly complex because they must maintain a connection with their cultural roots while simultaneously adapting to new surroundings. This interaction between preservation and adaptation forms one of the central discussions within migration studies. Cultural identity is often understood as a sense of belonging to a particular group, community, or heritage. It is expressed through language, clothing, customs, traditions, food practices, social values, religious beliefs, and collective memories. However, contemporary researchers emphasize that identity should not be viewed as a fixed or permanent condition. Instead, identity is dynamic and constantly reconstructed through lived experiences. Migration accelerates this transformation by exposing individuals to multiple cultural influences throughout their lives. One of the most widely discussed concepts within migration research is cultural hybridity. The theory of hybridity suggests that migration creates spaces where different cultures meet, interact, and influence one another. Rather than completely replacing one culture with another, migrants often combine elements from both their ancestral and adopted cultures. This process results in hybrid identities that reflect multiple cultural influences

simultaneously. Such identities challenge traditional assumptions that people belong exclusively to a single culture, language, or national identity. The influence of migration can be clearly observed through clothing practices. Clothing serves as one of the most visible representations of cultural identity because it communicates information about social belonging, ethnicity, regional heritage, and personal values. Throughout history, garments have functioned as cultural symbols that distinguish one community from another. However, migration often alters these expressions by introducing individuals to new climates, social expectations, and fashion systems. In many migrant families, traditional garments continue to hold symbolic importance despite changes in everyday dress. Clothing worn during weddings, religious ceremonies, cultural festivals, and family gatherings often reflects ancestral heritage even when contemporary lifestyles encourage alternative forms of dress. As generations pass, traditional clothing may be modified, simplified, or combined with modern styles, creating new visual expressions of identity. These transformations demonstrate that clothing is not merely functional but also serves as a cultural archive that preserves memories of migration and belonging. The relationship between migration and clothing is particularly relevant in societies that have experienced extensive cultural exchange. Communities moving across regions such as Afghanistan, India, Bengal, and Pakistan have historically encountered diverse textile traditions, aesthetic preferences, embroidery techniques, color symbolism, and garment structures. Through migration, these influences become integrated into everyday cultural practices, contributing to the development of unique forms of dress that reflect multiple cultural histories. Language represents another essential component of cultural identity. It functions not only as a means of communication but also as a vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge, collective memory, values, and traditions. Language enables individuals to express their sense of belonging and maintain connections with their ancestral heritage. However, migration frequently influences linguistic practices, particularly across generations. Research suggests that migrant communities often experience gradual language shifts as younger generations adopt the dominant language of the society in which they live. While such changes facilitate social integration and educational opportunities, they may also weaken direct connections to ancestral languages. Nevertheless, traces of linguistic heritage frequently survive through family vocabulary, oral storytelling, cultural expressions, and inherited forms of communication. This phenomenon demonstrates that language loss is rarely absolute; instead, elements of ancestral identity continue to exist in transformed forms. The transformation of cultural norms and social practices further illustrates the influence of migration on identity formation. Cultural norms shape how individuals interact with family members, participate in community life, celebrate important occasions, and understand social responsibilities. Migration often requires individuals to adapt these practices to new environments where different expectations and social structures exist. Family structures, marriage customs, hospitality traditions, gender roles, and social behaviors frequently evolve through migration. Some traditions remain unchanged because they serve as important symbols of cultural continuity, while others are modified to accommodate changing social realities. This process reflects the adaptive nature of culture and highlights the ways in which migrant communities balance preservation with transformation. Another important concept within migration studies is memory. Researchers emphasize that memory plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural continuity across generations. Family stories, photographs, oral histories, rituals, and inherited traditions function as mechanisms through which migrants preserve connections with their past. These memories help individuals construct a sense of identity even when they are geographically distant from their ancestral homeland. The concept of belonging is closely connected to memory and identity. Migrants often develop attachments to multiple places simultaneously, creating complex understandings of home and cultural affiliation. As a result, belonging becomes a fluid experience

