The Identity Formation of Second-Generation Australians from Dislocated Immigrant Family Backgrounds

Natalie Anderson
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School of International and Community Studies
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I hereby certify that the thesis entitled:

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is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis in whole or part has not been submitted for an award, including a higher degree, to any other university or institution.
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I dedicate this work to my parents who provided me with the inspiration to explore the constellation of stories that shape our identities as families and as individuals.
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ABSTRACT

In light of the increasing global need for acculturation to changing social environments, it is a pertinent time to be considering the influence of different cultures on individual identity formation. It is the process of re-examining and re-defining the factors which impact upon individual identities and their realities, which can assist in understanding the nature of emerging and evolving contemporary 'Australian' identities. Family background, personal experiences and interactions within society all contribute to the development of these multiple realities for individuals.

When families migrate to a new country, decisions are made regarding which cultural beliefs and practices from the country of origin are retained, and which of the country of settlement, if any, will be adopted. For the second generation, the issues are complex due to the need to structure a concept of personal identity based on traditional cultural family beliefs and history, in the context of the contemporary Australian social environment and value-systems. By making choices shaped by both migrant family and Anglo-Australian influences, these individual embark upon the process of developing a culture in 'transition' - the formulation of new 'Australian' cultural identities.

This research project aimed to study the way in which six individuals from dislocated Italian, Greek, Turkish, Lebanese, Chinese and Vietnamese family backgrounds have interpreted their backgrounds and experiences, and the extent to which these have impacted upon the formation of their identities over time. The case studies investigate the way in which these factors may have exacerbated a sense of cultural dislocation for each individual and explore these aspects of identity and family in a broader historical framework, including consideration of potential implications for the future.

The participants whose stories were explored by these case-studies have experienced diverse individual journeys towards both understanding and distancing themselves from their own dislocation to develop a tangible sense of self-identity not singularly based on family or place. Their stories were characterised by the following factors, which directly or indirectly impacted upon their relationships, lifestyle, environment and their identity formation:
• Cultural difference
• Relocation and settlement issues
• Risk and insecurity
• Depression
• Gender Issues
• Values
• Language

Participants generally found that in terms of formulating and reinforcing a sense of home and identity, factors involving family, home and contemporary global culture are more meaningful than broader concepts of national citizenship or cultural heritage. The significance of cultural heritage was consistently contributed to the link between migrant culture and family. These ‘external’ factors often conflicted with the individual sense of self that each participant struggled to maintain while juggling other demands. Ultimately, each individual has been successful in achieving many positive outcomes in terms of their identity development, however each spoke of the personal cost of this and the unresolved challenges for the future.

The second-generation individuals who participated in this study have developed an inherent sense of cultural diversity, involving a fusion of both local and global, and past and present cultures in their process of identity formation. There was acknowledgment that an understanding of the past has a positive impact on the formulation of present identities, however most of the participants have felt quite isolated by the uniqueness of their stories that they felt others have not been able to identify with or understand. This may be why many second-generation individuals have not completely identified with broader generic definitions of what it is to be ‘Australian’ and have searched for other ways to express their sense of individual identity. This thesis proposes that these stories are an essential reflection of the culturally diverse Australian identities of today.
CHAPTER 1

Context

1.1 Background

The aim of this research project was to investigate the process of identity formation of six second-generation adults from problematic immigrant family backgrounds, and the extent of cultural dislocation that is experienced by these individuals.

My interest in this area was prompted by my work with disadvantaged and marginalised young people in the northern suburbs of Melbourne for a non-government community service organisation. It was clear that much of the complexity and extremity of their problems was related to dysfunction in the family home. Around a third of the clients attending the program were also from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, experiencing learning difficulties that were compounded by language and communication problems. I was particularly interested in exploring the impact of cultural dislocation on individuals as a hidden factor contributing to marginalisation. I felt that much was being ‘lost in translation’, not only for individuals who have newly migrated to Australia, but also among subsequent generations of what are commonly assumed to be ‘settled’ families.

As I have a parent who is from a CALD background, it was quite obvious that the dislocated experiences of my family, which I had previously only viewed from a very personal prism, are shared among growing numbers of the Australian population. As a child I spoke the Vietnamese language, ate Vietnamese food and I met my Vietnamese relatives. However as I grew older, I lost my sense of ‘connectedness’ with my mother’s heritage. I wanted to be like all the other kids, not different, and the cultural maintenance of my mother’s background was not a priority in my family due to her complete assimilation into my father’s Anglo-Australian lifestyle and culture. However, as an adult living in a changing and increasingly culturally diverse Australian society,
and with thoughts of the future generations of our family in mind, my mother's Vietnamese origins are increasingly gaining new significance as part of the ongoing development of my own sense of multifaceted cultural identity.

After living overseas for several years, on my return to Australia four years ago I also began to feel that the current debates around multiculturalism were somehow missing an essential point. Over the three years of my research, I have collected many newspaper articles, for example, on the effects of fundamentalist Islam on multiculturalism (Bone, 2003), which reflect current events in terms of the way they invoke the ongoing question of whether acceptance of multiculturalism 'implies that there is not an existing, dominant culture?'. I would propose that for the majority of the population who are not of Anglo-Australian origin, the answer would be 'no, it does not'. There remains a lack of recognition how our past migrant experiences have already been richly, if not easily, translated into the nation that Australia is today, largely due to the lives and experiences of the individuals concerned rather than the effectiveness of government policy and other strategies of multiculturalism. To learn valuable lessons for the future, I believe that we need to look for the stories that are developing within the 'Australian story' that for many culturally diverse families and individuals has already spanned several generations.

This project has aimed to further investigate these issues by providing a selection of specific stories which illustrate some of the issues experienced by the second generation and their immigrant families beyond the common assumptions, stereotypes and generalisations occasionally invoked when considering the so-called 'success' of multiculturalism. While there is growing recognition that identity formation for second-generation individuals from dislocated immigrant families can be a complicated process, I have frequently wondered to what extent there is true understanding of this, particularly in terms of depreciatory attitudes towards cultural diversity that serve to reinforce or perpetuate these experiences. My research was greatly impacted upon by public debates around multiculturalism, asylum seeker policies and indigenous issues that highlighted the questions of just who can be called an Australian, and, furthermore, of whether or not nationality is the most effective or significant way to express this form of identity.
Issues of identity and nationality are also re-emerging into national focus as the world and local regions struggle with the considerations of becoming a ‘global community’. The search for distinct identities that embrace difference, rather than homogenisation, is gaining more significance to each new generation. In light of the diverse social environments that are being re-shaped by these global developments, it is a pertinent time to be considering the current impact of different cultures on individual identity formation in Australia. The process of re-examining and re-defining the factors which impact upon individual identity development can facilitate an understanding of the nature of emerging and evolving contemporary ‘Australian’ identities. An individual’s family background, personal experiences, interactions with institutions within society and even contact with mass media all contribute to the development of these multiple realities.

1.2 Relevant Research

The Australian Context

This research is situated within a body of knowledge concerned with the unique Australian multicultural reality, more than fifty years on from the beginning of the post-war immigration experience. This knowledge and the associated policy perspectives on the issues of multiculturalism are being re-thought in an increasingly globalised social and economic environment, in which debate over nationality and identity flow with concerted effort, yet little agreement or resolution. The historical, risk and settlement factors of migration that have served to reinforce the problematic demographic, cultural and socioeconomic migrant identity in Australia have been well researched (Freeman & Jupp 1992). Further exploration of multiple identities in terms of the approximately forty per cent of the Australians who have ‘some element of non-English-speaking background (NESB) in their personal histories, whether through direct descent, intermarriage, or other family connection’ is essential (Holton 1998: 205). Research of this nature is also relevant in the wake of multicultural policy that has not fully addressed structural factors that contribute to social and economic difficulties, or alternatively, aspects of gender, class or
education that serve to reinforce migrant experiences of dislocation or dysfunction for these generations.

Therefore, analysis of the project's case studies refers to current literature that encompasses the historical, social and political aspects of relevant immigration issues as a framework for discussion. Migrant family stories have been widely chronicled in terms of the experience of separation from the home country, settlement in the new, and experiences of isolation, alienation and assimilation. However, the experience of the second (and third) generation and the formation of their ethnic identity is a less recorded story of cultural diversity, one that is not effectively interpreted by the post-war multicultural rationalisation that may have applied to their parents (Penny & Khoo 1996). Likewise, more detailed discussion of the 'blurring of cultural identity and the emergence of bicultural and multicultural identities' is required (Hartley 1995:23).

Currently, there is increased awareness within the community that cultural difference or dislocation can contribute to dysfunction within many families. There is also an understanding of the causes of other major social and economic disadvantages among minority or marginalised groups within the community, such as a lack of education, poor health or low economic status. However, further discussion of the extent to which there is a combination of socially and economically based structural factors and cultural factors at work is required for accurate interpretation of statistics regarding issues such as welfare, unemployment, disability and divorce among migrant groups. 'A cultural difference often overlaps other difference: differences for instance in economic resources or in years of education... there is also the possibility of false attribution to difference in culture' (Goodnow & Cashmore 1985:234).

This kind of discussion includes consideration of the varying levels of 'skill differences and socioeconomic attributes' of migrants (Graetz & McAllister 1994:114). It is suggested that inequality among certain groups within the community can be attributed to factors beyond birthplace, such as experiences of employment, education, language and length of residency. The example is given of the average of years spent in Australia for southern Europeans generally
being virtually double that of many Asian migrants (Graetz & McAllister 1994). Likewise, as neither blood nor birth singularly define citizenship or nationality, aspects of ethnicity such as demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status and the culture practised by ethnic groups (Freeman & Jupp 1992) may be more significant for many individuals.

This area of this research is also situated within literature covering issues of cultural diversity that are related to the relationship between family and identity. Any examination of these issues should focus on 'continuity and change and on present and future', highlighting the need for further research in the area of intercultural adaptation and into the impact of this upon the children of migrants (Hartley 1995: 1-2). The process of describing and defining families in this context will always be open to debate and therefore should remain flexible and subject to change over time as this is the nature of both families and of culture. The action research methodology of this project, which evolved naturally from the case-study interview process, attempts to capture and reflect this cycle of continuity and change.

It has been recognised that migrant groups are by no means homogeneous, and that they are influenced differently by migration and settlement factors depending on the social, political and economic environment at the time of their arrival in Australia (Western: 1983). Complex pre-existing issues for migrants, such as a history of difficulties or dysfunction within the family that may originate in the home country, contribute to problematic or difficult experiences in the new country. The high number of migrant groups represented in statistics of mental illness has been documented often without adequately detailed analysis, for example, refugees, women and adolescents who experience depression, suicide or alcoholism as an symptom of post-migration anxiety or trauma, often years later. The inequality of literacy standards for some students with no English spoken at home or English combined with another language is also an ongoing issue.

It has been proposed that diversity within cultures probably exceed the differences between cultures (Jandt 1995: 8). In some families there is the requirement for many second-generation individuals to identify with the family's country of origin, in which they do not live, or alternatively to
separate themselves from the society in which they do live, to assimilate the cultural traditions of other family members. It has been suggested that '...at this rate Australia will be less a multicultural society...than a mixed cultural society - that is, a society whose people inherit in themselves many different cultures and in themselves mix the cultural elements as seems good to them' (Wilton & Bosworth 1985: 123). This research focuses on the role of personal choice and decision-making in structuring identity.

The systems internal to families can be mapped to reveal the social and cultural identification of individuals (McGoldrick & Gerson 1985). This mapping lays the foundation for the exploration of the manner in which families repeat themselves through lifestyle and behavioural patterns. Internal and external factors that influence the identity formation of many individuals range from social rituals, geography, structural changes linked to shifts in technology and the labour market that impact upon gender roles, the distribution of income and wealth and the institution of the family. The extent of external influence on each family obviously varies, however some of these factors may be so structural that they may seem largely inescapable.

A final context for this project is historical analysis of the settlement, acculturation and identity formation patterns of migrant families and how this has impacted upon subsequent generations. This includes the period in Australian history when the successful settlement of immigrants required that 'they learn the language of the host society, comply with and understand its laws, pay its taxes, and abandon or modify practices which are illegal or socially unacceptable' (Jupp 1991: 98). The policy of multiculturalism has attempted to avoid separatism by bringing different ethnic groups together. Educationally it has sought to do this by attempting to provide immigrants access to a universal system that takes pluralism into account. This was done to enable immigrants to maintain ethnic identity and self-esteem so that they would become 'productive' citizens. Ongoing research is necessary to consider the impact this kind of policy over time on the children of immigrants through assessing the relationship between their sense of ethnic identity and their 'success' as citizens, and perhaps how relevant this concept might be to this new generation.
The Second Generation in Australia

This is an area where valuable research has been conducted, with focus on the role of the second generation in ‘recognising and remedying the class and gender processes that are at work in forming and de-forming the lives of immigrants’ (Freeman and Jupp 1992: 181). Much of the Australian research into immigrant families discussed previously stresses the need for continuing research into new generations, namely the second generation. These individual are in the process of leaving the education system and entering the labour market, getting married, establishing homes of their own or ‘branching out’ in other ways from their families in varying degrees, often depending on the length of settlement time in Australia for different ethnic groups.

It is now increasingly necessary to review earlier debates regarding the social and economic disadvantage experienced by immigrant families within the framework of the second generation experience, particularly in a comparative context.

A significant work relevant to this study is Storer’s introduction to the family values of nine ‘minority’ groups in Australia including the Italians, Greeks, Lebanese and Vietnamese (1985). This literature is noteworthy not only for its insight into cultural values but also cultural assumptions about ‘typical’ intergenerational situations or dynamics. For example, families differ between cultures, yet they may become particularly atypical as a consequence of migration, which through separation or distance may change the shape and function of the family unit. The societies into which they settle may also change the definition and context of the family and the way in which its members relate to each other. Therefore the experience of immigrants and particularly their children born in the country of settlement are quite unique.

After the 1991 Census, Birrell and Khoo (1995) presented the findings that the second generation of European origin were achieving higher educational attainment and occupational success than ‘Anglo-Australians’. While in many cases the first generation immigrant may lack adequate education and qualification, second generation individuals are less likely to experience these
difficulties. Therefore these findings revealed that in Australia upward mobility was not only possible, but indeed often common for the children of immigrants when compared the experience of their parents, particularly those of Greek, Italian, Yugoslav and Lebanese origin. There has been little opportunity for significant research in the area of the second generation from non-European backgrounds such as those from Vietnam until fairly recently, as they have only now begun to come of age.

Birrell's report following the 1996 Census (2001) found that in 1996 there were 3.4 million second generation Australians, which is about 20 per cent of the total population. It acknowledges that:

...while their parents' generation has spent their childhood, youth or even adulthood in another country before immigrating to Australia, the second generation has lived in Australia since birth. They have gone to school and grown up with other Australian children, even if at home with their parents they may still experience a different cultural system that includes eating different foods, speaking a different language or adhering to a different set of social values and cultural norms.

The report also recognised the difference between the first and second generation in terms of citizenship and national identity, and therefore the perhaps greater importance of social and economic 'adaption' for the second generation in the country in which they were born and raised.
The Second Generation in Europe and the USA

Research into the identity development of the second generation of post-war immigrants in Europe and in the United States has slowly emerged over the last decade through investigation into the success of integration and assimilation for this group. Although increasingly urgent as suggested by Portes (1997), this area also remains sparsely researched, largely due to the young age of certain groups. Most relevant to this study is the debate which developed in the mid-1990's regarding whether the process of integration today differs from that of 'old immigration' (Crul & Vermeulen 2003, Portes, A. 1997, & Rumbaut, R. 1997). On the one hand, there is the view that the differences are greater than the similarities. This belief is based upon the argument that structural integration has become more difficult, resulting in the second generation being less likely to achieve social mobility and success and precipitating the possibility of 'downward assimilation'. In a climate of increasing globalisation second generation individuals may also be more inclined to move away from mainstream or majority identity and assume 'bi-cultural or hybrid identities' than to assimilate (Crul & Vermeulen 2003: 966).

The opposing line of thought in the debate serves to remind us of the historic difficulties of past immigration, and views the current situation as being quite optimistic for the second generation, in that assimilation is ultimately possible (Foner 2000, Perlmann & Waldinger 1997). This in turn has naturally lead to a re-assessment of the concept of assimilation, and the way in which the inclination towards assimilation versus integration differs between immigrant groups and national contexts. Are the second generation reproducing the positive 'positions, themes, practises and trajectories' of their parents? Are they perhaps 'converging with native nationals'? (Simon 2003: 1091). Or rather, are they experiencing a kind of 'segmented assimilation' (Portes & Zhou 1993), where they feel the 'indiscriminate impact' of a socioeconomic system, or a 'systemic discrimination' which impacts upon their ability to participate in the labour market? It is clear that these debates will continue until further research reveals a clearer picture of the forces which are currently shaping the identities and experiences of the second generation.
CHAPTER 2

Discussion Themes

The following discussion aims to explore some of the complex issues impacting upon the process of identity formation for the second-generation and their immigrant families in Australia today.

2.1 Dislocation

Immigrant families have pre-existing traditions, values, customs and socioeconomic status in their country of origin, which upon their arrival in Australia may be thrown into discord due to the way in which the wider society no longer serves to reflect or support these aspects of their identity. They may find that their new environment consists of other families, institutions and systems that differ from them in size, value or status, and in terms of the resources available for achieving goals and successfully participating within the society that now defines them. They also often make decisions regarding the extent that they wish to incorporate local influences into their lifestyle or to continue to affirm their original ethnic identity within the context of their new environment.

The Australian born children of immigrant parents may become a link between the family and the wider community via their participation in schooling, local community groups and recreation and leisure activities. As they become older, they may assist their parents or other family members to negotiate and manage language, finances, legal and medical systems and other aspects of daily life. They are uniquely placed in a situation that encompasses both a family life based upon ethnic origins and a local environment comprised of Anglo-Australian influences, and other multi-ethnic and media influenced forms of popular culture. This generation is often vulnerable to conflict between family traditions and various external influences, due to the sense of cultural dislocation or displacement experienced by their immigrant families that has formed an integral part of their history, and therefore identity formation.
In this way, second generation individuals from immigrant families can experience discord and confusion when it comes to a sense of 'who' they are and 'where' they are from. They also can be affected by other structural kinds of difficulties and a sense of dislocation as a result of their place in society, as individuals defined by gender, sexuality, religion, class, education and economic status. This project aimed to examine the causes and effects of this sense of dislocation in an effort to gain some understanding of the identity development of this second generation, whose stories are becoming increasingly prevalent yet remain largely unexplored. The various identities of these individuals often overlap and are subject to extraordinary changes over time.

2.2 Family

There can be little doubt that the family, perhaps more than any other factor, is one of the greatest influences on the development of the beliefs, customs, attitudes and behaviour of individuals. It is a primary function of the family to provide security, conformity, and continuity, but also ideally to inspire its members to desire a sense of separateness and difference, conducive for the individual's entrance into the outside world and search for a new direction. The influence of the 'genetic' family line can tacitly promote the formation of a strong individual character, or may restrict such development to achieve a conformity that will serve to strengthen the family unit. Families often strive to continue their name and uphold the traditions, values and religion that strengthen the kinship group. Under these circumstances there is an inherent pressure to avoid disintegration or disenfranchisement, particularly for immigrant families for whom rights and privileges may appear to be more easily gained as a unified group than as individuals.

The complexities of membership within the family unit reflect the many levels at which they tend to exist, such as the physical, emotional, historical, religious and cultural. The place that individual members hold within the family (as nuclear or extended family members) and the place that the family holds within the wider community are also significant. Where the individual fits within the family often sets the relational, behavioural and family patterns that they will follow in the future, as
discussed by McGoldrick and Gerson (1985). The sense of security, confidence and utility that is instilled and nurtured within the individual as a part of the family group can establish the foundation for the development of meaningful and positive roles within the greater community. The security of the individual's identity is often influenced by the extent that it is accepted and reflected within the family, and this in turn can affect the future sense of importance with which they establish their place in the world. When identity within the family involves conflict or uncertainty, the development of positive identities for second-generation individuals can become quite complex and problematic.

The success of the family as a system can largely depend on the way in which members rationalise cultural and historical family-related issues in a contemporary and personal context. Over-dependency is a bond that can serve to keep families together, due to the way in which members focus on achieving greater power and control as a group rather than on an individual basis. The identity of the family group can therefore become more important than those of its individual members. For the ethnic family who have taken the risk of migration, and experienced the upheaval of re-location and the possibly traumatic effects of isolation and alienation upon settlement, a non-flexible and conservative attitude to family may be developed. The unity of the family may become a priority, however this may be interpreted as being restrictive or a form of conservatism for younger generations who do not fully understand the way in which past experiences have threatened or impacted negatively on their families.