shaped by both historical roots and contemporary realities. Individuals may feel connected to the culture of their ancestors while also identifying with the society in which they currently live. The historical migration patterns of communities across Afghanistan, India, Bengal, and Pakistan provide an important framework for understanding these processes. Over centuries, movement across these regions has facilitated cultural exchange, linguistic adaptation, social transformation, and the formation of hybrid identities. Families who experienced these migrations often inherited cultural influences from multiple locations, making their identities products of historical movement rather than fixed geographical origins. Despite the extensive literature on migration, identity, language, and cultural adaptation, relatively little research examines how these transformations occur within a single family lineage across multiple generations. Existing studies frequently focus on nations, ethnic groups, or large migrant communities. Consequently, there remains a gap in understanding how ancestral migration experiences influence everyday cultural practices within individual families. This study addresses that gap through the concept of Bogie Number?. Using migration as both a lived experience and a metaphorical journey, the research explores how clothing, language, traditions, memory, cultural norms, and belonging are continuously reshaped through generations of movement. It argues that identity should not be understood as a fixed destination or a static inheritance. Rather, identity functions as an ongoing journey in which cultural influences are accumulated, negotiated, preserved, and transformed over time. Similar to passengers sharing a train bogie while travelling through different destinations, individuals carry traces of multiple cultures throughout their lives, creating identities that are both rooted in history and shaped by movement.

Method and Material

This chapter explains the research methodology adopted to investigate the relationship between migration and cultural identity across generations. The study examines how ancestral migration has influenced cultural practices, language, clothing traditions, social norms, and the sense of belonging within a single family lineage. A qualitative research approach was employed to explore personal experiences, family memories, and cultural transformations that occurred as a result of migration from Afghanistan, Bengal, India, and eventually Pakistan. The methodology focuses on understanding migration not only as geographical movement but also as a process of cultural negotiation and identity formation. This study follows a qualitative and exploratory research design. The purpose of the research is not to measure migration statistically but to understand its cultural and social impact through lived experiences and family history. A qualitative approach was considered most suitable because it allows deeper exploration of identity, memory, belonging, and cultural transformation. The research investigates how cultural identity evolves when families migrate across different regions and generations. Particular attention is given to the ways traditions are preserved, modified, or blended over time. The study explores how migration shapes everyday cultural expressions such as language, clothing practices, family customs, values, and social behaviors. The research also adopts a narrative approach, where family history and ancestral stories are treated as valuable sources of cultural knowledge. Through these narratives, the study examines how migration experiences continue to influence contemporary identities.

Research Approach

The study utilizes an interpretive research approach. Identity and culture are viewed as dynamic concepts that continuously evolve through social interaction and historical experiences. Rather than treating identity as fixed, the research explores how migration contributes to the creation of multiple and layered identities. The concept of “Bogie Number?” serves as a metaphor throughout the study. Similar to a train journey that passes through different stations while remaining part of the same route, generations of a

family carry traces of various cultures encountered throughout their migration history. This metaphor provides a framework for understanding identity as a continuous journey rather than a fixed destination.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the study conducted to explore the impact of ancestral migration on cultural identity across generations. Through family narratives, visual analysis, cultural observations, historical tracing, and design exploration, the study investigated how migration influenced clothing practices, language, traditions, social norms, and the sense of belonging within a single family lineage. The findings reveal that migration did not erase cultural identity; rather, it transformed and reshaped it through continuous interaction with different cultural environments. The results indicate that identity exists as a layered phenomenon, where traces of multiple cultures remain visible despite geographical displacement and generational change. The concept of Bogie Number? Successfully represented this journey by comparing identity formation to the movement of train bogies connected through a common track yet carrying different experiences and influences.

Migration as a Foundation of Cultural Identity

One of the most significant findings of the study is that migration served as the primary force behind the cultural diversity present within the family. The migration route traced from Afghanistan to India, Bengal, and eventually Pakistan resulted in the accumulation of various cultural influences over generations. The findings show that each geographical movement contributed new cultural practices while preserving selected aspects of previous traditions. Rather than replacing one culture with another, migration created layers of identity where multiple cultural influences coexisted. Family members continued to carry memories, customs, and values inherited from previous generations, demonstrating that migration is not merely a physical movement but also a process of cultural transmission. The study revealed that cultural identity within the family cannot be linked to a single place of origin. Instead, it represents a combination of experiences gathered through generations of movement, adaptation, and settlement.

Impact of Migration on Clothing Practices

The analysis of clothing emerged as one of the strongest indicators of cultural transformation. Findings revealed that traditional garments from different regions continued to influence contemporary dressing practices within the family. Elements inspired by Afghan garments, Bengali drapes, Indian sari traditions, Pashtun turbans, Baluchi silhouettes, and Pakistani shalwar kameez were identified as recurring cultural references. Although these garments are no longer worn in their original forms on a daily basis, their influence remains visible through silhouettes, layering techniques, draping styles, and garment construction. The findings further suggest that clothing acts as a visual archive of migration history. Every garment contains symbolic references to ancestral roots while simultaneously adapting to contemporary lifestyles. This demonstrates how fashion functions as a medium through which cultural memories are preserved and communicated. The final collection successfully translated these cultural influences into modern garments, proving that traditional clothing elements can be reinterpreted without losing their cultural significance.

Influence of Migration on Language and Communication

The study revealed significant linguistic transformation across generations. Family narratives indicated that language evolved according to changing geographical and social environments.

Earlier generations maintained stronger connections with ancestral languages and dialects, while younger generations adopted Urdu and English as primary modes of communication. Despite this shift, several words, accents, expressions, and cultural phrases continued to survive within family interactions.

The findings suggest that language functions as both a tool of adaptation and a marker of identity. While

migration encourages the adoption of dominant languages for social integration, fragments of ancestral languages remain embedded within everyday communication. These linguistic traces serve as reminders of cultural origins and reinforce intergenerational connections.

Transformation of Cultural Traditions and Social Norms

The findings indicate that migration significantly influenced cultural traditions and social behavior. Various customs related to family gatherings, hospitality, celebrations, marriage practices, and social interactions underwent modification over time.

Some traditions remained largely unchanged because they were considered essential to family identity. Others adapted according to the social conditions of new environments. This balance between preservation and adaptation demonstrates the dynamic nature of culture.

The study found that cultural continuity was maintained not through exact replication of traditions but through the retention of their underlying meanings. As a result, traditions evolved while still preserving connections to ancestral heritage.

Memory, Belonging, and Intergenerational Identity

A major finding of the study is the role of memory in preserving cultural identity. Family stories, photographs, heirlooms, garments, and oral histories emerged as important sources of cultural knowledge.

These memories acted as bridges connecting younger generations with their ancestral past. Even when direct experiences of migration were absent, inherited memories allowed family members to maintain emotional connections with their cultural roots.

The findings suggest that belonging is not solely determined by geographical location. Instead, belonging is constructed through memories, relationships, traditions, and shared cultural experiences. This explains why individuals may feel connected to places they have never physically visited.

Findings through Design Development

The design development process provided visual evidence supporting the research findings. Through sketching, draping, experimentation, and garment construction, various cultural influences were translated into contemporary fashion forms. The final collection demonstrated how migration can be represented visually through layered silhouettes, hybrid garment structures, contrasting textiles, and symbolic design elements. The combination of cultural references from different regions reflected the complex nature of identity formation.

The findings indicate that fashion design can function as a powerful research tool capable of documenting cultural histories and expressing personal narratives. The garments served as tangible representations of migration journeys and cultural transformation.

Significance of the Concept “Bogie Number?”