It is important to consider the way in which many immigrant families operate a system of interdependency to ensure financial security, particularly where migration is prompted by economic aspirations over social or political factors. The desire to achieve this form of independence and freedom as a family unit can preclude the opportunity for individual members to utilise opportunities to strive for personal goals. Even though there may a fair amount of expectation to achieve academic, professional or personal (marital) 'success', this may still be for the benefit or reputation of the family. The concept of kinship for many Mediterranean or Asian families may involve living, working and saving money together to provide care, protection, and
financial security for older and younger relatives. This notion of kinship also simultaneously acts to preserve the historical cultural identity of the family, when its origins may be located thousands of miles away. The difficulties and sacrifices experienced by the family in providing security and protection for the future may also contribute to a sense of guilt and the pressure to live up to expectations on the part of younger generations.

The concept of lineage is a hugely influential factor to the process of identity development. It includes considerations of biological origins and ancestry and enables a state of homeostasis among groups who find strength in processes of bonding and identification on both a complex and primordial level. However, 'the modern world was born out of discontinuity with what went before' in terms of the development of industrial capitalism of the West (Giddens 1984: 239). Many symbols of the modern world are distinctly material, aimed at the mass market, and involve the replacement of genes by consumerism in terms of identity development. Increasingly, 'young people are both following trends in family formation begun by their parents and grandparents and setting new directions themselves' (de Vaus and Woolcott 1997: 60). This suggests that in an increasingly globalised society there are many examples of individuals choosing to combine ethnic family traditions with mainstream patterns of popular culture.

This raises the question of how successfully immigrant families negotiate this change in societal values, after perhaps having struggled to adapt to other social, economic, and geographical shifts in the past in a world that is also constantly changing. However, the family unit is not simply a victim of the challenges of the society in which it exists. The family is 'attributed considerable power in determining outcomes in people's lives, and this is why it is the focus of attention in areas as diverse as political science and psychotherapy, education and marketing' (Funder 1991:1). The process of juggling the influences of the immigrant family and popular culture, may facilitate a sense of dislocation for second-generation individuals searching for their own sense of identity, but also contributes to the development of a vast array of new and increasingly cosmopolitan Australian identities.
The role of the family, particularly the parents as main care-givers, has been proven to be a
hugely important factor in the development of behaviour and identity for the individual. The
psychological structuring that is achieved by adulthood is a result of the psychologically significant
events and experiences in a person's life up to that point (Cohen et al 1984). Each individual has
a repertoire of responses to different experiences, shaped by other previous experiences. The
individual then structures attachments to other persons, groups or ideologies around this
response or behaviour. This is dependent on the individual's ability to remember experiences, to
collate them with other experiences and adapt to new experiences. Responses are generally
'dormant' until stimulated in this manner, and for some there is a wide range of responses, and for
others this is more restricted depending on the diversity of experience. In terms of patterns of
identification, individuals may repeat, modify or reject specific behaviour and attitudes of their
parents, ranging from lifestyle choices to parenting methods.

Parent-child interactions generally involve dynamics and experiences that consciously or
unconsciously influence the early development patterns of children regarding autonomy and
sexuality for example. By way of 'mutual cuing' between the infant and parents, the child learns
to adapt to parental attitudes and expectations, and this part of the process of shaping to adapt to
the human environment (Cohen: 359). Likewise, the mother and the father also must adapt to the
needs, wants, habits and so forth of the child. The manner in which many individuals approach
parenting is determined by interaction with one's own parents, and one's learning and experience
of gender, sexuality, and other forms of personal and social conditioning also. Therefore, both
parent and child responses are often predetermined in the sense that they operate on a blue-print
of past experiences. This is perhaps why young people may pick up on unspoken or intangible
expectations and influences from family, peer group and society that undermine their own
decision-making processes.

It is often difficult for parents to encourage their children to make independent life-choices, as by
virtue of living and interacting with their children they are influencing them in many tacit ways.
Parents both purposefully and inadvertently interfere with their children's developmental
processes. They may encourage freedom in some areas but impose restrictions in others. The child may act out the conscious or sometimes unconscious wishes or desires of the parents. Empathy is an important factor in determining the ability of the parent to interact with their child in a way that is both positive and growth orientated, especially in terms of the identity formation process of the child. ‘Transactional experiences between child and parents are not simply action and reaction and often involve simultaneous communication and effects between both participants; and the multiplicity of motivations involved includes influences of the other parent, siblings, social mores and cultural traditions’ (Cohen: 363).

Family language and customs can form seemingly insurmountable barriers between second generation children and the wider community. In Australia, the children of immigrant parents are taught English at school, yet many speak the language of their parents' country of origin at home. At school, national and/or Christian festivals and events such as Easter and Christmas, Anzac Day (the same day as Italian Independence Day) and Australia Day (occasionally coinciding with Chinese New Year) are celebrated by children. However, within their families or ethnic community they may instead observe culturally important events from the country of origin such as the Passover, Ramadan, or the Lunar New Year. At school they may watch their classmates eating Vegemite or cheese sandwiches, and yet be unable to convince their parents to incorporate these items into their own lunches. They may also struggle with homework due to their parents' lack of proficiency in the English language or local cultural, political or religious knowledge.

Adolescence is a particularly tumultuous and significant period of development. Ideally, it can be a phase during which there is an exchange of ideas, attitudes and values between generations (Cohen et al 1984: 311). However, young people also seek 'self objects' such as peer groups, cult heroes and ideologies to reflect their identification process. Whether or not they choose to adapt, modify or develop these facets of their identities, they can reject them at a later stage to pursue goals of their own choosing selected from other new social influences. Many of the parents who were surveyed regarding the importance to their children of the school environment for instance, underestimated the significance of this area as a pervasive one in their children’s
lives, thus primarily only recognising their development within the context of the family (Cohen et al 1984: 70). As such, parents may be largely unaware of the ongoing social difficulties that their children often face at school and among their peer group.

2.3 Work and Study

For several of this study’s participants, work was considered to be one of the most significant of life’s activities for a variety of reasons. Work often occupies a large portion of our adult lives, and like aspects of family life it can present challenges such as change, conflict, and stress. However, work can also be rewarding and satisfying, and serve well to develop and nurture a healthy sense of identity. Work can provide status in terms of enabling an individual to identify with their family, or a social or cultural group or network. Financial benefits and productive activity can assist individuals to fulfil community and family obligations or personal goals. For the second generation of migrant families, economic gain and social recognition can assist to transcend traditional working class limitations. Work can also contribute to increasing personal self-esteem and expressing creativity and so forth, due to the aforementioned factors or perhaps because of the nature of the work. Therefore, satisfaction in terms of employment can improve the quality of life for the individual both materially and psychologically.

The kind of work chosen by individuals (as opposed to that which may be purely opportunistic) may reflect their attitudes, values, interests and skills, and be influenced by class, gender, or cultural factors such as ethnicity and language. Regardless of whether these elements may adequately express an accurate and comprehensive sense of personal identity, there are elements of work that can negatively affect the individual, such as the prospect of unemployment, a lack of mobility or inadequate benefits. It is commonly understood that the more satisfying the rewards of work, the less the individual may need to rely on other facets of their lives for expression or fulfilment. For example, being stuck in a ‘dead-end’ job that does not pay very well can inspire individuals to seek satisfaction of their personal goals and needs by other means. This may be easier to achieve when there is a well balanced and rewarding personal life-style or
family life. The alternative may be the manifestation of disappointment, frustration or dissatisfaction in other areas of life, which can result in negative side-effects on self-esteem, family, and other social pursuits or interactions.

Work is also dependent on other variable factors that are largely external such as those that are industrial, technological, political, cultural and economic. These factors may change rapidly and be less controllable by individuals than perhaps changes in family or lifestyle. However, work choices may provide more flexibility and mobility in terms of financial and social leverage for individuals to escape rigid ethnic, gender or class boundaries or restrictions. The workplace can also often provide quite a strong or extensive social network, due to the experience of sharing activities that may serve to develop a sense of identification and common interest between workers. In my experience, this is especially relevant to younger individuals upon initially entering the workforce, looking to explore their concept of self-identity through work via the process of developing skills and discovering strengths and weaknesses. At this time there is often a variety of other influences and pressures imposed by the expectations of family, peers and other parties that may cause conflict for individuals who are attempting to establish their own hopes and goals at that point in time out in the 'external' world.

In terms of identity development this is a time that can be confusing and difficult as family or societal expectations can be quite high or unattainable when compared to each individual’s actual capabilities or personal goals. It is a time of change, where individuals are meeting new people as adults, re-defining roles within the family and existing social groups and taking responsibility for life-choices. Effective work choices can help to establish and develop a sense of worth and positive identity formation. By the time that such young adults reach their late twenties and early thirties, they may have the confidence to seek to consolidate their experiences and knowledge into a cohesive identity and life path that is less reliant on external factors. They may derive a satisfaction of their achievements that enables them to justify the sacrifices, conflicts or drawbacks that may have been a consequence of some of their life-style choices. By this stage,
personal freedom, success and contentment may be more important to certain individuals than the price they may have paid in terms of family conflict, or a loss of traditional culture.

In terms of a single factor such as literacy, second generation individuals from non-English-speaking backgrounds may lack the support and environment at home to reinforce learning adequately to participate successfully in the workforce, regardless of years of education. For some migrant groups the link between educational and social mobility are vague, both because of the lack of data, and the mitigating factors of class, gender, ethnicity and other social indicators (such as recency of arrival of parents, their levels of education) in determining schooling outcomes (Cahill 1996). Families for whom migration is linked to the desire for future economic and social success may relocate to Australia to find that they are disadvantaged in the labour market not only due to language barriers or educational factors but also a lack of understanding of new systems of welfare, law and government.

Figures for the percentage of immigrants in high status white-collar occupations in 1996 show 22.8% for Vietnam, 30.4% for Italy and 29.1% for Greece (ABS Census: 1996) which are several of the migrant groups that are included in this study. They appear to comprise the bottom half of the economic scale, when for example, compared to the U.K at 42.5%. The obvious factor of disadvantage here is English language proficiency and low educational attainment. Other indicators of inequality, such as low socioeconomic or refugee status and unemployment may have initially motivated migration from these countries, as opposed to a desire for professional or academic advancement for example. The three former groups also often include extended family such as parents or grandparents, which may also precipitate increased economic burden.

After settling in a new country, immigrant families may be driven to focus on economic rather than social methods for achieving 'success'. This may involve fathers doing seasonal or shift-work, mothers working away from home, children working for family businesses and being primarily cared for by older relatives, which, although more preferable than other forms of childcare, may create other problems due to generation and language disparities. There is also the requirement
for the younger generation to potentially take on a role reversal of sorts by being given the
responsibility of assisting adults with linguistic, legal, financial and social matters. They may be
expected to simultaneously respect traditional family values and beliefs, not only in regard to
language and religion, but also often in terms of lifestyle, relationship and employment choices.
And so the culturally and economically insular cycle of the family may be perpetuated from one
generation to the next if unchecked by social interference. It is widely accepted that ‘occupation
determines life chances - education, housing, medical and unexpected expenses, effective
participation in bureaucracies, organisations and associations’ (Western 1983:261).

2.4 Lifestyle and Leisure

This study recognises that leisure is an integral part of many lifestyles and cultures, and often an
important requirement for the achievement of a sense of happiness, enjoyment and good health.
The concept of leisure also conveys a sense of freedom and of choice. It is also an area where
some individuals can exert the most control in their life, and the most likely to reflect their own
attitudes, beliefs, values and interests. Leisure can not only assist to develop and reinforce a
sense of identity, it can provide an outlet for creative expression and a relief from the demands of
work, financial obligations or daily routine. Leisure can also be a means for developing and
maintaining involvement and a sense of worth in society or a chosen community. Increasingly
many individuals regard leisure time as a priority, particularly those who watched their parents
work long hours and view leisure time as perhaps more a reward for hard work than principally the
motivation to work, and therefore this attitude may vary between different generations.

My experience of working with young people from CALD backgrounds lead me to believe that to
understand one’s identity and roles in many different areas of life, it is important to reflect upon
personal patterns of choices, actions and interests. Older migrant generations may have believed
that spending twelve hours a day working at the family business is justifiable in terms of the goal
of supporting extended family or for future security. However, younger generations are perhaps
more aware of the negative aspects of having had absent parents, a lack of family holidays and
the responsibility of having to work from an early age to assist running the family business. They make choices in their own lives based on these experiences, often aiming to achieve more free time for themselves and quality leisure time with their family and friends than their parents did. Many individuals may naturally make lifestyle choices that are more typical of popular Australian culture than the traditional values of their parents.

It appears that second generation individuals also appear to have social, political, or religious beliefs that differ from the traditional beliefs of their parents due to their exposure to and experiences in both cultures. They may hope to give their own children the opportunity to embrace, combine or reject either if they desire, especially if they themselves were not given the freedom to choose without conflict or waiting to reach adulthood. By virtue of having diverse social networks and links to the workplace, individuals can gravitate away from ethnic or family-based activities to become more involved in the external communities that they work and live in. As young people develop a need for independence and self-expression, families may increasingly begin to represent obligation and control. Families may symbolise a lack of choice or freedom and inspire guilt or shame when young people attempt to act independently and they may find themselves instinctively turning from one culture to another to seek a way of life that will reflect their own chosen sense of identity.

The nature of contemporary life is fast-paced, and full of both increasing choices and stresses. As a result, individuals may be more inclined to ask themselves why they do certain activities and whether or not they enjoy them. As prioritising these choices becomes an important task, more time may be dedicated to personally significant and valued activities. While traditional family activities are often meaningful to young people, they may find themselves less inclined to actually participate once they have left the family home, especially when they might find these to less representative of their own beliefs or views, for example where there are religious ceremonies involved. Alternatively, migrant families may find that they are less orthodox in terms of traditional beliefs in Australia than in the homeland as a result of their own experience of acculturation.
However, they may still expect their children to adhere to quite orthodox or conservative principles to re-inforce a sense of identification with values or principles that they feel are being lost.

For many individuals, achieving a balance in life roles is an important personal goal. For most it is preferable that the demands of the different aspects of life cause minimal conflict of time, activities, values and so forth. It is difficult for any individual to exist in limbo between different roles for a sustained period of time. Prolonged experience of this can result in the individual feeling stressed and confused in terms of a positive and satisfactory sense of identity and self. It is particularly problematic to be required to fulfil roles that do not conform to personal values or beliefs. This is a situation that is commonly described as 'living a lie' and can lead to the individual experiencing sensations of guilt or hypocrisy, which was the case for several of the participants involved in this study. These negative feelings can characterise interactions between individuals and their families where they go to great lengths to conceal the opposing sides of their lives from them. For example, they may not wish to reveal to their families that they have a partner who is not from the same religious background.

2.5 Identity

A major aim of this project was to ascertain which experiences and influences the participants most identify with and how. Major influences may take the form of a variety of individuals, family members, peer groups, school friends, work colleagues or famous icons and heroes that they may never meet. Identification can be expressed through choices regarding brand names, fashion, music, religion, drugs or sexuality. Other influencing factors for some individuals may be knowledge or experience of events in their lives or memories, reflections and stories of the past. These may have taken place in the early developmental stages of life, or may be a part of everyday life such as something that an individual has seen or done. The experience of story telling during the interview process for this project was intended as an opportunity for individuals to reflect, re-create and perhaps review the factors that have impacted upon the formation of their sense of identity.
Memories and stories play a particularly important role in identity formation when the people and places of the past are distant, lost or no longer exist. Gaps in memory or stories invoke feelings of displacement or dislocation in terms of personal history, and therefore, often concepts of identity. Just as the re-created stories of individuals participating in this project may have been subject to emotion, forgetfulness, or selectivity, there were also probably aspects of their pasts which were transformed in some way by their own family members in the way they were remembered, collated and presented. The 'missing links' or 'keys' in the ever changing puzzle of identity can be introduced by way of fabrication, myth or the application of reliable shared 'universal truths', relating to the traditions and culture of both the internal (family) and the external (society) influence on the individual. For some second-generation individuals there may be huge gaps in their own history and sense of identity due to the stories that they do not know about in their own family's history.

It is widely understood that identity is shaped by more inherent qualities such as personal character and psychological disposition, which are influenced by experience, family and social environment. Clearly, identity formation is also significantly impacted upon by the gender, class, sexuality and religious and political beliefs of the individual. An important question for this project has been the extent to which individuals compartmentalise personal, social, family and cultural aspects of identity, and the different ways they access these facets of self, depending on their social environment at the time. There will be extensive discussion of how cohesively individuals feel that they fit into both their family and the Australian social environment. Making choices in this area involves a certain degree of sacrifice, often requiring individuals to choose one over the other (or perhaps sacrificing the quality of one for quality in the other). This also raises the question of which aspects of lifestyle and identity are chosen and which are prescribed.

The construction of identity is often linked to interaction with others. The process of identification is initiated within the family environment, and expands as the individual's external world widens also. Language is a key to naming and therefore identifying the world and we must also name
and identify ourselves within this context, or within several contexts in the case of bilingual or multi-lingual individuals. We recognise ourselves and others (and the differences between us) in terms of gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality. We formulate public and private identities that reflect both how we see ourselves and how others view us. Ethnicity, in the context of the heritage borne from one's family's country of origin, is a layer of identity that intermingles with other characteristics, and the significance of each such layer depends on a multitude of other environmental and experiential factors. This is why it is important to avoid generalisations that do not allow for these other factors.

The impact of communication and language on culture and the effect of these factors on identity are unmistakable in the universal evolutionary process (Giddens 1984). The earliest forms of culture were commonly based on religion, family and technology enabled by communication through language. As societies have developed both oral and written histories, politics, bureaucracy, law and money have increasingly served to both tie yet liberate consumers from kinship groups (Giddens 1984: 264-268). Individuals make choices regarding their personal evolution in terms of these factors, and historical stories form a basis for their contemporary identity development. These stories can be passed on in terms of language and lifestyle and may serve to form a cultural perspective through which the surrounding environment or society may be filtered. These images or representations of identity can be based on attitudes, beliefs or opinions that consist of both fact and fiction.

Tradition plays a significant role for self-identification purposes from the very early stages of development. Similar to personal history, traditions are stories that are partly based on 'truth' and partly invented. Traditions are justified in the context of power, control, security and habit, and are often a distinguishing feature of organised groups such as religions and families. In terms of inheritance, tradition can be passed on to each generation to be both protected and nurtured, which suggests that it can be a fluid concept (Giddens 1999: 39). It follows that if traditions have the potential to be modified and adapted this may result in a process of positive and flexible decision-making stimulated by a variety of factors such as experience, education and knowledge.
Alternatively, the individual may find that when the safeguard of tradition is removed or lacking, that other ‘addictions’ such as love, food, sex and drugs may assume a definitive influence on identity.

Therefore traditions can be both chosen and re-invented from one generation to another. In the context of globalisation, the so-called truths of tradition are questioned as part of the reassessment of the old-world order. As traditional values are increasingly being challenged, moral and social beliefs require new foundations, and it is often life style choices that prevail. However, this entails that the self is increasingly accountable for personal truths and beliefs. When the repetition of tradition declines there may be a greater freedom of choice, yet choice may also be ‘subverted by anxiety’, as there is a shift in focus from collective to individual past (Giddens 1999:47). The responsibility for personal identity and lifestyle decisions becomes largely that of the individual, potentially resulting in insecurity, uncertainty and a greater degree of risk when faced with a reality that holds little or no structure.

Peterson (1997) suggests that a kind of social ‘ecology’ based upon one’s physical surroundings also plays a significant role in determining identity. This involves recognition that the second generation often has stronger aspirations to identify with their Australian social environment than the previous generation of their family, which often have firm nostalgic ties to the land in which they were born. The physical and social environment of the place where second-generation individuals are born and reside also provides an extraordinary determining influence on identity formation. ‘Ethnicity’, defined in Greek as _ethnikos_ or _ethnos_ in terms of nation or race, is one factor among many, including circumstance, situation and social or physical environment, that impact upon the development of cultural identity. Ethnic identity, like cultural identity, is multifaceted and influenced by other factors such as class, gender and ‘Anglo-conformity-assimilation’ (Peterson 1997: 26). It follows that love and pride for a tradition can be felt without the need for its principles to be incorporated into everyday life. It is in this way that many second-generation individuals are able to provide continuity for their ethnic identity that at times may not be manifested in other ways.
It is also necessary to consider the effects of the so-called 'melting pot' phenomenon. As society becomes increasingly populated by a range of multifaceted identities, it becomes necessary to reflect on the composite aspects of its inhabitants and their lifestyles. Just as Asian influenced culinary dishes often take on a hybrid form, so do dialects and everyday language in a culturally diverse environment. For example, the broad Italian-Australian accent of the second generation is a distinct part of contemporary Australian culture today, perhaps even more so than many British colloquialisms or jingoistic 'ockerisms' of the past. The hyphenated phrase 'Italian-Australian' is also important in terms of stating symbolic identity that reflects nostalgic allegiance to the family homeland in the context of contemporary affiliation with the place of birth, and therefore serves as an 'expressive' as well as 'instrumental' function (Peterson 1997: 28). Social influences on identity such as consumer products and advertising also attempt to reflect this cross-cultural interaction and representation.

As part of the complex process that is identity development, we can be defined by our roles in society or economy not only as mother or daughter, but also as voter, rate-payer, employer or consumer. Our identities are shaped by the way we look, the languages we speak, the clothes we wear, the foods we eat, and the products we buy. As consumers we choose a certain image and lifestyle, based on advertising, fashion and popular culture (Sarup 1996: 105). Increasingly, we are able to purchase these indicators of identity, therefore this form of identity is not only socially motivated, but also firmly based upon economic status. This in turn may involve the sacrificing of traditional family aspirations for individual materialistic ones, especially in a society where the young and mobile population may embark upon a quest for freedom, independence and choice as a matter of course. As families become more flexible and less reliant on tradition (yet perhaps become increasingly fragmented as a result), individual members may choose to 'shop around' and explore new experiences, environments and ways of looking, thinking and feeling which contribute to their sense of 'self' identity.
It is possible that the construction of identity is increasingly becoming based upon things that are different rather than things that are the same (King 1991: 39). Identities are generally always in a stage of formation or development. Identity formation has traditionally involved the process of believing that we are similar, or have similar experiences, to others, not simply in terms of how we look or feel, but in the context of narrative representation - the narration of one's self. However identities are composed of various discourses of 'sameness' and therefore often vary in nature (p. 51). The multiplicity of the social and cultural identities we develop leads to the inevitability of difference also playing an important role in the identification process. We all fit into different categories, groups, and stereotypes. We also articulate our sameness, our differences, and basically the sum of our stories and identities in diverse ways. Developing cultural identity is another way of 'positioning' and 'placing' ourselves within a social context (p.61), and this is a unique process for each individual shaped by their own meaningful stories.

Singular definitions can no longer reflect these differences adequately. Rather there are many groups, movements and individuals that may be part of a larger association or community, yet still retain their differences (King 1991:65). The process of forming identity is therefore often a process of establishing priorities. To this effect, the second generation may feel that ethnic identity is restrictive in many ways, but ultimately is also an instrument of mobility that is 'dynamic and adaptable to changing conditions' (Callan 1986: 83). The ethnic identity expressed by individuals or groups may therefore differ from their own personal perception of their ethnicity identity. The differences expressed by each generation are inevitably greater than the differences experienced between individuals of the same generation, therefore there can still be a strong sense of social cohesion and identification between young people from different cultural and social backgrounds. Despite the difficulties experienced by young people who are occasionally torn between cultures, they usually value many aspects of the ethnic dimension of their families, as evidenced by the successful translation of these into their own lives.

As identity formation incorporates a wider range of influences, there is increased risk that this may lead to a slightly dislocated or fragmented sense of identity for the individual as more traditional
influences, such as a sense of family or heritage, decline. The impact of the ‘poly-ethnic’ nation in
displacing the ‘ethnic’ nation, potentially may result in social fragmentation, is made more complex
by causal factors such as unemployment, breakdown of the family, crime, drugs and ‘youth
reluctance to join a society which seems to deny it hope’ (Dixson 1999: 3). Individuals are not only
defined within the framework of past generations, but also by the times in which they live and the
ways in which they can adapt to change. Awareness of the past is an important step in
establishing a historical sense of identity, however interpretation of contemporary ‘core’ culture is
also integral to future identity development for the individual, both for each new generation, and
for the nation as a whole in the process of ‘unmooring’ fixed identity.

2.6 Citizenship

An important influence on the identity formation process of Australian-born individuals is the
current attitudes and definitions of citizenship in this country. Concepts of citizenship are ideally
based upon a foundation of equality, particularly in relation to class and other social and economic
structures. The process of achieving equality includes addressing diverse and disparate
circumstances of the inequality of rights, status and economy. This measure of equality (or
inequality) also includes equitable access to resources, income, health care, education, and
welfare (Nile 1995: 96). It involves all forms of participation in society, and in the communities
contained within, and it can be defined in terms of membership to a group, ideally equal
membership. In a ‘consumer-oriented mass society’ homogenisation can achieve a certain
levelling effect and a degree of social integration (p.105).

However, many minorities have been further marginalised and excluded from mainstream society
by the manner in which ‘citizenship’ (and the laws and institutions that define and support it) has
failed to facilitate social or political access and mobility, restricting the ability of some individuals to
participate in the community. To be denied equal participation indicates an imbalance of the
social and political power required to combat discrimination and disadvantage. Exploration of
these citizenship issues is not only a nation-building exercise but also contributes to the identity
building process also. It is likely that the negative experience of marginalised migrant groups has impacted upon the uncertain relationship between the second generation and their concepts of Australian citizenship and identity. This has contributed to the argument increasingly expressed in the media and other public forums that if Australians are to have a united identity, it should be one that does not demand conformity to commonly accepted stereotypes.

The Families, Social Capital and Citizenship Project (Stone 2002) found that ‘there is now mounting international evidence that social relations of particular quality and nature are central to creating sustainable communities’. However, Stone argues that while it is accepted that the mere practice of family life will generate relationships of trust and reciprocity, the actual circumstances under which this takes place are under-researched. Contemporary family sociology has identified that family life is actually changing quite rapidly yet issues of cultural diversity are not commonly highlighted or differentiated by existing research aimed at defining or measuring social capital. Research findings often neglect to provide significant investigation or analysis of the combination of structural and cultural factors contributing to the immigrant family experience of dislocation that is often passed on to following generations, impacting negatively on their capacity to successfully participate in Australian society.

Traditionally citizenship has been acquired through birth via parents or birthplace. It is possible to now qualify for citizenship through other means such as residency. However, this has often involved the changing of citizenship to include an additional one or to relinquish original citizenship. Either status implies that some individuals are legally bound to make cultural decisions based upon membership of only one unit or system even if they may feel affiliated to more than one or perhaps a different one. While this is often a decision made on a pragmatic basis to gain social, political or economic status, it may still be a compulsory requirement for many. For the second-generation individuals who have access to more than one country’s citizenship, there is more flexibility and therefore perhaps other motivations for the decision-making process involved with self-definition of cultural or national identity. For the participants in this project, this choice is often determined by considerations of a sense of belonging over time,
based on balancing the priorities of both family and self. For example, while the country of origin is important in a family context, often the country of birth or place of residence is more significant to the individual.

Citizenship in a contemporary democratic society such as Australia may enable individuals to realise aspirations to be an entrepreneur, to travel or to make other versatile choices. It is perhaps identification with these goals that can override the influence of traditional immigrant family expectations for second-generation individuals. However, it is not necessarily Australian citizenship alone that enables or promotes this desire for freedom and autonomy. Second-generation individuals from immigrant family backgrounds can seek dual nationality that allows them the flexibility and wider variety of options. They may be less inclined to limit their choices, as their parents may have been required to plan for a single long-term goal in what they may perceive to be an increasingly uncertain future, or where there are simply many other short-term goals that they would rather achieve.

Definitions of citizenship in such a society must also involve reconciliation between multiculturalism and democracy, and the compatibility of the rights of the individual citizen versus the rights of communities. In contemporary Australia for example, gay and lesbian individuals are part of a minority community that has fought for acceptance as part of the diversity of a modern democratic and multicultural society. Historically the rights of citizenship have not always been conferred equally to such groups, and therefore sexuality has been an area where pluralism has not had an entirely smooth path in achieving equality in the face of difference. Prior to the 1960s, homosexuality was not a generally acknowledged aspect of social identity, yet the right to express this aspect of identity is now reinforced by policy, law and public attitudes. This is not to say that all such marginalised individuals can identify with each other and these ‘groups' exclusively, or in a meaningful way. Many may prefer to remain distinctly separate and individual, yet the development of these kinds of groups can promote and encourage a sense of re-affirmation and broader identity that can actively claim acceptance and inclusion in wider society.
The women's movement has achieved similar success in terms of political and social equality in Australia since the 1960s. The emergence of the feminist critique that challenged the dominant gender-order provided the social space to enable the gay and lesbian movement in Australia to grow. Women 'came out', so to speak, in a similar fashion, in terms of gaining a new public identity as a marginalised group requiring recognition and equity, as was also sought by the developing ethos of multiculturalism (Callan 1986: 113). The majority of women, unlike gay/lesbian communities, do not live together in exclusive groups or form affiliations with organised social or political groups. However, women from diverse backgrounds share many complex issues and principles universally. Australian women's movements were undoubtedly influenced by the North American and European feminist movements, which promoted the desire to seek similar changes at a local level. The United Nations also set an agenda for reforms internationally, and political changes occurred locally witnessing the progression of more women into the realms of parliament, business, trade unions and universities.

In this way, women began to achieve the power and mobility previously denied to them by the factors of difference and discrimination that have characterised them as a disadvantaged group, reinforced by the rights of equity and democracy which they are entitled as citizens of this nation. In terms of more positive identities for women, assimilation strategies offered opportunities for women to be incorporated into male-dominated power structures. However, similar to the complex implications of assimilation for ethnic groups, this did not necessarily afford women an adequate level of equality (Callan 1984: 134). The very nature of assimilation primarily serves to acknowledge, reinforce and perpetuate the ideology of the dominant or majority group. Therefore, to a certain extent, assimilation for women, just as for ethnic groups, serves only to reinforce the dominant group superiority. However, 'minority' (in terms of disadvantage or marginalisation) groups do benefit from self-definition of identity rather than simply relying on the definition of other external groups, and social and traditional stereotypes.

The re-defining of developing identities based upon concepts of citizenship must involve a process of challenging stereotypes and traditions, including society-based perceptions and
divisions, and the reasons why they exist. This also involves language reform in terms of the way in which such ideas and definitions are communicated and expressed, and an historical analysis of oppression leading to inequality. Such reflection is essential in the process of identifying and developing change and strategies for the future. The story of migrant women in Australia for example is one from which many lessons can be learnt. Migrant women have traditionally been the most disadvantaged in terms of various different kinds of minority - group membership, namely, as working - class migrant women. Difficulties for these individuals have taken the form of language barriers, a lack of educational and employment opportunities, child or health care and knowledge of their rights and laws to protect them against discrimination and disadvantage.

2.7 Culture and Ethnicity

For the purposes of this project, culture will be discussed in terms of 'the set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people, communicated from one generation to the next via language or some other means of communication' (Matsumoto 1994: 4). This definition makes the distinction of emphasising that culture does not simply concern race or nationality. As discussed previously, individuals of certain races or nations do not necessarily prescribe to the cultural stereotypes of their biological origins or citizenship. More than anything, stereotypes tend to reflect the negative aspects of cultural behaviours and attitudes. However, culture is generally a shared and interactive construct, and strict adherence to particular cultural doctrines may serve to bias or restrict the pursuit of individual identity development that diverge from the mainstream.

Many kinds of cultures evolve distinctly and diversely to forge human behaviours in a manner that will ensure survival, thus attempting to avoid en masse the amorphism that may characterise the development of individual realities. As much as culture is a 'macro' social construct, it is also an individual social construct. Consequently, culture exists in each individual as much as it exists as a 'global, social construct' (Matsumoto 1994: 5). A measure of culture is the extent to which individuals participate and engage in the behaviours, beliefs and attitudes that they have adopted as their culture, by consensus so to speak. Increasingly individuals (and societies) are living by
many differing cultures and sub-cultures and adapting them far beyond the 'political boundaries of nation-states' (Kramsch 1998: 81). The value of culture is therefore perhaps changing in terms of significance to each generation as 'cultural horizons' expand (Kramsch 1998: 83).

Culture can be discussed in terms of both the biological and social sciences, namely as the method by which human beings adapt and evolve more quickly and efficiently than would be possible by genetic processes alone (Van den Berghe: 1982). According to this theory, societies are motivated primarily by the self-interest of their individual members, who are able to learn experientially, modify behaviour appropriately and communicate these patterns to others, in aid of enhancing each other's fitness to survive in an essentially selfish and egocentric form of cooperation. This can be achieved via the organisation of society into families through kinship ties and marriage. This indicates an emphasis on biological rather than cultural need to successfully enhance one's own 'replication' and strengthen 'potentially immortal genes' (p.20). As such, concepts of ethnicity are based on a 'propensity to favour kin over non-kin', entailing that the closer relationships are, the more 'preferential' the behaviour (p.18-19).

However, these arguments raise the issue of relatedness to others beyond biology as being beneficial to the survival of individuals within an increasingly disparate global society. Just as ethnicity is based on common kinship, societies are founded on common modes of living and places of being. There is a natural propensity for individuals to prefer and seek the company and association of others who reflect themselves through language, appearance and other aspects of cultural identity, an obvious feature of ethnic relatedness. For many individuals, shared language, appearance, lifestyle, consumer needs and products may be reflected by the social peer group rather than kin, especially for those individuals who aspire to 'upward social mobility and symbols of successful attainment of middle class status' (Van der Berghe 1982: 226). Some aspects of cultural identification are easily manipulated (usually unconsciously) to achieve maximum personal advantage, and therefore can be 'situationally' based as well as a primordial feature of all human beings (p.26).
Therefore this thesis assumes that, on a pragmatic level, individuals acculturate and assimilate when it is most personally beneficial to do so. This cultural and social pluralism will exist for as long as individuals feel the need to adapt their language, values, custom, religion and other aspects of cultural and ethnic identity to achieve their own personal goals and aspirations within society (Van der Berghe 1982: 186). An example of this is the experience of the American ‘melting pot’ phenomena that involved the desire of the second generation to escape from migrant ghettos that they perceived as a symbol of working class existence (p.226). The primary method of achieving this takes the form of intermarriage and educational and occupational mobility. Despite the potential for cultural heritage to always remain meaningful for individuals, concepts of class are firmly based on convenience and personal aspirations that may impact more significantly on their every day lives.

However, it generally requires significant social, economic or political motivation for most individuals to circumvent kinship ties and ethnic identity. The breakdown or replacement of these cultural influences may lead to feelings of insecurity, guilt and loss of identity for the individual (Van der Berghe 1982: 257). Families often provide the basis of cultural identification and membership in this particular group is a potentially life-long and ‘all-encompassing experience’ for the individual. This relationship promises personal benefits such as the assurance of reciprocal care, the preservation of ties and cooperation to ensure the general fitness of the kinship group as a whole. It can be argued, however, that as the individual begins to care more for self and direct kin preservation rather than group membership to enable greater power and benefits as a consumer and competitive global citizen, the need to prove fitness in terms of reproduction may become less important. Indeed many gay individuals and couples do not consider this an essential part of their quality of life and therefore this factor may not form a part of the belief or value system that is the foundation for their sense of cultural identity.

The acculturation of the second-generation involves individuals from different ethnic and cultural groups intermixing and re-defining language, beliefs, customs, food, clothing and other lifestyle features and techniques borrowed from each other. The ability of the younger generation of
immigrant families to look further afield for these influences has enabled the re-shaping and flexibility of rituals such as marriage. Intermarriage has been encouraged by the gradual removal of strict social and cultural barriers, along with certain geographical and religious factors. Intermarriage is increasingly an option being considered by young Australians making lifestyle choices. Individuals are also commonly deciding that being married is not a necessary feature of their self-identity at all, leading to the rising contemporary trend of de-facto relationships. This often presents challenges to traditional family values and contributes to rifts between generations until understanding and acceptance of these issues has been developed.

In these kinds of circumstances conflict is generally experienced between the parents and the young person, rather than within the young person (Callan 1986: 83). The younger generation appears to be more easily capable of being able to ascribe the best from both worlds, and subsequently incorporate parts of both cultures in a process of ‘dual identification’. As most cultural and social experiences and knowledge is internally processed by children from very early in development, these choices and decisions are pragmatically based just like many others. The dynamics of the relationship between young people and their family members is more likely to be problematic when there is discord between the expectations of the latter and the needs and desires of the former. The process of breaking or loosening cultural ties with family is often quite traumatic and damaging for all parties involved, but the goal of achieving freedom, autonomy and self-determination is considered by many young people to be worth this price or an unavoidable outcome.

The stereotypes typical of many cultural groups can lead to the assumption that the individuals within the group share the same characteristics as those identified as distinguishing the group as a whole (Callan 1986). These kinds of stereotypes can result in social or cultural misunderstandings between peer groups and family or ethnic community groups. When stereotypes are used to replace an individual response to members of a group this may lead to feelings of alienation or ‘otherness’ (p.28-29). It is difficult to say whether these ‘misfit’-type feelings simply describe unconventional or contrary behaviour, or cause them to develop in the
first place. The experience of the second generation can be compared to that of migrant women who have had to precipitate change to ‘male-dominated structures that will allow them greater access to education, the workforce and freedom from traditional role divisions’, and of homosexuals challenging the norms and oppressions of heterosexual society.

With the changing role and significance of family and other cultural sources or stereotypes traditionally instrumental in the development of identity for the individual, concepts of ‘home’ and ‘residency’ are also being re-defined by globalisation. Definitions of ‘family’ and ‘home’ are constantly being regulated and reconstructed by the social debate, with liberal influence by both mass consumer production and mass media (Bird et al 1993: 150). With the expansion and increasing diversity of identity-shaping factors, the evolution of ‘modes’ of modern living and ‘home-making’ are also worth closer examination. Households, like families, ‘use commodities and general cultural resources in a fundamentally opportunistic way to carry out internal strategies’ that take some time to evolve (p.154). In migrant families that have been ‘relocated culturally, socially, and economically by participation in an external educational and employment system, more couples now enjoy and, in a sense, must create, living environments representing their distinctive trajectories - rising from personal and family histories to self-projection in social space’ (p.158).

Research into contemporary households in Britain has revealed interesting parallels in terms of the changing social and cultural attitudes between each generation. Generally, younger couples shared the belief that they occupied a different ‘social place’ and ‘direction of movement’ to that of their parents. They also maintained ‘diverse networks of chosen social contacts relating to work or leisure interests’ (Bird et al 1993:161). However, the couples could also be divided into two distinct groups where their perspectives differed. The first group was oriented towards individuality and the de-construction of its own pre-suppositions, while the second valued reciprocity, identity and the reconstruction of tradition. This thesis examines factors from both categories that may exist for each individual and characterise the way in which they have
formulated their sense of cultural identity. As concluded in Bird, further study of the home as a cultural site, especially pertaining to the transmission of culture between generations, is required.

Many 'new' and emerging generations of genders, ethnicities and communities are now speaking for themselves for the first time, having been previously excluded from cultural representation (King 1991: 34). Such 'speaking out' involves 'hidden' personal histories and stories that need to be explored and shared, however this discourse is always firmly based within a tradition, as a part of the 'rediscovery of a place, of a past, of one's roots of one's context' (p.36). The Australian cultural landscape is characterised by a fluidity and flexibility of boundaries that at times defy definition. This impacts not only upon the social, economic and sexual classification of the self, but also on each individual's demographic, generational and occupational positioning for example. An adequate understanding of culture increasingly requires exploration of the unique and diverse stories describing what both culture and identity mean for individuals in a contemporary Australian context.

The power of any culture is greatest in terms of the way in which it represents and shapes its participants. Resistance to mainstream culture is essentially the act of rejecting or denying the ordered foundation of security and stability that often forms the basis of social complacency rather than social revolution. However, today in Australia acts of cultural 'resistance' are less organised and far subtler than in politically or religiously charged cultures. It is by virtue of the freedom to make lifestyle choices that each generation of Australians can expand their cultural and social horizons, with perhaps no firm destination in mind. As such, developing Australian identities appear to remain in a state of transition. Resistance towards traditional ethnic culture, family constraints or the stereotypes of mainstream society may be difficult choices to make, as has been discussed. This experience also may become a journey of personal discovery that presents both positive and negative consequences for individuals who find themselves involved in such a search.
2.8 Society

Socialisation is the process through which individuals take on elements of a certain culture, 'its values, beliefs and other behaviours in order to function within it' (Gardiner et al, 1998: 24). Essentially, exchanges and interactions with family and significant others influence the social and cultural development of individuals from an early age. It follows that this development is an ongoing process that is reciprocal with other individuals and also a product of social environment and setting. It is important to note that while nuclear or traditional families may increasingly no longer be necessary for reproduction, they are still essential for socialisation as discussed previously.

There has been ongoing controversy and debate about regarding the identity of Australian society and its citizens. Much of the discourse has been expounded within academic and bureaucratic circles, and everyday Australians have yet to wade into the argument with a cohesive voice. However, increasingly community and ethnic groups, stimulated by the media and political and economic factors, appear to be postulating that there is no need for a singular definitive concept of Australian society and its people. There is growing encouragement to cultivate acknowledgment and acceptance that we are all different, and that perhaps the value and strength of the nation lies in its diversity, and in our ability to embrace this. Like individuals, societies are defined by the languages spoken, food eaten, leisure taken, religion and beliefs followed within, and also by the forces of environment, technology, industry, and other elements of processes such as globalisation.