The concept of Bogie Number? Emerged as a successful metaphor for understanding migration and identity. Similar to train bogies connected through a shared route, generations remain connected through ancestry while experiencing different cultural environments.

Each generation carries elements of the previous one while simultaneously adapting to new circumstances. The findings suggest that identity is not a fixed destination but a continuous journey influenced by movement, memory, adaptation, and cultural exchange.

This metaphor effectively captured the essence of the research by illustrating how migration links the past, present, and future within a single family narrative.

Overall Findings

The study concludes that migration plays a significant role in shaping cultural identity across generations.

Its influence can be observed in clothing, language, traditions, social norms, memory, and the sense of belonging.

The findings demonstrate that:

- * Cultural identity is dynamic rather than fixed.
- * Migration encourages both adaptation and preservation.
- * Clothing serves as a visible representation of cultural history.
- * Language evolves while retaining traces of ancestral heritage.
- * Family memories play a crucial role in maintaining identity.
- * Multiple cultural influences can coexist within a single lineage.
- * Fashion can be used as a medium for documenting migration narratives and cultural transformation.

Overall, the research confirms that identity is not inherited in a pure or unchanged form. Instead, it is continuously reconstructed through movement, experience, and interaction with different cultures, making migration a central force in the formation of contemporary cultural identity.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how ancestral migration has influenced cultural identity across generations by exploring the interconnected roles of clothing, language, traditions, cultural norms, memory, and belonging. The findings demonstrate that migration is not merely the physical relocation of individuals from one place to another; rather, it is a continuous cultural process that reshapes identity while preserving traces of ancestral heritage. The journey of the researcher's family from Afghanistan through India and Bengal to Pakistan illustrates how multiple migrations contribute to the formation of a layered cultural identity instead of replacing one identity with another. The findings strongly support the arguments presented in the literature review that cultural identity is dynamic rather than fixed. Identity continuously evolves through historical experiences, geographical movement, and interaction with different societies. Throughout the migration journey, family members adopted new social practices, languages, and clothing styles while maintaining important cultural traditions inherited from previous generations. This demonstrates that migration creates transformation without completely erasing cultural roots. One of the most significant findings of this research relates to clothing as a visible expression of cultural identity. The study revealed that garments carry historical and emotional meanings beyond their practical function. Traditional clothing associated with Afghan, Bengali, Indian, Pashtun, Baluchi, and Pakistani cultures continued to influence contemporary fashion choices within the family. Although these garments have been adapted to modern lifestyles, their silhouettes, draping methods, construction techniques, and symbolic elements remain connected to ancestral traditions. The final fashion collection successfully translated these influences into contemporary garments, showing that clothing can preserve cultural memory while responding to present-day fashion needs. The designs therefore function not only as wearable garments but also as visual narratives representing migration and identity. Language emerged as another important finding of the research. The results indicate that migration contributes to gradual linguistic transformation as families adapt to new social and educational environments. Older generations retained stronger connections with ancestral languages and regional dialects, whereas younger generations primarily communicate through Urdu and English. Despite this linguistic shift, many traditional expressions, family terms, accents, and oral narratives continue to survive across generations. These findings suggest that language remains an essential marker of identity even when complete language preservation is no longer possible. Rather than disappearing entirely, ancestral languages continue to exist through everyday communication and family memory. The study further demonstrates that migration significantly influences cultural norms, customs, and social behavior. Family traditions related to