These debates raise pertinent questions that are not easily answered. Does the acceptance of diversity also entail the loss of identity for our society? Is it possible to simply expand the existing foundation of Anglo-Australian identity to incorporate this diversity? Should we focus our identity challenges on individuals and local communities simply by virtue of life-style choices rather than attempting to re-define society itself? Is it inevitable that our progressive and modern-thinking society has shifted from its own traditional Anglo ideals as the world has been progressively
shrinking, and knowledge is increasing? Is this the point in time where traditions of Anglo-
Australia and other ethnic origins need to be redefined by new generations in the face of global
change? Can each generation continue to relate to a singular and one-dimensional past and
identity to adapt to change and plan for the future? Is it possible or essential to incorporate all of
this in one definition of our society or citizenship?

It may be an appropriate time to consider that perhaps the reason why we are ‘so lukewarm in
articulating patriotism’ (Dixson1999: 94) is that one-dimensional patriotism is no longer required
now that it has served its purpose. Nationalistic debates have been successful in establishing
that there is a question of identity for Australian society and its people. The role of these debates
is like those of feminism, prior to the point where equality between the sexes was generally
accepted, and was reflected by society, education, government and the law. Once the principles
of the ‘movement’, so to speak, have been established, perhaps it will be left to individuals to do
the work of enacting change in everyday situations. However, the multicultural ‘identity’ of a
society becomes problematic to singularly define when its inhabitants technically may not all be
‘citizens’, just as the country of origin of migrants may not actually be their country of nationality.
Another question is that of how ethnicity can possibly be measured effectively, for example
information regarding country of birth may not indicate cultural identity for second-generation
individuals whose parents where born overseas.

If the nurturing of identity by nations is comparative to parenting an infant, the nation itself is
perhaps a symbol of the family in the role of nurturing identity formation and is just as complex
depending on the composition of membership. As discussed earlier, in terms of the physical and
psychological bond between families and their members there is a similar relationship of
symbiosis between a society and its inhabitants. Similarly, there may ultimately be a process of
separation to create a distinct entity that can result in a sense of dislocation or fragmentation for
the individual. The diversity of personal histories and experiences and ethnic cultures has hugely
impacted upon mainstream society as a whole and therefore upon the complex processes of
identity development for individuals. In The Republic, Plato argued that the order of the city is
structurally reflective of the citizens themselves, the city constructed with 'knowledge, spirit and appetite'. Likewise, the beliefs, styles and attitudes of differing religions, ethnic groups, families and so forth, need to coexist to adapt to modern society (Giddens 1999).

It is certainly the case that Australian society and its citizens are ideally complementary, yet this relationship can also form the basis of much personal and national conflict and instability if not in adequate cohesion or unity. The current era has been described as 'a time of marginalised, fragmented, unenfranchised, disadvantaged and dispersed identity - particularly so for migrants' (Jakubowicz et al 1994: 33). Furthermore, an effect of globalisation is to give us all a growing sense of 'migrant hood', in the face of which we in turn examine our sense of identity beyond nationality. Attempts to incorporate features of social environment within the context of an ethnic background during the process of identity development give second generation individuals the opportunity to voluntarily choose certain aspects of identity in this ever-changing world shaped by often increasingly homogenised globalised images, symbols and products.

Society's effect on the individual is both 'liberating and constraining', and influenced by the degree to which we seek to recognise sameness, or separateness (Kramsch 1998: 6). The immigrant's identity in the country of origin can be linked to that individual's distinct social, economic and political status and so forth, while in the new country this may be judged or imposed simply on the basis of ethnicity or citizenship. As a consequence, immigrants may instinctively become more reliant on their own pre-existing sense of nationality, religion, language and traditional customs and values as self-defining factors, so that these characteristics of identity become even more pronounced in the country of settlement than in the home country's society. In this way, cultural identity is influenced by both social and personal stereotypes.

Generally, the increased globalisation of Australian society has resulted in many individuals and groups adopting and adapting to a variety of cultural influences, a process that can be described as the 'appropriation' (Kramsch 1998: 81) of culture based on the individual's own needs and interests. This indicates an emphasis on 'expanding horizons' rather than the 'equal value or
relative worth of different cultures’ in terms of self-ascribed identity (p.83). The ‘multiplication and diversification of worlds rather than homogenisation or hybridisation better express the dominant forms of cultural relations under global conditions’ (Albrow 1996:149). In this way self-identity is formulated through various experiences of social life and group membership rather than singularly through assimilation into one group.

However, the rigidity of the need for a ‘bureaucratic’ identity juxtaposes the flexibility of social identity development. Despite the universal benefits and rewards offered by a multicultural society, for the individual there still exists the ‘fundamental realities of unequal power, authority and legitimation’ (Kramsch 1998: 82). Migration, education, unemployment, health and housing have become factors of inequality that regularly characterise the society which form a part of individual reality, and an unavoidable part of identity development. For individuals from ethnic backgrounds there are a myriad of experiences of disadvantage influenced by the social, economic and political environment of initial migration. For some immigrant families who are faced with unemployment and inadequate housing or medical care for example, often stress and financial risk have led to increased incidence of depression, suicide, and alcoholism, and other issues of cultural diversity that are not always reflected in statistics denoting disadvantage (Western, 1983).
CHAPTER 3

Research Program

3.1 Methodology

This project aimed to explore the stories and relevant life histories of participants through the case study process, and discuss the information gathered in terms of the following objectives:

- To describe the self-perception of the individuals' multiple and intersecting identities.
- To examine the role of the immigrant family and its family history in the construction of these multiple and intersecting identities.
- To examine the way in which the individual negotiates the expectations of migrant family values and practices in the Australian context.
- To identify the impact of key events and decisions in the process of identity formation of the individual.
- To explore identity formation in relation to the individuals' social, educational and occupational history.
- To investigate the degree and type of dislocation of identity formation in a multicultural context.

This research was primarily intended to describe the self-perception of the individuals' multiple and intersecting identities, and the extent to which the individuals have incorporated aspects of both their immigrant family background and the realities of the Australian social environment in the construction of these identities. The impact of key events and decisions on identity formation and the way in which they have shaped individual educational, occupational and social histories was explored in the context of the many definitions of national identity that are currently being debated by many Australians as the new century unfolds.
The problematic cultural factors impacting upon identity formation for individuals include the language, religion, customs and beliefs within the immigrant family and the ethnic community. Structural factors may be those involving class, education and employment within the framework of the wider Australian social environment. There are factors that have both cultural and structural significance such as gender, and the plurality of their roles as both the cause and effect of dislocation is significant. Other factors contributing to the development of individual identity are political, social or sexual, and these may also influence or reinforce the experience of dislocation or marginalisation for the individual.

The following diagram (Figure 1) reflects my understanding of the variety of factors that form the framework for the formation of cultural identity, for the purposes of this project.

**Figure 1**: The framework of cultural identity.
Another important focus of this study was investigation of the role of the migrant family in the development of individual identity. As the interview process progressed, my thesis rapidly evolved to focus on the values, beliefs and experiences of the participants' families as an integral foundation for developing an understanding of their individual contemporary 'stories'. The significance of the stories of the previous two generations grew as participants spoke of their pasts, yet gained even further relevance when they encountered 'gaps' in family or personal memories or histories. These intensely personal narratives were generally centred on the participants' interpretations of their families and their own social environment and experiences, contributing to the epistemological approach of this research.

The importance of this thesis is based on the notion that all understanding of identity incorporates class, gender and ethnicity, and other aspects of identity such as age, sexuality, and religion. These elements influence the manner in which individuals speak, think, behave, establish beliefs and make judgements. Discussion and facilitation of change within society, and of social policy, are complicated by these factors, yet often fail to take them into consideration when attempting to define our multicultural population. Therefore, a progressive understanding of multicultural identity development required the study of the experiences of a range of second-generation Australian individuals from diverse backgrounds who are living and breathing cultural diversity (Eng et al. 2002).

Proving or testing the research hypothesis that immigrant family dysfunction or dislocation contributes to cultural dislocation for second-generation individuals was not the aim of my research, due to participants having been selected based on their experience of this. Rather, the focus of this study is on the extent and shape of dislocation and the way in which these experiences influenced the identity development of this particular group of individuals. While there has been research aimed at exploring the benefits of this kind of cultural maintenance for positive identity formation, my emphasis was on experiences of dysfunctional or problematic cultural dislocation, and accordingly my study was not intended to be representative of general migrant experience in any way.
Initial consultation with my supervisor confirmed that the most effective process of illustrating and developing an understanding of the phenomenon of dislocation would be achieved through a case study methodology. It was intended that this would enable a small number of participants to reflect on their own experiences and stories in the context of their current social environments on an individual basis. In the first instance, appropriate participants for this project were recruited through professional contacts at the community service organisation where I am currently employed as a researcher. However, this quickly developed into a snowball technique involving individuals from a wide variety of sources. My primary aim was to recruit participants from diverse backgrounds and a variety of areas. The resulting group represented a range of lifestyles and personalities that were generally considered to be 'non-conventional' by their migrant families, a distinction made by several of the participants, who also generally described their families in turn as 'dysfunctional'.

The individuals who became participants had expressed interest in the project on the basis that they believed their identity development to have been strongly impacted upon by their dislocated immigrant family backgrounds. I spoke to each individual by telephone to invite them to participate and to briefly describe the research and my expectations regarding their role. They also expressed their ideas and outlined brief personal histories for my benefit. The final group consisted of six participants, each born in Australia, to parents from Lebanese, Chinese, Turkish, Greek, Italian and Vietnamese origins. The age group was between 17-38 years of age at the commencement of the project and was reflective of the different periods of settlement for each migrant group; as such the oldest participant was Italian and the youngest was Vietnamese. There was a balance of male and female participants and they all lived within the metropolitan Melbourne region. Over what was to be a three-year period, none of the six participants withdrew from the project.

Early in the project development process it was essential to consider some important guidelines concerning ethical codes of conduct relating to the study of marginalised groups, which were
relevant to this particular research project including the following factors outlined by Callan (1986: p.35-36):

- Ethical evaluation - in consultation with members of the relevant cultural group to ensure that the study is 'ethically acceptable' in the first instance.
- Respect for the host culture - for investigators to be aware of the language, culture, social order and conduct of members of the host community.
- Open communication - effectively describing to participants the purpose, interests and experience of the researcher and encourage individual responses and suggestions.
- Respect for the subjects' rights and privacy - allowing subjects the freedom to participate voluntarily and to cease the interview process at any time.
- Protection of subjects' welfare and dignity - protecting subjects from undue embarrassment or distress.
- To generate knowledge and promote benefit to social policy and welfare development.
- To provide a foundation for continued research questions and study in the field.

As part of the recruitment process, written information regarding the project was distributed to participants and they were requested to sign consent forms as required by the University Ethics Committee. Participants were informed that participation in the project was voluntary, and that privacy and confidentiality would be maintained at all times. As participants would be required to reflect upon memories and experiences of a sensitive nature that may possibly have been ignored, suppressed or forgotten over time, I was aware that participants might have experienced embarrassment or frustration, and potentially shame, guilt, anger or other negative emotions during the interview process. Participants were informed of this possibility and of their right to withdraw from the project at any time, and offered support and de-briefing during and after the interview process as required.

Due to the diverse ethnic identities explored by the project it was my imperative to present to the reader an impression of the personal 'reality' and 'culture' of each individual, that was relayed by both tacit and literal means through the interview process. To conduct the interviews in a sensitive
and empathic manner in accordance with the individual's cultural and social background or beliefs, it was important to consider the following factors for each participant and for their family:

- personal and family history
- the role of gender
- notions of ethnicity
- sexuality
- religious values
- political beliefs
- economic circumstances
- the role of the individual within the family
- the role of the family within society
- the role of the individual within society
- concepts of honour and pride

Three interviews in English were conducted with each participant over a period from 2001-2002 in an environment of their choosing. It was essential that both interviewer and participants felt comfortable in this environment. Initial interviews usually took place in a neutral public space such as a restaurant or at their workplace. At later stages in the project interviews were occasionally conducted at the individuals' home when conversational trust and ease had developed and details of a more personal or more emotive nature were being discussed. Interviews did not take place at the individual's home where family members or others may have been present to threaten the privacy and autonomy of the participant. All participants agreed to have their interviews tape-recorded. Subsequent interviews also involved brief discussion, reflection and feedback, often from both parties, regarding the prior interview/s, so the sessions were usually around two-hours in duration.

The first session, of approximately one-hour, after a brief introduction to their current circumstances, involved participants discussing their family history in the country of origin and
transition to Australia, and therefore their knowledge of the initial migration and settlement experiences of their parents. It was apparent that some participants knew relatively little about their parents' stories from their country of origin and those who knew more about this area were generally the older participants. During the course of the following two sessions participants were encouraged to speak about their own childhood memories, education, occupation and relationship histories. It was intended that from this point participants would be able to discuss cultural identity and family issues in the context of their past histories, and in terms of their current circumstances relating to relationship and work choices as adults.

The semi-structured interview questions initially focused on historical facts relevant to the individual and family and were modified as participants disclosed and discussed areas of importance and significance to their personal situations. The most effective guides for the direction of questioning were the participants themselves. The grounded theory of this research relied heavily on the ongoing interactions with the participants in an effort to gain an understanding of the extent to which they had created (and were able to re-create through the story-telling process) their individual identities. Robson (1993: p.168) outlines the advantage of the case study as being a continuing process, allowing for the opportunity to change direction. This kind of study is only aimed at describing 'what is happening in a certain context'. The participants were responsible for translating their own stories through a reflective narrative process and chose to make substantial personal revelations and fairly critical analysis of these. Participants generally appeared to be relaxed yet focused throughout the interview process, and obviously quite familiar with many areas of discussion.

3.2 Case Study Considerations

The problematic areas of my research arose as a consequence of the complex nature of families and the personal reflection processes of individuals. This research was dependent on the participants' ability to recall and reflect upon details of a sensitive and subjective nature. The hidden workings of such an extended or disparate unit as the family, dislocated or otherwise, are
sometimes buried in layers indiscernible to those within, let alone to an outsider - in this particular case layers of both the family and culture. The institution of family is a culture in itself, and the line between this form of culture and the traditional can easily become blurred. As outlined by Stake (1995:p.12) the role of the case-study researcher is to remain 'non-interventive and empathic'. My interpretations have been emphasised, yet 'the multiple realities' of each story has been preserved. Admittedly however, while I did not 'intervene' as such, the reflective feedback process was instrumental in prompting the participants to make their own inquiries and changes to their lives or relationships which became part of an ongoing action research process.

Lonner and Berry (1986: p.85-88) discuss the comparative element of culturally-based research as being implicit, if not explicit. The greatest methodological problem of a research design involving two or more cultural groups is the drawing of equivalent samples so that the results of the study are not rendered misleading or ambiguous. This is especially necessary for findings to be utilised for further research that may vary in context. It is important for the researcher to choose participants primarily on the basis of obtaining significant results in this context. The more comprehensive the description of the sample group, the easier it is for both the researcher and readers to measure the validity of the study. Characteristics that may influence data analysis include participant information regarding 'age, sex, educational level, status, income, occupation, special training and place of residence in relation to other members of the culture'. In each case-study, both the participant and myself have emphasised the unique characteristics and experiences that have contributed to their stories and thus their individual identity development processes that cannot be easily generalised.

For analysis of the case-studies, it was essential to attempt to assess the amount of enculturation and acculturation experienced by each individual within their community and ethnic group. These variables include factors such as employment, urbanisation, media, political participation, religion, language, daily practices and social relations and which culture the individual may be most influenced by in terms of these variables. These are in many ways interrelated and have obviously been mentioned many times in various different contexts within the course of this
research as factors that are inextricably linked to the study of identity and culture. It has been imperative for research analysis to take into account the effects of these factors in determining experience, knowledge, identification and change in the life choices and decisions for each individual. The grounded theory of this thesis illustrated the way in which action-reflection research provides a foundation for an ongoing cycle of identification, reflection, intervention and change. The identities that they represented were incredibly diverse, but the factors and circumstances impacted upon them had many commonalities.

Other important considerations during analysis of the interview process were those of truth and ownership. The case studies illustrate specific conceptions of 'truth' based on the subjectivity of the individuals from whom information was gathered. Reason and Rowan (1981) define truth in this case study scenario as 'somehow getting it right', whereas Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the question is not 'is it true?' but rather, 'does it increase understanding?'. The meaning or intention of information disclosed by participants is perhaps best measured by exploring the circumstances surrounding its disclosure. It was also necessary to examine the motivations of the subject, who may have thought that certain responses were expected from them, or perhaps they may have had the intention to perhaps reveal or conceal certain information or emotions. Likewise, I was aware that my observations and interpretations would be open to examination in the context of my own personal beliefs and background.

Information was not only gained through the interview questions but also through observation and interaction with participants (through colloquial language usage, body language, emotional responses and facial expressions). This kind of physical expression and behaviour conveys the unspoken reactions and responses that accompany verbal communication. The participants may have found themselves reflecting upon uncomfortable or unhappy aspects of their ethnic identity or backgrounds. It would not have been an easy task for any of the participants to speak so openly during interviews, particularly about the traumatic impact of experiences of being bullied as children or to describe their parents as uneducated or as growing up as 'peasants' in their home country, for example. A couple of participants were quite emotional, and in one case, moved to
tears, yet they remained focused on the discussion and appeared to be as neutral as possible under the circumstances. All of the participants seemed to be pleased that the issues they spoke about were being recognised as having wider significance than simply as their own personal stories.

CHAPTER 4

Case-Studies

4.1 Preliminary Discussion

All participants were born in Australia to families from non-English speaking backgrounds. Each individual attended school in Australia and in some cases, also overseas. The oldest three participants lived independently from their families. The two youngest lived at home with their
families; one was married and consequently had left the family home during the course of the project. The other participants were not currently married, although two had been divorced. None of the participants had any dependents. All of the participants were working and/or studying. Each participant had one or more siblings who had made considerably different cultural lifestyle choices. Most of the participants had focused a significant amount of time and energy on attempting to reconcile their social environment and their cultural heritage with the development of their sense of self-identity.

During the interview process the individuals concerned developed questions and ideas of their own, raised by discussion in the initial interview, which they were then keen to discuss in their follow-up interviews. I also found many themes to subsequently clarify and explore with participants. Most of the participants initially claimed that they had not thought much about the concept of their own or their families' cultural dislocation before being approached to take part in the project. However, participants acknowledged that they were able to immediately identify themselves as suitable for the project, and eager to discuss the topic further. For most, participation in the project in some way fulfilled a need to examine themselves in terms of dislocated identity formation patterns that in several cases had resulted in intensive counselling in the past. As mentioned previously, some of the participants did appear to be quite familiar with many of the issues and themes raised by the interview discussion.

Essentially, most participants did not think that their situation was extraordinary, but they did find it a positive experience to recognise and acknowledge that their lives have been problematic in certain areas for historical, social and environmental reasons that have been out of their control. These case studies illustrate some of the unique identities that are developing in Australia for individuals from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, religious and political beliefs, class, gender and sexual orientations who are 'living diversity' (Eng et al. 2000). It is important to note that while participants have not been identified by their actual names in the case-studies, the names used were chosen to culturally reflect the names that they do use in real life. For example, the participants identified as 'Julie' and 'Christine' are known by English names instead of their Greek
and Chinese names. However, 'Marcello', 'Sanaz', 'Hoang', and 'Ali' are all known by names from their family's country of origin.

In each of the discussion areas, participants conveyed a stronger sense of recognition of what they could not relate to or identify with, than clear positive insights into what they could easily define in terms of identity. For these individuals in their search for self-identity there has been a process of discovering what options and definitions have been available to them and then rejection of these as not suitable, before then embarking upon an almost unconscious journey towards defining themselves through other cultural means and signifiers. Their stories provide reflection upon this nation as a multicultural 'melting pot' so to speak, where individuals desire to re-define themselves in a wider social context, but still acknowledge and maintain for future generations their traditional cultural origins. The following case - studies are the result of information gathered during the interview/discussion process with participants, in accordance to the outlined project objectives.
4.2 Case-Study 1: Marcello

*Self-Perception of Multiple and Intersecting Identities*

Marcello, 37, the eldest of three children, was born in Melbourne to parents who emigrated from the Italian Island of Elba, where relatively few Italian settlers in Australia have come from. He is employed as a trade union representative, and resides in St. Kilda with his Anglo-Australian de-facto partner. Marcello is a non-practising Catholic, with strong views and extensive knowledge of the contemporary Australian political scene. Marcello feels that he exists somewhere 'between classes, on common ground' because of his family's working class origins. He feels that culturally he is also somewhat 'in limbo', as he is unable to align himself to one cultural system over another due to his perception of the faults inherent in each, relating instead to 'sub-cultural influences', such as music, psychology and spirituality. Marcello believes that prescribing to 'one system of thought or lifestyle is to live a lie' and that 'people generally conform to stereotypes because of a psychological fear of difference'. Marcello's fear of being different developed when he was a child and he has spent many years confronting this fear. Marcello says that he is constantly changing, as is the world around him. Unlike some younger participants, Marcello has had the benefit of many varied life experiences, and substantial distance and reflection upon his past with which to consolidate his present sense of self-identity.

*The Role and Impact of the Family in the Construction of Identity*

Although not orthodox in terms of religious belief or overtly 'Italian' in tradition either for themselves or for their three children, Marcello's parents created 'an intense communal feeling of family at home that was suffocating'. Marcello's parents have had high expectations for their two sons and daughter in terms of attaining 'comfortable lifestyles' rather than achieving success based on career or wealth. To that end, they have no ethnic preference for their children's partners or aspirations regarding work, but desire their children to attain and maintain a 'good life' where they 'want for nothing'. Marcello believes that this wish is a consequence of their secure
marriage and lifestyle that were the result of many sacrifices, rather than traditional parenting values. Similarly, his parents did not migrate to Australia to achieve middle class status, but to escape from a homeland that was physically and psychologically devastated by war.

Marcello believes that the direct result of his parents’ refusal to let their children ‘fail’ has ironically led to their over-dependence and general inability to ‘stand on their own two feet’. This is why Marcello has detached himself from his family to a certain degree, although they still maintain regular contact. Marcello is actually more interested in learning about their pasts than conforming to their plans for his future. He has extensive interest and knowledge of Italy’s role and experience of World War II, and the social and political climate of modern-day Italy. He would like to know more about his parent’s personal experiences but they generally do not wish to talk about these. This is a contradiction to the stereotypical belief that older generations ‘live in the past’ while younger generations are only concerned with the present or future. These case studies have illustrated the necessity to unlock or re-construct the mysteries of personal history, in which family history plays an immense role, that is often required by individuals to develop a strong sense of place and self-identity in the world.

Marcello has spent many years exploring his cultural heritage and his sense of self-identity. The multi-faceted sense of self, as he has discovered, is related to the many diverse aspects of his family and personal history that he has sought to explore through speaking to his parents and particularly his grandparents about their pasts and the history of Italy. Marcello has discovered that many of their memories are based on the trauma and anxiety of living through a war. He believes that three generations of his family were affected by experiences of dislocation:

... Firstly my grandparents, due to the stress of war. Secondly, my parents through migrating to a country where they didn’t even speak the language. And thirdly, when I went to school and was referred to as a ‘new Australian’ even though I was born here...
Marcello's parents wanted him to do well at school but he was not particularly interested in further education and they did not push him to continue. While they wanted him to have a secure job, they were not particularly concerned what area he chose to work in. However, Marcello spent some time moving between a variety of jobs, including factory work, pizza delivery and security work for a massage parlour. Marcello's parents opened a family pasta business that involved all of their children, despite Marcello's brother and sister having little business sense, an ongoing problem which he believes led to its closure due to financial difficulties a few years later. Marcello decided to never become involved in business with family again as a result of the experience of witnessing his parents' support of his siblings, and the emotional and financial toll that it took on the family. He says that the one risk that they took was to employ his brother and sister and this was a mistake in the end. Marcello also worked for an insurance company for ten years and in the disability field for five years, before recently moving to his current position as a trade union representative that he finds to be secure, well paid and rewarding.

Marcello related a story of when his parents arranged for their children to be I.Q. tested. Despite his sister achieving the highest scores, their parents did not harbour a great deal of expectations or provide encouragement for her to strive for academic, professional or personal success in the same way that they did for her brothers 'because she was a female'. Marcello stated '...my sister entered a cycle of dependency, she was never expected to achieve anything', spending years drifting between factory jobs, and developing a heroin problem that exacerbated her mental health issues, later diagnosed as schizophrenia. After she was the victim of a serious sexual assault by a group of men, she moved into supported accommodation, and remained somewhat beyond or outside the reach of the family. Marcello believes that due to past traumatic experiences she has little motivation or incentive to change her life. She is currently a burden on the family, both emotionally and psychologically, and particularly so for her parents but they find it difficult to turn their backs on their middle-aged daughter because they feel that she is their responsibility.

Marcello's brother did not appear to experience these kinds of identity issues as he 'simply conformed to the Italian stereotype' by continuing to live at home and remaining dependent on his
parents' support. However he is still doing so as an unemployed, unmarried man in his thirties. He does not appear to have any sense of responsibility for his own life or future, nor concerns for the burden that he may place upon his retired parents, particularly his mother, who cares for him in lieu of a wife. Marcello says that his brother becomes more 'rude, demanding and lazy' as he gets older. He owes both his parents and his elderly grandparents a 'small fortune' that he is unlikely to pay back and, as with his sister, his parents are reluctant to say no to his demands. Marcello believes that because he attracted most of his parents' attention, his siblings had little incentive or desire to succeed. There were few expectations placed upon his brother and sister and they have fallen into a pattern of relying on the strong sense of obligation of their family to bail them out of immediate trouble.

Marcello is the only child who has come close to meeting his parents' expectations, apart from his divorce in his early twenties. When Marcello married at the age of twenty-three, it was to an Italian woman, and when they were later divorced, Marcello stated that his parents were 'upset due to their belief in the sanctity of marriage, rather than out of their loyalty to my wife'. Marcello believes that they did not have concerns regarding the nationality of his partner, but they hoped for a woman who took the 'traditional role of looking after the man and his family'. Marcello's next serious relationship was with a woman who challenged him both culturally and 'sub-culturally'. This partner was a bisexual single-mother who was interested in witchcraft and psychology and who was also from an Italian background that she chose to 'rebel against'. Marcello's current long-term partner is from a regional Anglo-Australian background. They do not necessarily plan to marry before they have children, and Marcello believes that his parents have respected this decision because they know that despite their cultural differences Marcello and his partner work hard and have shared plans and goals for the future.

*The Impact of Key Events and Decisions on Identity Formation*

In 1971, when Marcello was six years old, his immediate family returned to Elba due to his parents' homesickness and dissatisfaction at the harsh struggle of their lives in a country whose
language was not their own. Marcello believes that they contemplated staying in Italy, but returned to Australia 'because they were used to it here I guess, maybe things had changed in Italy...I don't know for sure, they never told us why'. To this extent the family found itself 'in limbo between the two cultures' that served to reinforce a sense of dislocation. Unlike most of the other participants, Marcello thinks that his mother would like to return to Elba one day more perhaps so than his father, but they have focused all of their energies on staying near to and supporting their children. Marcello thinks that they probably have assumed that once again life in Elba has changed in their absence and now that they are retired they do not want to 'start again'.

At his particular school, not only did Marcello feel different from the other children because of the language he spoke at home, the food he ate, and his parents' beliefs and principles, but that he looked different and his name was different and that this would never change. His self-esteem suffered as a result of consistent teasing and bullying during his school years and he developed deep feelings of frustration. Marcello learnt retaliatory coping methods from the aggression that he had experienced, 'I had a violent reaction to the way I was treated, I was angry and stayed that way for a long time'. It took Marcello many years and counselling to talk about these feelings and to realise that these early negative experiences of being different had had a substantial effect on the development of his sense of self-worth and identity, and the way that he views people and Australia. In some ways Marcello also became more aware of the link between events in his past and his current beliefs through telling these stories during the interview process, and reflecting upon some of the most significant events in his life retrospectively.

Marcello now believes that he does not need to seek the approval of others or follow mainstream mores due to his intense feelings of dislocation when he was younger. He learnt to cope by questioning, and often rejecting, the customs and conventions that he did not believe suited his lifestyle and his own value-system. When he was older, Marcello attended a more 'ethnically diverse' and progressive thinking school, which made quite a positive impact on the development of his sense of identity. Marcello suggests that 'at the age of about 25, most people get stuck on certain ideas, beliefs or principles in an effort to define themselves...I have challenged my own
beliefs and those of others so I have an identity that is a product of change, or acceptance of change’. As far as Marcello is concerned, ‘mainstream society is not generally accepting of sub-cultures, and therefore is intolerant of difference’. Intolerance is a characteristic of society that Marcello does not accept due to his experiences of racism.

*The Effects of Dislocation in a Multicultural Context*

Marcello said, ‘when I was a kid I just wanted to be an Australian’. In a reaction against his inability to truly feel this, Marcello believed that he began to think that he was Italian in his early twenties. Now that he has had the time and the space to observe the opposing extremes that constitute some of these qualities, he believes that there are parts of him that are neither, or both, Australian or Italian. Marcello firmly believes that the ‘primary language spoken by people is the nationality they feel’. However, Marcello believes that essentially his identity is not only a product of his family’s history and culture, but is also a result of the experiences that have impacted upon his life that have been the basis for his social experimentation and decision-making. Marcello accepts that Australian society is culturally diverse with much potential to develop further, yet he also believes that as a young nation with such a tumultuous past, it is still quite ‘culturally insecure’, something that he could identify with in the past. Marcello is admiring of the proud and distinct qualities of Italian culture, and would like to see development of the rich mix of cultures in Australia to overcome what he perceives as a ‘distinct lack of culture’ which does not appropriately reflect the contemporary population.

*Summary*

At this point in his life Marcello is able to relate difficult stories not only of his own past, but also those of his parents and his grandparents, indicating how significant the histories of all three generations were in the development of their dislocated sense of identity as individuals. His own particularly problematic experiences were those of bullying and harassment as a child by his Anglo-Australian peers. The latter experiences had caused him to feel alienated from the
Australian social environment that he had always wanted to feel a sense of belonging with. However they also led him to 'turn inwards' to investigate more fully his Italian cultural heritage, where Marcello found himself to be deeply affected by his family's traumatic experience of war. This coupled with his time in Elba (and with the older generations of his extended family) as a child assisted in the development of his sense of positive connectedness with his family history and his 'Italian' self. His experimental lifestyle as a young adult challenged parts of the 'mainstream' Australian culture that he had felt external to and allowed him to find people and experiences that he could relate to in the social environment of the place of his birth.

After many years of struggling with pressure to feel either Australian (to school yard bullies) or Italian (as the oldest son), Marcello has successfully reconciled these aspects of his cultural identity to feel a positive (yet still incomplete) sense of belonging to both cultures. His negative feelings from the past have been positively channelled into his passion and determination regarding his career and relationship. He has directly witnessed the unhappiness of his siblings and the frustration of his parents, and seeks to avoid this in his own life-choices. Marcello's challenge in the future will be the introduction of the next generation into his family, and successfully merging this with his partner's sense of identity, family and culture. They are already aware of the need to embrace the 'best of both worlds', which may involve continuing to distance themselves from problematic family issues (and emotional 'baggage') in order to give their children the freedom and opportunity to choose, just as they have, their own individual and cultural identities.
4.3 Case-Study 2: Sanaz

_Self-Perception of Multiple and Intersecting Identities_

Sanaz, 24, was born to Turkish parents and raised with her older brother and sister in Melbourne. Sanaz and her Canadian husband reside in the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne not far from where her parents live, but still one or two suburbs away. Sanaz works for a community services organisation and is the supervisor of a residential unit for clients with intellectual disabilities. Sanaz has a degree in psychology and post-graduate qualifications in health sciences, and has a strong desire to succeed in her chosen profession. Sanaz has been significantly driven in this area in response to the working class background and struggles of her family. Sanaz was fairly keen to participate in the interview process; however around the time of her initial involvement with the project she was experiencing many upheavals due to her upcoming marriage to her non-Turkish non-Muslim partner. Sanaz had been forced to leave the family home due her father’s non-acceptance of the marriage, and was at the point of quitting her job and leaving Australia to be married in Canada. By the end of the interview stage of this research, Sanaz had married her partner in Australia and was working towards reconciliation with her father.

Sanaz strongly identifies with her Turkish background in a religious sense and is a non-practising Muslim, who in her youth developed principles from the Qu’ran that she applied to her everyday life, such as making decisions as to what is ‘morally right and wrong’. Sanaz feels dislocated by living in a society that does not generally reflect these values, however she has also a struggle attempting to convince her family to accept her Anglo-Australian social values and lifestyle.

Sanaz stated:

_I live my life according to my own values and principles which have come from living in both cultures and from the way I was raised...I can’t totally identify with either culture even though in the past I have felt that I should._
Sanaz has spent many years wanting to ‘fit in’ to the society she lives in and earn the respect and acceptance of her family for her life choices, but has always felt guilty for not being able to satisfy the requirements and demands of both. Now that she is married to a Canadian from a non-Muslim background, her sense of cultural identity has taken on ‘a third dimension’.

The Role and Impact of the Family in the Construction of Identity

Sanaz’s parents had high expectations for their children due to their migration from Turkey being motivated by the desire to achieve economic independence. To this extent Sanaz was always encouraged to succeed both academically and professionally. By an early age Sanaz had completed two degrees and had commenced a career in the disability field and is keeping her options open for future progression in the area of health sciences. Sanaz has bought her own home since recently marrying. Her parents are pleased with these achievements, apart from the fact that her partner is Canadian and more importantly, that he is not a Muslim. Sanaz is devastated by the rejection of this aspect of her life as she feels that she has sought to respect and satisfy her parents’ wishes ‘in every other area’. Sanaz’s decision to marry her partner has caused a huge rift in her family to the point where she was forced to move out of the family home in the lead up to the wedding and her father went to Turkey for several months. Sanaz’s mother stayed in Australia, but did not attend the ceremony. Sanaz feels that her family has disowned her and that until she has made peace with her father she will ‘never truly be at peace’ with her marriage.

Sanaz believes that being made to choose between her husband and her family has caused her to feel an incredible sense of guilt not only in terms of the loss of her family, but also in terms of her Muslim faith. Sanaz attributes the learning of her religion to her family, who sent her to Turkish school at a mosque each weekend when she was a child, but she explained ‘I took my beliefs a few steps further. I believed in the principles outlined by the Qu’ran … like the belief that good deeds outweigh bad deeds, and I made these a part of my every day life’. Even where her
family was not orthodox in practice, for example when they drank alcohol and gambled, Sanaz abstained:

*I was harder on myself than they were... I actually thought they were hypocrites... I remember my mother dyeing her hair at home, at the same time that I was wearing a head scarf to go to the mosque on Saturdays to learn from the Qu’ran.*

Sanaz abstained from alcohol and sex before her marriage, regardless of what her university contemporaries were doing, or what her parents assumed that she had been doing. What Sanaz perceived to be her parents’ ‘double standard’ was part of the reason she felt that she was able to defy both her family and her religion to marry her partner without their approval. It was a very traumatic move for Sanaz however, who is aware that there may be repercussions for the marriage due to her deep emotional ties and interdependence with her family.

Sanaz still feels guilty for some of the choices that she has made yet she knew they were all necessary at the time. Due to her experiences Sanaz stated ‘now I think in a bigger picture than my grandparents who were born in Ankara several generations ago to a life that had already been decided by their parents’. Sanaz is aware that her world is shaped by the need for the freedom of choice that characterises the Australian society in which she was born and raised. Despite her intense loyalty to her own husband, Sanaz’s mother has refused to completely lose her daughter and quietly respects that Sanaz has decided to marry for love, as she herself could not. Sanaz could understand her parents’ concern that her husband is an ‘outsider’ because of their expectations for their children’s marriages to adequately ensure the continuation of their family beliefs and traditions. Sanaz believes that they thought it was essential for her to learn about Turkish traditions and religion regardless of whether she adhered to them so that she could pass them on to her children. Sanaz often feels that she is caught in a ‘no-win situation’, and was so distressed during an interview that she cried several times, however she continued to emphasise the point ‘I will live my life my own way’.
Sanaz believes that the narrow-mindedness of her parents’ thinking is the result of a tradition that entails that parents are ‘selfishly and obsessively attached to their children... and use their children to serve as a reflection of their own struggles, needs and the identity that they have wanted’. Sanaz says that many children within the Turkish community feel guilty for the sacrifices that their parents have made on their behalf and subsequently feel pressure to meet their wishes. However, Sanaz believes that a shift in values is occurring in this area due to each generation rebelling against the former. Just as her parents left their homeland to achieve their goals and dreams, Sanaz’s contemporaries are also leaving their family homes to do this. Sanaz believes that the freedom to choose partners or to not marry is being increasingly accepted, although the reality of dealing with these situations is still traumatic for many families. There is an element of guilt and shame for the parties involved which is not a product of ethnic tradition but is due to the importance of the unity of the family. Sanaz suspects that marriage was the only way that she could remove herself from the family home and the influence of her father.

Sanaz had previously assumed that she would marry an Anglo-Turk to keep her parents happy and so that she and her partner would have a ‘similar background and cultural understanding’. Her husband was agnostic but has now converted to Islam, and they were married in both civil and Muslim ceremonies. They have plans to have children in the future when they are more financially secure, progressing in their careers and have resolved some of the conflict with Sanaz’s family. Due to their estrangement from Sanaz’s family and the geographical distance from her husband’s family in Canada, they hope that having children of their own will secure their sense of being a family. Sanaz and her husband plan to establish different family traditions and values for the next generation, encompassing the diversity of their own origins and life-experiences. Sanaz admits that she would not like to have children until she has made peace with her own past and her father ‘so that they can experience their Turkish heritage and enjoy the security of knowing their family’. Sanaz hopes that they will marry individuals from Australian-Turkish or Canadian backgrounds to establish their own ‘cultural boundaries’ for the future,
however she realises that this is ultimately their own choice to make. The lesson that she has learnt from her own experience is that flexibility and acceptance can keep a family united.

*The Impact of Key Events and Decisions on Identity Formation*

In 1994, at the age of sixteen Sanaz moved back to Turkey for a year with her parents. They were ‘testing the waters’ so to speak to return to their homeland older, wiser and more financially secure with only one child to support (their two oldest children were married to other Turks, in Australia). However, they discovered that though they had previously desired to escape from family responsibilities by migrating to Australia, they were now returning to them once again. They also carried the stigma of having lived in another culture for over twenty years. Sanaz felt that she ‘stood out’ in that society by looking, sounding and thinking differently:

...I was not accepted *in Turkey because I was born and raised in Australia. As far as my relatives were concerned, this made me an ‘Australian’, they said I looked and sounded like an ‘Aussie’.*

Sanaz also felt alien in an unfamiliar environment that she had learnt about but had not truly experienced before, almost like a ‘migrant’ having coming from another country. This challenged, and to a certain degree undermined, her emerging adolescent sense of identity. For the first time Sanaz felt the physical and psychological distance between the two cultures.

On her return to Australia, Sanaz felt more accepted and comfortable at school. An important factor shaping Sanaz’s experiences, unlike some older participants, is that she grew up during an era when a significantly higher proportion of her classmates were also born in Australia to parents from an ethnic background than was common perhaps five or ten years prior. However, Sanaz still felt a sense of dislocation in terms of the ‘double life’ that she was leading. Sanaz was ‘hanging out with all the other kids at school’ while at home she was living a Turkish lifestyle, in the context of language, food, music, and clothing with her family. In terms of religion, fasting for
Ramadan is an example of one of the rituals that Sanaz and her family practised which made her different to her classmates. As a child Sanaz questioned the validity of this practice just as her friends questioned her apparent belief in it, but she had been taught these principles at her Turkish school. As an adult Sanaz believes that her sense of dislocation was prompted by the fact that she had been taught a religion that her own family did not regularly practise apart from special occasions, and that wider society in Australia did not reflect.

*Effects of Dislocation in a Multicultural Context*

As a result of her life experiences, especially her time living in Turkey, Sanaz has realised that she no longer feels as dislocated in Australia, having embraced important and valuable aspects from both cultures in her daily life and as part of her identity. Sanaz stated 'I am bilingual and bicultural'. Sanaz feels more Turkish in terms of her food, music, and leisure choices yet she feels more Australian in terms of 'a sense of home'. Her Australian identity is currently significant because as she says 'this is the place where I was born and where I live'. It is also the place where she would like her own children to be born and raised. Essentially, this means that Australia is the link with not only Sanaz’s sense of self-identity, but with her family. As much as Turkey is a part of Sanaz’s history Australia represents her future. Despite recent experiences of racism after the World Trade Centre bombings, Sanaz believes that 'Australia is a relatively accepting and tolerant society in which I can feel a sense of belonging.' Sanaz hopes that in an increasingly multicultural society comprised of multi-layered identities such as her own, the journey will be a little easier for each generation.