hospitality, celebrations, marriage customs, food practices, and interpersonal relationships have gradually adapted to changing social environments. However, these changes did not eliminate cultural identity. Instead, they produced new cultural practices that combine inherited traditions with contemporary lifestyles. This supports the concept of cultural hybridity discussed in migration studies, where identities are formed through the interaction of multiple cultural influences rather than through the dominance of a single culture. Another important aspect highlighted by the findings is the role of memory in maintaining cultural continuity. Family photographs, oral histories, heirlooms, inherited garments, and personal narratives act as important cultural resources connecting younger generations with their ancestral past. These memories preserve emotional ties with places and cultures that many family members have never physically experienced. As a result, identity is maintained not only through geographical belonging but also through collective memory and shared family experiences. The concept of “Bogie Number?” proved to be an effective metaphor for representing the entire research. Similar to the bogies of a train travelling together while passing through different stations, each generation remains connected through ancestry while encountering different cultural landscapes. Every generation carries inherited cultural values from the previous one while simultaneously absorbing new influences from its surrounding environment. Consequently, identity develops as a continuous journey rather than a fixed destination. This metaphor successfully reflects the complexity of migration, adaptation, and cultural continuity explored throughout the research. The study also demonstrates the value of fashion design as a research methodology for investigating cultural identity. Rather than functioning solely as a creative practice, fashion design became a medium for documenting migration histories and translating intangible cultural experiences into tangible visual forms. Through silhouette development, textile exploration, draping techniques, and symbolic garment construction, the final collection transformed historical narratives into contemporary fashion expressions. This interdisciplinary approach expands the role of fashion research by showing how garments can communicate personal histories, cultural transitions, and collective memories. Overall, the discussion confirms that migration should be understood as a multidimensional process that influences every aspect of cultural identity. Clothing, language, traditions, social values, and memory continuously evolve through interaction with different cultures while preserving important elements of ancestral heritage. The findings reinforce the central argument of this study that identity is neither static nor confined to one geographical location. Instead, it is an ongoing process of adaptation, continuity, and cultural exchange. Through the concept of “Bogie Number?”, this research illustrates that every generation becomes another connected carriage in the long journey of migration, carrying fragments of the past while moving towards the future.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationship between migration and cultural identity by examining the migration history of the researcher’s family and the cultural influences that developed across generations. Through the concept of “Bogie Number?”, the research investigated how migration shaped clothing, language, traditions, cultural norms, memory, and the sense of belonging. The findings demonstrate that migration is not only a geographical movement but also a continuous cultural journey that transforms identity while preserving important connections with ancestral heritage. The study found that cultural identity evolves through adaptation rather than replacement. As families move across different regions, they encounter new societies, languages, customs, and lifestyles that gradually become part of their identity. At the same time, elements of their ancestral culture continue to survive through family traditions, oral histories, cultural values, clothing practices, and collective memories. This balance between preservation and

adaptation creates a unique and layered identity that reflects both historical roots and contemporary experiences. One of the major contributions of this research is its emphasis on clothing as a visual language of cultural identity. The findings suggest that garments are more than functional objects; they represent history, memory, and belonging. Traditional dress elements inherited through migration continue to influence contemporary fashion and serve as symbols of cultural continuity. Similarly, changes in language, customs, and social practices illustrate how migration encourages cultural transformation without completely erasing ancestral identity. The metaphor of “Bogie Number?” successfully captures the essence of this research. Just as every bogie of a train is connected while carrying different passengers, stories, and destinations, each generation of a migrant family remains connected through shared ancestry while experiencing different cultural environments. Every migration adds another layer to identity, making it richer and more diverse. Identity, therefore, should not be understood as something fixed or limited to a single place; rather, it is a lifelong journey shaped by movement, memory, interaction, and cultural exchange. This research also highlights the value of combining personal family narratives with academic inquiry. By using a qualitative and auto ethnographic approach, the study demonstrates that individual family histories can contribute to broader discussions on migration, cultural identity, and heritage. It provides a deeper understanding of how cultural change occurs within families and shows that personal experiences can offer meaningful insights into larger social and historical processes. In conclusion, “Bogie Number?” argues that migration does not erase identity; instead, it reconstructs and enriches it over time. Every journey leaves cultural traces that become part of future generations, allowing identity to grow through experience while remaining connected to its origins. The study therefore concludes that cultural identity is not a destination reached at the end of migration but an evolving journey that continues with every generation, carrying memories of the past while creating new meanings for the future.

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