*Summary*

Sanaz was a determined young woman whose 'dislocated youth' was culminating into quite an unhappy period at the time of her 'escape' from her family home and consequent marriage, events which took place around the time of her involvement with this project. At the time of
Sanaz’s final interview, almost a year after her wedding, Sanaz had re-united with her father, but he had not yet accepted her marriage. Initially, she felt devastated by the sense of rejection this created, however, over time she reflected that many young Turkish women in Australia had been through similar if not worse intergenerational conflict with their families. This relieved some of the burden of guilt from Sanaz and reduced her anger towards her father. She now feels sorry for the sadness that they have all suffered as a part of their parents’ dislocation from their homeland, which made it more difficult for them to give their children freedom and to not fear the impact of their independent choices on the family. Gradually, she is beginning to see that both she and her father are both products of generations that have been radically separated not only by time but distance.

Sanaz and her husband are planning to manage their multi-cultural connections as a ‘global’ or ‘transnational’ family; this is not simply a new ‘social trend’, this is their intercultural reality. At her final interview Sanaz stated:

I once believed that, like my parents, my life was tied to the ‘homeland’, however now my life has changed and my future will involve Canada as much as Turkey. As much as I now feel ‘Australian-Turkish’, if I lived in Canada with no Turkish community and my children were to be born there, I guess I would eventually call myself an ‘Australian-Canadian’.

Now recognising that her family’s historical issues of dislocation were responsible for her problematic identity development, Sanaz is looking forward to the future and hopefully she can successfully share her learning in this area not only with her children but with her own parents.

4.4 Case Study 3: Hoang

Self-Perception of Multiple and Intersecting Identities
Hoang, 17, was born in Melbourne and lives in inner city Richmond with his mother and his sister. His parents divorced six years ago, and he sees his father, who lives in Collingwood with his second partner and their son, only infrequently. Hoang was initially attending high school with little academic or work aspirations when he became involved with this research, but later went onto TAFE College. Despite his parents being non-practising Buddhists, Hoang is a non-religious ‘atheist’, and he says that he ‘doesn’t care’ about political and cultural issues in Australia generally, although he acknowledges that some of these issues are simply a part of his everyday life, such as unemployment and racism. Hoang admitted to being lacking any long-term goals at this point in his life and spoke about his deep sense of dissatisfaction with his life, his self-identity and his future. Hoang felt a lack of significant identification with his family’s past, because even though Vietnamese culture is a part of the everyday life that he was born into in the close-knit Richmond community...’I don’t think it has any meaning for me, I never been to Vietnam. ...Why would I want to go there when it is probably just like Richmond?’ However, Hoang later began to consider the link between his feelings of alienation within the Australian environment with his lack of knowledge of his family history and cultural heritage.

*The Role and Impact of Family in the Construction of Identity*

Hoang cannot remember a time when his parents did not fight. He assumes that they migrated to Australia from Saigon together to escape from the war. At the first interview Hoang said:

*I don’t know how they met and I haven’t ever thought about it. They never talked about their lives in Vietnam or about the war. They only talked about how hard everything was here, and everyday stuff. They worked all the time and they fought a lot, that’s it.*

Hoang had still not yet seen anyone in his family achieve financial independence despite all their hard work and sacrifices. Not only did his parents constantly struggle against hardship in their time together, they battled against each other, and it was this rather than their lack of financial
success that was the basis of Hoang’s resentment towards them as he was growing up. They constantly complained to their children of their problems, which caused them emotional stress and guilt for the sacrifices that their parents had to make for the survival of the family. This is how Hoang learnt that ‘hard work brought nothing...dad just left in the end’. Hoang decided that he wished to avoid all of the choices his parents had made, for example, to marry, have family, and have financial goals. Hoang admits that he has never wanted to work, or to aspire to live anywhere but in the housing commission flat that has long been his home.

Hoang’s parents continued to pressure their children to endeavour to achieve a ‘good life’. They believed that this would be the result of hard work, but hardship is all that Hoang remembers from childhood. He began to ‘resent the expectations’ of his parents for him to strive to gain a life that they had never provided for him, due to their general lack of encouragement and support to do so. Hoang’s parents were too busy working and arguing to give him sufficient attention to nurture his sense of security in his family, home and identity. Hoang says that family holidays, or leisure time of any substance were not a part of his home life. Nor could he recall any affection between or from his parents. Hoang believes that more time or money would not have made a difference to this state of affairs due to the ‘angry’ breakdown of his parents’ relationship. This is a situation that was not simply the result of cultural dislocation, it was also the negative impact of war, migration and poverty. Hoang also admitted that he resented his parents for divorcing more than he could ever value the ‘sacrifices’ that they had made for their children.

Hoang indicated that his relationship with his father, whom he rarely has contact with, is ‘good’, whereas he believes that his relationship with his mother is only ‘average’. This could be due to the functionality of their relationship, as his mother has been the active parent for the past six years, and it is she who has constantly ‘nagged’ Hoang. There is also the possibility that as it was his father who was the parent who left the family home for ‘a better life’ and this impresses Hoang. Although they do not spend much time together, Hoang says that he has no ill feelings towards his father, his step-mother or his half-brother. There are even times that he wishes that he were a part of their ‘complete’ family, and not his own fractured family where he must face the constant
grind of the daily life he has known his whole life. However in his final interview Hoang acknowledged that although it may have been 'my mother's anger that drove my father away, my father gave her plenty of reason to be angry'.

The negative effect of his parents' break-up was quite a significant point in Hoang's life and at the age of fourteen he began a period of shoplifting, prompted by the belief that 'no one cared what I did anyway'. An older teenager influenced Hoang during this time, and became a fairly negative role-model. Hoang's illegal activities resulted in apprehension by the police and a good-behaviour bond. It also succeeded in attracting his family's attention, as from that point onwards he was chaperoned everywhere. Hoang believes that the situation had well and truly back-fired by this point, as he became the focus of an intense level of negative attention from his parents. Hoang did not at any time feel guilt for what he had done in the eyes of society - he felt ashamed only for disappointing his parents, whom paradoxically, he originally felt had let him down first. After the departure of his father from the family home, not only did Hoang become the 'man' of the family, he had also lost his 'model' for this role. This could in some way explain Hoang's lack of sense of purpose or worth in the subsequent years of adolescence.

Impact of Key Events and Decisions on Identity Formation

Hoang's class at school was comprised of students from many different ethnic backgrounds however, the majority were not Vietnamese. He felt isolated from them due to his own 'anti-social behaviour' and this in turn served to reinforce his sense of difference. Hoang says that he was incredibly 'quiet and shy' because at home he was constantly surrounded by yelling and fighting. Hoang admits that he prefers to listen to the English language being spoken (even though he speaks Vietnamese more fluently as it is his first language that he still speaks at home) because it sounds 'quieter and less offensive than Vietnamese'. Because Hoang believed that he failed to blend in with others at school he became an 'outsider', and attributes this to his personality rather than his ethnic background; 'because I was so quiet the others thought I was stupid'. His strong Vietnamese accent made it even more difficult for him to communicate confidently with his peers.
Hoang became the object of much teasing at school, not only on this level, but also because he was overweight. As a result, Hoang spent most of his time both at school and at home attempting to isolate himself from others.

The teasing at school soon became bullying and Hoang says that in high school he tried to stand up to his tormentors. Initially he would respond verbally and attempt to undermine their intimidation, however he said, 'I soon learnt to hit back. Hit harder'. Even though Hoang believes that ignoring the bullies had made him feel even more withdrawn, he began to feel more confident after this point. To this end he began attending Kung Fu classes that 'put discipline on my anger'. Kung Fu boosted his concentration and gave him a sense of satisfaction that other aspects of his life had been lacking. It was also a useful focus for when he felt that he was lacking purpose or direction, but primarily in a physical sense. Hoang also immersed himself in video games for distraction. He mastered these over time but does not feel that this is a skill or talent despite it being one of his few interests or pastimes. Hoang says that he is often bored but has trouble thinking of different ideas or trying new activities. Interestingly, Hoang commented 'I wanted to be a super-hero when (I was) little. Then I found out there was none'.

*Effects of Dislocation in a Multicultural Context*

Hoang has not yet felt confident enough to break away from family influences and from the Vietnamese community in which he lives. Hoang's sense of confidence has been undermined by self-doubt, and at this point in his life he has difficulty explaining his concepts of self-identity as he 'does not feel very real'. As a consequence, Hoang feels quite confused about his identity, particularly, about which aspects of his identity are Vietnamese and which are Australian. Hoang believes that his experience of being part of a close-knit minority community has meant that he often feels isolated from wider Anglo-Australian society, however, being born and raised in this country has also lead to him feeling unable to say that he completely identifies with the Vietnamese community. Hoang says that he often feels detached and alienated from his family, especially from their 'Vietnameseness'. Hoang hopes that his future will be more than a sum of
the family's struggles in the past, and he believes that perhaps this may be what ultimately draws him away from the Vietnamese community. Hoang knows that his isolation will follow him because it is internal, however he also speculates that in part he has been 'a bit of a loner because I haven't met anyone like me'.

By his final interview for the project, Hoang had successfully completed high school. He is now studying Applied Design at TAFE, and is 'studying harder than ever before'. Hoang is still uncertain about what the future holds; however he feels that things are looking more positive. Home life has settled, primarily because his mother is satisfied now that he is continuing his studies. However, Hoang believes that their relationship has also improved since an incident last year:

One day my mother was screaming at me as usual.  
She was really angry, but for once I didn't yell back
...I just said to her 'I am not my father' and she just stopped. She's never done it again.

Hoang recalled his mother threatening to kill his father with a butcher's knife and thought that perhaps now that they have both realised that those days were in the past, it is finally time that they can move on. These days his mother does not 'hate his father so much', and Hoang feels better about himself. Hoang's father has offered to take him to Vietnam for a holiday and Hoang thinks that he will probably go. Hoang does not know whether he will like it but now that he has been thinking about it he realises that he will miss Australia regardless, 'because it's home'.

Summary

As the youngest participant, reaching the end of a difficult period of adolescence, it was fairly evident that much of Hoang's sense of dislocation from his family stems from his feelings relating to his parents' unhappy marriage and their eventual break-up and the effect of this on the household. His personality was quite withdrawn as a child perhaps partly to due to this, and
much of his problematic behaviour in earlier years was attention seeking in nature as a result of family dysfunction. Hoang also experienced difficulties at school because of his thick Vietnamese accent, as his parents had not taught him English before he started school, and this was another source of his resentment towards them. Compounding these family and cultural factors was the circumstance of virtual poverty that his family lived in, and which combined with traumatic experiences in the past, he perhaps felt drove his father away.

It is important to consider that Hoang's parents were refugees and had left their homeland in circumstances of war. Hoang's family has not discussed these experiences openly, but as he grows older he is increasingly aware of the negative effects of the past on his parents, and on his perceptions of Vietnam. Hoang is the only participant who had not visited his parents' homeland and it would be interesting to see the impact that this experience might have on Hoang in the future and how it effects his sense of cultural identity. It would be particularly significant in Hoang's case considering the low level of acculturation of his parents when compared to other case-study participants; Hoang lives in a Vietnamese community and speaks another language more frequently than English but has never left Australia. Hoang's story would be shared by other children of refugees who take extreme risks and resettle into situations of socioeconomic disadvantage that reduce their capacity to achieve mobility and independence in the future.

4. 5 Case Study 4: Christine

*Self-perception of Intersecting and Multiple Identities*

Christine, 28, was born in Melbourne to parents from a Cantonese background; she resides in Fitzroy with her English fiance. Christine describes herself as a self-employed 'aesthetician', a beautician, jewellery-maker and body-piercer. Christine also has a science degree and a background in laboratory research, and has worked in a wide variety of occupations that she believed did not adequately reflect her personality. Christine's mother's Catholicism is a significant part of the family's social life; she attends church with her family occasionally on weekends and for other celebrations. Christine believes in the Ten Commandments but questions other tenets
of the Bible. Her father’s Buddhism is more relevant to her own sense of spirituality and a self-identity that encompasses both Western and Eastern philosophies and values, although she would like to instil a sense of Christian values in her own children in the future. Most importantly, Christine would like to pass on her strong belief in family tradition that she attributes to her Chinese background more so than her Anglo-Australian environment. Christine also believes that tolerance is an important part of her identity as she feels that she has always been ‘different’, and she is very aware of ‘how Australian society tends to stereotype individuals in terms of race, sexuality and gender’.

*The Role and Impact of Family in the Construction of Identity*

Regarding her family, Christine stated ‘I have always been different to my family, and they know it...they don’t mind, but they haven’t really encouraged me either’. Christine is seen as the ‘strange’ or ‘weird’ member of the family, which she interprets as being a result of her ‘creative artistic personality’. As a child Christine was also ‘unconventional’, much more so than her younger brother and sister whom she terms as being ‘more conservative and traditional...more Chinese’. They both married partners from Chinese backgrounds, who are professionally and materially successful. Christine’s brother went into electronic engineering and her sister works in information technology, both desirable professions as far as their parents are concerned. Christine’s parents also attempted to steer Christine towards the sciences, away from the creative arts, and initially she respected their wishes. However, this resulted in Christine following a convoluted path strewn with several false career directions en route towards combining both her creative and their professional aspirations. Christine wed in her early twenties, to an Anglo-Australian man who was financially secure which was the only pre-requisite of her parents in this area, but the marriage ended in divorce, and Christine continued to focus on her career. Christine was reluctant to speak further of her first marriage during interviews.

When her contemporaries were buying houses and having children, Christine was investing her money in her current business. This distressed Christine’s parents and became the major area of
conflict between them. Her parents had run a Chinese take-away restaurant as a family business, and had spent the bulk of their married years attempting to achieve financial security. They desired that their children would never want for anything and were therefore 'horrified' at the debt that Christine had accrued in establishing and operating her business. Christine said, 'they find it difficult to understand that my passion and interests are more important to me than money'. Christine admits that she has a strong Chinese belief in the mutuality of luck, fortune and destiny, just as her parents do; however they are genuinely convinced that happiness is facilitated by money. Christine, on the other hand, is prepared to incur debt to operate a venture that she finds both 'stimulating and satisfying'. Christine believes that despite their own risks, her parents do not want her to follow their example because they 'want a more secure kind of future for their children'.

Christine knows that her parents struggled when they were younger. They met when they were teenagers and married when they were just seventeen years old. While they have never judged Christine's partners on the basis of age, race or religion, they do want them to be in the financial position to provide a secure future for Christine. They were happy for her to marry the first time to a man whom she met working in a lab, and were supportive when this marriage ended. However, they have recognised that modern marriage and lifestyle are no longer as stable or long-lasting as they may have hoped and would prefer her to remain single than to ever divorce again, yet at the same time they do not wish her to be a single mother. Christine thinks that this is probably for moral reasons; however unlike her mother, Christine does not feel that these are important considerations, she simply wants to 'do as much as I can in my life, if having a family is meant to be, it's meant to be. It's not a priority'.

When Christine was seventeen, her parents encouraged her to undertake computer studies at RMIT University. This prompted her to decide to move to Ballarat to study Applied Science. Christine admits that there was a strong element of wanting to escape from her parents' direct influence and to 'gain some freedom' by moving so far away. The more that they worried about her, the more that Christine kept information about her life from them. Christine felt a sense of
her difference not only from her parents, but from other members of her family as well, for a variety of reasons. Christine related a story of how her grandmother largely ignored her, even when Christine visited her daily in hospital for a month 'because I was a girl and not a male relative'. Christine resented the fact that as a boy she would have been 'treated better and taken more seriously' by her family. To her nieces and nephews she was simply 'crazy Aunt Christine'. Her relationship with her brother and sister has been reasonable over the years but Christine attributes this to her easygoing nature, more than a genuine amicability. Christine is acutely aware that they have simply 'accepted' her unconventionality and manage it 'as best they can'.

*Impact of Key Events and Decisions on Identity Formation*

Christine moved from suburb to suburb while growing up in Melbourne, living in areas as diverse as Footscray, East Keilor and Kew. At school, Christine was the only child from an Asian background; most were from European backgrounds. Christine says that there were many children from Greek families, who had quickly established themselves as the 'others'. Christine found herself identifying with this group and remembers joining in games of 'spot the skip' at school. Christine said, 'I teased the Aussies, I made jokes about them, but secretly I always wanted to be a white girl in hot pants'. Christine was a part of the 'nerdy, science and music group' and therefore spent much of the time being the only girl among a group of boys. In this group, Christine remembers being the only one whose mother made her ham and cheese sandwiches; 'other kids brought marinated eggplant sandwiches'. Christine also recalls living next door to Italians, and swapping fried rice for pasta dishes. In these ways, Christine felt that she learnt much at a young age about the cultural diversity of Melbourne, and incorporated these experiences into her own attitudes and philosophies about the society that she lived in.

Christine also learnt a few lessons in the harshness of life from her Anglo-Australian peer-group. Christine said 'It's simple, their parents were racist, they were ignorant...how could their kids not be?'. Their attitudes confused and frustrated Christine at the time. However, Christine learnt to be anti-racist and tolerant of others due to her own experiences, especially the irony of being told
to 'go home' when she knew that Australia was her home as much as anyone else's. Christine also has memories of the widespread stereotyping of the indigenous Australians. She recalls reading articles in Chinese newspapers about the 'stolen generation' long before she came to hear about it anywhere else. This is why, in terms of the current social and political issues of this country, Christine is empathetic of the plight of minority groups and those who are different from mainstream Australian society. Christine strongly believes that the government is unsympathetic towards attempts to defeat discrimination against difference that is based on ethnicity, religion, sexuality and so forth. Christine believes in 'personal sub-cultures that should be developed by each individual and take in all different kinds of larger more traditional cultures'.

In terms of 'Chinese' characteristics, Christine said, 'sometimes I feel like an old and superstitious Chinese woman...I've believed in fortune, luck and destiny since I was little'. Christine likes to use Chinese remedies in her health care and feels that she derived her 'quirky, slapstick humour' from watching old Chinese Kung Fu movies. Likewise, Christine feels that not only her business acumen but also her ability to follow her instincts both professionally and personally are part of her Chinese self. On the other hand she believes that her casual approach to life and its uncertainties are the product of being raised in the Australian social environment. Christine definitely believes in 'giving it a go' and generally 'giving others a fair go' although she believes that she has also developed the tendency to stereotyping people as is common in this country, especially in terms of the 'tall poppy syndrome' for example.

Christine was very aware that her Anglo-Australian peers were different in that family was not as important or as significant to them as it was for Christine or any of her peers from ethnic backgrounds. Christine's parents had extensive 'social, cultural and religious input' into her personal development. This was to the extent that she admits she felt the need to escape, moving away from the family home and beginning to explore her creative and artistic side against their wishes. Christine felt that she was different not only to her peers, but to the rest of her family and ethnic background in this sense. Christine said that she is also different to many other women of her age group. As Christine reaches her thirties, rather than being focused on being 'a
wife, mother and saving for the future’, she is dedicated to her body piercing and design business. Christine not only thinks uniquely, she looks quite unique also; with her blue spiky hair and distinct personal style, she has baulked against many stereotypes for all of the social categories that may be used to define her. Christine is aware that she appears, thinks and lives quite differently to others around her, but is comfortable enough in her physical and social environment to do so and feel confident about her own identity.

*Effects of Dislocation in a Multicultural Context*

Christine has always believed that to embrace difference, ‘Australian society needs to improve communication to develop knowledge and tolerance’. Christine stated:

…*Australia has had confused social progress in some areas, generally there is much potential for development in the future. Everyone I meet here makes me feel like a part of their culture by introducing me to their food, music and celebrations…I’ve travelled a lot, but living here in Australia, I feel like the world has come to me.*

Christine loves the individuality of the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne where she lives. She calls herself an ‘Australian’ because she is proud to be part of such an ethnically and socially diverse country, despite whatever remaining barriers are left to hurdle before becoming a ‘truly proud multicultural society’. Christine will live the life that she chooses within this society, but she looks forward to passing on her family’s traditional Chinese beliefs to her own children. Christine plans take on the responsibility of caring for her parents when they are older, ‘in my Australian-Chinese home’.

*Summary*
Perhaps more so than most of the other participants, and when compared to many of her family and peers, Christine has chosen an alternative lifestyle that reflects her individuality, not only through her beliefs and values, but also through her appearance and unconventional profession. Christine's career choice has been the area that has caused the most conflict between herself and her parents, followed by her relationship/marriage choices. At this point in her life she is accepting that this is the cost of maintaining her independent identity and goals. Christine tried to satisfy the career and relationship preferences of her family when she was younger, by training to be a scientist and marrying her first long-term partner as her siblings had done. However, when faced with the prospects of buying a house and the next challenge of having a family of her home, Christine began to make choices that led to further independence (and risk) rather than settling for comfort. This resulted in her divorcing her husband and becoming a body piercer, both areas of conflict with her parents.

Although Christine attributes many of her beliefs and choices to her independent personality, in many ways her parents' attempts to push her in certain directions have led to them having an indirect effect on her life by encouraging her to do the complete opposite. This may also have been the case with other participants, and also like the some others, Christine has struggled to feel accepted as part of her family due to her divergence from their idea what is 'normal' or 'conventional'. Luckily, Christine's family appears to appreciate her confidence and humour that have given her strength to succeed at all of her goals including maintaining a strong relationship with them, which has improved over the years as they have increasingly accepted her life choices. Christine clearly looks forward to continuing to merge the richness of her cultural heritage with the benefits of her cosmopolitan lifestyle, and achieving recognition of this by both her family and the wider 'mainstream' society in which she lives.
4.6 Case Study 5: Ali

Self-perception of Intersecting and Multiple Identities

Ali, 22, was born and raised in Adelaide to parents who were both born in a village in the Shouf Mountains in Lebanon. Ali now lives and works in a south-eastern suburb of Melbourne with his family. He manages his family-owned convenience store and completed a Mechanical Engineering degree during the course of this research. Ali can relate to many cultures outside of his own ‘Anglo-Lebanese’ background, as a result of his upbringing in this country. Socially he feels that he can embrace this diversity; however in terms of his family’s religion, he says that there is ‘little scope for flexibility’. There is the very real expectation that the most important act for Ali to perform both out of respect for his family and his religion will be to marry a woman of the same religion, a form of Islam called Druze. In most other aspects of his life, Ali has been able to reconcile his family’s traditional expectations with his Australian lifestyle. However, it is this one area that he feels the pressure of knowing that his choice of wife and the way that he raises his own family is integral to the continuation of his family tradition, and as such is more restrictive than
any other part of his life. His struggle in the future will be to balance his own wants and needs with the expectations of his family's religion.

The Role and Impact of Family on the Construction of Identity

Ali believes that his large extended family is more important than religion, however it is via this particular belief system that they impose their wishes and expectations on their children. Although Ali describes his family as 'quite liberal', they have expectations that require him to compromise his lifestyle out of both obligation and respect. At the age of 75, Ali's father has spent forty years in Australia and his mother, almost half his age, has lived here for twenty -four years. His father's reason for migrating was a reaction to both the social and political environment in Lebanon; he was jailed due to his political activity. Ali's mother migrated to Australia to join her husband. Ali describes his mother as 'progressive; she did not like the treatment of women in Lebanon, especially living under the rule of her father who took her out of school at the age of fifteen'. Ali's sister is both 'quite rebellious but also traditional'. Their parents were very liberal with both children when they were growing up, but Ali's sister nonetheless chose to marry at eighteen to a Lebanese man in a traditional ceremony back in Lebanon.

The one area that Ali's parents have enforced in terms of traditional beliefs and values is ensuring that their children follow the doctrines of the Druze religion pertaining to family. Ali's said:

*My parents don't care who I marry...nationality or Ethnic origin doesn't matter, but she must be of the Druze religion. There are only three principles that are important as a Druze: when you are born, who you marry and when you die. This is something I will respect for my family's sake.*

Ali does not take his any of his girlfriends home to meet his family. He says that he has dated non-Druze women but the woman that he eventually takes home will be the one he will marry. Ali
knows that his family's expectation is quite oppressive, but for now he says that he can 'have my cake and eat it too', as he is not interested in settling down with a life-partner at this stage in his life. Discussion during the interview also involved some speculation about how Ali may feel about these pressures in the future, especially considering that, like many young Australians, he would like to travel around the world 'back-packing' while he is young. Ali accepts that he may meet and fall in love with women from different cultures and religions on his travels, however, he refuses to believe that he would ever have a 'serious' relationship with any of them.

While discussing what he would do if one of his girlfriends became pregnant, Ali took some time to consider his response. He admitted that he understands that there is a difference between goals and reality, and that an inherent hypocrisy of his family's belief in their religion, is that their beliefs often differ from their actions. He attributes this to 'individual emotions, personality and feelings'. Ali also believes that many of the concerns of his family are prompted by the desire to 'keep up appearances', and to a certain degree he is also doing so. Ali suggested 'it would take a lot for me to go against the wishes of my parents, and if I did I would lose my family'. He knows that to do so would be to disgrace both his family and their religious traditions because the two are inextricably bound. To the Druze 'marriage is the foundation of the family and that family is the most important part of culture'. For Ali's family, Druze is also a symbol of their family's village and their homeland.

Ali described the things that he can and cannot do in terms of Halal, that is, according to religious law. The principles instilled by his family are not simply based on religious beliefs but on this kind of law. Ali explained that a secular kind of commitment and discipline are necessary in other aspects of his life, such as his responsibility to manage his family business, since his father is now too old to do so. This is a responsibility that Ali would prefer not to have, but it is again another situation where his own feelings and desires are more easily overcome than his sense of obligation to his family. Ali's actions are also influenced by respect for his parents and for their struggles and by the freedoms and opportunities that they and this society do offer him. Ali believes that his parents have attempted to allow him as much freedom as possible, and have
empathy for his situation of 'having to live a mix of two different cultural lifestyles'. Therefore he tries to understand their position. Ali believes that as a consequence, the family bond is based on respect. Out of respect for his parents, Ali would probably never say anything to the contrary.

Impact of Key Events and Decisions on Identity Formation

Ali’s parents escaped the political oppression of Lebanese society and community by coming to Australia. Ali’s primary school provided him with a ‘multicultural environment’, and he felt comfortable within his community, until the age of thirteen when the family moved back to Lebanon. They remained there for three years primarily because Ali’s parents wanted their children to ‘experience their homeland environment’. Ali found this experience to be quite a remarkable experience because he felt a new sense of belonging when surrounded by his extended family, and the beauty of his parents’ homeland which magnified his sense of ‘family history and heritage’. Ali had never felt this sense of home at ‘home’ in Australia, and believed that he would never have identified so strongly with Lebanon if he had not lived there. Ali also became familiar with the vastly different social environment in Lebanon, based on a class system that depended on appearances and that he and his family found to be very materialistic. The family was also the subject of gossip, which felt oppressive in contrast to the less judgmental and interdependent local community environment that they had left behind in Australia.

Ali enjoyed the benefits of living with his family in their homeland until they returned to Australia so that he and his sister could ‘access a better level of education’. Ali had received extra tutoring in Arabic while living in Lebanon, but still spoke it with a ‘foreign’ accent, and made more progress when speaking English at school. Back in Australia Ali and his family moved from Adelaide to Melbourne and Ali attended a suburban school that he found to be ‘racially intolerant’ and his life changed significantly after this point. Ironically, he attributes his academic success to the fact that he felt that he never ‘fitted in’ at school. Ali stated, ‘the other kids made my life miserable for all those years, I studied to escape, I hid behind books’. The constant bullying that he received served to make Ali feel ‘more Lebanese than Australian’. Ali also looked different and therefore
felt in some ways even less assimilated in this society than he had in Lebanon. He never wanted to upset his parents by sharing his distress and anxiety, so he simply focused on working even harder.

When Ali left school to attend university, his life again changed markedly. At university he found himself surrounded by ‘diverse groups of individuals from many different backgrounds’. Ali found this to be a positive social experience that enabled him to feel confident and accepted again as he had been as a child. His circle of friends included not only a mixture of Australian and Lebanese individuals but others from separate groups and different ethnic backgrounds. Ali felt that he had ‘changed roles’ again, because he no longer felt ‘oppressed’, and was more relaxed due to his increased social interaction, and the diversity of his cultural environment. He was able to cease fearing non-acceptance and reflect upon his life experiences. Ali’s friends now reflect his image of himself; they have ‘similar morals and ideals and a mix of family influences and experiences’. Ali has been able to choose friends who have similar attitudes and goals in life, and who in the future, may travel a similar path to his and experience parallel complexities.

While Ali has had to juggle his many roles to maintain a balance between satisfying obligation and his own desires, he manages to do this because it is important to him and because he gains benefits from his assiduity in this area. Ali incorporates the spirit of his family in his own work ethic, which was reflected in his diligence at school, and now in managing their business in tandem with studying at university. Ali lives with his parents above their convenience store and in recognition of his contributions, his family often manage the business while he has breaks to travel and has other adventures with his friends. Ali said, ‘they accept that I like to go out to pubs and clubs, drink beer and have a good time...they know that’s what young people like to do, and I’m doing everything else that they wanted me to’. Ali considers his early shouldering of responsibility a small price to pay for the ability to have the ‘best of both worlds’ as much as he can. He will try and negotiate this to his advantage by not viewing his family’s wishes as restrictions, but simply as the principles that must govern his decision-making processes.
Effects of Dislocation in a Multicultural Context

Ali feels that at this point in time his identity in Australia is as a ‘Lebanese Australian’. This is due to a powerful sense of his Lebanese heritage, which appeared to gain more significance over the year-long interview period. However Ali believes that his identity is also firmly grounded in Australian culture. His family is the link to Lebanese culture, and the time that he spent there as a child re-enforced his bond both with his family history and the land itself. Australia represents people in Ali’s life who are important to him such as his friends and his closest family. Australia also represents the future for Ali, socially, professionally and economically. This is why he says that he believes that Australia is his home, and that it holds ‘the heritage of the future’. Ali suggests that his parents feel more dislocated than he does because their parents are in Lebanon. The second generation is fortunate, he believes, because their parents live in Australia and as far as Ali is concerned ‘where my family is, is home’. When I last spoke to Ali he was about to backpack around Europe with his friends, with little concern regarding the future that will await him upon his return.

Summary

Ali believes that his own sense of dislocation is deeply rooted in negative past experiences, and he appears to be incredibly optimistic and enthusiastic about his future. However, it was evident the pressure of his family situation are still quite burdensome for Ali despite his unwavering acceptance of it. Ali has managed to balance ‘the best of both worlds’ so far, yet he is aware that he has many challenges to come. One tangible impact of Ali’s family situation could be that he has yet to have a significant relationship with a woman, and perhaps will not do so until he does find the woman that he will marry. The rest of Ali’s family has returned to Lebanon to find Druze partners to marry, and it will be interesting to see what choices Ali makes in this area. The significance of this action on his part is magnified the fact that the family pays little other ‘homage’
to the teachings of their religion. Ali appears to find it quite important to believe that he will perform this act for his family, rather than for his religious beliefs alone.

Ali has yet to question whether making his family happy will ultimately make him happy in the long term, and this will be greatly impacted upon by the success of his marriage. Despite being willing to talk at length about these possibilities in the future during interviews, Ali appeared to be less inclined to make decisions in this area in his own life. Luckily his mother is very supportive of his independent choice making and while there are expectations for him to continue to work hard, she perhaps understands how restrictive family and other cultural expectations can be for young people, having experienced this herself. Being much younger than her husband she has acculturated to Australian society more extensively than he has, due to the freedoms that it has offered her. As a result, Ali is meeting his family's expectations in every other way, and is being supported by his mother to realise as many of his other goals as possible. Ali's story illustrates the way in which empathy and mutual understanding can strengthen family relationships and minimise the negative impact of cultural and generational differences.
4.7 Case Study 6: Julie

Self-perception of Intersecting and Multiple Identities

Julie, 32, was born in Melbourne and was raised in the inner city suburbs of Carlton and North Melbourne by her Greek parents with her two older brothers. Julie now lives in the northern suburbs in a house that she has bought with her partner, an Anglo-Australian woman. Julie currently works as a public relations officer, and is the landlord of another property that she owns also in Melbourne. Julie’s social and political views are generally quite liberal. Julie describes her religion as Greek Orthodox, but her beliefs are not strict. Julie has had a tumultuous relationship with her family over the years and has struggled with her own sense of dislocated identity as a result. Julie feels a certain sense of imbalance in her life because of the many different roles she plays in the various facets of her life. Julie’s inextricable ties with her family, and the way in which they represent the past, often present a dilemma and resulting trauma for her when attempting to maintain her sense of cultural heritage and family ties and yet further developing her own cultural identity.

The Role and Impact of Family on the Construction of Identity

Julie has experienced several traumatic upheavals with her family that has compounded her sense of 'dislocation' throughout her life. Julie described the following story:

One day, when I was eleven, I came home from school to find that our house was for sale and that my father had decided that we were moving to Greece. They never discussed it with us kids...we were expected to just leave everything behind... The next two years were miserable. I missed school, my friends and Australia...
Julie found attending school in Greece as a complete ‘culture shock’, having left behind an alternative inner city school with a relaxed atmosphere for a strict ‘military’ type of Greek school. Her father succeeded in opening his own business, but they found that their extended family was ‘gossipy’ and ‘judgmental’, constantly measuring what the family said and did and the way that they acted. They were judged even by the clothes that they wore. Julie’s parents were faced with the realisation that things had changed at home, yet they stayed for two long years in the hope that the situation would improve.

The traumatic impact of returning to Greece on the children was deep and irreparable, and upon returning to Australia a couple of years later, they found that ‘things were definitely never the same again’. The family was less united and no longer sat at the same table to eat their meals, something that had previously been a family ritual. The children felt that their lives had become more fragmented after this ‘huge disruption’ that had not been explained fully to them. Julie believes that when they came back her mother was relieved, however her father was both ‘disillusioned and humiliated’. Julie was happy to be returning to Australia and attending an inner city high school, however she faced a significant amount of readjustment, not only academically but also socially. Today, Julie values the experience and the insights into her family history and Greek culture that it gave her, but she is also keenly aware of the high cost that the family paid for this.

Julie had appreciated the active social life in Greece; ‘the cafes, the food and the music’ that were the part of Greek culture that she most identified with and still does as an adult. However, in terms of language for example, even though Greek was her first language, Julie said, ‘the fact that my mother would only speak to me in Greek made me feel even more dislocated and even now she does it... it drives me crazy’. Julie stated that she resents the fact that by doing this her mother failed to acknowledge the part of her that is essentially ‘Australian’.' Julie comments that part of her problem with her parents has been that ‘they are not good communicators…my father is passive and socially inept. I don’t know why my mother never challenged him.’ On the other hand,
however, Julie generally admired the Greek sense of family and its protective role, as she thought that Australian society did not place enough importance on these principles.

However, Julie has often also felt oppressed by the overwhelming demands of her parents, her mother in particular. Julie said that she and her mother hold conflicting views over almost every aspect of her life to the point where she 'just no longer wanted to let her in'. Julie stated that when she moved out of home at twenty-two years of age:

My mother reacted as though I had died, because I had moved out of home before getting married or buying a house. It took her four years to calm down. I've felt guilty and entirely to blame for her freaking out all these years... I feel like it's always my fault...

In many ways Julie's negativity about her relationship with her mother manifests itself in her internal feelings of negativity about herself and her life, or the anxiety that she feels about the life choices that she makes. She felt that her mother was an inadequate role-model in this area due to her constant dissatisfaction with her own life. Julie believes that the gap between them is not only cultural but also generational. Julie thinks that this has also negatively affected her brothers, one of whom she suspects is gay and another who has moved interstate to live with an older woman who has a child of her own.

Impact of Key Events and Decisions on Identity Formation

Julie spent many years drifting from job to job many of which she did not tell her family about because they were generally 'unsuitable for a woman'. They had expected her to settle in a secure office environment, and desired financial benefits rather than personal satisfaction for her in this area. Julie did try several office jobs, worked in the community service sector and was a tram driver for awhile. Julie did not minding risking personal safety or sacrificing higher wages for occupations that satisfied her need for diversity and to 'work with people'. As a result of her
mother's pressure on her to care about appearances, status and what other people thought, Julie
did the opposite, however this remained a private part of her life that she did not share with any of
her family. Julie has a strong sense of independence as a woman and says that she cannot
identify with the Greek values pertaining to women marrying early and staying home to have
children. Julie believes that women of previous generations often had simpler lives because
'success' could be measured materialistically or by marriage.

Julie's upbringing was very conservative in relation to sexuality, and she believed that exploration
of this aspect of identity was overshadowed by the perception that family values and morals were
more important than any other part of individual identity. Not only did Julie fail to see her parent's
marriage in a positive light, she states that she was led by her family to believe that her own
sexual identity appeared to be dependent on the 'whether I secured a good-looking and wealthy man as
my husband. It didn't matter if I loved him or not'. In the light of these pressures, she felt that she
never wanted to marry, and focused instead on developing the 'tom-boy' identity that she found to
be more comfortable. A combination of a lack of confidence in this area, and the belief that she
would never find a partner good enough to meet her mother's criteria, meant that she did not bring
boyfriends home and did not develop relationships with men generally. Back then, Julie
considered that if she were to get married to a partner who was from a Greek-Australian
background would be appealing because he would have a cultural empathy for her situation and
past experiences, and would be able to relate to her dislocated sense of identity.

Julie's partner for the past two years has been a woman who is from a large family of Irish
descent. They were friends for many years before they became a couple. They are very happy
and committed to their relationship, and share similar interests in the areas of lifestyle and political
and social values. They both realise that there are factors governing their different attitudes or
beliefs that are culturally based and attempt to gain an understanding of these. Julie had yet to
tell her parents about her lesbian relationship before becoming involved in this research for
several reasons. Julie was aware that her mother's expectations were unreasonable but still felt
guilty for not meeting them. Julie also feared the extreme nature of her mother's critical reactions
to her decisions, especially one as significant as this. Julie was dreading her mother’s response based on the way that she had reacted to so many things in the past. Her mother’s opinion, although not enough to hinder Julie from making her choices, was still difficult for her to bear, and would be particularly so in regards to a relationship that is so important to Julie. Ultimately Julie did not want to lose her family, but at the time she stated that ‘I will eventually have to hurt them so that I can survive’.

Therefore, at the age of thirty-three, Julie was still preparing to reveal her ‘true identity’ to her family. In this respect, Julie knew that she has been leading a ‘double-life’ for many years. Even at her workplace, she found herself ‘playing down’ both her sexuality and her ‘Greekness’. Socially, Julie’s friends and peers are mostly Australian and a mix of differing sexualities, and she does not feel a particular affiliation to any particular group; she just adapts chameleon-like from one situation to another. Julie truly enjoys the diversity and richness of her life, however she felt that this also contributed to her deeper sense of dislocation, especially in regards to her family’s opinion which ultimately matter far more to her than those of social acquaintances. It was a burden for Julie to continue to keep the various compartments of her life separate and to not allow these crucial parts of her life and her identity to overlap, particularly where people that she loves were concerned.

At her weekly dinner with her parents the night before her final interview, Julie was determined to tell them about her partner and the fact that they had bought a house together. Her mother’s reaction was to tell her to ‘leave the house and to never return’. Julie said:

> Then she called me at home...crying and all that...
> and told me that she would have preferred if I had told her that I had cancer... anything... rather than that I was one of those (a lesbian)...

Her mother’s hurtful reaction and her father’s acceptance of this response have devastated Julie. However, she now says that she is ‘relieved’, and has realised that although her relationship with
her family may always be a problem for her, her sexuality, her relationship with her partner and her lifestyle choices are not. Despite the struggles ahead, Julie was satisfied to begin this next chapter in her life and to describe these developments as part of her story. The next challenge is to attempt to introduce her family to her life and more of her life to her family. This has become particularly significant in light of the IVF treatment that Julie and her partner are currently undertaking in the aim of having a child together and as she considers their future together as a family.

Effects of Dislocation in a Multicultural Context

Julie visits her parents about once a week on average, which she believes indicates the extent to which she feels a bond to her family generally; those other six days are the ones that truly reflect her true identity and her life. Julie says that she feels '20%-30% Greek', but that nationality alone is not important to her. As much as she feels quite at home when she is in Greece, Julie said, 'I'm used to Australia and I love living in Melbourne. I felt Greek when I was younger, then Greek-Australian as I grew older. Now I would say that I am an Australian with Greek parents'. Julie believes that Australia is the place that she identifies most with and therefore it is her home; Australia represents diversity, and living here allows Julie to feel secure in her personal religious and cultural beliefs. Julie believes that the 'culture in Australia is one of tolerance due to its multiculturalism', and she values the freedom of speech that is encouraged in this country. Julie does not believe that she is 'like other Australians or that all Australians are the same.' The Australian people are 'individuals who feel comfortable living in a place that they call home', and that is what is important to Julie in terms of her own sense of identity.
Summary

Julie continues to experience a high level of trauma due to her family's experiences of dislocation. Julie clearly feels that her relationship with her mother in particular has been damaging to her sense of self-esteem and identity. While Julie had made some determined choices around living her life the way she chooses she has still many hurdles to overcome to meld the different areas of her life effectively. However, it does appear that Julie has become so used to the compartmentalisation of the different areas that she would now have difficulty exposing them to each other. Like most of the other participants, Julie has taken on many of the expectations of both her family and society as a personal burden. Julie does believe that she has attempted to balance her life as much as possible while still considering the happiness of others.

Ultimately Julie has complicated decisions to make in the future regarding her own relationship and choices around motherhood and co-parenting. As Julie shifts her focus away from the past and her roles that interconnected with others she may also consider pursuing other personal goals such as possible study or career options. Many of these decisions are crucial to contributing to her own sense of identity and one of the interesting areas of consideration will be around having her own children in the future. At present Julie says that she is not interested in being a mother herself but is willing to co-parent with her partner. Julie herself pointed out that this may be related to the negative relationship that she has with her own mother and the way in which she does not feel that she has had an appropriate role-model for this role. Julie will certainly learn much from her own partner as a 'co-mother' in the future, however an improved relationship with her mother will have an incredibly positive impact on her wider sense of identity.
CHAPTER 5

Case- Study Analysis

5.1 Findings

The participants whose stories were explored by these case-studies have experienced diverse individual journeys towards both understanding and distancing themselves from their own dislocation to develop a tangible sense of self-identity not singularly based on family or place. Each participant experienced different levels of self-insight during the interview process. Their stories were characterised by the following factors, which directly or indirectly impacted upon their relationships, lifestyle, environment and their identity formation.

5.2 Cultural Difference

Just as the diversity within cultures probably exceeds that between cultures (Jandt 1995:8), the cultural differences that exist internally within families were often perceived to be as diverse as the differences that exist between families and society. Likewise most of the participants attributed much of the family conflict they experienced to personality clashes between parents and children, rather than to ethnic parenting patterns. However there was recognition that this situation was generally exacerbated by a lack of cultural understanding and communication. While cultural difference often overlaps other differences (Goodnow & Cashmore 1985:234), overwhelmingly, participants believed that any cultural gap between themselves and their parents contributing to family dislocation was primarily caused by a generation gap that resulted in negative cultural stereotyping by both generations.

However, it is important to note that all of the participants generally viewed their own stories from a very personal perspective that did not take into account what they often dismissed as ‘cultural
generalisation' or 'social theory'. What was termed 'dislocation' in these each of these case-studies, while not necessarily connected to the family's ethnic origins, was comprised of problems that had been exacerbated by the huge costs and burdens of migrant experiences on the family. These often became unresolved issues that had impacted on many of the participants as they have struggled with their own sense of identity, and sense of dislocation or difference from wider society. Their negative experiences were not just viewed as the barriers presented by social attitudes and structures, but as a part of what they now reflect upon as the very personal upheavals that are associated with generational and cultural change.

Several of the participants had sufficiently distanced themselves from their families to conclude that their ongoing sense of dislocation in life had simply reflected the internal dislocation of their families. A majority of the participants' parents did not have extended family in Australia upon their arrival, nor were they particularly well-supported through the initial settlement period. It appears that families who are linked to existing kin relationships in the country of settlement are likely to experience fewer difficulties adapting to their new social and physical environments. In many ways, the families in question may have been better equipped to cope with later internal problems if they had been better equipped to deal with external ones.

The sense of dislocation experienced by these families was evidenced by recurring patterns such as frequently returning to the country of origin, moving from suburb to suburb or by sending their children to a variety of different schools. Many of the participants realised that their parents, fathers in particular, must have found themselves literally caught between cultures, not only of their country of origin and Australia, but of the past and the present beliefs, values and attitudes. Many of the participants realised that in this sense dislocation was certainly passed on from one generation to the next.
5.3 Relocation and Settlement issues

The participants' families often experienced the impact of these issues before their birth, however, for many families they had a lingering effect on the marriage and their relationship between parents and their children. Difficult settlement experiences led to a tense home life for some children, many participants commenting that conflict was the 'status quo' for as long as they could remember. The stress experienced by parents through the ongoing process of dealing with these issues usually contributed in some way to the intensity of their focus on their children as 'expressions' or 'extensions' of themselves.

Participants suggested that settlement issues for parents were prompted by the following factors:

- Poor or non-existent English language skills.
- Differences between the moral and social values between local culture and their own
- Isolation from both the wider community and similar cultural groups.
- Inter-generational gaps of understanding between parents and children, children and grandparents etc leading to a lack of ability to understand social issues that had not been prevalent in the home country (e.g. homosexuality, de-facto marriages). These issues may have been less traumatic if dealt with within the context of the more familiar environment of gradual social change and response in the country of origin.
- Anxiety (and feelings of guilt) for family and friends left in the home country.
- Low-economic and social standing as immigrants.
- Transition between traditional rural life to a contemporary urban environment where life was more 'fast-paced', competitive and fractured (for example, new environments in which their children are born into knowing no different way of life and therefore developing different values and attitudes to their parents from an early age).
- Lack of knowledge or trust in the systems of Australian society, government and law and therefore unable or disinclined to access assistance and support.
Separation from kin by geographical distance, leading to diminished family ties. Some families may have been prompted to migrate to Australia due to connections with family or friends already living here yet may have found the actual distances between or within cities prohibitive to utilising these relationships for support.

There were also differences between the attitudes of older overseas-born children and those who were born in Australia. The Australian-born participants were generally the most liberal thinking and more likely to 'rebel' against their parents' wishes (e.g. by intermarrying or not getting married). As most participants commented, the strongest sense of identity stems from an individual’s place of birth and their most commonly spoken language and older siblings identified more with their parents in this. The children born here were more likely to experience conflict in terms of their identity, due to the need to utilise many different options and opportunities to redefine themselves beyond ethnic family identity.

Participants acknowledged that a lack of knowledge about their parents’ past settlement struggles, apart from in terms of the sacrifices that they made for their children, often left a gap in their sense of family and personal histories, compounding other identity issues. Further exploration of their parents’ fears and insecurities associated with the hardships and risks that they faced in the past generally impacted positively on their own self-esteem as adults when attempting to understand the factors contributing to their family dislocation, which they often interpreted as ‘dysfunction’.

5.4 Risk and Insecurity

The majority of parents had experienced trauma from war-related issues or political/economic disadvantage in the home country, and these were related to:

- Experiences of political and social conflict
- Loss of home and property
• Separation from family and friends
• Stress from an uncertain future
• Trauma from the journey to Australia

As discussed previously, for many of the participants in this study there were multiple unresolved issues as a consequence of their parents generally 'not wanting to talk' about past experiences. Participants have developed an understanding of an almost 'obsessive' desire for the families' security, safety and well-being 'at any cost' only after developing an understanding of their parents' fear of losing both their family and their identity. They had often felt that they were the cause of their parents' frustration, unaware that perhaps their parents were experiencing uncertainty and frustration with their own choices and 'mistakes' in the past.

The more insecurity the parents felt, the more 'closed' the family unit often became, many being unprepared or unable to seek external support that was not family-based as discussed previously. Family members appear to have been caught in a complex cycle of interdependency that was problematic due to the fractured power-balance between generations and genders resulting in men relying on women and adults on children. As participants gained the confidence to overcome their own sense of vulnerability caused by the fear of disappointing their families, the sense of guilt that may have previously characterised their relationships was gradually reduced.

Upon reflection several of the participants realised that a sense of their parents' insecurity had resulted in their own feelings of vulnerability as children. This was negatively re-enforced by 'bullying in the school-yard', 'victimisation in the classroom' and other 'painful remainders of difference' as they were growing up. However, unlike their parents who may have felt excluded from Australian society as migrants from another country, participants developed a deep sense of dislocation from the actual place in which they were born. Many participants believed that at times they had felt divided between desiring inclusion in the family and seeking acceptance by their peer group for example because the two goals often felt 'mutually exclusive'.
5.5 Depression

Many of the parents who struggled with settlement in Australia, were subject to discrimination, and felt culturally isolated, may have suffered from a significant lack of self-esteem and unrecognised periods of depression. Fathers and husbands who were unable to provide financial security or linguistic guidance for their children and who were being supported by their wives may have found this quite detrimental to their sense of pride and self-respect both as an individual and as the head of the family. Mothers were often 'caught between cultures' not only in terms of their own experiences but also of their children's as they grew older.

The oppressive or extreme parenting patterns of unhappy or depressed mothers and fathers are also bound to have a negative effect on their children, which is widely recognised today as a particularly damaging problem for refugee families. For several of the participants their view of themselves in the future was limited by an inherited sense of futility or loss. This includes a sense of lost childhood, the need to uncover family histories and the desire to not revisit their parents' mistakes on their own children in the future. It is widely acknowledged that the family patterns and structures of one generation may repeat itself in the next (McGoldrick and Gerson 1985:5).

The example of some parents managed to instil in their children an inherent fear of failure or of repeating the all-too-familiar story of struggle and sacrifice lived by recent generations resulting in a quite negative view not only of the world, but also of the future. However, the future has gained a broader scope and vision for each participant over time, particularly after many meaningful and significant experiences. This includes their relationships, work choices, financial ventures and other autonomous life-choices.

5.6 Gender Issues

For both mothers who are born overseas and their daughters who were born here, there were many gender issues contributing to a sense of dislocation within the family. For mothers,
marriages may have been the product of formal or informal match-making between families. These women may have found that their 'roles' as wives and mothers shifted significantly upon their arrival in Australia. Just as their husbands' qualifications or work experience may not been recognised, they also may have had difficulty finding employment appropriate to their level of skills and training.

However, many women who may have had better English language skills than their husbands found themselves the main or most consistent income-earners in the household, through factory work for example. Many may have joined the work force for the first time in family owned ventures after raising children, where they may have found themselves working twelve-hour days. For one mother discussed in the case-studies, the financial independence resulting from full-time employment, supportive social mores and legal system in Australia enabled her to divorce her husband (with whom she had had an abusive relationship) and raise her children on her own.

Some participants suggested that their migrant mothers were forced to maintain traditional values and expectations of their husbands and families despite often finding themselves in more equal roles upon settlement in Australia. This made it difficult for them to support their own daughters in their struggles with identity and gender issues regardless of any sympathy they may have had for their situations. For young women, the apparent inability of their mothers to 'relate' to their feelings, and particularly to challenge their fathers' decisions, directly contributed to a tense relationship where there was the perception of a lack of awareness of the other's generational values.

5.7 Values

Many young Australians may not have had cause to consider the worth of their rights as individuals, unless it in the context of the laws or moral conventions imposed by society or family and so forth. Many may never have to consider their human rights as individuals. Unlike in the country of origin for their parents or other family members, they generally will not have
experienced civil war, military invasion, religious persecution or political oppression. Thus, they may not understand their parents’ fears, concerns and reservations regarding measures of success, security and happiness for the future. Throughout history young people have often been more concerned with the issues of their own generation which they can engage with through both shared experiences and reflective responses.

In terms of religious values, most participants commented that the sense of religion passed on to them by their non-orthodox parents was a moral ‘double-standard’. It was a common theme for participants to wonder why their parents insisted that they learn about their religious tradition and practices when they did not adhere to these in their own daily lives. Misunderstandings in communication arose from this as young people increasingly perceived the message from parents to be a matter of ‘do as I say not as I do’. It was only upon further reflection that participants began to realise that their parents were attempting to use religion to encourage their children to retain traditional values and culture that they believed would otherwise be lost.

5. 8 Language

For all of the participants, the languages spoken by older generations were often perceived to be ‘a reflection of the past’, and were regarded as being important to ‘uphold tradition’ and instil a ‘sense of cultural origin and family identity’. However, the frequent refusal by parents to speak English with their children was likewise believed to be an inability to face the future, and acknowledge this vital aspect of their children’s identities. The obligation to communicate with older generations in the migrant language also resulted in some participants refusing to do so through frustration, resentment or rebellion at this method of ‘control’. It appears that there were not only problems resulting from a lack of understanding of language but also from people not being able to communicate effectively:

One of the most significant common themes shared by all of the participants was the way in which the language/s they chose to speak corresponded to their sense of identity. Participants generally
believed themselves to be not only bilingual but also as 'bicultural' and they generally identified themselves as hyphenated identities such as 'Lebanese-Australian', or, as 'Australian with Greek parents'. Their use of language directly reflected their sense of cultural identity to the extent that they could nominate the measure in percentage form, for example if they spoke English 75% of the time and 25% Greek, then they would describe themselves as 2/3 Australian, 1/3 Greek. None of the participants identified themselves as being singularly 'Australian' without reference to their family's background in some way.

All of the participants did state that Australia was the place they call home. They not only acknowledged it as the country of their birth but also as the country of their children's births in the future, and recognised English as being the first language of future generations. Likewise, participants' parents who spoke more English were less inclined to return to their country of origin and were usually more acculturated than others. These parents were generally mothers who were more likely to acknowledge the significance of Australia as the birthplace and home of their children, and potentially their grandchildren, than their husbands were.
CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

These case studies have illustrated the way in which these six individuals have sought a balance between family and wider society in terms of the development of cultural identity. The aim of this thesis to illustrate the extent of personal dislocation that is experienced by many second-generation individuals from problematic immigrant backgrounds was met through exploration of these stories.

Participants generally found that in terms of formulating and reinforcing a sense of home and identity, factors involving family, home and contemporary global culture are more meaningful than broader concepts of national citizenship or cultural heritage. The significance of cultural heritage was consistently contributed to the link between migrant culture and family. These 'external' factors often conflicted with the individual sense of self that each participant struggled to maintain while juggling other demands. Ultimately, each individual has been successful in achieving many positive outcomes in terms of their identity development, however each spoke of the personal cost of this and the unresolved challenges for the future.

For the families profiled in this study, the ability to participate in the wider civil society has been complicated by the extra stages of establishing or re-building their social capacity as migrants. As mentioned by Birrell (2001) there is often an 'implicit assumption that the second generation, being Australia-born and having grown up here...have social and economic outcomes that are unlikely to differ very much from those of other native-born Australians'. However, as this study has shown, it is the case that second-generation individuals have developed an inherent sense of cultural diversity, involving a fusion of both local and global, and past and present cultures in their process of identity formation. There was acknowledgment that an understanding of the past has a
positive impact on the formulation of present identities, however most of the participants have felt quite isolated by the uniqueness of their stories that they felt others have not been able to identify with or understand. This may also be why they have not completely identified with broader, more generic definitions of what it is to be ‘Australian’ and have searched for other ways to express their sense of individual identity.

Despite each participant attempting to distance themselves from the negative aspects of family life, it is important to note that none of them was able to withdraw completely from their families, even in extreme cases. It has been important for these individuals to maintain links to a family identity that has been forged through unique shared experience and history, particularly for individuals who have returned to their family’s country of origin and then back to Australia. It should be noted that this phenomena, commonly known as ‘pendulum migration’ (Cahill 1996), has distinctly negative effects despite its apparent benefits. As several participants mentioned during interviews, regular visits rather than an abrupt, apparently (at the time) permanent upheaval would have been far less dislocating for all involved.

Ironically, each of the participants had inherited a sense of risk-taking from parents who later attempted to ‘protect’ them from by pressuring them to strive for security and stability at any cost. While parents may believe that they had been forced into risk-taking, they do not always realise that their children were born into a time of family risk and dislocation and have had to accept this to survive - at home, in the school yard, in the workplace and in relationships. Their children have learnt from them about the way in which everything can be left behind to start again anew, to re-invent oneself. Through the tenacious desire to maintain the best of both or several cultures the participants in this study have developed a strong sense of resilience and determination to make difficult choices regardless of cost or barriers, primarily in the area of work and relationships. Therefore, the differences between the expectations and outcomes for the first and second generation certainly outweigh the similarities in many respects, as argued by Portes (1997).
It is a difficult task to summarise the commonalities between the stories of the participants without generalising, but several shared experiences do exist. Marcello and Julie felt ‘Southern European’ pressure to ‘keep up appearances’, to find a suitable husband or wife for example. This resulted in many alternative work and relationship choices, with varying levels of success. For Sanaz and Ali, both from Middle Eastern backgrounds, conformity in relationship choices were also the main burdens placed upon them by their families, however with emphasis on the religious significance of this. The perception of this being a double standard has impacted heavily upon both of them although more so for Sanaz at this point in time. For Christine and Hoang, their families’ demands relating to hard work and financial security reflect the ‘typical’ Asian characteristics that Christine discussed in her interviews, however both are yet to find happiness in the way prescribed by their families. Like many individuals, most participants appear to be attempting to reconcile the jigsaw pieces of family, culture, religion, experience, knowledge, belief and geography into a tangible whole identity, yet have found the result process to be somewhat fragmented.

Clearly, stories of dislocation are widespread across Australia not only among migrant groups. Alternatively, stories of cultural diversity are increasingly becoming a positive characteristic of ‘mainstream’ national consciousness. While it is important to encourage and embrace the acculturation of migrants, the negative impact of what is lost for each generation of these families over time should also be acknowledged by discussions regarding multiculturalism in Australia today. If, as a nation, we continue to critically engage with this form of debate, we will be better equipped to truly embrace diversity. This can be achieved through recognition of the often hidden stories of generational dislocation experienced by individuals such as the participants in this study. Longitudinal research is a crucial strategy towards effectively capturing the effects of this dislocation on positive identity formation, particularly for the next generation of newly arrived families from East Timor, the Middle East and Horn of Africa countries.
APPENDIX A:

Plain Language Statement

My name is Natalie Anderson. I am a post-graduate student currently undertaking a Master of Arts Degree in the Faculty of Education, Language and Community Studies at RMIT University. The title of my research project is The Identity Formation of Second Generation Australians from Immigrant Family Backgrounds.

The aim of this research project is to examine the nature of identity formation of second-generation adults from immigrant families with problematic life-histories. It will examine both cultural and structural factors that cause or exacerbate a dislocated sense of identity for the individuals. The project will take the form of a case study involving a small number of participants in an individual interview process.

I am approaching you with the understanding that you are a second generation Australian who has experienced feelings of dislocated or problematic identity formation due to your immigrant family background. You are invited to participate in three audio-taped interviews, each of approximately an hour’s duration, focusing on issues relating to the experiences, beliefs and other key factors that have impacted upon the development of your sense of identity. Data analysis will also incorporate existing social and historical reference material documenting the contemporary debates on identity and multiculturalism. It is intended that final analysis of the viewpoints and perspectives raised in the interviews will assist in developing knowledge of current issues of cultural diversity and identity among the Australian community.

As interview questions may be of a personal and sensitive nature, and cause discomfort or anxiety your participation will be entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any questions. De-briefing or further is available as required. The interview data will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to myself, and to the supervisor of the project, Professor Des Cahill of RMIT University, who can be contacted on (03) 9925 4981. Excerpts from the interviews may be a part of the final dissertation that will be submitted to RMIT University, and articles or other publications in the future but under no circumstances will you be identified.

I will be directing the project and can be contacted at should you have any questions. If you have any further concerns you may approach the RMIT Human Ethics Committee, GPO Box 2476V Melbourne, 3001; telephone: (03) 9925 1745.

Natalie Anderson
B.A. (Hons.)
APPENDIX B:

Informed Consent Form

I, ______________________ (print full name), hereby consent to participate in a case study as part of the thesis project entitled The Identity Formation of Second Generation Australians from Immigrant Family Backgrounds, conducted by Natalie Anderson as part of the degree of Master of Arts (Cultural Studies) at RMIT University.

I understand that my involvement includes participation in three 1 - hour interviews. I authorise the audio-taping of these interviews, and understand that due to the personal nature of questions asked that I have the right to refuse to answer certain questions or to withdraw from the project at anytime without notice. I understand that in the event of questioning causing distress to myself, I have the right to de-briefing or to further counselling as required.

I am aware de-identified information that I provide during interviews may be included in the final thesis report, and articles or other publications written by the researcher in the future. All transcripts and other personal information will remain confidential and stored securely in a locked file at all times to be accessed only by the researcher.

I understand that Natalie will be directing the project and can be contacted at ______________________ should I have any questions. If I have any further concerns I may approach the supervisor of the project, Professor Des Cahill of RMIT University, who can be contacted on (03) 9925 4981 or the RMIT Human Ethics Committee, GPO Box 2476V Melbourne, 3001; telephone: (03) 9925 1745.

Signed: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
APPENDIX C:

Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. Participant's name:
2. Phone no:
3. Date of birth:
4. Suburb of residence:
5. Occupation:
6. Education:
7. Marital status:
8. Age at marriage:
9. Nationality of participant's partner:
10. Partner's occupation:
11. Languages spoken by participant's:
    • in the home
    • with older relatives
    • with same-age relatives
    • with peer group
    • in the work place
12. Religion of participant:
13. Religion of participant's partner:
14. Age of participant's first employment:
15. Participant's father's date of birth:
16. Country of origin:
17. Languages spoken by father:
18. Religion:
19. Level of education:
20. Year of settlement in Australia:
21. Reasons for leaving home country:
22. Occupation:
23. Nature of participant's relationship with father:
24. Participant's mother's date of birth:
25. Country of origin:
26. Languages spoken by mother:
27. Religion:
28. Level of education:
29. Year of settlement in Australia:
30. Occupation:
31. Nature of participant's relationship with mother:
32. When and how participant's parents met:
33. Year of parents' marriage:
34. Ages of participant's siblings:
35. Nature of relationship with siblings:
36. Main areas of participant's conflict/dispute with parents/family members:
37. The current extent of resolution of conflicts/disputes:
38. Amount of participant's contact with family members:
39. Level of participant's identification with family traditions and beliefs:
40. Level of participant's identification with family history and personal past:
41. Level of participant's identification with peer or social group:
42. Participant's self-perception of identity and nationality:
LIST of REFERENCES


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